



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

3A

Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** June 27, 2017

**Title of Item:** AEOA Rural Rides Program

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
<b>Submitted by:</b> Jessica Seibert		<b>Department:</b> Administration
<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Marcia Mehle and Jack Larson		<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b>
<b>Summary of Issue:</b>  Marcia Mehle and Jack Larson will give an update to the Board on the Aitkin County Rural Rides Program.		
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>		
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b> None at this time.		
<b>Financial Impact:</b> Is there a cost associated with this request? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		



May 2, 2017

Cynthia Bennett, Director  
Aitkin County Health and Human Services  
204 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW  
Aitkin, MN 55431

Dear Ms. Bennett:

I am writing you to discuss the need for additional support from the county for the Rural Rides program. This highly successful program has been providing work related transportation assistance to residents of Aitkin County since 2015.

This program was originally funded through a federal Job Access Reverse Commute Grant (JARC) that was administered by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT). Beginning in 2015, when JARC dollars were no longer available to the state, MNDOT began fully funding the program. Out of over two dozen JARC programs in the state only two were chosen to receive full state funding and we were privileged to be one of them

The program has two components: mobility management and direct client assistance. MNDOT has continued to fund both components with minimal contributions from the counties, but beginning in 2018 they have committed to funding only the mobility management portion. They feel that paying for vouchers and tickets is not an appropriate use of transit dollars. Approximately half of our million dollar budget goes to pay for ride vouchers used by program participants.

This program serves the seven county region of the Arrowhead. Aitkin County job seekers and low income workers have received a substantial amount of support. In 2016 we provided 59 Aitkin County residents with almost 4,000 rides at a direct voucher cost of \$58,937.23

I would like to meet with you to discuss this need and to share with you the outcomes and successes of this program. This program not only benefits the low income workers in Aitkin County, but also employers in maintaining a reliable workforce.

**RECEIVED**

**MAY 05 2017**

**Aitkin County H & HS**

702 Third Avenue South, Virginia, Minnesota 55792-2797  
(218)749-2912 (800)662-5711 FAX: (218)749-2944 TDD: (800)862-0175

Equal Opportunity Employer and Affirmative Action Agency



Thank you for your attention to this letter. I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at 218-748-7319 or contact my program manager, Marcia Mehle, at 218-735-6850 or [marcia.mehle@aeoa.org](mailto:marcia.mehle@aeoa.org).

Best Regards,



Paul Carlson  
Executive Director, AEOA

Cc: Jeff Kletscher, AEOA Board Chair  
Jack Larson, Transit Director

**RECEIVED**

**MAY 05 2017**

**Aitkin County H & HS**

## Sue Bingham

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**From:** Marcia Mehle [marcia.mehle@aeoa.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2017 10:01 AM  
**To:** Sue Bingham  
**Subject:** Information for county board packet June meeting  
**Attachments:** Aitkin County Rural Rides Program Data as of 03.docx; Introducing Rural Rides.docx

This message was sent securely using ZixCorp.

Here is the information that we would appreciate being included in the board packets for the June 27th meeting. Jack Larson and I will plan on attending. Thank you for your assistance. MM

Marcia Mehle

Arrowhead Transit  
Community Transportation Manager  
Virginia Work Force Center  
820 9th Street North  
Virginia MN 55792  
218-735-6850 or 218-750-3088

***"Community Action ~ Helping People ~ Changing Lives"***



AEOA is celebrating 50 Years of Service!

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This message was secured by **ZixCorp**<sup>(R)</sup>.



## Introducing Rural Rides

### Innovative Solutions to Meet the Needs of Workers and Job Seekers

#### Who We Are

We are Transportation Advocates, also known as Mobility Managers, who are located in the area Work Force Centers and Employment Hubs.

#### Who We Serve

- Workers (most often entry level workers)
- Job Seekers
- Persons attending short term job specific training

#### How We Can Assist The "Tool Box" Approach

We provide temporary support to persons who cannot meet their work related transportation needs by providing .....

- Personalized Transportation Plans
- Trip Vouchers (public transit, taxi)
- Volunteer Drivers
- Ride Share Support (Work Buddy Project)

#### Our History

- Rural Rides began in 2008 serving St. Louis (excluding Duluth) and Lake Counties and supported approximately 13,000 rides
- We expanded to Itasca County later 2008, Cook County in 2009, Carlton County in 2013, and Koochiching County in 2015
- In 2014 we served 805 persons with 68,512 rides



Your ride.



### Rural Rides Funding Sources

- Rural Rides was initially funded in 2008 with a federal JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) grant through MNDOT to serve low income (150% or below the poverty level) workers and job seekers
- In mid-2008 the Blandin Foundation awarded Rural Rides additional funding to expand the program into Itasca
- In 2010 the Northland Foundation awarded funding to serve more persons in our three county area and expand to Cook County
- In 2013 our JARC grant award was increased which provided expansion into Carlton County
- In 2015 MNDOT funded our request which provided for expansion into Koochiching County and possibly into Aitkin County
- Since the program's beginning we have received contributions and support from the counties we serve



Your ride.

**Aitkin County Rural Rides Program Data  
as of 03/31/17**

<b>Aitkin County Employment and Training Data</b>															
Year End 2015, 2016, and 2017 thru 3/31/17	Total Number of Clients	# of Clients Currently Employed	% of Clients Currently Employed	# of Clients Employed at Intake	% of Clients Employed at Intake	# of Clients who Became Employed	% of Clients who Became Employed	# of Clients who Improved their Employment	% of Clients who Improved their Employment	# of Clients who Maintained their Employment	% of Clients who Maintained their Employment	# Clients Conducting Job Search	% of Clients Conducting Job Search	# Clients Receiving Job Training Services	% Clients Receiving Job Training Services
<b>2015</b>	28	5	18%	5	18%	7	25%	0	0%	12	43%	24	86%	0	0%
<b>2016</b>	59	28	47%	20	34%	9	15%	7	12%	29	49%	36	61%	21	36%
<b>2017</b>	28	13	46%	13	46%	2	7%	2	7%	15	54%	12	43%	12	43%

<b>Aitkin County Homeless Data thru 03/31/17</b>					
Year	Total Number of Clients	Number of Home-less Clients	% Home-less Clients	Number Clients Found Housing	
<b>2015</b>	28	11	39%	0	0%
<b>2016</b>	59	9	15%	0	0%
<b>2017</b>	28	0	0%	0	0%

\*\*\*Program Wide 2015 Rural Rides Provided 86,126 rides to 909 clients  
 \*\*\*Program Wide 2016 Rural Rides Provided 83,919 rides to 1052 clients  
 \*\*\*Program Wide 2017 Rural Rides Provided 20,925 rides to 453 clients