



Tompkins County / Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council
Special Community Mobility Projects
Application for 2019 Grants
Due to ITCTC on Friday, Nov 2, 2018, 4 pm

Contact Information:

Name: Nicole Roulstin, 2-1-1 Contact Center Manager

Agency: Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County/ 2-1-1 Tompkins Cortland

Address: 171 East MLK Jr/State St #133

Phone #: 607-273-8686

Email: nroulstin@hsctc.org

Website: 211tompkins.org, hsctc.org

A. Project Name: 2-1-1 FISH Call Center Support

B. Project Description:

2-1-1 Tompkins/Cortland is a comprehensive helpline that assists individuals from Tompkins and Cortland counties with their human service needs. This service has been in operation since 1978 (first as "Information and Referral," and since 2007 as 2-1-1) as a program of the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County. The 2-1-1 helpline handles calls, emails, chats and walk-ins. Calls are handled 24 hours a day/7 days a week, with local staffing available Monday-Friday from 8:30 am-5:00 pm to respond to phone, chat, walk in and email requests. In 2018, the 2-1-1 center also began the use of text messaging as an additional method of communication. Clients need only to text their zip code to TXT211 or 898211 to be connected.

FISH (Friends in Service Helping), a volunteer organization, offers necessary and critical transportation to doctors, dentists, the hospital, clinics and medical-related social service appointments in the central New York region. FISH supports older adults, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and individuals with no other means of medical transportation. FISH operates with an entirely volunteer staff of drivers; its funding consists of grants and donations.

Since 2012, 2-1-1 Tompkins Cortland has been handling ride request contacts for the FISH medical transportation program. In the past 12 months, 2-1-1 has handled 1,534 calls and taken 820 ride requests for FISH. Through Special Community Mobility grant funds, we propose to continue the provision of ride requests and enhanced program support services for FISH. 2-1-1 continues to support the FISH pilot program to provide out-of-county medical transportation to regional medical centers. 2-1-1 serves not only as a cost savings for the FISH program but also connects callers to other resources—these include other transportation supports as well as programs such as food pantries, health insurance assistance, and housing, among others.

The 2-1-1 contact center, in support of the FISH program, supports the approved mobility project of the Tompkins County Coordinated plan, the "promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income

individuals.” 2-1-1 also supports Tompkins County’s efforts toward the “development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinated transportation information” across multiple travel modes.

Each day the call center takes ride requests for FISH, both in and out of Tompkins County. 2-1-1 has developed a process for handling “short-term” requests, where the need for medical transportation is less than the four business days preferred by FISH. In the past several months, 2-1-1 has enhanced the level of service it provides to FISH. Prior to 2018, 2-1-1 would send the list of daily ride requests to a volunteer “phoner,” who would then schedule the rides with the volunteer drivers. In the spring of 2018, 2-1-1 staff began scheduling all in-county FISH rides directly. 2-1-1 also continuously handles troubleshooting calls, where clients have not received a response from FISH to their requests, or other issues that arise such as a lack of drivers, changes to ride requests, and other client concerns.

2-1-1’s recent enhanced support for FISH has had benefits for both organizations, and for clients. For FISH, 2-1-1’s new responsibility for ride scheduling, in addition to taking requests, alleviates the volunteer burden and allows for more consistency in supporting drivers and clients. For 2-1-1, having centralized ride scheduling allows for more quicker response to changing client needs, enables staff to immediately identify and work to address challenging ride requests, and helps maintain stronger long-term relationships with clients and drivers. For FISH clients, additional 2-1-1 support has resulted in more consistent communication and an increased likelihood that their needs will be met. For 2018 to-date, requests for FISH rides that could not be met (i.e., no driver available) have decreased nearly 30% as compared to the same period in 2017.

2-1-1’s affiliation with the Human Services Coalition provides other advantages, too. The 2-1-1 office now houses a Community Health Outreach Worker who assists Medicaid beneficiaries with using their insurance coverage and addressing barriers to health care. 2-1-1 often connects the Outreach Worker with FISH clients who are Medicaid beneficiaries but struggle to navigate the Medicaid transportation benefit, helping them to take advantage of Medicaid Transportation services. This in turn helps take pressure off of the FISH volunteer program, by freeing up rides for individuals who do not qualify for other services.

2-1-1 also creates the monthly driver schedule for FISH, a change was implemented in the last grant funding cycle. This includes contacting each of the volunteer drivers and building the schedule around driver availability and preferences. The 2-1-1 call center manager participates in all FISH board meetings and FISH events, including the annual meeting, giving all the FISH personnel an opportunity to discuss ways to improve program operations to best serve clients. The call center manager serves as a resource to FISH leaders in their planning and decision making.

2-1-1 coordinates a number of other initiatives beyond FISH call center support that may be relevant to FISH clientele. The contact center schedules appointments for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) during tax season as a contract with Alternatives Federal Credit Union, which now includes Cortland County. 2-1-1 also implements scheduling for the New York State of Health insurance navigator program. In 2018, 2-1-1 began a transportation pilot program along with four other counties called Supports-for-Health. This voucher program offers health-related transportation to Medicaid beneficiaries that is not covered by the Medicaid transportation benefit. The types of services covered under this program include trips to get groceries after hospitalization, pharmacy for picking up prescriptions, support groups for substance use treatment, and fitness or chronic disease classes, among many others.

Type of Project (Please Check One):

Operating Assistance: []

Mobility Management: [X]

Other Capital Project: []

Planning: []

Describe the proposed project goals and objectives. Is it a new or continuing project? How will the project be implemented?

The goal of the FISH Call Center Support Project is to continue to provide customer-friendly, efficient and effective program support services to the FISH Volunteer Medical Transportation Program.

Objectives:

1. Through trained 2-1-1 Community Service Specialists using an online reservation form, screen for eligibility and obtain pertinent ride request information from Tompkins County residents in need of rides to medical appointments and other eligible medical-related locations. Assist clients in accessing the appropriate transportation supports.
2. Check schedule of ride request to see if FISH has capacity to accommodate new ride, then contact driver directly to send the ride information. If request is for an out-of-county ride, send to FISH director.
3. Screen those in need of medical transportation for other human service needs and provide appropriate referrals. Share other medical transportation resources with them in case FISH cannot fulfill their request. Provide information about FISH for callers who do not know about the service.
4. Provide support and troubleshooting for FISH riders when they have not heard about their ride request, rescheduling an appointment, and other needs.
5. Provide FISH and other interested parties with information on medical transportation requests and other data.
6. Participate in FISH agency annual meeting, volunteer appreciation, and board meetings. Serve as a resource for FISH throughout the year.

How will the project serve and benefit target populations (low income, seniors or persons with disabilities)?

FISH states that they serve “elderly citizens who may be frail or who no longer drive, and Tompkins County residents who have limited transportation options and resources.” 2-1-1 works with each caller to ensure that referrals, including those that result in scheduling a FISH ride, are appropriate and meet eligibility requirements. 2-1-1 services as a whole are open to any person, however the vast majority of the programs in the 2-1-1 database are nonprofit-based. Services typically have missions to serve individuals with low to moderate income levels or who have social, economic, health or other vulnerabilities.

As part of a statewide project, 2-1-1 Tompkins Cortland has created a customized database and webpage with programs serving individuals with developmental disabilities. These resources are categorized by needs, such as housing and transportation. With this project, 2-1-1 staff can use the specialty database for a person with a disability to find other transportation resources beyond the FISH program.

How will the project coordinate with existing transportation services in the service area?

2-1-1 is well connected to the range of local services, especially transportation. Both 2-1-1 and FISH personnel participate in the monthly Tompkins County Coordinated Transportation meetings. Much of the conversations at these meetings involve improving efforts to coordinate with other participating agencies to meet transportation needs of the community.

2-1-1 has a continued partnership with Way2Go at Cornell Cooperative Extension, and renewed their contract in 2017 with 2-1-1 being the “One Call, One Stop” destination for transportation resources in Tompkins County. 2-1-1 provides Way2Go with quarterly reports, including an in-depth look at FISH transportation. The report includes the origin and destination of each ride request through FISH. Also in the report are all transportation-related calls and any unmet needs from those calls (where the person calling was unable to receive assistance) and an explanation for the unmet need. Examples include agency not open at time of request, caller ineligible for service, or caller refused referral offered by 2-1-1 staff. 2-1-1 includes a narrative with the Way2Go report, highlighting unique transportation calls and

noteworthy unmet needs for that quarter. Way2Go supports 2-1-1 with analysis of this data and with planning around addressing emerging and unmet needs.

2-1-1 is also highly involved in other transportation-related initiatives directly focused on volunteer transportation services and on enhancing options for people with transportation barriers in Tompkins County and the region. 2-1-1 is an active participant in a new countywide volunteer transportation workgroup, which is looking at ways to bolster the capacity of volunteer driver programs. Members of this coalition include representatives from the volunteer driver programs themselves, Way2Go, transportation providers, and others. 2-1-1 also supports the planning and analysis around the development of new models for serving county residents, including Mobility-As-A-Service and other options, which enhance the menu of services available and which help to direct the most appropriate service population to each travel mode. With the capacity to serve as a contact center and public customer service front-end, 2-1-1 plays an important role in these initiatives.

Finally, as described earlier, 2-1-1 administers the Supports-for-Health transportation voucher program for Medicaid beneficiaries in Tompkins County. Transportation is provided through service agreements with Gadabout and Ithaca Dispatch, and can also include TCAT bus passes. Since just the summer launch of this program, over 25 agencies and clinics have become referring partners, able to refer eligible clients or patients, after receiving training on the program.

C. **Project Budget** (Present the budget including assumptions.)

Budget Assumptions:

(What are the unit prices, cost per trip, cost per person, cost per hour; payment per mile, number of units, trips, hours, instruction hours, etc.)

Phone Staff Hours - taking requests and scheduling rides with clients: 1450 annual calls X \$2.64/call.

We anticipate receiving 1,450 requests for year 2019. \$22 is the average hourly rate for a call specialist plus fringe, and the average length of a FISH Call is 7 minutes, or 12% of an hour. 12% of \$22 is \$2.64.

Phone Staff Hours - rider troubleshooting: 11 contacts/week X 52 weeks X \$5.50/contact.

Troubleshooting averages 15 minutes total, or 25% of an hour. 25% of \$22 average rate plus fringe is \$5.50.

Phone Staff Hours - booking, communicating, and confirming rides with drivers: 800 annual rides X \$3.74/ride.

We anticipate 800 FISH rides for 2019. Average time spent to book each ride is 10 minutes, or 17% of an hour. 17% of \$22 average rate plus fringe is \$3.74. Includes often communicating with several drivers to find one to take on a ride, re-communicating with drivers after a client schedule change, etc. *New in 2019 Proposal*

Program Coordination & Supervision: 3.50 hours/week X 52 weeks X \$33.00/hour (hourly rate for contact center manager plus fringe).

Creating Monthly Driver Schedule: 5 hours per month X \$33.00/hour contact center manager rate plus fringe.

IT Service and Support (iCarol 2-1-1 database platform and technical support): 1450 calls + 572 troubleshooting calls is approx. 14% of total estimated 2019 2-1-1 calls. Total cost of iCarol subscription and technical service/support is \$10,600 per year. 14% of \$10,600 is \$1,484

Administrative Overhead: 18% figure is based on 2-1-1 program budgeted non personnel and non-IT expenses. Includes rent, telephone system and charges (critical component of a 2-1-1 program), etc.

Show Itemize expenses and revenues (add rows as needed)?

| Expenses | | |
|--|---|--|
| Phone Staff Hours - taking requests and scheduling rides with clients | 1450 calls at \$2.64 per call | \$3,828 |
| Phone Staff Hours - rider troubleshooting | 11 contacts per week x 52 weeks at \$5.50 per contact | \$3,146 |
| Phone Staff Hours - booking, communicating, and confirming rides with drivers | 800 rides at \$3.74 per ride | \$2,992 |
| Program Coordination & Supervision | 3.5 hours per week x 52 weeks at \$33.00 per hour | \$6,006 (\$3,706 requested, \$2,300 match) |
| Creating Monthly Driver Schedule | 5 hours per month x 12 months at \$33.00 per hour | \$1,980 |
| IT Service and Support | See assumptions | \$1,484 |
| Administrative Overhead | 18% of above | \$3,498 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | | \$22,934 (\$20,634 requested) |
| Revenues | | |
| Special Community Mobility Project Funding | | \$20,634 |
| Program Coordination and Supervision – MATCH (Tompkins County and other local funding) | | \$2,300 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | | \$22,934 (\$20,634 requested) |

How will Federal funds will be matched?

Local Funds: The 2-1-1 Call Center receives local funds from the Tompkins County Legislature, state and local grant funding, and other sources. These funds support call center infrastructure including our database and call screen operations and personnel.

| | SCMP Proposal | Local Tompkins County | Total |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Personnel | \$15,652 | \$2,300 | \$17,952 |
| IT | \$1,484 | | \$1,484 |
| Administration | \$3,498 | | \$3,498 |
| TOTAL | \$20,634 | \$2,300 | \$22,934 |

D. Project Evaluation

How will you measure the performance of the project? What are the most important outcomes? Describe criteria you will use to measure the project's performance.

2-1-1 is committed to continuous evaluation of the program to improve services for clients. 2-1-1 monitors both process and output/outcome factors. At the end of each business day, the call center manager reviews each ride request taken for FISH and checks for errors and/or missing information prior to communicating the information to FISH personnel. The manager also collects and submits quarterly reports of number of FISH calls and ride requests to the FISH Executive Director and the Tompkins County Chief Transportation Planner.

2-1-1 assesses and monitors the effectiveness of this program by conducting quarterly quality assurance surveys. For a two-week period, call specialists ask every caller to take a call-back with a few questions about the service. Because of the high call volume of FISH callers, these clients are well represented in each survey period. The 2-1-1 specialists ask the clients if they received the ride that they requested and give clients the opportunity to express both praise and concern related to FISH. Both positive and negative feedback is shared with FISH.

The last quality assurance survey was conducted in August 2018. Overall within the survey period, 91% of participants received the help they needed directly from the referrals provided by 2-1-1. The reasons that callers provided for not received the help needed: the person simply had not called the referrals provided, agency referred is currently closed (triggers follow up from 2-1-1 and/or a database update), or services needed were not available. Detailed quality assurance reports are posted on the 2-1-1 website and regularly shared with the community.

Here are some of the comments specifically given by FISH clients:

“Other transportation services were not available at the time I needed to go to this appointment. FISH driver was fantastic.”

“Without FISH I would not be able to make my appointments to Sayre.”

“I highly recommend 211's services—I'm so grateful to the FISH drivers and the 211s help in coordinating our rides.”

E. Certification by Chief Executive Officer of Applicant

I hereby certify all information and data in this application are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are supported by our records. I certify, as applicant, we will comply with all applicable Federal requirements.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Name: <i>M. Kathleen Schlather</i> | Title: <i>Executive Director</i> |
| Signature or email: <i>M Kathleen Schlather</i> | Date: <i>10/31/18</i> |

Kschlather@hsect.org

Send to Fernando deAragon, ITCTC, 121 E. Court St, Ithaca, NY 14850 or by email fdearagon@tomkins-co.org before 4 pm on Nov 2, 2018.

For technical assistance contact Dwight Mengel, Tompkins County DSS, at: 607-274-5605, Dwight.mengel@dfa.state.ny.us before Oct 31.

FISH
310 Comstock Rd.
Ithaca, NY 14850
October 22, 2018

Nicole Roulstin, CIRS
Call Center Manager
2-1-1 Tompkins/Cortland Help-line
Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, Inc.
171 East MLK Jr./State Street #133
Ithaca, NY 14850-5543

Dear Dwight and ITCTC members,

I am writing in support of the Human Services Coalition's redesignation as 2-1-1 Help line for contact by FISH clients.

Tompkins County residents in need of free transportation to medical and health services call 2-1-1 and are referred to FISH. Although 804 rides occurred in county in 2017 and in the first 9 months of 2018 58 people had rides to out of county medical facilities, this does not represent the number of calls processed. Nor does it represent the amount of time 2-1-1 staff spend educating clients on transportation options and assisting clients and FISH volunteers resolve issues as they arise. We also have transitioned to allow 2-1-1 staff to schedule monthly drivers and arrange all in county rides in 2018.

FISH appreciates the support that the 2-1-1 help line provides.

Sincerely,

William Maxwell
Executive Director, FISH
wibowomax@hotmail.com