

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

This announcement is not a request for applications.

This announcement is to provide public notice of the National Park Service's intention to award financial assistance for the following project activities. *Refer to Section 2. Grants.gov Posting Determination.*

ABSTRACT	
Grants.gov Opportunity Number	NPS-19-NERO-0118
Project Title	Operate, Maintain, and Enhance Acadia National Park's Alternative
Recipient	Downeast Transportation, Inc.
Anticipated Federal Funding	\$2,867,104
Non-Federal Cost Share	\$691,394
Total Anticipated Award Amount	\$3,558,498
Award Instrument	☐ Task Agreement ☒ Cooperative Agreement ☐ Grant Agreement
Anticipated Period of Performance	Through October 31, 2023
Legal Authority	54 U.S.C. §101702(a)
CFDA # and Title	15.954 National Park Service Conservation, Protection, Outreach, and
Single Source Justification Criteria	Unique Qualifications
National Park Service Point of Contact	Patrick Reidy, Grants Management Specialist 215-597-5949

Section 1. Project Summary

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Agreement is to provide an alternative transportation system that serves area residents, employees, and visitors to Acadia National Park and seven surrounding gateway communities on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula. The regional public transit system, known as the Island Explorer, will enhance access to outdoor recreation opportunities, create jobs, support the local economy, reduce traffic and parking congestion, improve public safety, help protect air quality, and help preserve the scenic beauty and natural resources of Acadia National Park while ensuring a high-quality visitor experience.

The objective of the project is to operate, maintain, and enhance the Island Explorer in cooperation with the Recipient, which is a nonprofit organization that has successfully provided public transit services in Hancock County since 1979 and is the only organization in Hancock County that operates under a contract with Maine Department of Transportation to provide flex-route public transit service.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC PURPOSE

The principal public purpose of the project is to assist in the creation, promotion, facilitation, and/or improvement of the public's understanding of natural, cultural, historic, recreational and other aspects of areas such as ecological conservation areas, and state and local parks. The project also engages recipients, partners, communities, and/or visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

The project will (1) improve air quality in and around Acadia National Park by using low-emissions fuel and reducing traffic volume, (2) improve public safety in the park by reducing illegal parking and decreasing traffic congestion, (3) enhance economic development in the region by providing access to retail, lodging, restaurants, and services, and (4) help preserve the park's resources and values, and ensure a high-quality visitor experience for current and future generations by reducing vehicle traffic.

STATEMENT OF WORK SUMMARY

The Recipient will operate and maintain the Island Explorer bus system to provide alternative transportation to an estimated ridership of over 575,000 in Acadia National Park and seven surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

A. The recipient shall be responsible for the following items under this agreement:

1. Operate and maintain a seasonal public transit system that serves Acadia National Park and its surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island and the Schoodic Peninsula.
2. Operate and maintain an Intelligent Transportation System in support of the public transit system.
3. Prepare and distribute an annual route map and timetable for the public transit system in consultation with the NPS.
4. Provide non-scheduled familiarization trips related to the project at the request of the NPS within reasonable operational and fiscal constraints.
5. Provide dedicated interior space on transit vehicles for printed NPS messaging.
6. Develop and maintain an up-to-date, user-friendly website for the public transit system that provides real-time tracking of transit vehicles.
7. Conduct annual passenger surveys to obtain public comments on the transit system and assess rider satisfaction.
8. Submit monthly and annual ridership reports, and annual passenger survey and transit inventory data to the NPS.
9. Acquire new, alternative fuel transit vehicles as needed to maintain a safe, reliable, and cost-effective fleet.

B. The NPS Responsibilities:

- ☐ A task agreement is proposed;
- ☒ A cooperative agreement is proposed;

therefore substantial involvement by NPS is anticipated during the period of performance of this agreement. In support of this agreement NPS will:

1. Permit the Recipient to operate the public transit system within Acadia National Park according to a mutually agreeable route map and timetable.
2. Provide the Recipient with all available information necessary to operate the public transit system within Acadia National Park.
3. Participate in the annual planning and development of the Island Explorer operation in Acadia National Park by advising the Recipient on route and timetable improvements, managing conflicts with other park uses, monitoring the quality of the transit service, implementing strategies to increase compliance with park entrance passes, and enhancing partnerships with other organizations and agencies.
4. Promote the Island Explorer and related activities through park publications, website, social media, and information provided at park facilities.
5. Work with federal, state, and local agencies and organizations to enhance and expand the regional transit system to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.
6. Provide the Recipient with all available information necessary to operate the transit service during the period of performance.

- ☐ A grant agreement is proposed, therefore no substantial involvement on the part of the NPS is anticipated for the successful completion of the statement of work. It is anticipated that involvement will be limited to actions related to monitoring project performance and technical assistance at the request of the recipient.

Section 2. Grants.gov Posting Determination

- ☐ The National Park Service intends to award a task agreement under a previously competed or single source justified award.
- ☒ The National Park Service intends to award a single source justified cooperative agreement. *Refer to Section 3 Single Source Justification.*
- ☐ The National Park Service intends to award a single source justified grant agreement. *Refer to Section 3 Single Source Justification.*

Section 3. Single Source Justification

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SINGLE SOURCE POLICY REQUIREMENTS

National Park Service Policy FAP&P 1443-2015-06 requires a written justification which explains why competition is not practicable. The justification must address one of the following criteria.

In order for an assistance award to be made without competition, the award must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Unsolicited Proposal – The proposed award is the result of an unsolicited assistance application which represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach which is not the subject of a current or planned contract or assistance award, but which is deemed advantageous to the program objectives;
- (2) Continuation – The activity to be funded is necessary to the satisfactory completion of, or is a continuation of, an activity presently being funded, for which competition would have a significant adverse effect on the continuity or completion of the activity. A single source on the basis of continuation must demonstrate that competition would result in a substantial duplicate cost to the government that cannot be recovered through competition;
- (3) Legislative intent – The language in the applicable authorizing legislation or legislative history clearly indicates Congress' intent to restrict the award to a particular recipient of purpose;
- (4) Unique Qualifications – The applicant is uniquely qualified to perform the activity based upon a variety of demonstrable factors such as location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications;
- (5) Emergencies – Program/award where there is insufficient time available (due to a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety) for adequate competitive procedures to be followed.

NPS did not solicit full and open competition for this award based the following criteria:

- ☐ Task Agreement issued under previously competed or single source master cooperative agreement per Section 2 above. Single Source Justification not applicable.
- ☐ Unsolicited Proposal ☐ Continuation ☐ Emergency
- ☐ Legislative Intent ☒ Unique Qualifications

Explanation of the proposed recipient's qualifications or the criteria of the proposed project which requires use of the single source criteria cited.

The Recipient is the only organization in Hancock County, Maine, that operates under a contract with MDOT to provide fixed-route public transit service. The Recipient has continually provided this service since 1979. The partners (NPS, MDOT, Federal Transit Administration, Friends of Acadia, and local municipalities) selected the Recipient to provide limited service in Acadia National Park in 1990 because they were already providing transit service from private campgrounds outside of the park to the town of Bar Harbor under a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The partners selected the Recipient based on its past performance and ability to obtain federal and state funding to offset the cost of the transit system. The successful campground service provided the model for the current system that serves Acadia National Park and the gateway communities on Mount Desert Island. The Recipient now operates 30 propane-powered transit buses equipped with bicycle racks and Intelligent Transportation System technologies, such as automated passenger counters and voice/text annunciators. The Recipient also operates its own propane bus fueling and maintenance facility in Trenton, Maine.

There are two other organizations that provide transportation services in the region that were considered, but not selected for

Section 4. Department of the Interior Secretary's Priorities

This award will support the following DOI Secretary priority(ies):

Other Key Initiatives:

- ☐ Employment of veterans.
- ☐ Supporting DOI Infrastructure needs.
- ☒ Creating jobs in the American economy.
- ☒ Access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Priority 1: Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt

- ☐ Utilize science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment.
- ☐ Examine land use planning process and land use designations that govern public use and access.
- ☐ Revise and streamline the environmental and regulatory review process while maintaining environmental standards.
- ☐ Review DOI water storage, transportation, and distribution systems to identify opportunities to resolve conflicts and expand capacity.
- ☐ Foster relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands.
- ☐ Identify and implement initiatives to expand access to DOI lands for hunting and fishing.
- ☐ Shift the balance towards providing greater public access to public lands over restrictions to access.

Priority 2: Utilizing our natural resources

- ☐ Ensure American energy is available to meet our security and economic needs.
- ☐ Ensure access to mineral resources, especially the critical and rare earth minerals.
- ☐ Refocus timber programs to embrace the entire 'healthy forests' lifecycle.
- ☐ Manage competition for grazing resources.

Priority 3: Restoring trust with local communities

- ☐ Be a better neighbor with those closest to our resources by improving dialogue and relationships with persons and entities bordering our lands.
- ☐ Expand the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife offices, water authorities, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities.

Priority 4: Ensuring sovereignty means something

- ☐ Support tribal self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty.
- ☐ Solidify mutual interests between the U.S. and the freely associated states and territories.

Priority 5: Generating additional revenues to support DOI & National interests

- ☐ Ensure that the public receives the full market value for the natural resources produced on Federal lands.
- ☐ Ensure that fees or costs levied for DOI services are reasonable and targeted to achieve cost recovery.
- ☐ Consider the impact of DOI decisions on economic development and job creation.

Priority 6: Protecting our people and the border

- ☐ Actively support efforts to secure our southern border.
- ☐ Ensure DOI law enforcement staffing addresses public safety risks anticipated on DOI land.
- ☐ Promote a "public service" demeanor within our law enforcement community.

Priority 7: Striking a regulatory balance

- ☐ Reduce the administrative and regulatory burden imposed on U.S. industry and the public.
- ☐ Ensure that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis.

Priority 8: Modernizing our infrastructure

- ☐ Support the White House Public/Private Partnership Initiative to modernize U.S. infrastructure.
- ☐ Remove impediments to infrastructure development and facilitate private sector efforts to construct infrastructure projects serving American needs.
- ☐ Prioritize DOI infrastructure needs to highlight:
 1. Construction of infrastructure;
 2. Cyclical maintenance;
 3. Deferred maintenance.

Priority 9: Reorganizing for the next 100 years

- ☐ Improve alignment and integration of the DOI organizational structure. Redistribute organizational resources (people and funding) to enhance mission achievement and improved public service.
- ☐ Improve organizational alignment with Executive Branch counterparts with major land management assets or influence.

Priority 10: Achieving our goals and leading our team forward

- ☐ Senior executives are expected to provide leadership in achieving goals of the President and the Secretary.
- ☐ The Management Team is expected to:
 1. Ensure cost-effective operations and quality service to the public;
 2. Facilitate organizational cooperation and conflict resolution;
 3. Ensure the workplace environment is conducive to employee productivity and safety;
 4. Hold individuals accountable for actions that violate DOI policies and requirements.

The proposed project does not support any of the DOI Secretary priorities, but the project is being funded for the following reasons: