



## Final Report Form and PowerPoint Guidelines

The purpose of this report is to document the strategies you implemented for this project, the outcomes, and to help others learn from your experience. Please be honest about any challenges you faced, or things you would have done differently. Some of the information and photos/graphics from this report may be made available to the public, but we will get your permission in advance.

There are no character limits, but be as concise as you can, while including all pertinent information and data you have collected. Most questions are required, but some are noted as being optional. You can fill out this form in SurveyMonkey Apply or you can type your responses in Word and email them to your project manager with any other files you want to submit.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Please provide a 1-3 paragraph summary with the crux of what people need to know about your project and the key outcomes.**

Color Express was set to develop innovative flexible routing across nine rural counties to promote increased access to higher education, reduce transportation as a barrier to expand higher education, increase training opportunities, and deploy innovative technologies that will facilitate and improve the quality of life for the residents in the rural counties of the Coastal Bend.

With the performance of extensive outreach, establishing and maintaining networking opportunities with gatekeepers of the region through coalitions, creating partnerships with ISD's and colleges in South Texas, Color Express gained much attention. Appearances on morning television shows, radio interviews, radio ads and billboards were beneficial with sharing this transportation resource. The addition of new integrated technologies to improve efficiency of transit operations to Wi-Fi services for riders received many compliments in our rider surveys.

Color Express increased awareness of public transportation services for residents in rural counties and with the establishment of flexible routing to educational institutions that improved the availability, efficiency, and sustainability of transit services to and from higher education. On-going discussions with partnered schools regarding transitioning to a compensated phase are occurring, and one of the partnered schools has transitioned with an agreement.

## TELL YOUR PROJECT'S STORY - Who, What, Where, When Why & How

- **Describe where your agency is located and the service area for the project.** REAL, Inc. is located in Alice, Texas. REAL, Inc. serves 9 counties in the Coast Bend area of South Texas, including Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Live Oak, Refugio, and San Patricio counties.
- **What was the problem or need that this project hoped to address?** The project hoped to address the need for development of a partnership that would help reduce transportation as a barrier in accessing higher education by residents from rural counties of the Coastal Bend.
- **What were the original project goals, and did they change all over time?** The goal of the Color Express was to develop innovative flexible routing across nine rural counties to promote increased access to higher education, reduce transportation as a barrier to expand higher education, increase training opportunities, and deploy innovative technologies that will facilitate and improve the quality of life for the residents in the rural counties of the Coastal Bend.
- **Who were your project partners? Who was your most effective partner?** Project partners were: Coastal Bend College, Del Mar College, Odem ISD, and St. John Paul II High School. Our most effective partners were St. John Paul II High School and Coastal Bend College.
- **Who was the target audience for the project?** Our targeted audience was multi-level; the primary target population was rural residents across a nine-county area of the Coastal Bend region. Young adults aged 16-26 enrolled in or attended courses and training throughout partnered institutions. The secondary populations are local ISD's, county governments and colleges located across the region.
- **What strategies did you use to implement the project?** We used extensive outreach throughout the community, radio ads, billboards, interviews on radio and television shows, and outreach at high schools, colleges, and universities in our service area to implement the project and throughout the project.
- **What resources did you use? (e.g., outside funding, technology, technical assistance, consultant expertise, training, partners, etc.)** Billboards, radio ads and our partnered colleges website and social media platforms. Through the assistance of one of our partnered colleges, we were able to connect with students through the registration process, which gave us the opportunity to be a resource to students during registration for classes.
- **Did the project follow your anticipated timeline? If not, why?** The project was a success, this service had a huge demand and certainly exceeded all our expectations.
- **Is there a website or page where one could learn more about your services related to this project? – OPTIONAL**

<https://www.kiiitv.com/article/news/local-transit-company-providing-free-transportation-for-college-students-in-rural-communities-to-from-campus/503-7e95113d-084f-478f-92f7-0b71fcfce985>

- *Please include in this document (or submit separately) any maps or other images that help provide context or demonstrate the impact of your project.*

## OUTCOMES, IMPACT & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- **What were the project outcomes? Did you achieve your project goals?** We reduced transportation as a barrier in accessing higher education by residents from rural counties of the Coastal Bend, increased awareness of public transportation services for residents in rural counties, established flexible routing to educational institutions and integrated new technologies that improved efficiencies of transit operations to Wi-Fi services for riders.
- **What impact has this project had on passengers, partners, the transit agency, and/or the broader community?** We believe this project was innovative as it served the rural regions' identified needs.
- **If you have testimonials from people impacted by the project, share them here, ideally with their name and who they are (rider, partner, etc.). You can also share a link to any video testimonials.** *"The Color Express program gave me the opportunity to complete my last semester of college. When my family only had one car at home that my parents used for work and we lived an hour away from the college, I did not think I would be able to finish my last semester. Color Express was a blessing for me, I see the finish line!" – Fernando (Rider)*
- **Please share your performance measures here and/or as a chart or spreadsheet attachment.** Please see attachment.
- **Were your initial performance measures valuable, or how have they changed? How will you measure the value of this project going forward?** Yes, initial performance measures were valuable. Increased ridership and trips along with successful outreach, networking and distribution of outreach items was very beneficial throughout this project.
- *Please include in this document (or submit separately) at least one chart or spreadsheet to show the data you collected for your performance measures and the impact of your project.*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

- **What about this project are you most proud of?** Several reasons, breaking the barrier for rural students to receive higher education, gaining ridership after the project from rural students and transitioning a partner to a compensated phase with an agreement.
- **What challenges or barriers did you face, internal or external?** At the beginning of the project due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were limited face to face public outreach events. Once restrictions were lifted and public events conducted, the ability to expand outreach in the service areas of nine counties increased, along with coalition meetings.

- **What would you do differently if you had the chance?**

One thing I would do differently is work at reaching existing students much sooner and not completely rely on existing educational institutions. Had we launched a more aggressive reach-out to students, we would have been able to connect with those benefiting from the service. In addition, the educational institutions proved to be very good facilitators, simply advancing the project at a much slower rate than the needed speed.

- **If another transit agency was about to start a similar project, what would you want them to know? What could other stakeholders (government agencies, local businesses, advocates, riders, etc.) learn from your project?** Important factors to emphasize would be outreach in the community, developing communication with ISD's, colleges and universities is key.
- *Please include in this document (or submit separately) any other files that demonstrate your project outcomes. (e.g., updated marketing materials, reports from consultants, etc.) - OPTIONAL*

## PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

- **What is the future of the project or service? Is ongoing funding secured?** The Color Express project has come to an end, we are communicating with partnered schools about the possibility of transitioning over to a compensated phase.
- **How will your partnership(s) continue after this project?** We have secured an agreement with one of our partnered schools, on-going discussions with other partnered schools and colleges could transition as well.
- **Will any policies, plans, or procedures that were developed during the project continue to be used?** Riders will continue to use the integrated new on-board technologies such as Wi-Fi. Long term the project will enhance employment options for rural residents and improve quality of life.
- **Would you have been able to implement this project/service without this grant? (Yes, no, Unsure)** No, we are on limited funding and would not have been able to implement this project.
- **Is there anything else you want to share about your project that did not fit into any of the questions above? - OPTIONAL**

## POWERPOINT GUIDELINES

- In addition to answering the above questions, please submit a PowerPoint (or conference poster) either in SurveyMonkey or via email to your project manager. If you are interested in doing a conference poster and would like to learn more or see a template, let us know!
- The presentation length should be approximately 15-20 minutes or 15-20 slides and should utilize the Widescreen (16:9) format.

- The audience for the presentation is primarily other rural or tribal transit agencies, but also potentially local, state, or federal agencies or other transit stakeholders.
- Tell the story of the project, with who, what, where, when, why, and how, just to give enough context. Then focus on the outcomes and the lessons you learned and what others can learn from the project.
- Use pictures, maps, and charts to depict your geographic area, service delivery, operations, performance measures, and/or community impact, etc.
- Include testimonials from those involved and impacted, if possible.

# Performance Measures



