

## Questions & Answers

### Special Solicitation for Chisago & Isanti Counties

#### Questions about this solicitation as of September 15, 2020

**Question:** Does Chisago/Isanti have a MnDOT Volunteer driving program? How about a non- MnDOT one?

**Answer:** Chisago/Isanti County does not operate a MnDOT sponsored volunteer driving program, however they do operate their own program outside public transit grant agreement and not funded through MnDOT. Please contact the county Human Services department for additional details.

**Question:** Where is Heartland at on applications/procurement for vehicles?

**Answer:** The following replacement vehicles are currently programmed for Chisago & Isanti counties:

2021: 2 Class 400 Vehicles

2022: 2 Class 400 Vehicles

2023: 3 Class 400 Vehicles

2024: 4 Class 400 Vehicles

2025: 2 Class 400 Vehicles

**Question:** Do they have any other applications in for Large Capital, Facility, Technology, or New Service? What are they?

**Answer:** No. Chisago & Isanti counties have not submitted any other applications for Large Capital, Facility, Technology, or New Service.

**Question:** What routes were implemented under the 2017-2019 NSEs and what were the corresponding service hours and vehicles assigned?

**Answer:** MnDOT does not track specific vehicle assignments for individual service routes. This determination is a local process.

The following routes were implemented under the 2017-2019 NSE for Chisago & Isanti counties:

B2 Saturday, 7am-5pm;

B2 Sunday, 8am-2pm;

B5 Saturday, 7am-5pm;

B5 Sunday, 8am-2pm;

B7, 6am-6pm;

B8, 7:30am-4:30pm;

C4 Saturday, 7am-5pm;

C4 Sunday, 8am-2pm;

C5, 7:30am-4:30pm

**Question:** What is the historical ridership for each of the routes assigned to Heartland? We would like the 2019 numbers and early 2020 so that we can get actual passenger usage pre-COVID.

**Answer:** See ridership spreadsheet identified in the application within Blackcat.

**Question:** What are the historical operating expenses for Heartland express? We would also like the 2019 numbers so we can get actual expresses pre-COVID.

**Answer:** See 2019 Line Item Detail Report identified in the application within Blackcat.

**Question:** Will the operating budget reflect the higher operating cost for the system taking over?

**Answer:** Applicants should submit application budgets to reflect their estimated operating costs. Applicants may have higher or lower operating costs to provide this same service.

**Question:** How many additional services hours will be allocated for service improvements? As a new transit system coming into the area, it is imperative for systems to be able to improve service delivery which will mean additional hours.

**Answer:** No additional service hours will be allocated for 2021, however the selected applicant may reallocate total service plan hours within the current contract period with a public involvement process. There is also an opportunity to apply for additional funding for future service improvements beginning in 2022.

**Question:** Can we get a copy of the current wage scale and benefits employees are currently getting, by position?

**Answer:** See the wage and benefit information identified in the application within Blackcat.

**Question:** When will applicants be provided access to facilities and current operations to identify needs for our transition plans? Who will be our contact to arrange that when the timing is appropriate?

**Answer:** After the solicitation process has been completed, MnDOT will work with Isanti & Chisago counties to help coordinate access to facilities and operations for the selected applicant.

**Question:** Do the buses currently have narrow band digital 2 way radios installed?

**Answer:** Yes, the buses currently have narrow band digital 2 way radios installed, however they are not owned by Isanti County. The 2 way radios will not be transferred as part of the equipment inventory. Applicants will need to identify a radio system to be purchased with transition funding, if desired.

**Question:** Is the system currently connected to MnDOT towers for 2 way radio communications? If so, will we take possession of those tower spots?

**Answer:** No, the system is not currently connected to MnDOT towers for 2 way radio communications.

**Question:** Will there be any issues with contract breaks or has the proper notice been given to discontinue all the operational and revenue contracts? As an example, Heartland utilizes Shah Software and other applicants may utilize a different system, operating different transportation programs.

**Answer:** All current contracts will be severed, and the new applicant will only be responsible for any new contracts for services.

## Previous Questions

### Local Representation

**Question:** The instructions under Local Representation read: “New applicant must include local representation, including representatives Isanti County and Chisago County serving on the Transit Advisory Council (TAC), governing board, and other types of representative participation.” Does the term “governing board” mean that the applicant must have representation on the umbrella agency Board of Directors or Transit Commission?

**Answer:** The intent of the local representation requirement is to ensure that people served by public transit in Chisago and Isanti counties have a voice in the decisions being made about transportation options within their community. Applicants have flexibility on how to include representatives from Isanti County and Chisago County. Serving on the Transit Advisory Council (TAC), or governing board are some examples of representative participation, not a specific requirement. Another example might include forming a new advisory group made up of people served by public transit in Chisago and Isanti counties. The expectation is the applicant will provide the structure on how Chisago and Isanti County key leadership and residents can participate and have a voice in the services provided in these two counties. Please note that both Chisago and Isanti counties have committed through Board resolution to “participate with the new subrecipient by providing a representative to serve on their Transit Advisory Council (TAC), their governing board and/or other types of participation.”

### Duration of Contract

**Question:** Does the one year contract mean that we would only be providing this service for one year?

**Answer:** While this expected grant agreement is for the remainder of the current Isanti County grant term, through December 31, 2021, the expectation is that the new subrecipient would apply for future Rural Public Transit Operating grants to continue providing public transit service in Chisago and Isanti Counties, although that is not a requirement.