



**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of March 14, 2009**

DATE: March 14, 2009

SUBJECT: Appropriation of New Freedom funds to the Department of Human Services

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Appropriate \$299,916 in federal New Freedom funds from the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board (101.374900) to the Department of Human Services (101.53104) to continue a “door through door” escorted transportation program serving approximately 120 residents of Arlington and Alexandria who are physically frail and/or have cognitive disabilities.

2. Authorize 0.5 FTE temporary grant funded position to provide mobility management services.

ISSUES: This is a request to appropriate \$299,916 in federal grant funds and authorize a 0.5 FTE temporary grant funded position. The required local match is covered by the cost of transportation services and existing Arlington and Alexandria staff. No additional net tax support is needed.

SUMMARY: The Arlington Agency on Aging, the Alexandria Office of Aging and Adult Services and the non-profit Home Care Partners submitted a joint application to the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board (TPB) for federal New Freedom funds to continue the “door through door” escorted transportation program. The program provides escorted transportation to Arlington and Alexandria residents who have difficulties making and keeping health care appointments. The new 0.5 FTE temporary grant funded position will raise awareness of and assist older adults with applying for and using existing transportation options. Mobility management and sensitivity training on the needs of frail elders and persons with disabilities will be provided to cab drivers. This expansion of services will further implement several Elder Readiness Task Force recommendations.

BACKGROUND: The Council of Government’s Transportation Planning Board (TPB) issued a request for proposals with funding from the Federal Transit Administration under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act to initiate programs that address the needs of people with disabilities, above and beyond what is required

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County Attorney: _____
Staff: Sharon Lopez, DHS, Aging and Disability Services

by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The TPB convened an advisory council to identify critical unmet needs in the region. Door through door escorted transportation was identified as a need that is not currently met. In December 2007, the County Board appropriated \$144,000 in funds for the “door through door” escorted transportation program. This appropriation of \$299,916 will extend the program until December 2010. Arlington County serves as the fiscal agent. The Department of Environmental Services, Transportation Division, has completed the federal assurances that must be provided in order to receive these funds.

DISCUSSION: Adults with physical frailties and/or cognitive disabilities face difficulties in accessing seemingly simple health care services. These individuals are unable to navigate the various steps and/or unable to self-advocate the myriad of processes necessary to gain access to health care services. The program will continue to provide the necessary personal assistance for consumers to take advantage of existing forms of public transportation services, as well as ensure support and assistance during the health care appointment. This assistance may consist of help preparing for the trip, help to and from the vehicle, accompaniment during the health care appointment (which may include translation services in Spanish and Vietnamese), briefly helping the client when they return home, and delivering reports to community service providers, family caregivers and others as appropriate.

This service will continue to be provided Monday through Friday for non-emergency health care appointments. Aides from Home Care Partners will provide the “door through door” assistance. All trips must begin and end at the consumer’s residence in Arlington County or the City of Alexandria and must be within 10 miles of the Arlington County and Alexandria City limits. Trips must be scheduled a week in advance. Special situations requiring shorter notice will be accommodated whenever possible. Payment for escorted transportation will be based on a sliding scale, contingent upon client income. During the start up of the program, staff found that callers had difficulty understanding, applying for and negotiating the various transportation options. The new mobility management component responds to a need for additional assistance with coordinating transportation options with health care appointments.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. There is no impact on net tax support. The fifty percent local match for the transportation required by this grant is already in the County’s FY 2009 adopted budget and comes from (a) the cost of the actual transportation service, and (b) existing Arlington County, City of Alexandria and Home Care Partners staff time. The new 0.5 FTE position is temporary and funded through December 2010. Any funds not used in FY 2009 will be carried over into FY 2010 for this project through the regular annual year-end closeout process.