

City of Alameda
Paratransit Scope of Work
Eden I&R/211 Alameda County

Mission

Eden I&R (EIR)'s mission is to link people and resources. We envision a community empowered with information and connected to resources so that all people attain health, happiness, hope, and improved livelihoods.

Proposed Program

Eden I&R proposes to provide curb-to-curb service through TNCs (Transportation Network Companies), Lyft and Uber. Seniors and persons with disabilities who are enrolled in the East Bay Paratransit (EBP) program in the City of Alameda and have low incomes will be eligible for this service. The City of Alameda will provide Eden I&R with a list of eligible participants.

Curb-to-Curb through TNCs will transport eligible individuals within Alameda County. The service will be available Monday through Friday from 8:15am to 5:30pm. Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) may be requested Monday through Friday from 8:15am to 4:30pm with the understanding that there may not be one available; i.e. WAVs cannot be guaranteed due to Uber's limited stock in Alameda County at this writing.

The TNC concierge service provided by 211 is available in over 300 languages utilizing the Language Line Translation service. Staff on site also speak Spanish, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

The proposed project would begin on July 1, 2021 and would continue for one year. The first two months would be spent setting up the Salesforce database and enrolling participants, with the first rides taking place on September 1, 2021.

Assuming the project is successful, there is potential to extend term an additional five years, and potential for additional operational monies in future years beyond the \$75,000 annually as the program grows. Likewise, additional evening and weekend hours can be added in subsequent years.

Service Area & Costs

TNC rides will only be available for trips within Alameda County including all cities and the unincorporated areas.

Program participants will pay the first \$4 for each trip, which is the same cost of an East Bay Paratransit trip for 12 miles or less, and pay for any amount over \$20 for each trip. Participants will need to call 211 to set up an account using their credit or debit card number for billing. A family credit card or pre-paid debit card is also acceptable.

Goals, Outcomes and Impacts of the Proposed Program

1. EIR will provide trained 211 staff to answer client ride requests and from eligible participants
2. EIR will monitor each scheduled ride via the TNC platforms to ensure that all trips are successfully completed as requested
3. EIR will ensure that clients receive no more than 5 one-way trips per month. 211 will provide a personal welcome call for each new program participant to help them feel comfortable with its agency and to answer any questions.
4. EIR agrees to only schedule rides outside the agreed-upon service area when sent approval from City staff.
5. EIR will compile and submit monthly service reports of all TNC performed trips Program Participants. Reports shall include the following information:
 - a. Number of one-way trips provided using ride-hailing apps
 - b. Information in aggregate on origin and destination for same day trips
 - c. Designation of Alameda clients
 - d. Purpose of rides (employment, medical, etc.)
 - e. Aggregate demographic information on riders (if available)
 - f. Average call length and average wait time
 - g. Qualitative information on complaints for the Transportation Network Companies
 - h. Qualitative information on safety incidents for the Transportation Network Companies
 - i. Other metrics as requested by Alameda CTC
6. EIR will monitor and evaluate call center services provided to Program Participants. This program will reduce the transportation barrier seniors and persons with disabilities face in accessing critical services such as medical care, food, and employment.
7. EIR staff will conduct a training on the 211 system for Mastick Senior Center staff so that City of Alameda staff can be a better “front door” to 211 services for Alameda residents

Experience

On July 1, 2020, Eden I&R began working with the City of Hayward to schedule TNC rides for seniors and people living with Disabilities as part of their Hayward Operated Paratransit (HOP) program. To date, the EIR team has scheduled more than 2,000 rides for HOP participants. Through a temporary one-month partnership with the City of San Leandro in July 2020, EIR additionally scheduled 66 subsidized rides for seniors and people living with disabilities in San Leandro.

In FY 19-20, EIR began partnering with Lyft and United Way Worldwide to provide free rides to callers for healthcare appointments and food access. Over the past year, that program has expanded to also support callers needing rides to employment offerings. This partnership has resulted in over 300 free rides for 211 Alameda County callers to date, some of which resulted in new jobs and life-saving medical care. As part of this work, Eden I&R's Transportation Coordinator, Kimberly Pham, was selected to serve on Lyft's new national Dispatcher Advisory Council, working directly with Lyft's engineering team. In this role, Kimberly will be able to advocate for changes to Lyft's services, which will help us better serve our clients.

Benefits of Scheduling Rides Through Eden I&R/211 Alameda County

Eden I&R is an Alameda County-based nonprofit that hires members of the local community to answer 211 calls and strives to pay them a living wage. Eden I&R's staff is reflective of callers in many ways, from having shared experiences (survivors of domestic violence, formerly homeless, and/or having to navigate the social safety net themselves), to matching the racial and ethnic make-up of our callers (46% African America, 28% Latinx, 7% API, 6% Mixed Race). Over the last year, Eden I&R has committed more strongly to serving our staff and clients of color in even better, more equitable ways and are currently working with a DEI consultant. Leveraging the 24/7 multilingual call center to enter into new contracts, such as managing the Hayward Operating Program for ride scheduling, has enabled us to increase our call center staff's wages an average of more than \$3/hour over the last two years.

211 launched in 2007, and over the past 14 years the budget has increased from \$1.5M to more than \$2.5M. Funding from city and county governments for 211 has not kept up with this increase. The TNC ride scheduling program is a perfect fit for 211, as it helps contribute toward needed costs for things like the 211 phone system, while also advancing Eden I&R's mission of "connecting people and resources." This project is also part of a larger effort to coordinate mobility management services in Alameda County by using 211 as a central access point for subsidized taxi and ride-sharing programs currently offered by the various cities and unincorporated areas of Alameda County.

211's staff is additionally trained to offer additional appropriate referrals in addition to the original need of the caller. It is a "holistic" approach. For example, while scheduling a ride for a San Leandro rider last summer, the rider expressed he was struggling with grief as a result of the death of his mother. The staff member he was speaking with gently asked him if he would like grief support resources, which he was grateful to accept.

Eden I&R's transportation team takes the time to get to know the TNC riders and watches rides to make sure they are completed safely. The team also has an average answer time of 12 seconds for each call. The following examples highlights how 211 goes above and beyond in supporting our riders:

~Arlene was returning home from a medical trip, and 211 staff noticed it was taking a long time for her to get home and that she was dropped off at a different address than requested. The team gave her a call to make sure she was safe, at which point we learned her driver had turned back to help her pick up her cane she left at the medical office, then dropped her off at a restaurant for lunch. Arlene was glad 211 staff called to ensure she was safe and was not being over-charged for her ride.

~ After Myrtle was done completing her errands at the bank, she called to request a ride home. Our team informed Myrtle that the driver's estimated time of arrival was about 15 minutes. Because of the 15-minute wait time, Myrtle wanted to buy tea at the shop close by but was worried if she would make it back on time. Our team reassured her that it was enough time for her. When the driver was about 2 minutes away, we called Myrtle to let her know that the driver was nearby, and she was picked up on time. The next day, Myrtle called back and expressed appreciation for our work to ensure a successful pick up. Myrtle was glad she had access to transportation that gives her freedom to go the medical office, bank, and tea shop all in one day.

~ Peter traveled to Kaiser Emergency Room with his wife, Victoria, in a wheelchair accessible ride booked by the transportation team. The day after the appointment, Victoria informed us that an ambulance was transporting Peter to a rehab facility but was unable to take his motorized wheelchair. Victoria was concerned because she had no mode of transportation to bring her husband's wheelchair home. Thankfully, a one-time approval from the City of Hayward was granted for Victoria to use a HOP ride, and Victoria safely returned home with his wheelchair. She has since enrolled with the program herself.

~ Daniel needed a ride to fill a transportation gap. Daniel is enrolled in East Bay Paratransit, but the shuttle does not travel to his home address for pickup. Daniel called to request a ride to Safeway that is about 3 miles away from his home, so that he could meet with the East Bay Paratransit shuttle for pick-up.

Eden I&R appreciates the City of Alameda's partnership since 211 launched, and we have also been happy to operate the Homeless Hotline for the city since it launched last July.

Budget Narrative

This grant will cover 40% of the salary for a Phone Resource Specialist to assist with answering increased call volume expected to result from this program; a portion of the 211 Associate Director's salary to oversee the program rollout and integration with 211; a portion of both the Director of Programs and Executive Director's salaries for time spent on reporting and oversight; a portion of the Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper's time spent reconciling ride charges; and a percentage of various operating costs including purchasing necessary equipment

for the new Phone Resource Specialist. There is additionally \$1,215 budgeted for our Salesforce Consultant, which is approximately 9 hours of work, to build out the needed aspects of Eden I&R's database for tracking and reporting on Alameda TNC riders. Finally, the indirect line item at 8.4% is used to cover items associated with running the organization as a whole, including administrative staff salaries. The remaining \$36,800 will be used to cover the cost of TNC services through Lyft and Uber.

Eden I&R use both Uber and Lyft and offer riders the best available price at the time of booking. While Lyft is a great partner for 211, Uber currently has Wheelchair Accessible Rides, which is not something Lyft offers at this time, so our team uses both services to provide the best option to our riders. Lyft allows 211's to book rides for any program without the Business Service Fee of approximately 10% as part of their agreement with United Way Worldwide and 211's throughout the country. This savings will be passed on to the City and riders for any Lyft rides that are booked. We estimate this in-kind value is around \$1,840 since approximately half of Eden I&R's rides are booked through Lyft.

Based on our experience scheduling rides for the City of Hayward for the past year, we believe the average TNC Service cost per trip for the City of Alameda will be a \$9.61. At this rate, the City can fund 4,020 rides between the \$36,800 we have allocated for TNC service and the \$1,840 in-kind contribution from Lyft. This is equivalent to 5 rides per person for 80 participants from September 2021 – June 2022.