



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

October 30, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

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

Michael Maul
Director, Department of Planning and Budget

FROM: Kevin Erskine 

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Public Transportation Services with Virginia Transit

This report is submitted pursuant to Item 331.R. of the 2025 Appropriation Act, which states:

S. Out of this appropriation, \$1,000,000 the first year and \$1,000,000 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 Ser

vices. 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.

KE: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 2025

Table of Contents

Implementation of TANF-Funded Virginia Transit Association Projects in State Fiscal Year 2025.....	v
Report Mandate.....	v
Executive Summary	v
Definitions	vi
Program Overview.....	vi
Contacts.....	vi
Author	vi
Implementation of TANF-Funded Virginia Transit.....	1
Association Projects in State Fiscal Year 2025	1
Section 1 Background	1
SECTION 2 Projects in State Fiscal Year 2025.....	1
Giles Health And Family Center – Giles County Access To Community Transportation	1
City Of Richmond, Office Of Equitable Transit And Mobility – Free Rides To Work.....	2
Farr Foundation Inc. – Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation.....	2
Section 3 Conclusion.....	3
Appendix A Item 331.R. Of The 2025 Appropriation Act	4

IMPLEMENTATION OF TANF - FUNDED VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION PROJECTS IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025

A Report for the Virginia General Assembly

September 01, 2025

REPORT MANDATE

Item 331.R. of the 2025 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 (SFY) 2025, the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) was provided \$500,000 from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. Of those funds, VTA awarded \$458,000 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)
- FARRR Foundation Inc. - Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation (LTC).



**12,834 on-demand or vanpool trips
provided at a value of \$297,798.**

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

About VDSS and TANF

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 ZeroFare 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, businesses, regional entities, and non-profit and organizational associate members.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The TANF Block Grant designates funding to VTA which, 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 and/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 2025

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly appropriated TANF block grant funds to the 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 2025 Appropriation Act, appropriated \$500,000 for each year in the 2025-2026 biennium budget in TANF block grant funds to VTA for competitive grants for public transportation projects. Information on SFY 2024 programs can be found in the “Annual Report on TANF Funded Projects by the Virginia Transit Association September 2024”.

SECTION 2 PROJECTS IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2025

In SFY 2025, the VTA awarded a total of \$458,000 through competitive grants to the following subrecipients:

- \$67,500 - Giles Health and Family Center-Giles County Access to Community Transportation (GCACT)*
- \$371,232 - Richmond Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility
- \$19,268 - FARRR Foundation Inc., -Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation

**GCACT’s program was in its fourth year, OETM in its third year, and LTC in its second year.*

GILES COUNTY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

Giles County Access to Community Transportation (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.

Two low-income housing areas generate the most referrals and riders and consist of mainly single mothers enrolling their children in childcare. The childcare center director makes referrals to the TANF program, and thus, to the transportation program. GCACT staff stated, *“For those that have used this program it has made a huge difference in their lives. We have been able to prioritize these trips to make sure these riders get the opportunity to work on time and have childcare and even expanded our hours to accommodate many of them due to the shifts they were assigned.”*

In SFY 2025, GCACT provided 690 transit passes at a value of \$34,200. This is a reduction from SFY 2024 when 969 transit passes were provided.

CITY OF RICHMOND, OFFICE OF EQUITABLE TRANSIT AND MOBILITY

City of Richmond’s Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (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. The OETM Programs and Operations Supervisor noted, *“As always, educating our new participants on the parameters and expectations of the program continues to be essential for success. We worked with our participants and our vendors to make sure that they scheduled their rides as far in advance as possible, set reasonable pick-up times, and were ready to be picked up.”*

The following article appeared in The Richmonder in January 2025: <https://www.richmonder.org/a-richmond-program-that-offers-parents-in-need-free-rides-to-work-is-set-to-expand/>

In SFY 2025 OETM provided 11,102 vanpool transit passes at a value of \$238,830. This is a reduction from SFY 2024, when 13,731 passes were provided.

FARRR FOUNDATION INC. – LIGHTHOUSE COOPERATIVE TRANSPORTATION

The Farr Foundation, Inc.’s Lighthouse Cooperative Transportation Program (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 reports that MoveUp’s current clients are actively working and using the program more consistently and keeping steady jobs compared to earlier clients. In one case, a participant successfully achieved income that moved her out of eligibility.

In SFY 2025 LTC provided 1,042 transit passes at a value of \$24,768. This is an increase over SFY 2024, when 606 transit passes were provided.

SECTION 3 CONCLUSION

In SFY 2025, the demand for public transportation continues to rise, as reflected in ridership totals among VTA grant recipients.

These three subrecipient programs reflect both shared and divergent characteristics. What is consistent—whether in rural Giles County or the City of Richmond—is that a severe transportation gap separates many Virginians from education, job training, employment, medical care, community services, and food access.

OETM and GHFC have become transportation mainstays in their communities, reliably supporting full time employment for residents. FARRR expanded its service area in SFY 2025 and gained experience in outreach, recruitment, and retention. Together, VTA and their *Zero Transit for Working Families Grant* recipients are helping Virginians gain self-sufficiency and independence.

APPENDIX A ITEM 331.R. OF THE 2025 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.