

Attachment 6

Maine Department of Transportation Grant for Reliable Infrastructure and Transit Agency Questionnaire

Aroostook Regional Transportation System (ARTS)

Question 1: How does your organization feel these new vehicles will benefit riders?

The vans would be replacing older vehicles that are costing more money for repairs and have high mileage. It will also allow ARTS to expand our service with more riders when we are unable to provide certain rides due to lack of vehicles. Aroostook County is the largest county in Maine and is comparable to the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island put together. Aroostook County is also the largest county in the United States east of the Mississippi River and has a population of around 67,105 residents.

Question 2: What issues has your organization been experiencing with your current vehicles, specifically those that are being replaced?

Our fleet has several vehicles that are well over eight years old and have high mileage. ARTS is a nonprofit and is not able to afford new vehicles in our yearly budget. ARTS relies on grants to attempt to purchase new vehicles to replace these older vans or buses.

Question 3: How often/likely is it for riders to ride alone? Do most riders ride alone and if they are accompanied who tends to accompany them? Do they ride with family or friends?

ARTS' policy is that if riders need an assistant for mobility or an aid, we will accommodate that other rider at no cost. Some older riders do utilize the aid policy and either their spouse or a friend ride with them to assist them. We average about five riders a day who do not pay for the ride. The rest of the passengers vary but the majority are alone.

Question 4: How do these vans help provide access for workers or those with MaineCare (Maine's Medicaid program)?

ARTS is already involved in a Workforce Pilot grant that has allowed us to purchase two twelve-passenger vans to provide workforce rides at no cost to the rider or employer. Our area of coverage consists of employees who are within a ten-mile radius of Presque Isle and Caribou. The pilot has exceeded our expectations and ARTS has had to utilize other general public vehicles to assist with the overflow. We have served 71 businesses with over 97 different passengers and 3,972 trips from November 1, 2024 to June 11, 2025. The Workforce pilot has served twelve communities in Aroostook and has an average of 32

riders per day. ARTS' goal is to continue the Workforce program with a minimal fee utilizing at least two more larger vehicles to sustain the cost of this program. ARTS also won the 2025 Excellence in Regional Transportation for the Workforce Pilot from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), a nonprofit organization that focuses on regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions to strengthen economic competitiveness and quality of life across the nation's local communities.

Question 5: Is there any other information you feel would be helpful for our application?

N/A

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP)

Question 1: How does your organization feel these new vehicles will benefit riders?

The three requested vehicles will be replacing those that are well beyond their useful life. The new vehicles will provide enhanced comfort and safety for passengers due to the new condition and manufacturer improvements. New vehicles are more reliable than those beyond their useful lives and are less likely to be out of service for repairs.

Question 2: What issues has your organization been experiencing with your current vehicles, specifically those that are being replaced?

The transit vans are better suited for rural transportation with a smaller body style that allows staff to feel safe when operating the vehicles.

Question 3: How often/likely is it for riders to ride alone? Do most riders ride alone and if they are accompanied who tends to accompany them? Do they ride with family or friends?

Most of our riders tend to ride public transportation alone, but we do have community members who utilize public transportation as a way to connect with their neighbors to do things together, such as dining, shopping, and other social activities.

Question 4: How do these vans help provide access for workers or those with MaineCare (Maine's Medicaid program)?

These vehicles will be used primarily for public transportation in rural communities outside of our current demand-response operating zones. Rides for those requests through MaineCare will be strategically placed based on the vehicle's operating area (Augusta, Waterville, or Skowhegan).

Question 5: Is there any other information you feel would be helpful for our application?

Description of clients: MaineCare members, low-income individuals, older adults, cancer patients, passengers with disabilities, special needs children, general public.

Number of clients/households to be served: Approximately 5,000.

Demand-response public transportation service: Three zones in Maine Transit Region 4 (August, Waterville/Fairfield/Winslow, and Skowhegan). The door-to-door service is open to the public and is performed on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals call at least one business day in advance to reserve their trip.

Anticipated new service opportunities: Expansion of the demand-response public transportation services to rural communities that surround existing service zones. Expansion of our mobility management programs in Kennebec and Somerset counties through partnerships with local businesses and municipalities that will support local economic development.