

Paratransit Services

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Since 1980, the mission of Paratransit Services has been to provide quality coordinated transportation and community services that meet the special needs of the people we are entrusted to serve.

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Response to Request for Information from Representative Liias for the next JTC Meeting

Introduction: NEMT Brokers as Regional Mobility Managers

The State of Washington currently provides Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) throughout the state by using a system consisting of regional transportation brokers. These brokers manage call centers for processing transportation requests, they determine the most appropriate, cost effective mode of assistance for eligible clients, and they maintain rosters of qualified subcontracted ride providers.

The NEMT brokers in Washington State have become, in effect, “Regional Mobility Managers.” They possess several key ingredients that have allowed them to serve as focal points for the coordination of other services in addition to NEMT:

- They have broad networks of subcontracted transportation providers—our Washington State brokers subcontract with over 190 transportation providers operating over 6,000 vehicles.
- They have high-capacity telecommunication systems.
- They utilize sophisticated scheduling software to coordinate and monitor ride requests.
- They employ call center staff who undergo extensive training in the skills required for call intake, trip request screening, ride scheduling, and billing.

Paratransit Services is one of the state’s eight regional NEMT brokers. We are a nonprofit transportation services company based in Bremerton, Washington, and have been an NEMT broker under contract with the Department of Social and Health Services for 22 years. We currently serve 10 counties in the western part of the state.

Coordination of Services with Others

Coordination with other funders and transportation providers is critically important in the *rural communities* where transportation resources are limited or non-existent. With the infrastructure in place for an NEMT brokerage, Washington State brokers have demonstrated that other transportation programs may be incorporated into the system with only incremental increases in cost. Paratransit Services works with several other social services agencies, medical facilities, transportation providers, government and community leaders, DOT and regional planning groups to develop resources and leverage existing transportation resources. Listed below (next page) are some of our coordination partners:

Snohomish County

- Stillaguamish Tribe
- Community Transit
- Snotrac – Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coalition
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Transportation for school districts in the county
- Everett Transit
- Volunteers of America

Pierce County

- Mustard Seed Project
- Beyond the Borders
- Work First
- Orting Soldiers Home
- Pierce County Emergency Preparedness
- Pierce County Aging and Long Term Care
- PCCTC/LCC – Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Transportation for school districts in the county
- TACID
- Greyhound Lines
- Pierce Transit
- American Lake Veterans Hospital

Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam, North Mason Counties

- Kitsap Coalition
- Kitsap Steering Committee
- Kitsap Transit
- Retsil Veterans Home
- Makah Tribe
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Clallam County Emergency Preparedness
- Mason County Emergency Preparedness
- Kitsap Continuum of Care (Homeless)
- Kitsap Information and Referral Network
- Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- Dungeness Line
- Mason Transit
- Jefferson Transit
- Clallam Transit
- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
- Lower Elwah Tribe

South Mason, Thurston, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific Counties

- Mason Coalition
- TOGETHER!
- Twin Transit
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Grays Harbor Transit
- United Way Community Coalition
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Coastal Community Action Program
- Rural Transportation
- Pacific Transit
- Mason Transit
- Intercity Transit

Puget Sound Area – Regions 3B, 4, 5 and a portion of 6B

- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Sound Transit

Statewide

- Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT)
- Community Transportation Association – NW (CTA-NW)
- WSDOT Federal Opportunities Workgroup
- Community Transportation Association of America

Examples of *programs* that Washington State brokers have incorporated into the Medicaid transportation system include (next page):

- Homeless Schoolchildren
- WorkFirst
- ECAP (State Head Start)
- Food and clothing bank deliveries
- Community Vans sponsorship
- Area Agency on Aging transportation
- Head Start (national demonstration site)
- Prescription drug deliveries for the homebound
- Spousal abuse centers transportation
- “Beyond the Borders” rural transportation
- Common Ground
- Carpool matching
- Non-MAA Mental Health Services
- Mobility equipment exchanges
- Volunteer transportation
- COPES transportation

Coordination with WSDOT and the Public Transportation Division

Paratransit Services is an active participant in Agency Council for Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) meetings, and we work with several other regional, statewide entities with a common interest in improving the coordination of transportation resources. We leverage resources to ensure the state has a robust and competitive transportation provider network to serve NEMT needs.

WSDOT awards a variety of grants to transit systems, non-profits and other community transportation organizations to assist in providing transportation. Paratransit Services has partnered with some of these organizations to leverage limited transportation resources. In Pierce County, for example, we partner with Pierce Transit and Pierce County Community Services to provide transportation to clients who live outside of the transit service area to the nearest park and ride so they can connect to the transit system. In other areas we have been able to utilize the brokerage infrastructure to build on to other local services to serve more clients at a reduced cost.

Making Decisions about Service Delivery

The Washington State NEMT brokers have been instrumental in the development of regional transportation resources. In addition to providing assistance to potential ride providers as they obtain the necessary licenses and certifications, brokers also offer training programs to instruct drivers in the special skills required for the safe transport of special needs passengers. In addition, brokers have instituted several programs that have broadened the *modes* of transportation assistance available to Medicaid clients. These include programs for the administration of bus passes, fuel vouchers, and volunteer drivers.

The NEMT brokers have a track record of saving costs to the State and problem-solving while at the same time improving services to clients and communities. They have made *significant* progress in coordinating transportation at the community level.