

Request for Information (RFI) Scope of Services for Low-Income Fare verification and ORCA Card Distribution

This request for information is to solicit feedback from 501 c(3) agencies/organizations and government agencies who may be interested in helping verify income eligibility and provide low-income ORCA cards to eligible customers on behalf of King County Metro.

King County Metro is proposing to operate a low-income fare program in partnership with third-party agencies. King County Metro's functions will include procuring and preparing low-income ORCA cards and providing them to partner agencies for distribution to end users. The functions of the partner agencies will include verifying customers' eligibility for the low-income fare program, distributing ORCA cards to them and using King County Metro's database to report and manage data.

This RFI is to help us find non-profit agency partners who are best suited to the performance of this specific work in a network of providers. This effort is not intended to replace Metro's current ORCA business account agreements with agencies that provide transit benefits to clients. Metro anticipates that a number of agencies will also be interested in partnering with Metro to implement the low-income fare program, and serving customers beyond their current client base.

Background

The King County Council passed an ordinance that requires a reduced transit fare option be available to all eligible individuals in King County. The low-income fare is planned to take effect on March 1, 2015. King County Metro will work with partner agencies to start providing customers with low-income ORCA cards in advance of that date to test procedures and best practices for meeting customer needs.

The ordinance specifies:

- Persons at or below 200% of the federal poverty level will be eligible for the Low-Income Fare
- A low-income fare will be available only by using a low-income ORCA card with either a monthly pass or E-purse.
- The low-income fare will be an all-day, flat fare of \$1.50.

Other details of the Low-Income Fare Program include:

- Low-income ORCA cards will be valid for two years.
- Low-income ORCA cards will be provided to eligible customers at no cost but there will be a cost (currently \$5) for replacing cards that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- Low-income ORCA cards will be registered to the owner to ensure that each eligible individual has only one card, to aid in replacement of lost or stolen cards, and to provide balance protection.
- Partner agencies will not be responsible for replacing lost or stolen cards; this will be managed by King County Metro.
- Partner agencies will not be responsible for disputes arising from a finding that an applicant is not eligible to receive a low-income ORCA card; agencies will refer disputes to King County Metro.

More details can be found in Appendix A which includes the Low-Income Fare Program implementation plan.

Qualifications

The goal is to determine the most feasible ways to provide information to potential eligible customers, determine eligibility of those interested and distribute cards to those eligible. In addition, there is a need to

help potential customers understand the benefits of such a card and the specifics of how to use it. The following criteria will be required from the participating agencies:

1. Ability to verify income eligibility for customers using one or more established databases (e.g., DSHS)
1. Ability to receive, securely store and account for low-income cards provided by King County , with a clear process of accounting for the cards and identifying which staff have authorized access to these cards. At a minimum, they must be stored in a locked room and container. Ability to enter a customer’s data into King County secure, online database which agencies will access for data tracking and reporting.
2. Multiple sites countywide where they serve customers and have Internet access.
3. Demonstrate that there is a procedure in place for storing and retrieving forms signed by each customer authorizing the agency to access client data on a benefits database and acknowledging that the customer understands and agrees to the terms of use for the low-income ORCA card. As an alternative to the authorization form, the customer may provide paper verification of income eligibility provided by a benefits agency.
4. Demonstrated experience with Limited English Proficiency populations.

If your agency believes you meet the above criteria and wish to participate in the RFI process, please come to an informational meeting on July 11 at 12 noon, King Street Center, room 4 C.

Proposed Timeline for RFP Process	
Proposals due	August 8, 2014
Agencies selected	August 2014
Notice to proceed	
Work order signed	September 30, 2014
Low-income fare process begins	October 1, 2014