

DFHV SchoolConnect Pre-Application Conference (6/22/21) Meeting Notes and FAQ:

1. When does the program start?

- The program starts July 26, 2021. DFHV anticipates a gradual start up August 30th, 2021 and steadily build capacity through the early fall to reach full implementation of the program by October 30th, 2021.

2. What type of vehicles are needed for this project?

- The applicant can describe in their application the type of vehicles the applicant will be using or purchasing to support this grant. DFHV will review and adjust the DCMR Title 31 rules to include 15-passenger vehicles. Any applicant purchasing vehicles with the funds of this grant should describe the timeline and plan to ensure the vehicles are licensed, painted and branded properly. The capacity of the vehicle should be up to 15-passengers.

3. Funding for the program:

- For FY21, DFHV has created a competitive grant application in the amount of \$2.5 million dollars and it is anticipated DFHV will receive an additional \$5.28 million to carry through FY22 and FY23. The funds being used are stimulus (federal funds) and can be carried over from fiscal year to fiscal year.

4. What is application deadline date?

- DFHV has set the application deadline date to July 6, 2021; midnight Pacific Time.

5. What is the availability of the vehicles?

- The vehicles should be ready by August 30th, 2021 to start with a group of identified schools. The program will begin July 26th. DFHV will work with the awarded applicant to ensure a gradual build up to 23 vehicles that are fully implemented for the program by October 30, 2021.
- Once an applicant is selected, the applicant will need to work with DFHV to ensure the types of vehicles and mini-buses that are available to meet the project's timeline, including uniformed painting (mandated colors of red and gray) and branding the vehicles for the project.
- DFHV will be working the legal team to include the 15-passenger minibuses or shuttles.

- 6. Can a technology company partner with a taxicab company (or other taxicab companies) on this grant?**
- Yes, taxicab companies applying for the grant should describe in their narrative which technology company they will be partnering with and describe the role of the technology company. DFHV is not guiding any taxicab company to partner with a technology company, but a technology company can partner with a DC license taxicab company to provide the transportation services under this grant.
- 7. In the NOFA or RFA I could not find the funding amounts and service provider billing and payment reimbursements structure. Where can I find that information?**
- The funding amounts and service provider billing will be based on expenses accrued and a flat administrative cost per month to the provider.
- 8. Is the funding for the vehicle acquisition and technology partnership included in the total grant funding or is that a required investment by the selected provider?**
- The funding for the vehicle acquisition and technology partnership will be included in the grant funding up to specified amounts.
- 9. Is this a phased project implementation or is the provider expected to have all vehicles and software ready to be in service for 24 schools by July 26th?**
- The program will be phased implementation. Initially, we will start with some schools for the 1st day of school between August 15, 2021 to August 30, 2021. There will be an additional roll-out between August 2021 and October 2021 for the remainder of the schools.
- 10. Will the provider receive a list of all approved students per designated route?**
- Yes.
- 11. Are students required to strictly travel on their designated routes or are they allowed to ride any route that is being serviced?**
- Each school will have their strict designated route where a student may go. Caregivers and school leaders will determine the pick-up and drop-off for the student.
- 12. Can students who are not on the designated list and route allowed to use the service?**
- No
- 13. If a student misses a pickup and needs additional transportation can the service provider send an alternate transport to get them and is that special service included in the funding?**

- No. The minibus will make additional trips. Every trip will require a “bus monitor” provided by the District Government.

14. Will the provider receive the student and parent contact information to build the individual student profiles?

- Yes.

15. The initial discussions on this project were that since it was being designated to taxicab companies that the vehicles could not exceed the 8-passenger limit. The RFA refers to 15-seater vehicles with WA lift. Which one is it?

- DFHV is working to lift regulations that restrict passenger limits for some DFHV programs at the discretion of the Director. The vehicles will be 15-person mini-buses that are inclusive of the driver and bus monitor.

16. There is a request for two-way radios to be installed. Is that mandatory or can direct messaging to the tablet or text messaging to the driver suffice?

- Radios will be required.

17. Driver Recruitment: What other policies of the standard operating policies will have to be developed?

- Drivers need to be licensed by DFHV. Additional guidelines and policies for drivers will be developed as we work with schools and other stakeholders.

18. Service Delivery: States that there will be two services per day. One in the morning one in the afternoon and there is mention of one for afterschool activities. Shouldn't afterschool activities which could be extended and random, be considered a third service?

- Each school has 6 hours to distribute between the morning and afternoon pick-up and drop-offs. There may be additional weekend and weekday evening services in the future as we roll-out a more robust service.

19. Is the pickup and drop-off for each student per route static or subject to random changes or when new students are added or removed from the route?

- The pick-up and drop-off locations will be static for the initial launch. Changes may be made at the discretion of DFHV in partnership with school leaders and stakeholders.

20. What public relations or media activity surrounding this program is expected?

- Yes. This will be done in partnership with DFHV, the Deputy Mayor for Education, and other stakeholders including DC Public Schools and DC Public Charter Schools.

21. The RFA outlines both on-demand and fixed route service as possible options (and that the final technology will be decided post-award). Would the DFHV also be considering a pre-booked solution (e.g., rider booked 1-7 days in advance) to give parents and students additional flexibility?

- No. This will not be a pre-booked service. It will be a fixed route service initially.

22. The RFA dictates 1 vehicle per school. Is a more flexible arrangement, in which vehicles can reshuffle between schools, acceptable? Is there a desire to keep students from different schools separate? If so, could the provider share vehicles but also ensure students only share rides with other students at their school?

- There are considerations for more flexibility for some schools especially schools with traditional feeder patterns. However, each school will receive one vehicle and there will not be reshuffling. There is a desire to keep students from different schools separate to avoid conflicts, however we may consider changes based on input from school leaders and stakeholders.

23. What is the total budget associated with the project in FY21 and FY22? In the Q&A, the DFHV mentioned that an initial set of funds would be available for vehicle procurement. Can you please elaborate?

- In FY21, there is a budget for an overall program including hiring of bus monitors, procurement of vehicles, and start-up funds of \$2,532,583 including DFHV administrative costs. In FY22, there will be \$5,281,806 to run the program, this amount is inclusive of DFHV administrative costs for bus monitors, supervisors, program manager, and other needed expenses to operate an effective program.

24. Is there a possibility for an extension to the RFA application due date to allow respondents to finalized partnership arrangements in advance of the response?

- At this time there is no extension of the due date of July 6, 2021 at midnight PST.

25. Participants on the Call:

- David Do, DFHV Director (David.Do@dc.gov)
- Eric Fidler, DFHV Chief Information Officer (Eric.fidler@dc.gov)
- Dory Peters, Chief of Staff (Dory.Peters@dc.gov)
- Jerry Kasunic, Administrative Officer (gerald.kasunic3@dc.gov)
- Charles Davis, Project Lead (Charles.davis3@dc.gov)
- Wendy Klancher, Senior Policy Advisor (Wendy.klancher@dc.gov)
- Ariel Emata, Program Manager, Transco, Inc. (transcoinc888@aol.com)
- Taylor Riddick, Via (talyor@ridewithvia.com)
- Josh Panter, Via (joshue.panter@ridewithvia.com)
- Michael Vaccarino, Via (michael.vaccarino@ridewithvia.com)

- JP Capulong: Call In Information not recorded.
 - i. DFHV has the following contact information on file:
 - contact@hopskipdrive.com
 - hopskipdrive.com
 - (844) 467-7547

26. What are the projected average number of student per school/run that may use this service? This information is very helpful to assessing vehicle needs.

- This will be worked out on a per school basis, but generally 30-40 students per school will use this service.

27. What are the projected age ranges of student s that will be using this service?

- This will be from the 1st to 12th grades. Some students may need a booster seat (appropriate child safety restraint system) to ensure their safety. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that the students are safe and secure in their minibuses.

28. If all runs are static please clarify what is the "on-demand" option mentioned in the RFA?

- Trips will initially be static and as we implement the program over-time, an on-demand component may become option as the program expands and transportation needs are measured as the project moves forward.

29. Please clarify the 6-hour service period because it seems to address the morning and afternoon service. Are the driver and monitor expected to respond to ad-hoc service requests within and outside that 6-hour period?

- The driver will be expected to make the loop for each school's respective stops during the service time. This could be a 6-hour period that is set by DFHV in conjunction with the school and other stakeholders. There will be sometimes in the morning and evenings.

30. Just a reclarification: All ad-hoc or on-demand requests MUST be done by the assigned driver and bus monitor even if the student is 16 or over?

- "Ad-hoc" or "on demand" options of this transportation service will be developed in FY22 after the start up and full implementation of the established static trips and routes to measure the need and demand.

31. Possible weekend service was noted. Is there an allocation for overtime expenses in the grant budget?

- Additional costs will be considered in conjunction with the provider.

32. Is DFHV hiring and managing the bus monitors?

- DFHV is hiring the monitors and their supervisors. The monitors will report directly to DFHV. There will be operational needs that will require the grantee and the provider to work together to ensure that for every trip there is a bus monitor on board.

33. Another clarification: The \$2.3M budget covers August to October 2020. The \$5.2M covers FY'22?

- Yes. \$2.3 million is anticipated to cover purchasing vehicles and some operational costs for FY21 and an addition \$5.2 million will be available to cover grantee and DFHV operational costs.

34. Included in both budgets are costs for bus monitors, supervisors, program manager and other DFHV administrative costs. How much was allocated in each budget for personnel, operating expenses and technology fees?

- The provider is required to develop a budget for DFHV to consider during the review process.

35. Are vehicle acquisition and branding, equipment purchase and installation only in the \$2.3M start-up budget?

- Yes. Not all the anticipated \$2.3 million will go to purchasing and acquisition of vehicles. Some of these costs will go to DFHV for operational needs.

36. Still do not fully understand the pricing structure to reimburse the service provider for their operating costs and administrative fees. Are all operating costs including vehicle maintenance, insurance, personnel and all other operating costs covered by the grant and the provider will be reimbursed a percentage of operating costs as their administrative fee or is a per trip fee reimbursement?

- The provider will be reimbursed by an administrative fees and indirect costs for operational purposes only, each potential applicant should submit a detailed budget within the application describing the operational costs, including administrative fees which include indirect and startup costs.

37. There is a mandated \$1M auto liability policy. Are the premiums for this extremely expensive policy yet to be issued for the taxicab industry, included in either grants?

- Indirect costs that may serve multiple purposes or cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective such as employee salaries and benefits, contractor labor, and insurance may be included in the administrative fee to the extent they used for the SchoolConnect Program.

38. Is there at any point that the purchased vehicles will the vehicles transfer to the provider or they will remain the property of DFHV or City?

- Vehicles will be titled and licensed under the provider. However, DFHV may obtain ownership of the vehicles if there is a breach in contract or upon termination of the project.

39. Is the selected service provider required to fund the vehicle purchase and then reimbursed by the DFHV?

- Purchasing of vehicles is reimbursable due to the short timeframe of acquiring the vehicles for a launch. However, DFHV will work with the provider to ensure that there is available funding to buy the vehicles.

40. The language of the RFA uses “vehicle” and “shuttles”, please provide guidance on the type of vehicle to be used for this project.

- For the purposes of this project, DFHV has been and will continue to use the verbiage “mini-bus,” or “shuttle” to define a vehicle carrying less than 15-passengers plus a driver and has weight limit less than 26,000 lbs.

41. Is the selected provider required to hire drivers as employees or can the provider engage existing licensed taxicab drivers under a sub-contracted agreement?

- DFHV is not dictating the employee classification of the potential provider’s drivers, but it would make sense based on the requirements of the program that the drivers would be considered the awardee’s employees to ensure the successful delivery of service.

42. Will DFHV require all vehicles to have 15-passenger capacity? DCPS has previously prohibited the use of 15-passenger vehicles for student use. Will DCPS also be revising the guidance here or is there an openness from the DC government to use smaller vehicles?

- DFHV is seeking the awardee to purchase vehicles that are capable of transporting the appropriate number of students for the program. Consistent with DCPS policy, awardee should not use 15-passenger vehicles. The applicant must detail in their application narrative the use of vehicles to accommodate the number of passengers per designated route.