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www.baldwincountyal.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Request for BRATS Transit Service

Thank you for your interest in utilizing BRATS for your special transit needs. We are here to serve you and look forward to assisting you in any way that we can. Requests for Special Transit Services must be submitted at least six weeks prior to event.

BRATS exists to provide an alternative mode transportation for citizens who need access health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation. These services generally occur on existing, scheduled routes that are open and available to any citizen. Periodically, BRATS is asked to provide a service that is dedicated to a specific group of passengers, whether that be a scouts club, convention attendees, or an economic development agency. When BRATS provides specialized transit services that look and feel more like charter services, it triggers a new set of federal regulations.

To protect private charter companies, Congress passed a law which limits when a public transit agency can provide charter-like services. The law identifies two types of charter services:

1. Transportation provided exclusively to an outside group for a negotiated price, and
2. Transportation provided for members of the public to events that only occur periodically.

A public transit agency may not provide either of the charter services defined above, except in a few specific situations. We want to help determine whether an exception exists that might allow BRATS to provide you with community-based charter services. **Please keep in mind that even if an exception does exist, all requests for special transit services must be approved by the Baldwin County Commission.**

Below are the six exceptions that allow a public transit agency to provide community-based charter services.

Primary Exceptions:

1. Service for Qualified Human Service Organizations (49 CFR 604.7)
2. Service for Government Officials on Official Government Business (49 CFR 604.6)
3. Service When Private Charter Service Not Available (49 CFR 604.9)

Lessor Exceptions:

4. Service Leased to Private Charter Company (49 CFR 604.8)
5. Service Based on Agreement with Private Charter Companies (49 CFR 604.10)
6. Service Allowed Based on Petition to Federal Transit Administration Administrator (49 CFR 604.11)

Exceptions 4 through 6 are rarely applicable and are not considered further in this document.

The following pages provide additional information relating to exceptions 1 through 3, along with a form that your agency can fill out to identify an exception that applies to your entity and request services from BRATS. We encourage you to contact our special transit service coordinator, Amanda Thweatt (251-972-6817 Ext. 7300), to answer any questions you have prior to submitting a formal request.

After you complete the form please scan and email to athweatt@baldwincountyal.gov and kweeks@baldwincountyal.gov. We will review your request and present to the Commission for consideration if appropriate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at 251-972-8576.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MB', is positioned above the printed name.

Matthew Brown
Director of Transportation

Exception 1

Service for Qualified Human Service Organizations (QHSO)

To qualify for the QHSO exception both of the following conditions must be met:

1. Requested service is for individuals in one of the following three categories:
 - a. Those with mobility limitations due to advanced age.
 - b. Those with disabilities
 - c. Those with low income
2. The entity requesting the service either:
 - a. Receives funding directly or indirectly from a federal program listed on the included attachment ([link](#)), or
 - b. Is registered as a QHSO on the FTA charter registration website ([link](#)).

When providing service under this exception, BRATS will be required to post notice of the service on FTA's charter registration website and also document the following:

- The QHSO's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- The date and time of service;
- The number of passengers;
- The origin, destination, and trip length (miles and hours);
- The fee collected; and
- The vehicle number for the vehicle used to provide the service.

Exception 2

Service for Government Officials on Official Government Business

To qualify for the Government Business exception the following conditions must be met:

1. Service must be provided in BRATS service area (currently all of Baldwin County);
2. No revenue is generated from the service;
3. At least one elected or appointed government official must be on each trip provided as part of the service;

BRATS is limited to providing 80 hours of service each year under the Government Business exception. When providing service under this exception, BRATS will be required to post notice of the service on FTA's charter registration website and also document the following:

- The Government Organization's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- The date and time of service;
- The number of passengers (specifically noting the number of government officials on each trip);
- The origin, destination, and trip length (miles and hours);
- The fee collected; and
- The vehicle number for the vehicle used to provide the service.

Exception 3

Service When Private Charter Service Not Available

To qualify for exception three, the following conditions must be met:

1. Notice of need issued to all registered private charter services through FTA's charter website;
2. No private charter service responds to the notice within:
 - a. 72 hours for service requested to be provided in less than 30 days; or
 - b. 14 calendar days for charter service requested to be provided in 30 days or more.

NOTE: *Due to the time required to present a request to the Commission, option "a" above will not apply when seeking specialized transit service from BRATS.*

BRATS cannot provide the service if a registered charter indicates an interest in providing the services and notifies BRATS of its interest. When providing service under this exception, BRATS will be required to post notice of the service on FTA's charter registration website and also document the following:

- The requesting entity's name, address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- The date and time of service;
- The number of passengers;
- The origin, destination, and trip length (miles and hours);
- The fee collected; and
- The vehicle number for the vehicle used to provide the service.

REQUEST FOR BRATS TRANSIT SERVICE

Name of Organization: _____ Date of Request: _____

Contact Person: _____ Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Billing Address: _____

Do you currently have an approved account with Baldwin Regional Area Transit System? Yes ____ No ____

POTENTIAL EXCEPTIONS

EXCEPTION 1: Service for Qualified Human Service Organizations (QHSO)

Is the requested service for individuals in one of the following three categories (check all that apply)?

- Those with mobility limitations due to advance age Those with disabilities Those with low income

Does one of the following apply to your entity (check all that apply)?

- Receives funding from federal program listed in attachment Is a registered QHSO on the FTA charter website

EXCEPTION 2: Service for Government Officials on Official Government Business

Will the proposed trip occur within BRATS service area (currently all of Baldwin County)? Yes No

Will the proposed involve official government business? Yes No

Will at least one elected or appointed official be on each provided trip? Yes No

EXCEPTION 3: Service When Private Charter Service Not Available

Would you like BRATS to initiate exceptions by issuing a notice to determine whether any registered charter providers are interested in providing your entity with charter service? Yes No

NOTE: if you mark "yes" above, BRATS will issue the required notice to registered charter service providers within Baldwin County. If any provider responds with interest in providing the service, Baldwin County cannot provide your entity with the requested service.

EVENT INFORMATION

Name of Event: _____ Date of Event: _____

Contact Person at Event: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Number of Vehicles Needed: _____ Number of Passengers: _____

Number of Wheelchairs: _____ Number of Lift Assist Passengers: _____

Time to Begin Event: _____ Time Event Will End: _____

Pick Up Location & Physical Address:

Destination Location and Physical Address:

A timed itinerary with address details must be supplied for multiple stops.

We acknowledge there will be additional charges for excessive clean up or damage to the vehicle caused as a result of passengers. We understand charges will include pre and post safety inspections of vehicle and travel times to and from event. We will not hold BRATS responsible for breakdowns, accidents, bad road conditions, inclement weather, and other conditions beyond their control.

Signed:

For:

(Authorized Signature)

(Company Name)