



FTA's Enhanced Mobility Program Case Study

Subrecipient

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation
Commission (PRTC)
"Wheels to Wellness"
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Background

The Potomac & Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) is a suburban Washington, DC transportation agency offering a variety of transportation services to meet community needs. PRTC prides itself on providing high quality, progressive, and innovative local and express transit services for residents of its member jurisdictions. PRTC co-owns the Virginia Railway Express with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. Bus service is provided to approximately 12,500 daily riders. PRTC also operates a taxi voucher transportation program for older adults, people with disabilities, and/or low-income residents. This voucher program, named *Wheels-to-Wellness*, is the focus of this case study.

The Wheels-to-Wellness program was selected as part of the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) fiscal year 2015 solicitation for

Enhanced Mobility (EM) applications. The TPB awarded PRTC \$125,000 in federal funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to assist with program operations. The award was matched with local funds from The Potomac Health Foundation, bringing the project total to \$250,000.

Project Description

The Wheels-to-Wellness transportation voucher program is designed to ease or eliminate transportation challenges that reduce or prohibit older adults and those with disabilities from getting the health care they need. Only trips to a medically-related facility are eligible for the program. PRTC enrolls participants who qualify by age (80+ years) or disability (as defined by the ADA) or reside in a low-income household (1.9 times the Federal poverty level) and are not eligible for Medicaid non-emergency transportation.

During the enrollment process, medical needs are assessed and a transportation voucher benefit is assigned. Participants who have chronic/critical illnesses that require multiple medical facility visits (e.g., dialysis patients, cancer patients, etc.) receive more voucher benefits. PRTC competitively procured contracts with two taxi cab companies to provide the transportation service for Wheels-to-Wellness. Participants arrange trips with PRTC-approved taxi cabs that are licensed to operate in Prince William County. These taxi cab companies provide trip log data to PRTC so trips can be verified as eligible. Any trip costs that were incurred for ineligible trips are

required to be reimbursed by the participant. Should the participant not reimburse the program, the participant is removed from the program.

The electronic voucher cards are assigned controls that limit the amount of each transaction and limit the use of the voucher cards to a single merchant category code (taxi). The voucher cards are also programmed so they cannot be used to pay for bus or rail trips or passes, an ineligible expense under the Enhanced Mobility Program. Participants pay a \$3.00 co-pay then use the voucher card to pay the remaining costs up to a maximum of \$25.00. Anything over the \$28.00 (\$3.00 co-pay plus \$25.00 voucher) is to be paid by the program participant. Currently participants pay approximately 20 percent of the trip cost.

The Wheels-to-Wellness program is partially funded by the Potomac Health Foundation.

Impact

There were 121 individuals enrolled in the Wheels-to-Wellness program as of December 31, 2018.

Over 12,000 health related trips have been provided (through December 21, 2018) since the inception of the program.

Next Steps

The Wheels-to-Wellness program is a scalable program that has highly replicable features that could be implemented in other jurisdictions.

PRTC is investigating more efficient processes that will reduce the administrative spent tracking participant's monthly balances. As

the program continues to grow, so has the administrative burden of monitoring program usage.

PRTC continues outreach efforts to increase enrollment and awareness of the program.

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.

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

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