



Cumberland County
Public Health

Memo to the Commissioners

October 20, 2025

From: Liz Blackwell-Moore

Subject: MATI contract extension and \$700,000 for demonstration project

In 2024, the Cumberland County Public Health (CCPH) was awarded Phase 1 funding of \$150,000 from University of Minnesota's (UMN) Center for Transportation Studies for a 9-12-month planning process for a mobility management demonstration project. The goals of the planning grant were to design a ready-to-launch program that provides easy and barrier-free access to free and reduced-cost bus fare across Southern Maine and to knit the current patchwork of bus fare and navigation assistance programs into a coordinated system. The planning team was made up of the Healthy Eating Active Living team lead at CCPH, Moving Maine and a Transportation Equity Council, a group of people with lived experience of transportation barriers who provided guidance and decision making support. The planning team distributed a survey in 5 languages; had 6 listening sessions with unhoused teens, newly arrived asylum seekers, older adults, and people with disabilities, and conducted local and national research.

In July of this year, CCPH submitted a plan for a demonstration project called Dirigo Access, an income-eligible fare program with reduced and free fare categories that would be delivered through a network of community-based organizations. With funding from the Federal Transit Administration, UMN has chosen Cumberland County Public Health's to be one of four demonstration projects to move forward to Phase 2. Phase 2 would be an extension of the current contract with UMN and CCPH will be awarded \$700,000 over 2 years to implement the Dirigo Access demonstration project and create a cooperative purchasing model that will fund the pass program beyond the two-year demonstration project period. CCPH will continue to collaborate with Moving Maine, Greater Portland Council of Governments and a few community based organizations who will act as "HUB"s for delivering the bus fare program to eligible recipients. CCPH will hire a MATI Coordinator to support the two-year project.

No matching funds are required and no additional county funding will be needed to complete the requirements of the grant.