Georgia Department of Human Services
Office of Facilities and Support Services

Coordinated Transportation
Presentation to the House Transit Governance and Funding Committee

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What is DHS Coordinated Transportation?

• The statewide Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transportation System provides access to human services for eligible consumers served by:
  • DHS: Division of Aging Services (DAS) & Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)
  • Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)
  • Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)

• Benefits:
  • Provides increased efficiency in operations
  • Eliminates duplication of programs, staff, services, and vehicles
DHS Regions & Service Provision

- Coordinated Transportation operates via purchase of service contracts within each DHS region.

- Providers are a mix of governmental entities, for-profit entities, and private non-profit organizations.

- Contractors are reimbursed for services provided using a fee for service methodology in the form of one way trip rates.

- All consumer groups are not served in every county, but some services are provided in each of the 159 counties.

- Regional Transportation Offices (RTOs) are staffed in each of the 12 DHS regions. Transportation services are designed, coordinated, and monitored through the RTO staff assigned to each DHS region.
Funding

- The system is funded by DHS and partners who purchase services from the system.
Coordination with Other State Agencies

• Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Rural Public Transit System (5311)
  • In two regions of the state, the same contractor is used for both the DHS Coordinated Transportation System and the GDOT Rural Public Transit System (5311)
    • Increases efficiency:
      • DHS purchases services from 5311 operators
      • GDOT provides capital equipment and maintenance support
    • Enables DHS to provide transportation to more consumers
    • Decreases duplication of services
Challenges in Transportation

• Federal funding has declined due to federal grant modifications, constraining our ability to serve those who qualify. Eligible consumers are served based on priorities determined by the funding entity.

• In rural areas, consumers often live considerable distances from services. Transportation providers travel long distances between trip origination and destination.
  • For example, in Savannah, individuals live an average of 10 miles from the senior center and have an average trip time of 20 minutes. In the rural area of Effingham County, individuals live an average of 20 miles from the senior center and have an average trip time of up to an hour.
Challenges in Transportation

• According to Savannahnow.com (June 2018), the decline in federal funds dispersed by GDOT will constrain the ability of the transportation system in Coastal Georgia to serve eligible low income, elderly, and disabled citizens.

• Coastal Regional Commission, the entity responsible for management of the system, does not know the impact the reduction of approximately $400,000 will have on services.

• The nine coastal counties currently contribute over $405,000 to the system, but are unable to make up the $400,000 decrease in federal funds.

• According to the article, “Just how many of the 62 buses operated by the Coastal Regional Commission will be cut has not yet been determined, but there will be some impact on people who pay $3 each way to visit a doctor in their own county, according to Allen Burns, executive director of the commission.”

• Sixty-five percent of the riders come from DHS, while the public makes up the balance of riders. For example, individuals served by EmployAbility utilize the transit system to commute to work.

• The challenge facing all is how to maintain transportation services.
Current Initiatives to Improve Transportation

• Implement transportation projects identified in coordination with partners to increase transportation options and allow access to needed services within local communities.
  • “Senior Shuttle” projects are planned for implementation in Vidalia and Waycross. The shuttles will operate one day per week for approximately 6 hours, making the same stops each hour. Seniors are involved in determining the shuttle “stops”. Current plans include stops at the pharmacy, post office, library, utility company, and Walmart.
  • The feasibility of implementing a pilot project with Lyft is in the beginning planning stages.

• Additional proposed initiatives for rural areas:
  • Implement volunteer driver programs in areas where the need exceeds available funds.
  • Implement voucher programs that reimburse non-family members to transport a consumer to services.
Questions?

For additional information, please contact:

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