

Downeast Community Partners (DCP)

Contact Information

Contact person: Cheryl Robbins, Transportation Services Director
Address: 248 Bucksport Road, Ellsworth, ME 04605
Telephone number: (207) 610-5932
E-mail: cheryl.robbsins@downeastcommunitypartners.org
Website: www.downeastcommunitypartners.org

Service Summary

Service area: Hancock and Washington Counties excluding Danforth in Washington County and including Isle au Haut
Type of service: Demand response, contract service

DCP Transportation Services

Service to the general public is provided almost exclusively through DCP Transportation (Downeast Community Partners.) All trips must be scheduled in advance and riders pay a fare based upon distance traveled. For those general public riders not able to be served by DCP Transportation, they may receive services on a space available basis in other vehicles.

The majority of general public riders are over 60 years of age and reside in major communities near Route 1, and the communities of Lubec, Eastport, and Blue Hill. General public riders use DCP Transportation primarily for shopping. The fares are based upon miles and mode of service provided.

DCP Transportation Services:

- 1. Eastport-Pleasant Point.** Thursday to Calais; Friday in-town Eastport.
- 2. Princeton-Baileysville.** Monday-Friday to Calais; Monday-Friday in-town Calais.
- 3. Lubec-Machias.** Monday-Friday to Machias; Tuesday in-town Lubec; Monday-Friday in-town Machias.
- 4. Milbridge-Machias.** Monday-Friday to Machias; Wednesday in-town Milbridge; Monday Four Corners in Columbia.
- 5. Other.** DCP Transportation in cooperation with Eastern Area Agency on Aging and the FTA free bus rides for seniors: first Thursday of the month Lubec and Eastport to Bangor; third Tuesday of the month Bucksport to Bangor.

DCP also provides transportation for MaineCare covered rides when such rides are arranged through the broker, as well as transportation for child protective visits upon referral by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

Summary of service changes

Downeast Community Partners (DCP – formerly Washington Hancock Community Agency Transportation Program) is still providing the additional services reported in the 2017 LCP update:

- Commuter transportation to Fair Trade Lobster in Prospect Harbor;
- Expanded demand response services in additional coastal communities including Stonington, Deer Isle and the Bar Harbor region; and
- New routes for seniors including Bucksport to Bangor shopping and Eastport/Lubec to Bangor once/month.

DCP would like to provide demand response service to Ellsworth one day per week, as well as provide door-to-door service in Bucksport for people not covered by the flex route service offered by Downeast Transportation, Inc.

Summary of Accomplishments

1. **No ride denials.** DCPs current policy is that no one will be denied a ride. DCP works very hard to ensure that all ride requests are filled. For example, an individual living in Calais needed to get to work at a campground in Eastport. DCP worked with the campground to adjust the worker's hours so that he could ride to work on one of DCP's routes. Occasionally, a ride request cannot be met.
2. **Maine Fair Trade Lobster.** Since 2014, DCP has brought about 30 workers from Hancock and Washington Counties to work at Maine Fair Trade Lobster canning factory in Prospect Harbor for the eight to nine-month season. The employer pays 50% of the transportation cost while a JARC grant pays the other 50%.
3. **Maintenance.** For the past four years, DCP has improved bus maintenance and related record-keeping, in accordance with federal and state requirements.

Future Priorities

1. **Senior shopping.** Provide transportation to seniors in an underserved area once a month to shop in Bangor. This would be from the Stonington Deer Isle area.
2. **Tribal services.** Work with the tribal offices in both Indian Township and Pleasant Point to come up with a way to provide more services for the tribes.
3. **Ellsworth service for seniors.** Provide more demand response general public transportation in Ellsworth for seniors. This would be one day a week.
4. **More vehicles.** This includes new and replacement vehicles to meet existing and future demands for transportation.
5. **Drivers.** More drivers will be needed to meet existing and future transportation needs.

6. **Local match.** This involves working with other agencies and units of government to secure the local match needed for new and replacement vehicles.
7. **Small community service.** If more money were available, DCP would provide transportation to people with no vehicle in very small communities that are not located along the Route 1 corridor.
8. **Mobility Manager.** We are very interested in learning more of the mobility manager role and the possibility of applying for this funding in the future.

Plans and Studies

DCP has not undertaken any studies of potential routes, but is working with a committee in Bucksport to expand services. DCP coordinates its services with Downeast Transportation and Friends in Action.

Ridership

DCP provides about 350 to 400 trips per day including general public and MaineCare trips. General public ridership has been increasing, although ridership growth has been greater in Washington County than in Hancock County. DCP advertises its services on its website and on Facebook, and has posted flyers in numerous locations in both counties. A growing number of younger people are riding on DCP's buses.

Downeast Community Partners Trips					
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
General Public	2,574	3,812	11,822	12,490	11,132
MaineCare	110,833	44,229	50,237	55,179	56,471
DHHS Other	7,553	9,656	15,539	10,704	8,172
Other	10,186	1,803	1,782	2,871	4,216
Total	131,146	59,500	79,380	81,244	79,991

Fares

Fare	\$2.00 in-town Machias, Eastport, Calais, Bucksport and Ellsworth. All others depend on distance ranging from \$3.00 to \$30.00. MaineCare, DHHS service: no fare
Exact Fare Required?	Yes
Electronic Fare?	No
Senior/disabled Half fare available?	Yes
Senior/disabled half fare pass required?	50% discount for seniors
Other discounts?	Low income

Multi-ride prepayment?	n/a
Monthly pass prepayment?	n/a
Passes available from:	n/a

Buses/Facilities

DCP has ordered several new buses including two (8 + 2) transit vans and two 12 +2 buses. DCP uses 16 + 2 buses for shopping. Buses are maintained at specific garages including Harmon’s in Hancock County and three garages in Washington County (one in Cherryfield, one in Pembroke, and one in Calais). Buses as large as 12+2s can be washed at Harmon’s wash bay in Ellsworth. DCP has approached Downeast Transportation, Inc., about using DTI’s wash bay at its maintenance garage in Trenton, but has not received permission to do so.

DCP uses cell phones to communicate with its drivers, but provides manifests to drivers by email or in person at either the Ellsworth or Machias office.

Agency Drivers and Volunteers

DCP has a volunteer coordinator and about 23 volunteers, most of whom are very active. Recruiting volunteers has been a challenge, even though DCP pays between 41 to 44 cents per mile, based on its contracts. DCP also pays dead-head miles. There are 35+ agency drivers, 10 more than in 2016.

Volunteer-Based Transportation Groups

DCP works with Friends in Action to coordinate trips whenever possible. Sometimes DCP is able to provide a ride requested by Friends in Action, and sometimes Friends in Action is able to do the same for DCP.

Coordination/Outreach/Partnerships/Unmet Needs

DCP coordinates with Downeast Transportation, Inc. and with Maine Fair Trade Lobster, but has found it difficult to coordinate with West’s. DCP has not been able to coordinate its services with West’s, in part because of the timing of West’s services to various communities. There has been no coordination with churches or taxi companies. DCP used to coordinate transportation with Ellsworth Dialysis, but that is now the broker’s job.

There has not been recent outreach to the Passamaquoddy Tribal Reservations at Indian Township or Pleasant Point. Some Indian Township tribal members make regular use of the service for methadone treatment. Indian Township Tribal Government has taken a position against methadone treatment, which has created a reluctance of the tribe to encourage other riders to use the same service. Pleasant Point officials consider the service desirable but too limited in times and vehicle capacity. Rides have been denied due to inadequate seats. The Tribe is interested in discussing ways to improve service.

Innovations/Creative Approaches

DCP’s Director is very community-oriented and is committed to providing transportation to everyone who requests a ride. DCP is planning to purchase tablets or cell phones for its vehicles and has talked with

Mobilitat about updating and possibly purchasing software for the tablets. A number of years ago, DCP tried using tablets but they did not work well because of poor reception and software issues.

Major Challenges

Major challenges include:

- Local match
- Finding drivers
- Lack of technology

Public Participation Summary

Downeast Community Partners participates in a variety of local groups with an interest in transportation.

1. **Commuter transportation.** DCP has had discussions with two employers, one in Washington County and one in Hancock County, regarding the possibility of commuter transportation.
2. **Transit workshop.** DCP attended the Region 2 Transit Workshop on October 12, 2016, at the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton.
3. **Flex route service to Gateway Center.** DCP has had discussions with the Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce regarding general public flex route service to the Gateway Center in Trenton.
4. **Washington County Transportation Work Group.** DCP has also participated in the Washington County Transportation Work Group.
5. **Community Care and Collaborative.** DCP attends monthly meeting with Community Care and Collaborative, where transportation is always identified as a problem within the community.