

People For People

Response for Joint Transportation Commission

September 22, 2010

People For People is a non-profit corporation that provides transportation services for individuals in the rural counties of Adams, Grant, and Lincoln. People For People provides over 379,000 annual trips while traveling over 2.2 million miles.

People For People provides access to individuals that live in poor, rural, and isolated communities that do not have access to transportation options.

Washington State Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Consolidated Grant Application provides the opportunity to provide transportation options that promote economic development, self-sufficiency, and improve the quality of life for individual citizens.

The grant application process utilizes the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans to identify the needs, resources, gaps in resources, and the strategies to identify and prioritize public transportation resources. It is through the coordination of resources that individuals with special needs are able to access services. The following are projects that receive support from federal, state, local, or private funding to provide coordinated transportation services.

The *Community Connector Moses Lake* is a fixed route service between Othello and Moses Lake that links migrant/season farmworkers with Grant Transit Authority to get to production plants in the small town of Warden. Low-income individuals are able to access employment and employment training opportunities at Big Bend Community College, WorkSource, and SkillSource. Older individuals also travel to Moses Lake for health care, shopping, and social services.

The *Community Connector Yakima* is a fixed route service that provides access along 48 miles of Highway I-82 from Prosser to Yakima. The most recent economic crisis has impacted our most vulnerable citizens the hardest. Previously many of our rural citizens would rely on family or friends to take them to appointments, and now they are finding that family or friends cannot afford to take time off work or simply cannot afford the gas to take them to their appointments. The *Community Connector Yakima* has coordinated the service to provide timely connects with Yakima Transit and Ben Franklin Transit at either end of this route and to the new *Pahto Public Passage* that People For People operates for the Yakama Nation. Connecting with Yakima Transit, provides riders with access to Greyhound and services that are not available in their rural communities. Through Ben Franklin Transit riders are able to access Amtrak, Greyhound, and the Grape Line providing service from Pasco to Walla Walla. By connecting with *Pahto Public Passage*, residents of the Yakama Nation are able to access community resources that are not available on the reservation.

The *Health Care Express Shuttle* is a unique partnership with non-profit, public, and private resources that provides daily access to specialty health care in Wenatchee from the communities of Moses Lake, Ephrata, and Quincy. Mose Lake Clinic sponsors 50% of this service to provide transportation for their patients to receive radiation treatment in Wenatchee.

People For People coordinates special needs transportation with funding from Washington State Department of Transportation, Aging and Long Term Care, Aging and Adult Care of Central Washington, Grant County Developmental Disabilities, and Grant Transit Authority to support special needs populations in Adams, Grant, Lincoln, and Yakima county that do not have access to public transit service. These partnerships are essential to providing access to services that allow individuals to remain independent and promote the local economy.

Transportation provides the elderly with the ability to remain independent in their own homes...avoiding the costly expense of institutional care.

Transportation provides access to employment, education and training that provides employers with trained, reliable employees.

Transportation provides access to preventative health care so that low-cost care is utilized and thus can avoid high-cost emergency health care usage. It also provides critical access to daily radiation treatment and dialysis treatment that would not be possible for rural residents that don't have transportation options.

Coordination of transportation services among various service providers enable and empower representatives of public transportation services and others to collaboratively find ways to more effectively use limited resources. Coordination with local partners is one of the best ways to stretch resources and a way to increase transportation options.

Rural residents without access to cars are particularly dependent on public transportation, especially in our remote and high poverty areas. In addition, lack of transportation is one of the most frequently cited problems facing persons with disabilities in rural areas.

People For People is a committed member DRYVE (Driving Rural Yakima Valley's Economy). This group meets six times per year and includes representatives from non-profits, municipal and county entities that identify public transportation as priority for economic development and strong communities in the lower Yakima Valley.