

**ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
May 27, 2021**

The Executive Committee of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) will meet at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, May 27, 2021, at the Titus County Extension Office, located at 1708 Industrial Road, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

Use the following information to register for the meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYldu2pqj0jGN0WHRg-C8FLWBQixAzW3f-U>

If you experience issues while registering or do not have access to a computer, please contact Mary Beth Rudel no less than two (2) workdays prior to the meeting at 903.255.3520 or mrudel@atcog.org.

Item 1. Call to order – Quorum Determination.

Item 2. Invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

ATCOG invites members of the public to provide oral comment on any item included on this agenda under this item. Each person wishing to make a public comment shall be limited to 3 minutes with comments directed to the Board as a whole. Reasonable accommodation shall be made for members of the public utilizing a translator for public comment.

Item 4. Review and consider consent agenda items. (To be presented by Executive Director Chris Brown)

- Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Executive Committee meeting held Thursday, April 29, 2021. (Page 3)
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee meeting held Thursday, May 13, 2021. (Page 7)

Regular Business

Item 5. Review and consider approval of additional guidance to submit to the Office of the Governor regarding the VOCA projects funding. (See page 11; to be presented by Patricia Haley)

Item 6. Review and consider approval of grant applications to United Way of Lamar County (UWLC) and United Way of Greater Texarkana (UWGT) to support ATCOG transportation services. (See page 14; to be presented by Sheena Record)

- UWLC application in the amount of \$25,000 for the Paris Metro Bus System. (page 14)
- UWGT application in the amount of \$7,200 for the TRAX Rural Public Transportation Program (page 15)

Item 7. Review and consider authorizing the Executive Director to execute a contract with Half Associates, Inc., for engineering services for the Region 2 Lower Red-Sulphur-Cypress Flood Planning Group. (See page 16 and [addendum](#) page 1; to be presented by Executive Director Chris Brown)

Other Business

- Item 8. COVID operations and telecommuting policy update. (See page 17; to be presented by Executive Director Chris Brown)
- Item 9. Recognition of ATCOG receiving a Texas Veteran's Commission grant in the amount of \$2,000 for bus passes for veterans.
- Item 10. Open discussion regarding American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery funds.

Announcements

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., at the Titus County Extension Office in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

Pursuant to the Texas Open Meeting Act, Government Code Chapter 551 one or more of the above items may be considered in executive session closed to the public, including but not limited to consultation with attorney pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 and Section 551.074 arising out of the attorney's ethical duty to advise ATCOG concerning legal issues arising from an agenda item. Any decision held on such matter will be taken or conducted in open session following the conclusion of the executive session.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact Administration at 903-832-8636 two (2) work days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

All agendas are sent electronically and available at www.atcoq.org. Should any Board Member need a copy printed and available at the meeting, please call 903.255.3520 or email mrudel@atcoq.org.

MINUTES
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
April 29, 2021

The Executive Committee of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, April 29, 2021, at the Titus County Extension Office, 1708 Industrial Road, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

Item 1. L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County, called the meeting to order.

Item 2. Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

No members of the public made a comment.

Item 4. Chris Brown, Executive Director, presented the following consent agenda items:

- Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Executive Committee meeting held Thursday, February 25, 2021, via teleconference/webinar.
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Homeland Security Advisory Committee meeting held Thursday, March 18, 2021, via teleconference/webinar.
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee meeting held Thursday, March 18, 2021, via teleconference/webinar.

Motion to approve was made by Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County, and seconded by Judge Lee. It was approved.

Review and Comment

Item 5. Mr. Brown presented, for information only, the Executive Director Report. He reviewed the indirect finance reports and explained that overall, the percentages of the budget used is in-line with the fiscal year. Mr. Brown also provided updates and statistics for all ATCOG programs.

Item 6. Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator, presented for review and comment on an application by the City of Winfield to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to renew its permit.

Motion to approve was made by Stan Wyatt, President, Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, and seconded by Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County. It was approved.

Item 7. Mr. Prange presented for review and comment on an application by Adrian Van Der Jagt to TCEQ to expand an existing dairy cattle facility.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Lee. It was approved.

Item 8. Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Manager, presented for review and comment on a grant application by Detroit Independent School District in the amount of \$12,886 to be submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start, for continuation/refunding of Head Start programs.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County. It was approved.

Regular Business

- Item 9. Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator, presented for consideration approval for the Executive Director to submit an application to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, for a grant to purchase supplies and PPE to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus in the ATCOG region for the project's grant period for the remaining of FY2021.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Howell and seconded by Judge Bell. It was approved.

- Item 10. Ms. Haley presented for consideration approval of priorities/recommendations established by the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) concerning projects being submitted to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, for funding consideration.

A representative from each of the three applicants for the General Victim Assistance – Direct Services grant (VOCA) spoke on behalf of their programs for funding consideration. Ryan Shriver spoke on behalf of SAFE-T Crisis Center. Mr. Shriver shared that SAFE-T received the highest score from the RCJAC and was advised to receive the requested funding. Mr. Shriver added that SAFE-T serves over 4,700 clients in nine counties, including Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River and Titus Counties. Mr. Shriver emphasized the importance of the SAFE-T Crisis Center, as well as, the other grant applicants, Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc., and the Victim Assistance Coordinator/Legal Assistant position in the Hopkins County District Attorney's Office. Mr. Shriver stated that each of the three programs are essential to the ATCOG region, and recommended that the ATCOG Executive Committee does not change the recommended funding allocations.

Pam Dennington spoke on behalf of Domestic Violence Prevention Inc. for funding consideration. Ms. Dennington shared that Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc. received the second highest score from the RCJAC and was advised to receive partial funding. She added that the program. serves Bowie and Cass Counties and provides services to domestic violence victims including emergency shelter, crisis intervention, advocacy, court accompaniment and counseling. Ms. Dennington emphasized that the program is essential and that client intake has increased by 38% since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Partial funding from the VOCA grant would allow the program to stay operational and maintain the emergency shelters; however, Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc. would be forced to end some of the program's services and layoff several staff members due to decreased funding.

Will Ramsay spoke on behalf of the Hopkins County District Attorney's Office for funding consideration. Mr. Ramsay shared that the Hopkins County District Attorney's Office received the lowest score from the RCJAC and was advised to not receive the requested funding. Mr. Ramsay noted that the funding requested for Hopkins County funds the salary and operating expenses for the position of Victim Assistance Coordinator/Legal Assistant. He added that the position is responsible for building relationships with victims and helping them feel comfortable throughout the process of their case. Mr. Ramsay emphasized that the Victim Assistance Coordinator is essential that Hopkins County case filings have increased by 100% since the COVID-19 pandemic began. No funding from the VOCA grant would force the Hopkins County District Attorney's Office to layoff the staff member and terminate the position due to decreased funding. Mr. Ramsay urged the ATCOG Executive Committee to not approve the RCJAC VOCA funding allocation recommendations and request additional grant funds from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division.

Judge Lee made a motion to approve the CSEY, JAG, JJTP and VAWA funding considerations, and to recommend to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, to fully fund all the VOCA grant applicants' requested amounts. The motion was seconded by Judge Howell. It was approved.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Judge Howell. It was approved.

- Item 11. Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator, presented for consideration approval of prioritization of 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program funds as recommended by the ATCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC).

Motion to approve was made by Becky Wilbanks, Judge, Cass County, and seconded by Judge Bell. It was approved.

- Item 12. Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director, presented for consideration approval of the submission of an Older Adult Home Modification Program application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Judge Williamson asked Ms. Rudel if houses are required to be fully paid for in order to be eligible for modification through the Older Adult Home Modification Program. Lisa Reeve, Area Agency on Aging Director, stated that the houses do not have to be fully paid for to be eligible for modification through the program. She added that the client must own the house and be low-income. Ms. Reeve also added that trailer homes would be eligible for modification through the program.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Mr. Wyatt. It was approved.

Other Business

- Item 13. Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Program Director, presented the 2021 ATCOG Telecommunicator of the Year award to Meagan McBain.

- Item 14. Mr. Brown presented Busline Magazine's article featuring Bobby Williams, Transportation Coordinator.

Announcements

Mr. Brown announced that a Workforce CEOs meeting will be held immediately following this meeting.

Lastly, he announced that the next Executive Committee meeting will be held on May 27, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., at the Titus County Extension Office in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

With no other announcements, motion to adjourn was made by Judge Bell and seconded by Marc Reiter, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Hooks. The meeting was adjourned.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Becky Wilbanks, Judge, Cass County
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County
Marc Reiter, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Hooks
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County
Scott Norton, President/CEO, TexAmericas Center
Stan Wyatt, President, Northeast Texas Municipal Water District

ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb

GUESTS PRESENT

April Corbit, Workforce Solutions

Doug Avery, Bi-State Communications
Ginny Lewis Ford, Texas Association of Regional Councils
Keith Whitfield, City of Daingerfield
Meagan McBain, Bi-State Communications
Pam Dennington – Domestic Violence Prevention, Inc.
Randy Reed, Workforce Solutions
Ryan Shriver, SAFE-T Crisis Center
Tim Wilson, Northeast Texas SBDC
Todd Kleiboer, Sulphur Springs News Telegram
Wendy Herring, Bi-State Communications
Will Ramsay, Hopkins County District Attorney's Office

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Brown, Executive Director
Erin Chewing, Executive Assistant
Lisa Reeve, Area Agency on Aging Director
Leslie McBride, Human Resources Director
Mae Lewis, Housing Director
Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director
Merle Luster, 9-1-1 PSAP Operations Coordinator
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director
Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator
Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator
Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Program Director
Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Manager
Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator

L.D. Williamson, President
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:

**ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (ATCOG)
REGIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RCJAC)
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
May 13, 2021
Teleconference via ZOOM**

MINUTES

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) met May 13, 2021 2:00 p.m., by teleconference/webinar via ZOOM.

Chairman, Darrell Bruce, and ATCOG CJ Coordinator, Patricia Haley, welcomed everyone on the call and allowed extra time for others to join before calling the meeting to order since there were several members still trying to connect successfully.

Darrell Bruce, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:17 p.m.

Patricia Haley performed a roll call to record those present on the teleconference. First, a roll card of RCJAC members was performed, followed by any visitors. 12 members acknowledged their presence on the teleconference, with a quorum met. Patricia Haley, ATCOG staff member, was also present.

Patricia Haley explained the background information regarding the additional VOCA funding distribution guidance that is needed. (See Attachment A for the background summary/explanation given to the RCJAC.) Ms. Haley gave the RCJAC the opportunity to discuss and review options of necessary funding distribution guidance to submit to OOG/CJD. Several options were presented, including the option for OOG to use the scores/ranking order to distribute the allocation until the allocation amount is expended. Another option Ms. Haley presented would have a percentage of the total allocation amount awarded to each of the three VOCA applicants, with the percentage based on the original amount requested by the applicant in relation to the total allocation amount. Another option presented by Mark Buhman would have a percentage distribution based on the order of ranking.

After RCJAC members discussed the options, a motion was made by Tracey Climer to recommend that RCJAC use the percentages (as seen below), which are based on the original amount requested by the applicants and the total allocation amount. (Each applicant's percentage will be multiplied by the total regional allocation amount to determine the applicant's eligible award amount.) The motion was seconded by Max Cannaday. The motion carried with none opposed.

SAFE-T	0.65364522
DVP	0.28560061
Hopkins Co.	0.06075417

Patricia Haley asked if there was anyone else on the call who was not recorded during the original roll call. Robert McGee and Robbin Vaughn responded as being present but were not recorded on the original roll call. Robert McGee and Robbin Vaughn were not present during the voting of Item 2.

A motion to adjourn was made by Sherry Edwards and seconded by Vivian Rhoades. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherry Edwards, Red River County Juvenile Probation
Bob Hundley, Paris Police Department
Tracey Climer, Daingerfield Police Department
Vivian Rhoades, Franklin County Concerned Citizen
Tom Whitten, Bowie County Commissioner
Michael Henry, Texarkana Texas Police Department
Robert Newsom, Hopkins County Judge
Max Cannaday, Mt. Vernon ISD Police Department
Deanna Nickerson, Dept. of Family Protective Services
Ronnie Humphrey, Mt. Pleasant ISD Police Department
Darrell Bruce, Lamar County Juvenile Probation
Mark Buhman, Mt. Pleasant Police Department
Robert McGee, Queen City Police Department
Robbin Vaughn, 8th Judicial District Probation

STAFF PRESENT

Patricia Haley, ATCOG staff

Attachment A

ITEM 2:

Discuss and recommend additional guidance for the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee to submit to the OOG/CJD regarding the VOCA recommended funding.

BACKGROUND:

The Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) met by teleconference on April 6, 2021, and applicants gave a presentation about their projects and answered any questions asked by RCJAC members. Applications were scored by the 18 RCJAC members present and those scores were averaged and ranked. The scores/rankings/recommendations were submitted to the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee for their final approval before submitting the information to the Governor's Office.

At the April 29th ATCOG Board Meeting, the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee voted to adjust the VOCA recommended funding distribution to reflect a recommendation of 100% funding for all three VOCA applicants, rather than sending the recommendation that reflected the funding distribution based on the scores, order of ranking, and the estimated regional allocation available. By making the adjustment, the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee's goal was, and still is, to stress the importance of all three VOCA programs in the ATCOG region (which was reflected by less than a point difference between the three applicants' scores), the need for their sustained services, and the funding required to keep those programs going, with the hope of OOG/CJD adding funding to the current estimated VOCA allocation for the ATCOG region.

The ATCOG Board/Executive Committee realizes the importance of all funding categories that were scored and prioritized. However, there are a number of circumstances that created obstacles in the FY22 VOCA funding situation.

- VOCA federal funds have decreased, which have caused the OOG/CJD state and regional allocations to decrease.
- OOG/CJD has been transitioning from 2-yr VOCA grants back to 1-yr grants and this is the first year that all three VOCA applicants are on the same 1-yr application cycle.
- In the past number of years there has been more than enough VOCA funding available (Last year: \$549,115.20 allocation available & \$392,631.10 total requested by the two applicants).
- Transitional Housing was previously a separate funding category and application through OOG/CJD, and that separate funding is no longer available. As a result, OOG offered Transitional Housing as an eligible activity in the FY22 VOCA application and applicants across the state who previously received an OOG Transitional Housing Grant, and wished to continue those services by means of grant funds, had the option to include their transitional housing program in the VOCA application.

All three victim service programs are established and vital programs to our region, with two of those being shelters which cover different counties, but together they provide victim and shelter services covering our entire ATCOG region (SAFE-T & DVP, Inc). The third program (Hopkins County) is a victim assistance coordinator position, and we have been informed that, according to the state's Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 56A.201, "The district attorney, criminal district attorney, or county attorney who prosecutes criminal cases shall designate a person to serve as victim assistance coordinator in that jurisdiction."

RECOMMENDATION NEEDED:

The ATCOG Executive Director and Criminal Justice Coordinator have since been informed by the Victim Services Program Manager at OOG that there is very little, if any, chance of having additional funding added to our estimated regional allocation for VOCA, and there is a possibility that it could be decreased even further once the final federal allocations are received at OOG.

After receiving this information, ATCOG feels it's in the best interest of the VOCA applicants in our region for us to give OOG/CJD further guidance in the event that funds are not available to cover 100% of the three application requests. Therefore, ATCOG is requesting discussion and a recommendation from the RCJAC to forward to the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee that would give further guidance to OOG in the distribution of the VOCA funding allocation if 100% requested funding is not available.

I have attached the VOCA scoring results and the VOCA application summaries together in Attachment B for your reference as well.

BRIEFING PAPER

ITEM 5:

Review and consider approval of additional guidance to submit to the Office of the Governor regarding the VOCA projects funding.

BACKGROUND:

At the April 29th ATCOG Board Meeting, the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee voted to adjust the VOCA recommended funding distribution to reflect a recommendation of 100% funding for all three VOCA applicants, rather than sending the recommendation that reflected the funding distribution based on the scores, order of ranking, and the estimated regional allocation available. By making the adjustment, the ATCOG Board/Executive Committee's goal was, and still is, to stress the importance of all three VOCA programs in the ATCOG region (which was reflected by less than a point difference between the three applicants' scores), the need for their sustained services, and the funding required to keep those programs going, with the hope of OOG/CJD adding funding to the current estimated VOCA allocation for the ATCOG region.

The ATCOG Board/Executive Committee realizes the importance of all funding categories that were scored and prioritized. However, there are a number of circumstances that created obstacles in the FY22 VOCA funding situation.

- VOCA federal funds have decreased, which have caused the OOG/CJD state and regional allocations to decrease.
- OOG/CJD has been transitioning from 2-yr VOCA grants back to 1-yr grants and this is the first year that all three VOCA applicants are on the same 1-yr application cycle.
- In the past number of years there has been more than enough VOCA funding available (Last year: \$549,115.20 allocation available & \$392,631.10 total requested by the two applicants).
- Transitional Housing was previously a separate funding category and application through OOG/CJD, and that separate funding is no longer available. As a result, OOG offered Transitional Housing as an eligible activity in the FY22 VOCA application and applicants across the state who previously received an OOG Transitional Housing Grant, and wished to continue those services by means of grant funds, had the option to include their transitional housing program in the VOCA application.

All three victim service programs are established and vital programs to our region, with two of those being shelters which cover different counties, but together they provide victim and shelter services covering our entire ATCOG region (SAFE-T & DVP, Inc). The third program (Hopkins County) is a victim assistance coordinator position, and we have been informed that, according to the state's Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 56A.201, "The district attorney, criminal district attorney, or county attorney who prosecutes criminal cases shall designate a person to serve as victim assistance coordinator in that jurisdiction."

DISCUSSION:

The ATCOG Executive Director and Criminal Justice Coordinator have since been informed by the Victim Services Program Manager at OOG that there is very little, if any, chance of having additional funding added to our estimated regional allocation for VOCA, and there is a possibility that it could be decreased even further once the final federal allocations are received at OOG.

After receiving this information, ATCOG feels it is in the best interest of the VOCA applicants in our region for us to give OOG/CJD further guidance in the event that funds are not available to cover 100% of the three application requests. Therefore, the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) held a special meeting on May 13, 2021 to discuss and review options of necessary funding distribution

guidance to submit to OOG/CJD. The RCJAC is recommending the following percentages (as seen below), which are based on the original amount requested by the applicants and the total allocation amount. (Each applicant's percentage will be multiplied by the total regional allocation amount to determine the applicant's eligible award.) These percentages can be used with any regional allocation amount that the OOG awards to the ATCOG region for the VOCA category (See examples below).

SAFE-T = 65.364522%
DVP = 28.560061%
Hopkins County = 06.075417%

Examples at different allocation amounts (not knowing exactly what the regional allocation will be):

At the current regional *estimated* allocation amount - **\$885,192.57:**

SAFE-T amount would be \$578,601.89 (\$885,192.57 x .65364522)
DVP amount would be \$252,811.54 (\$885,192.57 x .28560061)
Hopkins County amount would be \$53,779.14 (\$885,192.57 x .06075417)

If regional allocation is **\$800,000:**

SAFE-T amount would be \$522,916.18 (\$800,000 x .65364522)
DVP amount would be \$228,480.49 (\$800,000 x .28560061)
Hopkins County amount would be \$48,603.33 (\$800,000 x .06075417)

If regional allocation is **\$700,000:**

SAFE-T amount would be \$457,551.65 (\$700,000 x .65364522)
DVP amount would be \$199,920.43 (\$700,000 x .28560061)
Hopkins County amount would be \$42,527.92 (\$700,000 x .06075417)

If regional allocation is **\$900,000:**

SAFE-T amount would be \$588,280.70 (\$900,000 x .65364522)
DVP amount would be \$257,040.55 (\$900,000 x .28560061)
Hopkins County amount would be \$54,678.75 (\$900,000 x .06075417)

If regional allocation is **\$1,266,712.33 (total of all 3 applicants' requested amounts):**

SAFE-T amount would be \$827,980.46 (\$1,266,712.33 x .65364522)
DVP amount would be \$361,773.82 (\$1,266,712.33 x .28560061)
Hopkins County amount would be \$76,958.05 (\$1,266,712.33 x .06075417)

RECOMMENDATION:

ATCOG staff and RCJAC recommend that the percentages listed above be sent to the OOG/CJD as further guidance in the distribution of the VOCA funding allocation.

RESOLUTION NO. AEC21-25

RESOLUTION OF THE ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (ATCOG) WITH REVIEW AND APPROVAL TO SUBMIT ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE TO THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR (OOG), CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION (CJD), FOR PROJECT FUNDING CONSIDERATION THROUGH THE GENERAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE – DIRECT SERVICES (VOCA) CATEGORY FOR FY2022.

WHEREAS, the Office of the Governor - Criminal Justice Division needs additional VOCA funding distribution guidance by the Ark-Tex Council of Governments; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) reviewed and discussed options for distributing the regional VOCA funding allocation in the event that 100% funding of the three VOCA applicants' requests is not available; and

WHEREAS, the RCJAC recommended using the percentages listed below, which are based on the original amount requested by the applicants and the total allocation amount (each applicant's percentage will be multiplied by the total regional allocation amount to determine the applicant's eligible award amount).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Section 1 - That the percentages listed below be submitted to OOG/CJD as additional VOCA funding distribution guidance for the FY22 VOCA applications submitted from the ATCOG region.

SAFE-T = 65.364522%
DVP = 28.560061%
Hopkins County = 06.075417%

REVIEWED THIS 27TH DAY OF MAY, 2021.

L.D. Williamson, President
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:

BRIEFING PAPER

ITEM 6:

Review and consider approval of a grant application to United Way of Lamar County in the amount of \$25,000 for the Paris Metro Bus System.

BACKGROUND

The Paris Metro fixed-route and accompanying Paratransit service were launched on July 27, 2016, operating Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Funding for this service has historically been comprised of funds from federal, state, and local levels.

DISCUSSION

United Way of Lamar County (UWLC) has been an advocate of the Paris Metro Bus System since its inception. UWLC has been a strong voice in the Paris community for Paris Metro and TRAX services both. UWLC has contributed grant funds for Paris Metro in the amount of \$25,000 for the past five years. ATCOG is requesting this amount again for FY2022. As part of the grant agreement, UWLC receives advertising space on Paris Metro buses and two Paris Metro shelters.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this grant application.

BRIEFING PAPER

ITEM 6:

Review and consider approval of a grant application to United Way of Greater Texarkana in the amount of \$7,200 for the TRAX Rural Public Transportation Program.

BACKGROUND

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments Rural Public Transit District was established in 1989, operating Monday through Friday on a demand/response (first come, first serve) basis. Funding for this service has historically been comprised of funds from federal, state, and local levels.

DISCUSSION

United Way of Greater Texarkana (UWGT) has been an advocate of the TRAX program for many years. UWGT has also been a strong voice in the greater Texarkana community for TRAX services. UWGT has contributed grant funds for the TRAX program the past few years. ATCOG is requesting funding again for FY2022. As part of the grant agreement, UWGT receives advertising space on TRAX buses.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of this grant application.

BRIEFING PAPER

ITEM 7:

Review and consider authorizing the Executive Director to execute a contract with Halff Associates, Inc., for technical consultant/engineering services for the Region 2 Lower Red-Sulphur-Cypress Flood Planning Group.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2020, the ATCOG Board of Directors approved the submission of an interest form to the Texas Water Development Board for consideration as the Region 2 Designated Flood Planning Group (RFPG) sponsor. In October 2020, ATCOG was selected as the sponsor. Therefore, on behalf of the RFPG, ATCOG is responsible for preparing and submitting grant funding applications, managing grant funds, procuring and managing contracts with technical consultants, serving as the RFPG's administrative agent, and delivering the first regional flood plan no later than January 10, 2023.

DISCUSSION:

A Technical Consultant/Engineer was procured by ATCOG fulfilling the ATCOG Procurement Policy requirements along with other requirements from the Texas Water Development Board. Halff Associates, Inc., was selected by the Region 2 RFPG at its April 2021 meeting to complete the regional flood plan. The draft contract between Halff Associates, Inc., and ATCOG is included in the addendum.

While the RFPG is responsible for the completion of the regional flood plan, ATCOG serves as the fiscal agent and has all contracting authority.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Region 2 RFPG has reviewed the initial draft contract and recommends approval to the ATCOG Executive Committee.



MEMORANDUM

To: ATCOG Staff

From: Chris Brown
Executive Director

Date: May 21, 2021

Subject: Updated ATCOG COVID Procedures and a new Telecommuting Policy

ATCOG has provided adequate time for staff to get vaccinated, if so desired, and has also shared available vaccine resources since the vaccine was made available to the public on March 29, 2021. Therefore, **effective June 1, 2021**, ATCOG procedures are as follows:

1. Staff shall resume regular schedules working 100% of the time in the office.
2. Screening
 - a. Staff shall continue to screen for symptoms including checking temperature upon arrival to work.
 - b. Staff will no longer have to complete the screening form each day, but by entering the office building, you are attesting that you do not have any COVID-19 symptoms. Signs will be posted by the temperature screening stations to serve as a reminder.
 - c. Staff experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must stay home or leave work immediately (if symptoms develop later in the day) and contact the supervisor.
3. Social Distancing
 - a. Staff should social distance when possible and continue using TEAMS and Zoom for screen sharing rather than looking over shoulders for training purposes.
 - b. The EOC and conference rooms are available for collaborating sessions.
 - c. Staff should maintain approximately 3 feet distance as a standard professional practice.
4. Travel
 - a. Staff may resume business travel as usual and are permitted to participate in meeting via video conferencing when available.
 - b. Staff should follow masks requirements of meeting sites when traveling.
5. Dress code returns to business casual as outlined in the ATCOG policy and procedures manual.
6. The office will continue being closed to the public except by appointment only.

7. The EOC is available for outside agencies to reserve.

Also, a new telecommuting policy is being drafted and will be distributed to staff once it is finalized.

These procedure changes mark the beginning stages of returning to pre-COVID-19 operations, which I know we are all looking forward to. I appreciate your support as we continue to navigate this pandemic together.

ATCOG Telecommuting Policy and Procedure

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with ATCOG.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement. Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of the organization. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, childcare and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with ATCOG for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and Manager/Director, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- Employee suitability. The employee and Manager/Director will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities. The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- Tax and other legal implications. The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and Manager/Director agree, and the human resource department concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence. See Attachment A for a sample agreement.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone, e-mail, and videoconference between the employee and the Manager/Director, and biweekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modification utilizing the Quarterly Performance Report form. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that

received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, ATCOG will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, internet equipment, phones and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. ATCOG may provide a hot spot device for telecommuter's business use while in the field, but it is expected that the telecommuter will provide adequate and reliable internet service while working within his/her own home. The human resource and information system departments will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee.

ATCOG accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. ATCOG reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all ATCOG property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made. ATCOG will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. For short-term telecommuting arrangements, ATCOG will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. For employees working remotely the majority of the time at the request of ATCOG, some essential needs may be supplied to the employee by ATCOG based on availability.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties will be investigated the same as other workers' compensation claims in accordance with policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. There shall be no business-related visitors at the home worksite. All business-related client or employee visits shall be made on ATCOG property or other preapproved public locations.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be temporarily modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family

members prior to entering a trial period.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using ATCOG's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave at the employee's request to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis.

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