

Dutchess County Public Transit Special Service Request Procedure

On occasion, individuals or organizations request the use of Dutchess County Public Transit buses and staff to provide special transit services outside the public transit system service. Because Dutchess County Public Transit buses are purchased with federal dollars, these special transit services are subject to the federal charter regulation (CFR 49 604.5).

Dutchess County Public Transit's Charter Policy (see attached) defines charter service and offers exemptions and exceptions under which special transit service may be provided at the expense of the Dutchess County Public Transit, using federally-funded vehicles.

The procedure for applying for and receiving special transit services is as follows:

1. The individual or organization requesting the service must provide a written request to the County Transit Administrator at least one hundred (100) days prior to the event. (The exception to one hundred (100) days notice would be for an emergency, an event of regional or national significance, or a unique and time-sensitive event such as a funeral of local, regional, or national significance.)
 - o The request must include (see attached)
 - Date of request;
 - the name and contact information of the individual and organization requesting the service;
 - the date of the event;
 - the time from start to finish;
 - the location of the event;
 - the location of the people to be transported;
 - the number of people to be transported;
 - the significance of the event; and
 - any special mobility requirements needed.
2. If the service is not in accordance with the Dutchess County Public Transit Charter Policy, or can not be done within the budget, or will disrupt regular transit service, the County Transit Administrator will respond accordingly within five (5) business days, or within ninety (90) days of the event date.
3. If the service is in accordance with the Dutchess County Public Transit Charter Policy, and can be done within the budget and time schedule, the request will be approved by the County Transit Administrator.
4. If the service is approved, the County Transit Administrator will respond to the request within sixty (60) days of the event date.
5. All statistics related to the service will be included in state and federal reporting as non-revenue service.

Application for Special Transit Service

Today's Date: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Phone/email: _____ Date of Event: _____

Time of Event (Start): _____ Time of Event (Finish): _____

Location or Destination of Event: _____

Desired Route: _____

Location of Passengers: _____

Number of Passengers Expected: _____

Significance of the Event: _____

Any Special Mobility Requirements Needed: _____

Other: _____

For Office Use:

Received: _____ By: _____

Recommend Approval: _____ By: _____

Sent to Date: _____ By: _____

Received from DCPD Date: _____ By: _____

Approved: _____

Reply to Request Date: _____ By: _____

Sent to Operations Date: _____ Sent to GM Date: _____

Dutchess County Public Transit Charter Policy

As of April 30, 2008, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued new charter regulations. An important change is that Dutchess County Public Transit is prohibited from using FTA-funded equipment and facilities to provide charter service if a registered private charter operator expresses interest in providing the service.

Dutchess County Public Transit is allowed to operate certain community-based charter services excepted under the regulation (49 CFR 604.5).

The regulations define charter service as follows:

1. Transportation provided at the request of a third party for the exclusive use of a bus or van for a negotiated price. The following features may be characteristics of charter service:
 - a. A third party pays a negotiated price for the group;
 - b. Any fares charged to individual members of the group are collected by a third party;
 - c. The service is not part of the regularly scheduled service, or is offered for a limited period of time; or
 - d. A third party determines the origin and destination of the trip as well as scheduling.
2. Transportation provided to the public for events or functions that occur on an irregular basis or for a limited duration* and:
 - a. A premium fare is charged that is greater than the usual or customary fixed route fare; or
 - b. The service is paid for in whole or in part by a third party.

*Examples of irregular or limited duration services that Dutchess County Public Transit is allowed to operate under the federal regulation are as follows:

1. Service that is irregular or on a limited basis for an exclusive group of individuals and provides the service free of charge when a third party requests service;
2. When the Dutchess County Public Transit initiates service it is allowed so long as the Dutchess County Public Transit does not charge a premium fare for the service or there is no third party paying the service in whole or in part. (This may also include Dutchess County paying for the service out of another fund, i.e. department to department.);
3. Shuttle service for a one-time event if the service is open to the public and the itinerary is determined by the grantee, Dutchess County Public Transit charges its customary fixed route fare, and there is no third party involvement;

4. When a university pays a fixed charge to allow all faculty, staff, and students to ride Dutchess County Public Transit for free, so long as Dutchess County Public Transit provides the service on a regular basis, along a fixed route, and the service is not exclusive to the public.
5. When Dutchess County Public Transit sees a need and wants to provide service for a limited duration at the customary fixed route fare.

The federal charter service regulations provide for the following six exemptions:

1. Transportation of Employees, Contractors, and Government Officials:
Grantees are allowed to transport its employees, other transit system employees, transit management officials, transit contractors and bidders, government officials and their contractors and official guests to or from transit facilities or projects within its geographic service area or proposed geographic service area for the purpose of conducting oversight functions such as inspection, evaluation or review;
2. Private Charter Operators:
Private charter operators that receive, directly or indirectly, federal financial assistance under section 3038 or TEA 21, as amended or to non- FTA-funded activities of private charter operators that receive, directly or indirectly, FTA financial assistance under any of the following programs: Sections 5307, 5309, 5310 and 5311 are allowed to provide charter service.
3. Emergency Preparedness Planning and Operation:
Grantees are allowed to transport its employees, other transit system employees, transit management officials, transit contractors and bidders, government officials and their contractors and official guests, for emergency preparedness planning and operations.
4. Recipients of Funds Under Sections 5310 or 5311: Grantees that use federal financial assistance from FTA for program purposes "disabled, elderly or low-income" only, under Sections 5310 or 5311, are allowed to provide charter service.
5. Emergency Response:
Grantees are allowed to provide service, up to 45 days, for actions directly responding to an emergency declared by the President, Governor, County Executive, or Mayor or in an emergency requiring immediate action prior to a formal declaration.
6. Recipients in Non-Urbanized Areas:
Grantees in non-urbanized areas for transporting its employees, other transit system employees, transit management officials, transit contractors and bidders to or from training outside its geographic service area.

Dutchess County Public Transit is allowed to operate community-based charter service under the following exceptions:

1. Government Officials:
Dutchess County Public Transit is allowed to provide charter service (up to 80 service hours annually) to government officials (federal, state, and local) for official government business if no revenue is generated and in the grantees geographic service area.
2. Qualified Human Service Organization (QHSO):
Dutchess County is allowed to provide charter service to a QHSO for the purpose of serving people
 - a. with mobility limitations related to advanced age;
 - b. with disabilities; or
 - c. with low income.
3. No response by Registered Charter Provider:
Dutchess County Public Transit is allowed to provide charter service, on its own initiative or at the request of a third party, if no registered charter provider expresses an interest in the service
 - a. Within 72 hours for charter service requested to be provided in less than 30 days; or
 - b. Within 14 calendar days for the charter service requested to be provided in 30 days or more.
4. Petition to the Administrator:
Dutchess County Public Transit may petition the Administrator (FTA Region 2 Administrator) for an exception to the charter service regulations to provide charter service directly to a customer for:
 - a. Events of regional or national significance;
 - b. Hardship (Only for non-urbanized areas under 50,000 in population or small urbanized area under 200,000 in population);
or
 - c. Unique and time-sensitive events (e.g., funerals of local, regional or national significance) that are in the public's interest.