

DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section IX:	Transportation Services
Title:	DHHS Client Transportation Services Guidelines: An Addendum to the DHHS Transportation Services Policy
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Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide recommended practices to all North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) programs that fund client transportation services. The guidelines are provided for informational purposes and support the Department's goal to maximize the use of resources for transportation services and to help DHHS clients access the health and human services they need.

Implementation

The following transportation guidelines are recommended, but not required, for all DHHS-funded programs that support client transportation services:

Vehicle Purchases

- Whenever possible, all state and local DHHS agencies should utilize the services of local transit systems to transport clients rather than duplicate services by purchasing vehicles. This is not intended to refer to transportation services for individuals with special needs who are not good candidates for public transportation, such as children receiving foster care or child protective services. This guidance is more applicable to adults who can be cost-effectively transported in a shared ride environment. Coordinating services through local transit systems supports the intent of the [Governor's Executive Order](#) on human service transportation coordination, which states in section 2:

“Wherever practical, existing transportation resources, public and private, shall be maximized before any new resources shall be made available through public funds.

The locally prepared and adopted Community Transportation Improvement Plan shall continue to be the means to determine the most cost effective and efficient use of transportation resources.

To the extent that funds are available and equipment is used consistent with the local Community Transportation Improvement Plan, DOT will provide financial support for capital equipment and the administrative assistance associated with the provision of local human service transportation, while the transportation funds from other State departments will be used primarily for operating assistance.”

Recognizing that the Department of Transportation (DOT) funded systems cannot meet all the transportation needs of DHHS clients, it is nevertheless important that we consider the transit systems as our primary source for client transportation services statewide. When seeking authorization from the appropriate DHHS division or office to purchase vehicles intended primarily for client transportation, DHHS state and local agencies must explain the reasons or special circumstances underlying an agency's need to purchase vehicles. A suggested policy would be:

All future State and local agency requests (including contractors) for approval to purchase vehicles that will be used primarily for client transportation purposes [at least 50% of the time] must provide the following documentation:

- *A description of the type of vehicle to be purchased (e.g., 15-passenger van, 4-door sedan, 4-wheel drive SUV, etc.);*
- *The number of clients expected to use the vehicle;*
- *Evidence of coordination with the local transit system in the planning, design and delivery of human service transportation;*
- *Reason(s) why the service cannot be provided by the local transit system; and*
- *Reason(s) why no other resource can be used.*

Assessments

- A thorough assessment of the individual's needs, resources and current methods of transportation should be completed prior to service authorization.
- If an unexpected need for transportation occurs after hours or on weekends prior to the completion of the transportation needs assessment, the service may be provided but an assessment should occur as soon as possible after the fact.
- The agency's assessment of the need for publicly funded transportation should include consideration of the individual's ability to access transportation and the need for special assistance or attendant services.
- The assessment should include consumer input and present all available service delivery options that are cost-effective and appropriate to the client's needs.
- When arranging, coordinating, providing, and/or purchasing transportation services, agencies should assure that the safety needs of passengers with

disabilities are met. As an example, wheelchairs should be properly positioned and restrained in a vehicle. Wheelchair securements and safety belt systems should keep the wheelchair and occupant securely and safely restrained.

Drivers for DHHS-funded Transportation Services

- Both private and public contract transportation providers should have a policy requiring that all drivers participate in a random drug and alcohol testing program.
- All state and local DHHS-funded agencies are encouraged to have a driver screening policy and to review, at least every 12 months, the driving records of all drivers, including agency employees who transport clients and contract transportation providers. The agency should consider any evidence that the driver has violated laws governing the operation of motor vehicles. The agency should give weight to violations such as speeding, reckless driving, and driving while impaired by use of alcohol or an impairing substance.
- Applicants for driver positions within state and local DHHS-funded agencies should be required to submit a list of all convictions for violations of motor vehicle laws or ordinances (other than violations involving parking only) during the three years preceding the date of the application.

Insurance Coverage

- All vehicles designed to transport 16 passengers or more are considered “commercial” vehicles and, therefore, require commercial insurance coverage. When commercial vehicles are used to provide client transportation services, DHHS agencies should obtain a copy of the private contractor’s Certificate of Insurance documenting that the applicable human service agency (e.g., the Department of Social Services (DSS) Director or designee) is an “additional insured.” This documentation does not require an additional premium cost. The party identified as an “additional insured” will be notified 30 days in advance of a contractor dropping any coverage.

According to the NC Department of Insurance, all vehicles used for business purposes should be insured by a commercial insurance policy. A person purchasing insurance must state whether the vehicle is for private or business use, and then the appropriate policy is rated and issued. If a person misrepresents that the vehicle is for private use, when in fact it is for business/commercial use, the insurance agency will deny coverage as fraud and/or misrepresentation and criminal charges may be brought.

Thus, even private contract transportation providers that transport DHHS clients

in 15-passenger vans should be insured by a commercial insurance policy, and DHHS agencies contracting with them should be listed as an “additional insured” on those policies.

- Counties/human service agencies should periodically review their own liability insurance policies (auto/umbrella) to assure adequate coverage and limits.
- DHHS agencies that use their own vehicles to provide client transportation should verify that the county and/or agency commercial insurance policy carries a “Symbol 1,” which would provide additional protection in the event of a lawsuit over a vehicle accident involving a volunteer, employee or contract transportation provider.
- DHHS agencies that do not own vehicles and do not have commercial auto/umbrella insurance should purchase “Non-Owned Auto Coverage” (“Symbol 9”), which would protect the agency in the event of a lawsuit over a vehicle accident involving a volunteer, employee or contract transportation provider.
- DHHS agencies should consider developing a policy that would require contract transportation providers to carry increased liability limits beyond the minimum statutory requirements.
- Agencies should assure that all agency staff and agency-approved volunteers who transport clients for mileage reimbursement (including foster care parents) maintain minimum liability insurance coverage for their vehicle's particular classification.

Purchasing Transportation Services

- All state and local DHHS-funded agencies that purchase transportation from public or private transportation providers should execute written agreements or contracts authorizing services and providing assurances that safety and liability insurance requirements will be met by the contractor.

Reimbursement Rates

- DHHS agencies should purchase the most economical means of transportation appropriate to an individual’s needs.
- Since most DHHS agencies do not calculate fully allocated transportation costs, agencies should identify standard local charges or reimbursement rates and generally pay no more than this amount.
- Unusual travel costs may be reimbursed but should be authorized in advance.

- Recommended maximum rates for the purchase of transportation services or mileage reimbursement to program recipients, family members and volunteers are identified below:

Recommended Maximum Allowable Rates

Method of Service Provision	Maximum Rate
Public Bus and Taxi with Regulated Charges	Not to exceed standard charges for all passengers.
Community Transportation System	Not to exceed rate based on the system's fully allocated cost model as indicated in the local Community Transportation Improvement Plan.
Incorporated Private Provider with Unregulated Charges	Not to exceed standard charges of other private transportation providers in the community.
Program Recipients, Friends, Family Members and Volunteers	Mileage costs may be reimbursed up to the state's standard mileage rate or the county's approved rate, whichever is higher.

For questions or clarification on any of the information contained in this policy, please contact [DHHS Transportation Program Administrator](#) For general questions about department-wide policies and procedures, contact the [DHHS Policy Coordinator](#).