Request for Kent County CARES Funds to respond to Older Adult Transportation needs during COVID19 Pandemic

Overview:

AAAWM funds a program called RideLink with Kent County Senior Millage funds. RideLink provides affordable and reliable transportation options for older adults, 60+ in age, throughout Kent County. What makes RideLink unique is that it operates off of a suggested $2 donation each way. You will not be denied a ride if you are unable to make the full donation. The demographics for RideLink are as follows; 23% are people of color with 7% being Hispanic, 45% of the riders are over the age of 75. Of those individuals who answered the question, 83% indicated they were low income. Of those individuals who answered the question about "Living Alone"; 62% said "yes" they do live alone. Donations go directly back into the program to provide more rides for older adults. Contracted partners that collaborate together to provide rides through RideLink are Hope Network, Kent County Community Action, The Rapid, Senior Neighbors Inc., and United Methodist Community House. Currently, RideLink operates on a paper manifest dispatch system. All of the rides are scheduled out of the RideLink dispatch office, which is located at the Rapid. The Rapid schedules rides until noon the day before trips are to take place. They then send the manifest to the RideLink partners to use for the next day's rides.

Covid-19 has forced RideLink to look at its weaknesses and look to the future on how we are going to provide more service. We have seen that RideLink needs to move away from paper manifest, it is inefficient and does not allow people to easily access them from home. RideLink is capable of providing more than the standard person to destination ride, it has been delivering goods and services to clients so that they do not need to leave their homes. If we look to continue this, because of its success, we need to do more to streamline our operations. If RideLink wants meet the possible influx of demand that could come post the stay-at-home order, we need to have better tracking of our vehicles and be able to grant more rides to older adults that need them.

Request:

Ecolane is a fleet management software system that will allow the contracted partners or users to; provide on-demand transportation, change schedules in real-time, provide drivers with the fastest routes to destinations, and take advantage of algorithms which streamline scheduling routes. To purchase and implement Ecolane's software, it would cost $163,600. My request is $163,600 to purchase the Ecolane software. With this software, RideLink would be able to reduce the amount of denials and increase the number of trips given. The yearly monitoring costs are $23,998, this will be paid for through the Kent Count Senior Millage to insure sustainability for RideLink and the Ecolane program. The need for safe affordable transportation for older adults is increasing daily, Ecolane would give RideLink the ability to meet that need and provide quality service.