



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

James Hunter Williams
Commissioner

December 6, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Co-Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

Michael Maul
Director, Department of Planning and Budget

FROM: James H. Williams *James Williams*

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Public Transportation Services with Virginia Transit

This report is submitted pursuant to Item 331.R. of the 2024 Appropriation Act, which states:

R. Out of this appropriation, \$500,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant shall be provided to the Virginia Transit Association to offer competitive grants for public transportation (as defined in Virginia Code §33.2-100) and public transportation demand management service fare passes. The Virginia Transit Association shall report on annual program performance and outcome measures contained in the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services. The department shall report on any performance and outcome data collected through the memorandum of understanding by July 1 of each year. This report shall be

provided to the Governor, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees.

Please contact me should you have questions at (804) 726-7011.

JW:kc

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources



Implementation of TANF-Funded Virginia Transit Association Projects in State Fiscal Year 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	ii
Report Mandate.....	iii
Executive Summary	iii
Definitions	1
Program Overview.....	1
Contacts.....	1
Implementation of TANF-Funded Virginia Transit Association Projects in State Fiscal Year 2024.....	2
Section 1 Background	2
Section 2 SFY 2024 Projects	2
Giles Health and Family Center - Giles County Access to Community Transportation (GCACT).....	2
City of Richmond, Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (OETM) – Free Rides to Work..	3
FARRR Foundation Inc. – Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation (LTC)	3
Section 2 Conclusion.....	3
Appendix A item 331.R. of The 2024 Appropriation Act.....	4

IMPLEMENTATION OF TANF-FUNDED VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION PROJECTS IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024

A Report for the Virginia General Assembly

July 01, 2024

REPORT MANDATE

Item 331.R. of the 2024 Appropriation Act

Item 331.R. Out of this appropriation, \$500,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant shall be provided to the Virginia Transit Association to offer competitive grants for public transportation (as defined in Virginia Code §33.2-100) and public transportation demand management service fare passes. The Virginia Transit Association shall report on annual program performance and outcome measures contained in the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services. The department shall report on any performance and outcome data collected through the memorandum of understanding by July 1 of each year. This report shall be provided to the Governor, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, by September 1 each year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In State Fiscal Year 2024, the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) was provided \$500,000 from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. Of those funds, VTA awarded \$318,648 through competitive grants to the following subrecipients who provided reimbursement:

- Giles Health and Family Center - Giles County Access to Community Transportation (GCACT)
- Richmond Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (OETM)
- Rockingham Rural Transit Demonstration - Jaunt, Inc. (Jaunt)
- FARRR Foundation Inc. - Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation (LTC).



15,306 on-demand or vanpool trips provided at a value of **\$318,648**.

This program promotes access to employment or job training through public transit, helping families achieve self-sufficiency and independence.

About VDSS and TANF & Virginia Transit Association

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) partners with local departments of social services and community organizations, to promote the well-being of children and families across the Commonwealth.

We proudly serve alongside nearly 13,000 state and local human services professionals throughout the Social Services System, who ensure that thousands of Virginia's most vulnerable citizens have access to the best services and benefits available to them.

Together, we work each day to serve, empower, and create opportunities for brighter futures.

The TANF block grant funds VTA's Transit Zero-Fare program for Working Families. This program helps families achieve self-sufficiency and independence by promoting access to employment or job training through public transit.

DEFINITIONS

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – TANF

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides a temporary, monthly cash payment to families with eligible children living in their home to help meet their basic needs.

Virginia Transit Association – VTA

The Virginia Transit Association (VTA) provides public education and legislative advocacy to support public transportation systems throughout the Commonwealth. The VTA has 125+ total members, which include transit properties, business, regional entities, and non-profit and organizational associate members.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The TANF Block Grant designates funding to VTA who, through their Transit Zero-Fare for Working Families program, offers competitive grants to organizations that can provide public transportation to people participating in the TANF program. This program promotes access to employment or job training through public transit, which helps families achieve self-sufficiency and independence.

CONTACTS

Author

Mark Golden, TANF Program Manager

Mark.Golden@dss.virginia.gov, 804.726.7385

Implementation of TANF-Funded Virginia Transit Association Projects in State Fiscal Year 2024

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly appropriated TANF block grant funds to the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) for competitive grants for transportation projects. Reports on prior year grantees and their programs can be found on the Legislative Information System. .

The Virginia General Assembly, in Item 331.R. of the 2024 Appropriation Act, appropriated \$500,000 for each year in the 2023-2024 biennium budget in TANF block grant funds to VTA for competitive grants for public transportation projects. Information on the State Fiscal Year 2023 programs can be found in the “Annual Report on TANF Funded Projects by the Virginia Transit Association September 2023”.

SECTION 2 SFY 2024 PROJECTS

In SFY24, the VTA awarded a total of \$318,648 through competitive grants to the following subrecipients:

- Giles Health and Family Center - Giles County Access to Community Transportation (GCACT)
- Richmond Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (OETM) - Van Share Pilot
- Jaunt, Inc. - Rockingham Rural Transit Demonstration (RRTD)
- FARRR Foundation Inc. - Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation (LTC)

While GCACT and OETM are returning participants with established programs, Jaunt, Inc. and the FARRR Foundation, Inc. were first-year recipients. Jaunt, Inc. was unable to launch an operable program in the required timeframe, resulting in the termination of their contract for SFY2024.

GILES HEALTH AND FAMILY CENTER - GILES COUNTY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION (GCACT)

GCACT leverages participation in the county’s program “Focus on Communities Utilizing Services” (FOCUS), a county hub connecting local government representatives, community support groups, volunteers, medical professionals, and other potential referral sources. GCACT maintains community awareness of their transportation program by attending the monthly FOCUS meetings.

In SFY2024 GCACT provided 969 transit passes at a value of \$36,000

CITY OF RICHMOND, OFFICE OF EQUITABLE TRANSIT AND MOBILITY (OETM) – FREE RIDES TO WORK

OETM is utilizing the grant contract to aid in achieving its goal of offering free, reliable, and efficient transportation to underserved citizens. Demand is so high that OETM continues to maintain an extensive waiting list. OETM intends to expand program capacity by 25% in SFY2025 and will likely hire a second vendor, or subrecipient, to meet demand. OETM is also in the process of establishing a permanent multiyear contract with their current subrecipient.

These services support full-time employment for over 50 people using the service every month.

In SFY2024 OETM provided 13,731 vanpool transit passes at a value of \$275,493.16.

FARRR FOUNDATION INC. – LIGHTHOUSE COOPERATIVE TRANSPORTATION (LTC)

Upon award of the grant, FARRR who is a first-year grantee, contracted Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation (LTC). LTC is a cooperative transportation initiative between FARRR Foundation and the transportation provider Unified Potential (MoveUp). LTC offers on-demand public vanpools in the City of Lynchburg and the counties of Amherst, Bedford, and Campbell where more than 17% of the population lives below the federal poverty level.

MoveUp uses a proprietary smartphone application that continuously tracks all utilization data in real time including origination and end points of trips, drivers and passengers, distance traveled, and time in transit.

FARRR established its program and began providing services in September of 2023. Demand for services picked up in the second quarter when it provided over 300 rides. However, in the second quarter of SFY2024, ridership declined to 83 rides. Due to this decrease in ridership, FARRR did not fully expend the awarded funding.

In SFY2024 LTC provided 606 transit passes at a value of \$7,155

SECTION 2 CONCLUSION

In SFY2024 the demand for public transportation continues to rise, as reflected in ridership increases among VTA grant recipients.

During this reporting period both returning grant subrecipients sustained and expanded their capacity to deliver services consistent with the goals outlined in their project proposals. They maintained and bolstered referral networks by showcasing the availability and benefits of their programs. These programs celebrated success thanks to their general and targeted efforts in reaching potentially eligible individuals. They created accessible programs while assessing referrals and providing services to enrollees. Together, VTA and their grant recipients are helping Virginians gain self-sufficiency and independence.

APPENDIX A ITEM 331.R. OF THE 2024 APPROPRIATION ACT

R. Out of this appropriation, \$500,000 the first year and \$500,000 the second year for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant shall be provided to the Virginia Transit Association to offer competitive grants for public transportation (as defined in Virginia Code §33.2-100) and public transportation demand management service fare passes. The Virginia Transit Association shall report on annual program performance and outcome measures contained in the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services. The department shall report on any performance and outcome data collected through the memorandum of understanding by July 1 of each year. This report shall be provided to the Governor, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, by September 1 each year.