Operational Implementation Plan

Southwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council

UNITED **community** **Action** PARTNERSHIP
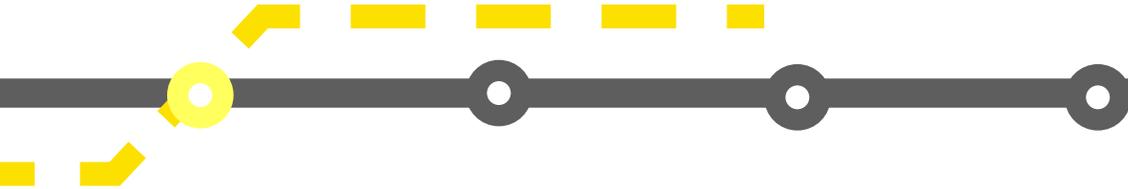
SRDC

Executive Summary

Overview

In 2017, United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP) and the Southwest Regional Development Commission, (SRDC) began meeting with stakeholders from throughout the nine counties of southwest Minnesota in response to action from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) calling for the development of Regional Coordinating Councils to coordinate transportation efforts statewide. After much planning work, it was decided that having UCAP be the governing agency would be in the best interest of the region, due to their extensive transportation experience.

Structure

The membership of the Southwest RTCC will consist of thirteen (13) individuals representing (but not limited to) the following sectors or agencies:

1. A representative from the Service Provider sub-committee.
2. A representative from the User sub-committee.
3. A Public Transportation Provider from the Transportation Provider sub-committee.
4. A Private Transportation Provider from the Transportation provider sub-committee.
5. A County Health and Human Services Representative.
6. A representative from Private Employers whose workers use transit.
7. A representative from the Southwest Center for Independent Living, (SWCIL).
8. A healthcare provider representative.
9. A representative from PrimeWest Health.
10. A representative from the Board of United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP).
11. A representative from the Board of the Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, (SMOC).
12. A representative from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, (MNRAAA).
13. A representative from Regional Economic Development.

Staffing

The RTCC will be staffed by the UCAP Mobility Administrator with support from the Transportation Director and UCAP supporting staff as necessary.

Implementation Plan – Year One
Projects:

1. Convene the Southwest Minnesota RTCC.
2. Create a searchable database of transportation options.
3. Make connection with regional interpreters.
4. Convene a service providers advisory group within the RTCC structure.

Implemenation Plan – Year Two
Projects:

1. Maintain searchable database of transportation options
2. Other Considerations for year two:
   • Begin work on the Human Services Transportation Plan Update.
   • Continue working on vehicle sharing.
   • Provide Multi-provider Comprehensive Travel Training

Conclusion
United Community Action Partnership, the Southwest Regional Development Partnership and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are committed to the successful implementation of a Regional Transportation Coordinating Council in Southwest Minnesota. The purpose of the Council will be to provide the best possible transportation outcomes for all persons in the region who are of need of such services and to do so as effectively and efficiently as possible.
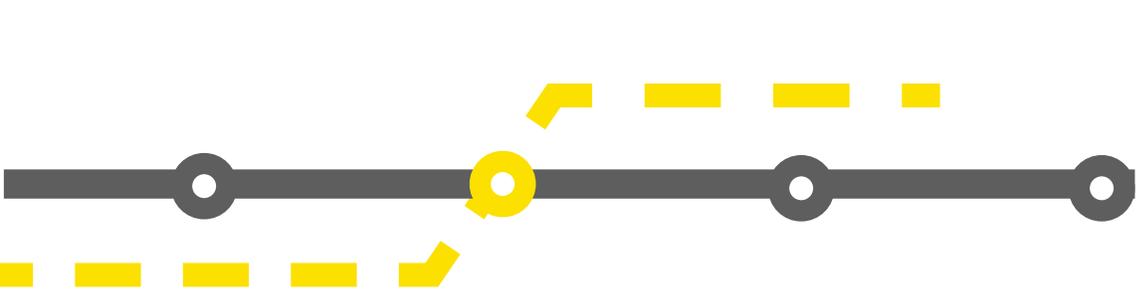
Southwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council

RTCC Overview

In 2017, **United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP)** and the **Southwest Regional Development Commission, (SRDC)** began meeting with stakeholders from throughout the nine counties of southwest Minnesota in response to action from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) calling for the development of Regional Coordinating Councils to Coordinate transportation/transit efforts statewide. These stakeholder meetings resulted in an application to MN/DOT from UCAP for planning funding for the southwest. This application was not approved as it sought to develop an organizational structure in conjunction with an existing entity in the region. After review with MN/DOT and stakeholders, particularly county representatives, UCAP applied for and was granted planning dollars in the second round of funding provided that a stand-alone RTCC was created. UCAP and the SRDC reconvened the RTCC stakeholder group and began working on implementing the proposal. During these stakeholder meetings, in response to numerous inquiries from the counties, MN/DOT decided to allow the development of the RTCC as a partnership with an existing entity. Due to the vast transit experience of UCAP, the stakeholder group asked UCAP if they would be the governing agency and UCAP agreed.

In early 2020, UCAP and SRDC staff began working with the stakeholder group to get specific about organizational structure, by-laws and plans for implementing the RTCC. This plan details the result of that work, and puts forth a plan for the accomplishment of the implementation phase of the project.

Structure

The business and affairs of the Southwest RTCC shall be managed by the RTCC members with staff support from UCAP. Duties and responsibilities may be modified from time to time by the RTCC. The RTCC may operate at less than full membership. The membership of the Southwest RTCC will consist of thirteen (13) individuals representing (but not limited to) the following sectors or agencies:

1. A representative from the Service Provider sub-committee.
2. A representative from the User sub-committee.
3. A Public Transportation Provider from the Transportation Provider sub-committee.
4. A Private Transportation Provider from the Transportation provider sub-committee.
5. A County Health and Human Services Representative.
6. A representative from Private Employers whose workers use transit.
7. A representative from the Southwest Center for Independent Living, (SWCIL).

8.   A healthcare provider representative.
9.   A representative from PrimeWest Health.
10. A representative from the Board of United Community Action Partnership, (UCAP).
11. A representative from the Board of the Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council, (SMOC).
12. A representative from the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, (MNRAAA).
13. A representative from Regional Economic Development.

Other representatives may be added to support achieving the intended purpose of the RTCC. Consideration of geographic representation will be a factor in determining membership.

Staffing
The RTCC will be staffed by the UCAP Mobility Administrator with support from the Transportation Director and UCAP supporting staff as necessary.

Bylaws
Bylaws were developed by UCAP and SRDC staff on the recommendations of the stakeholder committee. The Bylaws are formatted to fit under the UCAP committee structure, and are included as Attachment A.

Local Human Services Coordination Plan
The SRDC has partnered with UCAP to perform the requirements of the Human Services Transportation Plan. As part of the ongoing implementation phase of the RTCC project, the Human Services transportation Plan will be updated through the lens of the information provided during the project phases as described below. The goal of the updated Human Services Transportation Plan is to not only incorporate those public transit systems and private transportation providers as has been the case in the past, but to also create multi-provider comprehensive travel training as well as transportation coordination.
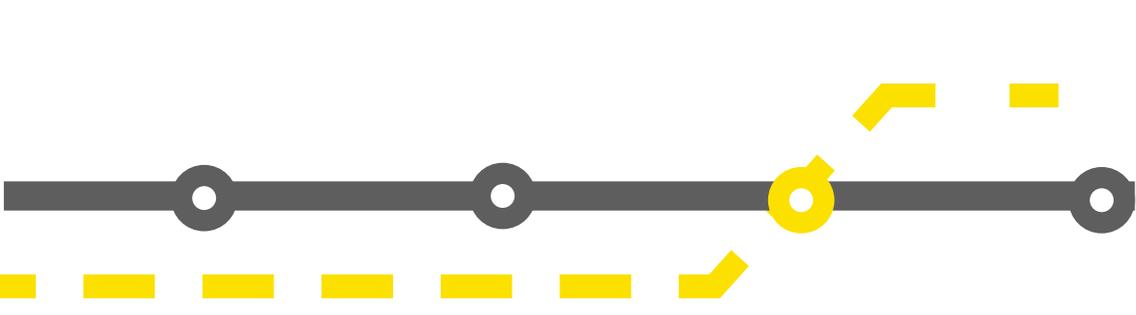
Implementation Plan – Year One

Project 1: Convene the Southwest Minnesota RTCC

Responsible Parties: Designated RTCC Staff
Timeline for Completion: within the first three months of grant funding

The 2016 Region 8 Local Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan (the Plan) found that, "regional connectivity, longer service hours, language access, and more accessible vehicles are desired in the Region" (pg. 1). To accomplish this work, United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is implementing the Southwest Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC). UCAP has one full-time staff member dedicated to the work of the RTCC who will lead the effort to convene the Southwest Minnesota RTCC according to the criteria established in the planning phase of this project.

Project Steps:
1. Reach out to all entities that were identified as necessary members of the RTCC and request their formal involvement.

2. Answer questions to make sure all potential members have a clear understanding of the RTCC and why their involvement is critical.

3. Formally appoint members.

Influencing Factors:
Some of the entities identified in the planning phase of the RTCC will easily be brought into the formal RTCC structure because the right people (i.e. agency leaders or decision makers) have been involved in the planning process. Others have not been involved at all. Getting involvement from those previously disengaged will take considerable effort. RTCC staff will use the network of stakeholders involved in the planning process and other regional resources to find appropriate representation in all necessary areas.

Project 2: Create a searchable database of transportation options

Emphasis Area Addressed: Transportation Coordination Management Center
*Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3, Strategy #8 ***
Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff, SRDC
Timeline for Completion: by the end of the grant period

Once formal membership is established, the RTCC members will begin laying the foundations for a Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC).

The beginning of effective transportation coordination is making sure everyone knows what transportation options are available. In fact, improving public awareness of transportation options was identified as a critical need in the Plan (pg. 1). In addition, an updated inventory addresses Strategy # 8 on page 71 of the Plan. So, the first steps our RTCC will take toward a fully functioning TMCC will be; 1.) Creating an updated and redesigned regional transportation inventory and; 2.) Begin creating a formal source of information and referral about all regional transportation options.

RTCC members, staff and the SRDC begin by creating an inventory in our region that is useful and accessible to anyone who needs to know what transportation options are available for any transportation need. The inventory will be planned for completion by the end of the grant period.

This project will be broken into the following steps. Steps may be added or changed to ensure the end product is truly useful.

1. The full RTCC will review the inventory list in the 2016 Local Human Service Public Transit Coordination plan and any other lists that people are aware of (within 4 months of the grant period).

2. The full RTCC or a designated group of selected members will outline both short-term and long-term uses for the inventory to ensure that it will not need to be reinvented as coordination efforts grow (within 6 months of the grant award).

3. The full RTCC or a designated group of selected members will determine what information needs to be included in the inventory and how it should be formatted to make it useful to end users (within 6 months of the grant award).

4. Staff, and partners will reach out to all known providers to get current service and fleet information, remove any providers that are no longer providing service in the region, add any new providers that are available, and compile an updated list, which will be presented to the full RTCC for final review and edits (within 9 months of the grant award).

5. The RTCC or a designated group of selected members will create action steps to ensure that the inventory stays current, accessible and useful to the region (by the end of the grant period).

6. The inventory will be made available to the public in electronic form and printed form, as determined by the RTCC (by the end of the grant period).

When completed the inventory will include a contact phone number and email address for people who would like more information. The decision about what number to include in the guide for information and referral will rest primarily with the providers listed in the guide. Allowing another agency to be listed on any media as a source of information about their services may be very difficult for some providers, but it is a small step toward relationship and future coordination.

Influencing Factors:
The primary vehicle for accessing the inventory will be the internet. RTCC staff will work with MCOTA, which will host our RTCC website, to determine if the inventory can also be housed there or if other website options need to be explored. If other options need to be explored, the final distribution of the inventory may take longer than anticipated. It is critical that the content is easily accessible on the internet because properly formatted website content can easily be translated into any language. This is essential because it is a first step toward including additional languages in transportation provider marketing materials as outlined in the Plan (pg.1).

* The completion of an updated regional transportation inventory is also be an important step in updating the Plan, which the RTCC will need to take a leadership role in. The Plan update, which happens every five years, will begin in 2021.

Project 3: Make connection with regional interpreters
Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3
Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff
Timeline for Completion: by the end of the grant period

In conjunction with the creation of the easy-to-use provider inventory, RTCC staff will do research and make connections with interpreters throughout the region. When the members of the public or the RTCC the request that printed inventories be made available in specific communities—for example, assisted living facilities or minority churches—an interpreter will be contracted to translate the material in languages that are appropriate for that area or community. This project accomplishes the goal to, "Identify local area translators for marketing purposes" outlined in the Plan (pg. 66). Additionally, because the inventory will include all types of providers, it advances strategy #3 on page 67 of the Plan, "Increase/improve public relations as part of public and private transportation services marketing."

Once a connection is made with regional interpreters, RTCC staff will also share that information with providers to encourage that more area resources are available in necessary languages.

Project 4: Convene a Service Providers Advisory group within the RTCC structure
Emphasis Area Addressed: Vehicle Sharing
Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #4, Strategy #5
Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff, SRDC
Timeline for Completion: within six months of grant award

Another area that stakeholders identified as a priority in the planning process for the RTCC is enhancing the ability to share vehicles and rides among multiple providers. This idea aligns with strategies on pages 68 and 69 of the Plan. Action 1 identified in strategy #4 specifically focuses on increasing collaboration between providers and identifying pilot projects to advance coordination. Strategy #5 focuses on increasing or maintaining the small to medium-sized vehicles in the region.

In the first year of RTCC implementation, a Service Providers Advisory group will be established under the RTCC, and the group begin meeting on at least a quarterly basis and discuss potential collaboration efforts, barriers and impacts.

The following steps would be taken to ensure these goals are met:

1. RTCC staff will call together the full RTCC, and request one of the members who provides transportation to Chair the Service Providers Advisory group (at the end of the first quarter of the grant period).

2. The Chair and RTCC staff will work together to reach out to other potential members from within the RTCC and outside the RTCC and seek participation. Provide potential members with all the information they need or request to make sure they have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (4-6 months after grant award).

3. Begin conducting meetings with a formal group of Advisory members (within 6 months of grant award).

Once convened, members of the advisory group will be asked to identify one pilot project they would like to explore further in the second year of implementation, as well as the specific barriers that currently prevent it, by the end of the grant period.

Increasing the collaboration between providers, in effect, will increase the number of available vehicles. The increased use of vehicles will also increase the likelihood of consideration for additional vehicles when grants become available. Convening this group is a very small first step in accomplishing much larger, and much more difficult, goals.

Additional Considerations:

The items addressed in this plan are the top priority areas identified by stakeholders during the planning phase in relation to increasing transportation coordination. They do not eliminate the potential for the Southwest Minnesota RTCC to contribute to statewide efforts related to growing and protecting volunteer driver pools or any other priorities that arise in our changing times.
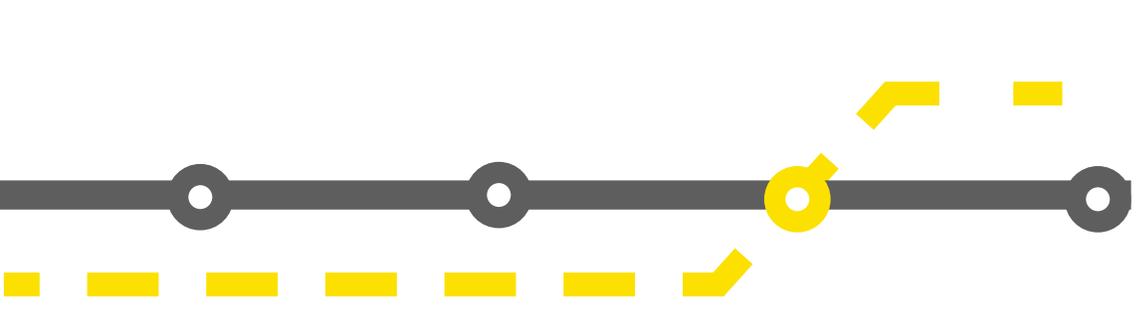
Implementation Plan – Year Two

Project 1: Maintain searchable database of transportation options
Emphasis Area Addressed: Transportation Coordination Management Center
*Plan Area(s) Addressed: Strategy #3, Strategy #8 **
Responsible Parties: RTCC members, staff
*Timeline for Completion: ongoing*

For the Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC), to be successful, maintenance of the searchable database must remain a priority in the second year of the implementation plan and beyond. Ongoing maintenance is necessary if the database is going to be useful.

RTCC members and staff will gather and update the inventory in our region and assure that it is useful and accessible to anyone who needs to know what transportation options are available for any transportation need.

The full RTCC and RTCC staff will review the inventory list established in the first year of this plan and add any further information that they become aware of.

Other Identified Ongoing Efforts

1. Human Services Transportation Plan. Work will commence in 2021 on this plan that is required to be revised every five years. The existing plan will be analyzed in light of the development of the RTCC and the TMCC. It is anticipated that plan approval may extend into 2022.

2. Vehicle Sharing. The RTCC's work around vehicle sharing will need to be continued as well. Year two will find the group established in the first year of the implementation plan beginning one of the pilot projects identified during that process. As the process of identifying partners and possible pilot projects is to be completed in the first year of the implementation plan, as yet there are no details on the specifics of such a project. Vehicle sharing was identified as a priority by the RTCC stakeholder group, concentrating on what the issues are preventing the utilization of all available resources.

3. Multi-provider Comprehensive Travel Training. Once the inventory and availability of services is developed, it will be necessary to provide training not only to various system providers, but also to the users of the various transportation systems. Training is often approached merely from a transit perspective. It is the intention of the Southwest RTCC that the training encompass all forms of possible transportation. Coordination between providers and riders will be much easier to accomplish if all groups share a common understanding of the availability of the different provider services, what services they offer and what service might be best able to the meet the needs of any given event.
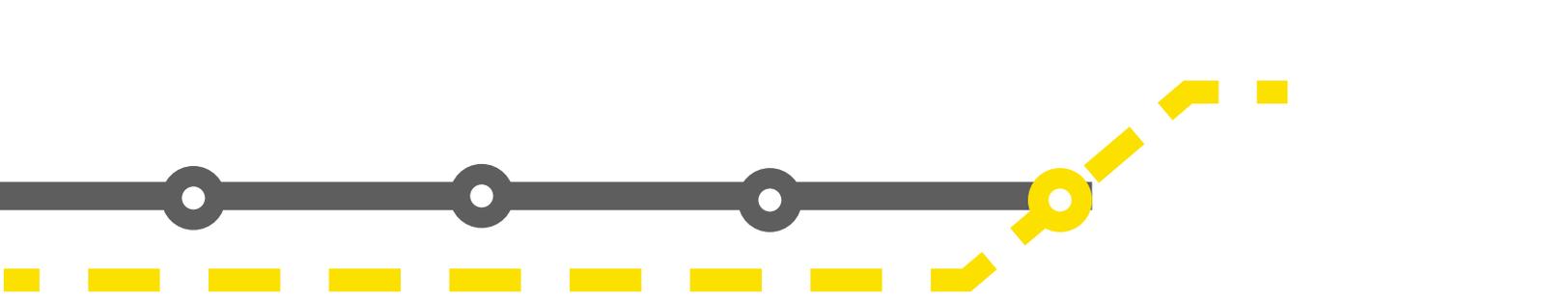
Staffing and Organizational Resources for Plan Implementation

Project Team

Contingent upon Phase 2 implementation funds being awarded, the following UCAP staff will be assisting the RTCC to achieve its goals:

Cathleen Amick, Transportation Director. Cathleen will oversee the implementation of the RTCC and provide supervision of RTCC staff on behalf of the RTCC and UCAP. Cathleen has extensive experience as Director of UCAP's public transit service.

Shelly Pflaum, Mobility Administrator. Shelly will be the primary staff to the RTCC, acting as a liaison between the RTCC and the UCAP Board, and performing the day to day operational functions of the RTCC. Shelly is the long-time Mobility Administrator for UCAP, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in service provision to her role.

UCAP General Support Functions. UCAP will also provide the services of Human Resources, Fiscal, IT and Maintenance staff in support of the functions of the RTCC.

Contract Staff – SRDC

Jay Trusty, Executive Director. Jay will assist the RTCC on organizational issues and coordinate between UCAP and the SRDC when necessary. Jay has been the Director of the SRDC since 2001 having come to the job from the public health world and is extremely knowledgeable in organizational and administrative requirements.

Rosemary Bruce-White, Transportation Planner. Rosemary will provide ongoing planning support for RTCC staff. As the SRDC's Transportation Planner, Rosemary provides staffing to the Area Transportation Partnerships and will assist on essential planning efforts of the RTCC.

Budget

The following is a synopsis of the budget as presented in the application for RTCC implementation funding:

Greater Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils
Phase 2: 2020 Application for Organizational Implementation Grant

1000 PERSONNEL	
1010 Administration, Management and Supervisory Salaries (include breakdown of employees in description)	$72,000.00
Description: *Mobility Administrator – 40 hrs @ $34.62/hr*	
1020 Operator's Wages (include breakdown of employees in description)	$0.00
Description:	
1030 Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Wages	$0.00
Description:	
1040 General Office Support Wages	$1,500.00
Description: *$40 Human Resources, $500 Fiscal Staff, $600 IT Staff, $360 Maintenance Staff*	
1050 Operations Support Wages	$0.00
Description:	
1060 Fringe Benefits (include breakdown of employees in description)	$14,700.00
Description: *20%*	
1000 TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES **(ADD LINES 1010 THRU 1060)**	**$88,200.00**
1100 ADMINISTRATIVE	
1110 Management Fees	$0.00
Description:	
1120 Drug and Alcohol Testing Administration	$0.00
Description:	
1130 Advertising, Marketing, & Promotional Charges	$500.00
Description: *$500 in newspaper Announcements*	
1140 Legal, Auditing & Oher Professional Fees	$2,600.00
Description: *$600 Interpreter Services, $2,000 Legal, Auditing, and other contracted services*	
1150 Staff Development Costs	$200.00
Description: **OMB and Audit Training**	
1160 Office Supplies	$200.00
Description: *$200 general Supplies, Postage and office equipment maintenance*	
1170 Leases/Rentals (Admin Facility) (Specify in Request)	$2,500.00
Description: *$1,000 for Office Space, $1,500 copier & misc. equipment*	
1180 Utilities	$1,720.00
Description: *$120 Utilities, $300 Internet, $600 Telephone, $700 Cell Phone*	
1190 Other Direct Administrative Charges (Specify in Request for Funds)	$1,500.00
Description: *$500 Travel for staff, $500 Annual Software Licenses, $500 Miscellaneous Fees*	
1100 TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES **(ADD LINES 1110 THRU 1190)**	**$9,220.00**
1200 VEHICLES	
1210 Fuel (Net)	$0.00
Description:	
1220 Preventive Maintenance Costs	$0.00
Description:	
1230 Corrective Maintenance Costs	$0.00
Description:	
1240 Tires	$0.00
Description:	
1250 Other Vehicle Costs (Specify in Request for Funds)	$0.00

Description:	
1200 TOTAL VEHICLES EXPENSES (ADD LINES 1210 THRU 1250)	**$0.00**
1300 OPERATIONS	
1310 Purchase of Service	$0.00
Description:	
1330 Mileage Reimbursement for Pass. Service	$0.00
Description:	
1340 Repair and Maintenance of Other Property	$0.00
Description:	
1350 Leases/Rentals (Garages, Vehicles, etc.) (Specify in Request for Funds)	$0.00
Description:	
1360 Other Operations Charges (Specify in Request for Funds)	$0.00
Description:	
1370 Private Capital Depreciation & Amortization (for ICB only)	$0.00
Description:	
1380 Private Capital Interest (for ICB only)	$0.00
Description:	
1390 Eligible In-Kind Match (Capital Cost of Contracting) (for ICB only)	$0.00
Description:	
1300 TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES (ADD LINES 1310 THRU 1390)	**$0.00**
1400 INSURANCE EXPENSES	
1410 Public Liability & Property Damage on Vehicles	$0.00
Description:	
1420 Public Liability & Property Damage - Other	$150.00
Description: ***Program Cost for Office Space Insurance***	
1400 TOTAL INSURANCE EXPENSES (ADD LINES 1410 THRU 1420)	**$150.00**
1500 TAXES AND FEES	
1510 Vehicle Registration & Permit Fees	$0.00
Description:	
1520 Federal Fuel & Lubricant Taxes	$0.00
Description:	
1540 Other Taxes & Fees (Specify in Request for Funds)	$0.00
Description:	
1500 TOTAL TAXES AND FEES EXPENSES (ADD LINES 1510 THRU 1540)	**$0.00**
1590 REFUNDS	
1594 Fuel Tax Refunds	$0.00
Description:	
1596 Insurance Reimbursement	$0.00
Description:	
1598 Other	$0.00
Description:	
1590 TOTAL REFUNDS (ADD LINES 1510 THRU 1540)	**$0.00**
2000 OPERATING REVENUE	
2010 Farebox Revenue	$0.00
Description:	
2020 System Revenues	$0.00
Description:	
2000 TOTAL REVENUES (ADD LINES 2010 THRU 2020)	**$0.00**
EXPENSE SUB TOTALS:	**$97,570.00**
REVENUE AMOUNT	**$0.00**
LESS REFUND AMOUNT:	**$0.00**
TOTAL:	**$0.00**