



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item Meeting of December 15, 2007

DATE: December 15, 2007

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

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Appropriate \$144,000 in federal New Freedom funds from the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board (101. 374900.53101) to the Department of Human Services (101.53119) to initiate a “door through door” escorted transportation program to health care appointments for approximately 120 residents of Arlington and Alexandria who are physically frail and/or have cognitive disabilities.

ISSUES: Should \$144,000 be accepted and appropriated for specified activities?

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 initiate a “door through door” program. This program will provide escorted transportation to Arlington and Alexandria residents who have great difficulties making and keeping health care appointments. This expansion of services will further implement several Elder Readiness Task Force recommendations.

BACKGROUND: The TPB issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) with funding from the Federal Transit Administration under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act to initiate new programs that address the needs of people with disabilities, above and beyond what is required 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. Arlington County will serve as the fiscal agent for the program. The Department of Environmental Services, Transportation Division, has completed the federal assurances that must be provided in order to receive these funds. All funds will be used to pay Home Care Partners to provide the service. Grant funds are for the period January 2008 – December 2008. The TPB will be initiating another RFP for a subsequent two-year grant period and the team will submit a funding application for the two-year period ending December 2010. At that time, the need for project continuation will be re-evaluated.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Terri Lynch, DHS, Aging and Disability Services

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 all essential components of health care services. The proposed project will 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 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. However, special situations requiring shorter notice will be accommodated if possible. Payment for escorted transportation will be based on a sliding scale, contingent upon client income. Access to this service will not be denied due to an inability to contribute toward the cost.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. The fifty percent local match that is required by this grant comes from (a) the cost of the actual transportation service, e.g., MetroAccess, Arlington STAR, Alexandria DOT and (b) time spent by existing Arlington County, City of Alexandria and Home Care Partners staff in coordinating the program.