Due to changes in Federal Regulations concerning public transit agencies performing service which qualifies as “charter”, Ozark Regional Transit has amended our policies/procedures in order to be in full compliance.

Definitions:

- **Charter Service**: Transportation provided at the request of a third party for the exclusive use of a vehicle for a negotiated price.
  
  Characteristics of a charter service:
  
  1. 3rd party pays the transit provider a negotiated price for the group.
  2. Fares charged to individual members of the group are collected by a 3rd party.
  3. Service is not part of ORT's regularly scheduled service, or is offered for a limited time.
  4. 3rd party determines the origin & destination of the trip as well as scheduling.
  5. Public events or functions occurring on an irregular basis or for a limited durations.
  6. Premium fare is charged greater than the usual fixed route fare.
  7. The service is paid for in whole or part by a 3rd party.

- **Exclusive**: service that a reasonable person would conclude is intended to exclude members of the public.

- **Program Purposes**: transportation that serves the needs of either human service agencies, or targeted populations (elderly, disabled, and/or low income); this does not include exclusive service for other groups formed for purposes unrelated to the special needs of the targeted population identified.

- **Qualified human service organization**: org. that serves persons who qualify for human service or transportation related programs or services due to disability, income, or advanced age.

Under the current charter regulations, ORT may provide charter service under the following exceptions:

**Government officials on official government business**

- For official government business which may include non-transit related purposes.
- Must provide the service in its service area.
- Does not generate revenue from the service, except as required by law.
- Documents the service in the charter logs.
- Limited to 80 charter hours only.

**Qualified human service organizations (QHSO)**

- May provide service to a QHSO for the purpose of serving persons:
  1. Mobility limitations related to advanced age.
  2. Persons with disabilities.
  3. Low income.
  4. QHSO receives funding from approved governmental programs.
  5. Documents the service in the charter logs.

**Leasing FTA funded equipment and drivers**

- ORT may lease vehicles and drivers for charter service if:
  1. Private charter operate registered on FTA website.
  2. Charter operator owns and operates buses or vans.
  3. Charter provider received a request which exceeds its vehicle capacity.
  4. Charter provider exhausted all of the available vehicles from other registered charter operators.
  5. ORT must document leasing in the charter logs.

**When no registered charter provider responds to notice from Ozark Regional Transit**

- ORT may provide charter service on its own initiative or at request of a third party if no registered charter provider responds to the notice issued.
- Within 72 hours if requested in less than 30 days.
- Within 14 calendar days if 30 days or more.
- ORT must document this in the charter logs.

**Agreement with registered charter providers**

- ORT may provide charter service directly to a customer if an agreement is entered into with all of the registered charter providers in the area.
- If a new charter operator registers in the area, current agreement is valid for 90 days.
- Parties may cancel the agreement at any time after 90 day notice.

**Reporting requirements for all exceptions**

- ORT must provide quarterly reporting to FTA when performing charter service.
Ozark Regional Transit, in accordance with the provisions of 49 CFR, Part 604, will periodically provide transit bus charters of short duration within the Ozark Regional Transit area of service (Benton, Carroll, Madison and Washington Counties).

Most charters consist of non-profit agencies, governmental, local business, social functions and are restricted to within our service area as described above. Charter times are open and include day and night time charters, seven days a week. Charters often require accessible buses to accommodate wheelchair passengers.

Ozark Regional Transit conducts these charters utilizing its fleet of Gillig Phantoms and “cutaway” buses. All vehicles are ADA accessible and wheelchair lift equipped.

**Scope of Services**

1. Service will only be provided in Benton, Carroll, Madison and Washington Counties.
2. Service will begin and end at our facility on 2423 East Robinson Avenue.
3. Ozark Regional Transit will make transit available in cases where willing and able providers need additional capacity to perform a given charter trip.
4. Providing charter service will not impact day to day bus service to the general public either by equipment needs or manpower requirements.
5. ORT will charge a rate per hour for charter service which insures complete recovery of costs associated with providing the service.

**Determining “willing & able” private operators.**

1. Each time ORT receives a request for charter service interested in performing, ORT will notify private charter operators located in our geographic service area. The list of registered charter providers is located by accessing the FTA Charter Registration Website and following the instructions.
2. Ozark Regional Transit will notify private charter operators via email or fax of any request for charter service ORT desires to perform.
3. If no “willing & able” charter providers respond to the notice in the time allotted under the current regulations, ORT shall provide charter service when equipment and manpower are available.
4. Ozark Regional Transit will not provide any charter service using equipment and facilities funded under the acts to the extent there is at least one willing and able private charter operator who expresses an interest in performing the service.
5. All charter service in which ORT provides will be documented and recorded both internally as well as utilizing the FTA’s TEAM Online Reporting Website.