

Public Participation Plan

Purpose

This plan documents the public involvement procedures and stated public involvement principles of the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency's (UCHRA) Public Transportation Department. The document is intended to outline public involvement considerations and procedures to be used by UCHRA's staff on all Federal aid projects. The Plan is available on the UCHRA's website for access.

This plan explains the Public Transportation Department's philosophy and approaches to public involvement, describes the public involvement, and presents minimum and enhanced public involvement activities expected to be implemented during the development of plans and programs.

As comments are received, they will be acknowledged and will be distributed to appropriate staff for review. Following discussion among a group of functional management staff, a recommendation will be made as to the disposition of each comment. The originator of each comment will be advised of the action taken. While maintaining the overall goal of moving people with an emphasis on quality and safety; it is the intent of the UCHRA's Public Transportation Department, that the needs of local communities and its citizens, and the input received from public involvement activities for each project, will receive substantial consideration.

Local governments, County Advisory Boards, community leaders, affected citizens and the traveling public will be invited into the process with special emphasis on those traditionally underserved by the transportation process. The goal is to develop improved communication, involvement and trust between the Agency's Public Transportation Department and users of UCHRA's Rural Transit System.

Public Involvement

Philosophy - UCHRA shall conduct its public involvement process in a manner to ensure accountability for its actions, continuous communication with stakeholders and constituents, consistency in approach, and integrity in its dealings.

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for anyone who chooses to help shape the future of the Upper Cumberland areas public transportation system through an involvement process that begins early, is convenient and meaningful;
- Develop partnerships with local community leaders, groups and organizations to provide an integrated, environmentally aware and multi-modal approach to transportation needs and desires;
- Provide timely and easily understood information to citizens, other interested parties, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects;
- Integrate citizen concerns and needs into the developmental process;
- Build credibility and trust between UCHRA's Public Transportation Department and those whom it exists to serve; and

- Provide for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.

Process

Consideration of the public involvement process to be implemented for any transportation effort will begin at the earliest planning stages. Projects may vary in the length of time required for planning and may vary greatly in size. The public involvement process can be different for each effort, and the level of public involvement implemented can vary.

- Project team will determine what level of public involvement should be reached.
- Hold informal meetings upon request.
- Present information to the Governing Board, Local County Advisory Committees, Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) or Local County/City Governments.

Public Transportation Service Plan

UCHRA's Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plan is updated annually through the involvement of staff and Local Advisory Committee's in each of the counties served. Goals are ranked by high, medium and low priority through internal discussion, community surveys and Local Advisory meeting input. This plan is also incorporated into the long-range planning goals for public transportation service needs for the agency.

General stakeholders for the Plan include citizens, affected public agencies, public transportation employees, private providers of transportation, representatives of and users of public transportation, representatives of and users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of and the disabled, and providers of freight transportation services. Many of these stakeholders are already involved in UCHRA's long range planning process through their participation in Local County Advisory Committee meetings.

Enhanced Public Involvement Activities

In an effort to be proactive in providing outreach to the general population, including traditionally underserved populations, this list has been developed and is to be utilized as needed.

Meet with community organizations and any organizations serving those traditionally underserved.

- Invite community/group leaders to serve on stakeholder committees, advisory groups.
- Add advertising to typical newspaper ads to announce meetings or request input from citizens.
- Use facilitators for meetings/hearings.
- Create specialized information for publishing on the web.
- Hold neighborhood meetings or information forums.
- Use surveys to gather input on the preferences and thoughts of the public.

Language Access Plan (LAP) for Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Purpose: In compliance with FTA C. 4702. 1. A. UCHRA has developed the following Language Access Plan (LAP) for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. UCHRA has and will make all reasonable attempts to accommodate language access needs of residents requesting oral translation during participation activities and program services.

Language Access Plan: As a result of performing a Four-Factor Analysis, UCHRA has identified that language assistance be made available and provided on an as needed basis by UCHRA through a language service.

- All UCHRA contractors, transit operators, dispatchers, and programs will make available as needed: Citizen Participation documents, project-related resolutions, public notices, and other requested material to the identified LEP Language (Spanish) and upon request of other participants speaking a language other than English.
- Additionally, all published citizen participation advertisements in the counties of Dekalb, Putnam, and Warren will include a statement in LEP language (Spanish) as identified to indicate other program materials are available in LEP language upon request.
- If other populations of LEP persons are identified in the future, UCHRA will consider additional measures to serve the language access needs of those persons.
- Currently, language cards and access to a language line (AVAZA) can be utilized to translate in over 100 languages and some written materials. AVAZA can also offer onsite translation services for events such as meetings or seminars.

In addition, outreach activities such as meetings, and other special events should also encompass measures to involve LEP communities, and other minority populations. Without translation services LEP populations may be less likely to engage in activities within their community due to language barriers. UCHRA's goal is to allow LEP populations to have the same community experiences as their English-speaking counterparts.