



FTA's Enhanced Mobility Program Case Study

Subrecipient:

Woodley House, Inc.
3000 Connecticut Avenue NW #108
Washington, DC 20008
<https://woodleyhouse.org/>

Contact:

Sheryl Kennerly
Grants & Contracts Administrator
202-830-3527
skennerly@woodleyhouse.org

Background

Woodley House provides personalized mental health supportive services and housing for Washington, DC residents. Founded in 1958, Woodley House has enabled tens of thousands of people to access mental health care and to live independently in our communities. With a team of community providers and professionals who ensure residents receive the right services at the right time, Woodley House operates 32 homes for more than 300 residents per year across 4 Wards.

While working as an occupational therapist at St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital in the 1950s, Woodley House founder Joan Doniger recognized that not all patients benefited from hospitalization, and as a result, often made returning to their communities more challenging. Understanding that hospitalization often resulted in worse

outcomes for patients with treatable mental health issues, Joan envisioned an alternative: therapeutic housing in a neighborhood setting with a community-minded environment. Her carefully researched framework provided a place where residents could learn to live with their illness, set personal goals, and work toward recovery.

With seed funding from the Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation, Joan established the very first mental health halfway house in the District in 1958, creating a middle ground between hospitalization and independent living. Originally known as the Potomac Residence Club, Woodley House first opened its doors to eleven residents. After a successful beginning, Woodley House received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health in 1961 and was able to expand its staff and services. Since then, it has become a constant innovator in the mental health space.

As part of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) fiscal year 2015 solicitation for applications, Woodley House, Inc. received \$64,587 in federal funding from the U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Enhanced Mobility (EM) funding for their *Van Acquisition* project. CHV matched \$16,147 of the federal award, which brought the project total to \$80,734.

Project Description

The *Van Acquisition* project provided reliable, accessible transportation for the residents of Woodley House, Inc. for transportation needs that cannot be met through use of public transportation. Each of the three Woodley House residential facilities requires 24-hour access to transportation to provide for emergency transportation needs. Due to the severe nature of their disabilities and the transitional nature of their recovery, many consumers are not always able to navigate public transportation or drive themselves to areas not served by public transportation. The residents rely on staff to provide them with a means to meet their needs, such as transportation to Day Programs, meetings, medical appointments, etc.

Impact

Transportation was used to help residents start the reintegration process back into the community as they work to stabilize their lives, such as familiarizing residents with the city, teaching life skills such as how to shop, accessing services, attending recreational events, visiting friends and family, attending school, going to the library, or whatever is appropriate to help them become stabilized and independent members of their community. In addition, transportation was provided for residents on structured group trips designed to provide recreational activities in which residents are supervised, coached and taught coping skills in the community. The use of the vans was particularly important during the pandemic to provide transportation for residents who tested positive for COVID in order to provide

transportation to city provided quarantine facilities and to provide transportation when public transportation was not advisable.

Next Steps

Woodley House, Inc. has expended all Enhanced Mobility funding for their current project. They will continue to provide transportation to our residents. Funding will be limited to preventative maintenance and maintaining the vehicles particularly for emergency use.

More Information

COG serves as the designated recipient for the Enhanced Mobility program in the Washington DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area. The National Capital Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at COG solicits and selects projects that improve mobility for transportation-disadvantaged groups.

Copyright © 2023 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

For more information about this project or future solicitations, contact:

Mohammad Khan
Enhanced Mobility Program Manager
202.962.3253
mkhan@mwkog.org

Cherice Sansbury
Grants Program Analyst
202.962.3222
csansbury@mwkog.org

<https://www.mwkog.org/enhancedmobility>