



June 22, 2024

Tara M. Smith – Chief of Staff
Office of Commissioner Robert Patrick – District 1
DeKalb County Board of Commissioners
1300 Commerce Dr.
Decatur, Georgia 30032

Ms. Smith,

Thank you for your ongoing partnership with Frontline Response International (“Frontline”) in our collaborative efforts to address the needs of unhoused and low-income individuals in District 1. This collaboration not only benefits these individuals but also enhances the quality of life for the broader constituency of your district and DeKalb County as a whole.

Frontline Response is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to rescuing and supporting those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, sex trafficking, and food insecurity in DeKalb County. We provide supportive services, shelter, housing assistance, and we advocate for more affordable housing in partnership with community and government groups. As our name implies, we are on the frontline every day, rescuing individuals out of homelessness and sex trafficking and preventing vulnerable children from falling victim.

We are seeking \$250,000 from District 1 with additional allocations requested of other impacted Commission Districts as well as investments from public-private partnerships to initiate DeKalb County’s first transportation program exclusively for individuals affected by homelessness. Our goal is to secure ADA accessible vehicles to travel along a fixed route of social service providers starting out operation three days a week and eventually expanding to five weekdays. Transportation access has long been identified as a social determinant of health and that research is further substantiated in an excerpt from a recent article in the International Journal on Homelessness which states:

“For people experiencing homelessness, the ability to move between and within communities is an important aspect of achieving stability and improving overall well-being. However, people experiencing homelessness are often transportation disadvantaged, which creates barriers to health management, housing, employment, and social service connections”.¹

Frontline seeks to be impactful in reducing transportation-related barriers for those experiencing homelessness throughout DeKalb County through our **FAST Trac** initiative. **FAST Trac** is a moniker for Frontline’s Accessible Services Transit Trac. Our **FAST Trac** will travel on a daily fixed route to social service and healthcare agencies and will be accessible to those experiencing homelessness *exclusively*. **FAST Trac** would be a no-charge transit option for those seeking housing, healthcare, or other social services. In lieu of payment, every rider must present a ticket that will be provided in advance upon registration in a secure data system through a Case Manager or other verifiable support person associated with a DeKalb County Community Service Agency. The ticketing system would be available to provide almost instant access to the **FAST Trac** bus thereby further reducing transportation barriers where those with limited mobility must plan days ahead or pay for transportation needs that arise unexpectedly. Transportation is vital for those impacted by homelessness to establish and maintain the connections to services requiring in-person visits for healthcare or to navigate the housing process which often requires moving between communities to access service providers. While not the goal, as a free transit service exclusive to those experiencing homelessness, **FAST Trac** would potentially reduce homeless ridership on MARTA buses and rails.

<https://ojs.lib.uwo.ca/index.php/ijoh/article/view/14811>¹

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Frontline is requesting a funding allocation from Commissioner Patrick in the amount of \$250,000.00 to be utilized to reduce transportation disadvantage by supporting the following collaborative county-wide initiative:

Frontline's Accessible Services Transit Trac (FAST Trac) Initiative:

FAST Trac will travel on a daily fixed route to social service and healthcare agencies and will be accessible to those experiencing homelessness *exclusively*. **FAST Trac** would be a no-charge transit option to reduce transportation disadvantage for those seeking housing, healthcare, or other social services. In lieu of payment, every rider must present a ticket that will be provided in advance through a simplified registration process through a Case Manager or other verifiable support person associated with a DeKalb County Community Service Agency. The ticketing system would be available to provide almost instant access to the **FAST Trac** bus thereby further reducing transportation barriers where those with limited mobility must plan days ahead or pay for transportation needs that arise unexpectedly. **FAST Trac** will operate from 8am – 6pm with a three-person team including a driver, security officer, and a compassionate navigator familiar with the providers along the route to assist riders get connected to the resource or appointment signed up for. The providers on the **FAST Trac** route will include an extensive and proven collaborative network of social services, including assisting with access to healthcare, housing, vital documents, employment resources, food and clothing. The provider network will consist of community service agencies, partner organizations, and other stakeholders invested in solution-oriented initiatives seeking to reduce homelessness throughout DeKalb County.

The Start-up Budget for Frontline's Accessible Services Transit Trac (**FAST Trac**) is outlined below:

F.A.S.T. Trac Line-Item Breakout	Expense Amount
Start-up Costs (Includes ADA Vehicle Purchase of two 13 passenger vehicles - \$235,000; Tax, Tag, Title, and Insurance \$10,000; Logo Placards/Vehicle Wrap \$5,000)	\$250,000.00
Staffing (Includes recruitment and 1 year salary for full-time team of 4 (project manager, driver, security, and case worker)	\$250,000.00
Supplies and Supportive Resources (Includes transportation maintenance, gas, dedicated team cell phones, tablet, hotspot, etc.)	\$50,000.00
FAST Trac Route Data System, Dedicated Landline; Research to inform Mapping, Marketing, Signage	\$75,000.00
Program Administration Cost (Includes Program and Budget oversight and reporting)	\$60,000.00
Total Budget	\$685,000.00

The requested funding allocation, in conjunction with investments from other impacted Commission Districts, and public-private partnerships will initiate DeKalb County's first transportation program exclusively for individuals experiencing homelessness. The **FAST Trac** initiative will allow Frontline to limit barriers to exiting homelessness by reducing the transportation disadvantage and continue building capacity in the service ecosystem of those who are unhoused and the resulting impacts on the surrounding communities. It is our hope that this request will, in conjunction with other funding opportunities, provide the support needed to serve as a measurable touchpoint for 3,000-5,000 individuals annually. Thank you kindly for your consideration!

Tammy Hughes

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