

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	March 1, 2021
Action Required:	Appropriation of Grant Funds
Presenter:	Hollie Lee, Chief of Workforce Development Strategies
Staff Contacts:	Hollie Lee, Chief of Workforce Development Strategies
Title:	Virginia Transit Association (V.T.A.) Free Transit Fare for Working Families Grant – \$180,750

Background:

In August 2020, the City of Charlottesville, through the Office of Economic Development (O.E.D.), received an award from the Virginia Transit Association (V.T.A.) in the amount of \$180,750 for the Free Transit Fare for Working Families Grant Program. The funding will be used to provide transportation for employment purposes to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (T.A.N.F.) eligible persons and/or individuals with a dependent child whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level from July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Transportation will be provided in the form of bus rides through Charlottesville Area Transit (C.A.T.) and/or on-demand transportation provided by Jaunt, Inc. (Please note that C.A.T. is currently not charging for bus passes, so it is anticipated that most of the funding will go towards on-demand transportation.) Transportation for employment purposes include, but are not limited to: interviews, job search, employment, training, and childcare for dependent children. The entire Charlottesville region is covered by the grant, including: the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle, Buckingham, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson counties.

The Downtown Job Center, which will administer the program, will document and verify T.A.N.F. and income eligibility with the assistance of C.D.S.S. Quarterly status reports will be submitted to V.T.A. and Virginia's Department of Social Services, and full and accurate project records will be maintained for the duration of the grant program. This grant will be executed in partnership with the Charlottesville Department of Social Services (C.D.S.S.), Network2Work @ Piedmont Virginia Community College, and Jaunt, Inc. There have also been letters of support from multiple employer partners outside of existing City bus lines, including the Walmart Distribution Center, Crutchfield Corporation, and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation (Monticello and the Distribution Center at Ivy).

The V.T.A. grant does not require a local match. All funding is designated for direct transportation services for clients.

Discussion:

In July 2013, the City's Strategic Action Team on Workforce Development (SAT) issued a report to City Council entitled, *Growing Opportunity: A Path to Self-Sufficiency*. The report, which was

subsequently endorsed by Council, examines the barriers to employment for low-income City residents and makes recommendations on how to address these barriers. One of these barriers includes transportation and the impact it has on residents being able to get to and from work and mid-skilled jobs that pay a self-sufficient wage.

The O.E.D. has attempted to mitigate the increasing inaccessibility to appropriate employment opportunities by developing and executing programs through partnerships with other public and private sector agencies. One such initiative is the GO Ride program wherein individuals in an active job search or starting at a new job are eligible for short term free bussing through C.A.T. Bus passes are available for City residents who can provide proof of residence and actively work with Downtown Job Center staff to meet their employment needs. The program is for those who rely on public transportation to commute and cannot afford to purchase passes or have had circumstances that make commuting to work difficult. Those who are in an active job search and work with staff to submit applications, prepare resumes and other employment-centric tasks are eligible for a 7-day pass, with the idea that it will help with getting people to and from appointments, interviews, and in dropping off completed applications. Anyone who has recently found employment is eligible for one 30-day pass, with the idea being acute transportation needs can be addressed during that period as the person starts earning income.

In support of a new on-demand transportation service and an expansion of OED's existing GO Ride program, the V.T.A. grant funding will allow City residents without reliable transportation the opportunity to obtain employment with employers located beyond the City bus lines in outlying counties.

Alignment with Council Vision Areas and Strategic Plan:

This effort supports City Council's "Economic Sustainability" vision and aligns directly with the SAT's *Growing Opportunity* report that was approved by City Council in 2013.

It also contributes to the following goals and objectives in the City's Strategic Plan:

Goal 4: A Strong, Creative and Diversified Economy

- Objective 4.1: Develop a quality workforce

Goal 1: An Inclusive Community of Self-sufficient Residents

- Objective 1.2: Prepare residents for the workforce

It aligns with Chapter 3 on Economic Sustainability in the Comprehensive Plan, and more specifically Goal 6, which focuses on workforce development and being an effective partner in creating a well-prepared and successful workforce.

Community Engagement:

Like practically all of the City's workforce development efforts, the GO Ride on-demand transportation program is supported by numerous community agencies and organizations. This includes: the City of Charlottesville Department of Social Services (C.D.S.S.), Network2Work @ Piedmont Virginia Community College, and Jaunt, Inc. There have also been letters of support from multiple employer partners outside of existing City bus lines, including the Walmart Distribution Center, Crutchfield Corporation, and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation (Monticello and the Distribution Center at Ivy).

Budgetary Impact:

There is no budget impact for the City of Charlottesville as no local match is required. This grant will be entirely State, and Federal pass-through funds.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of grant funds.

Alternatives:

If grant funds are not appropriated, City residents without access to reliable transportation will not have access to potential job opportunities beyond City bus lines.

Attachments:

- V.T.A. Free Fare Grant Proposal
- V.T.A. Free Fare Grant Agreement – Fully Executed

APPROPRIATION

**Virginia Transit Association (V.T.A) Free Transit Fare for Working Families Grant
\$180,750**

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville has received grant funds from the Virginia Transit Association in the amount of \$180,750; and

WHEREAS, the funds will be administered by the Office of Economic Development through the Downtown Job Center and used to support transportation for program participants for employment purposes; and

WHEREAS, the grant award covers the period from July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that the sum of \$180,750 is hereby appropriated in the following manner:

Revenue – \$180,750

\$180,750 Fund: 210 IO: 1900392 G/L: 430120 State/Fed pass thru

Expenditures - \$180,750

\$180,750 Fund: 210 IO: 1900392 G/L: 599999 Lump Sum

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this appropriation is conditioned upon the receipt of \$180,750 from the Virginia Transit Association.

Free Transit Fare for Working Families Program Grant Application Form

Application Instructions

Applications for the Free Transit Fare for Working Families (Free Transit Fare) grant program will be accepted from June 22 to July 10, 2020. To apply, please complete the following application form in its entirety and enclose the following supplemental supporting documents:

- a) **Cover letter** on organizational letterhead certifying the proposed project and outcome reporting can commence in September 2020.
- b) **Letter of support** from the identified transit service provider(s) acknowledging the proposed project and certifying that ridership data can be provided as described.
- c) **Project budget form** completed utilizing the template provided.

The application narrative is limited to the space provided in Section C.

Application Form

A. Sub-Recipient Information

Sub-Recipient Name:		
Entity Type:	Municipality <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If "other", please describe:</i>
	Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Transit Provider <input type="checkbox"/>	
Point of Contact:	Name:	
	Title:	
	Phone:	
	E-mail:	
	Address:	

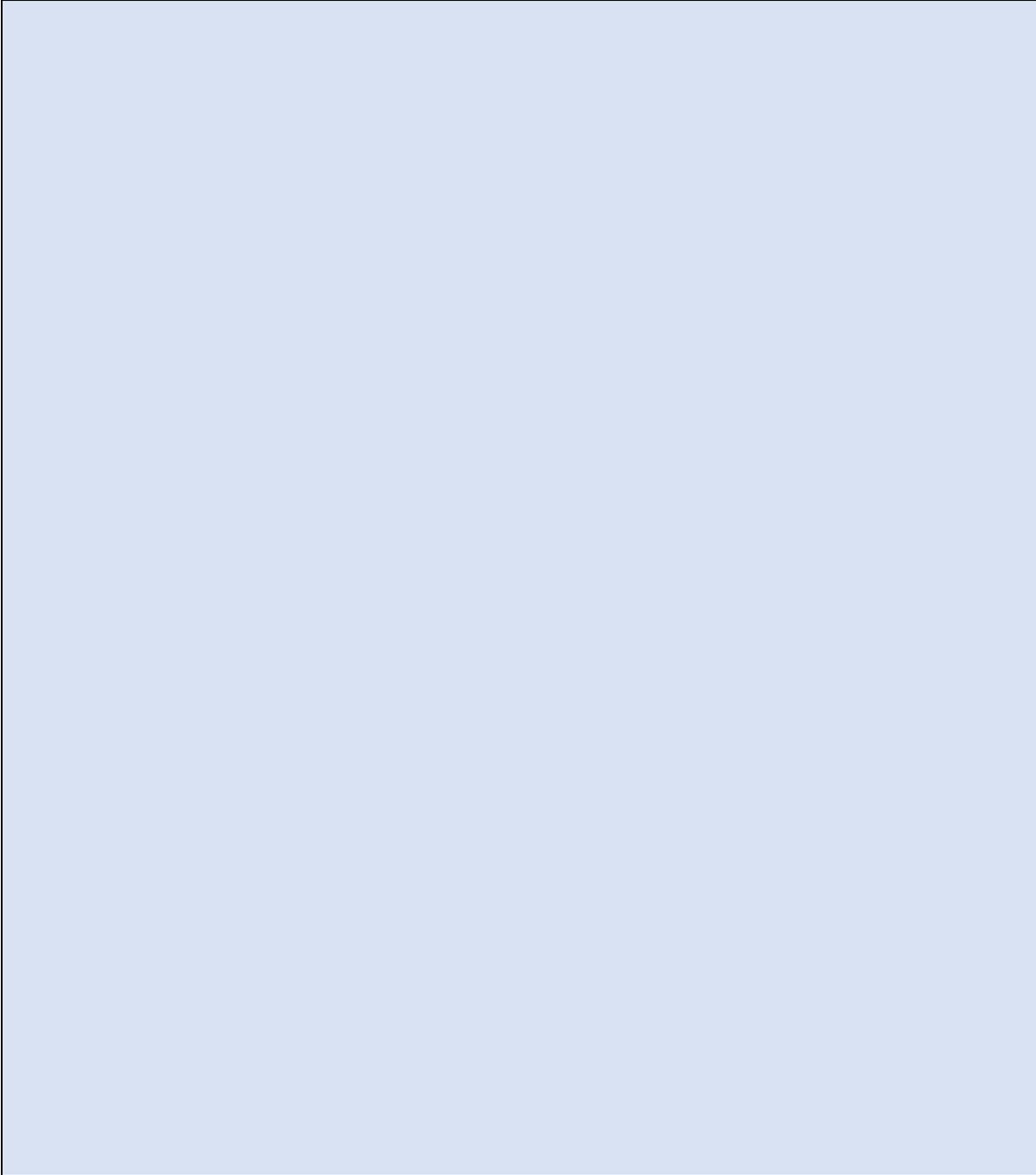
B. Project Information

Project Title:		
Total Project Cost: <i>(based on completed project budget form)</i>	Transit Passes:	\$
	On Demand Bus Trips:	\$
	Public Vanpools:	\$
	Ridership Tracking <i>(if applicable)</i> :	\$
	Miscellaneous Program Expenses:	\$
	Administrative Expenses	\$
	Total Project Cost: <i>(This is your grant request)</i>	\$
Number of TANF Persons to be Served <u>Monthly</u> from September 2020-June 2021:		
Number of TANF Persons to be Served from September 2020-June 2021: <i>(unduplicated)</i>		
Description of Primary Service Area: <i>(counties/cities of TANF eligible persons)</i>		
Transit Agency(ies):		
Proposed Transit Service to be Provided: <i>(check all that apply)</i>	Fixed Route Bus:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	On Demand Bus:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Public Vanpool:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anticipated Primary Destinations:		

C. Project Narrative

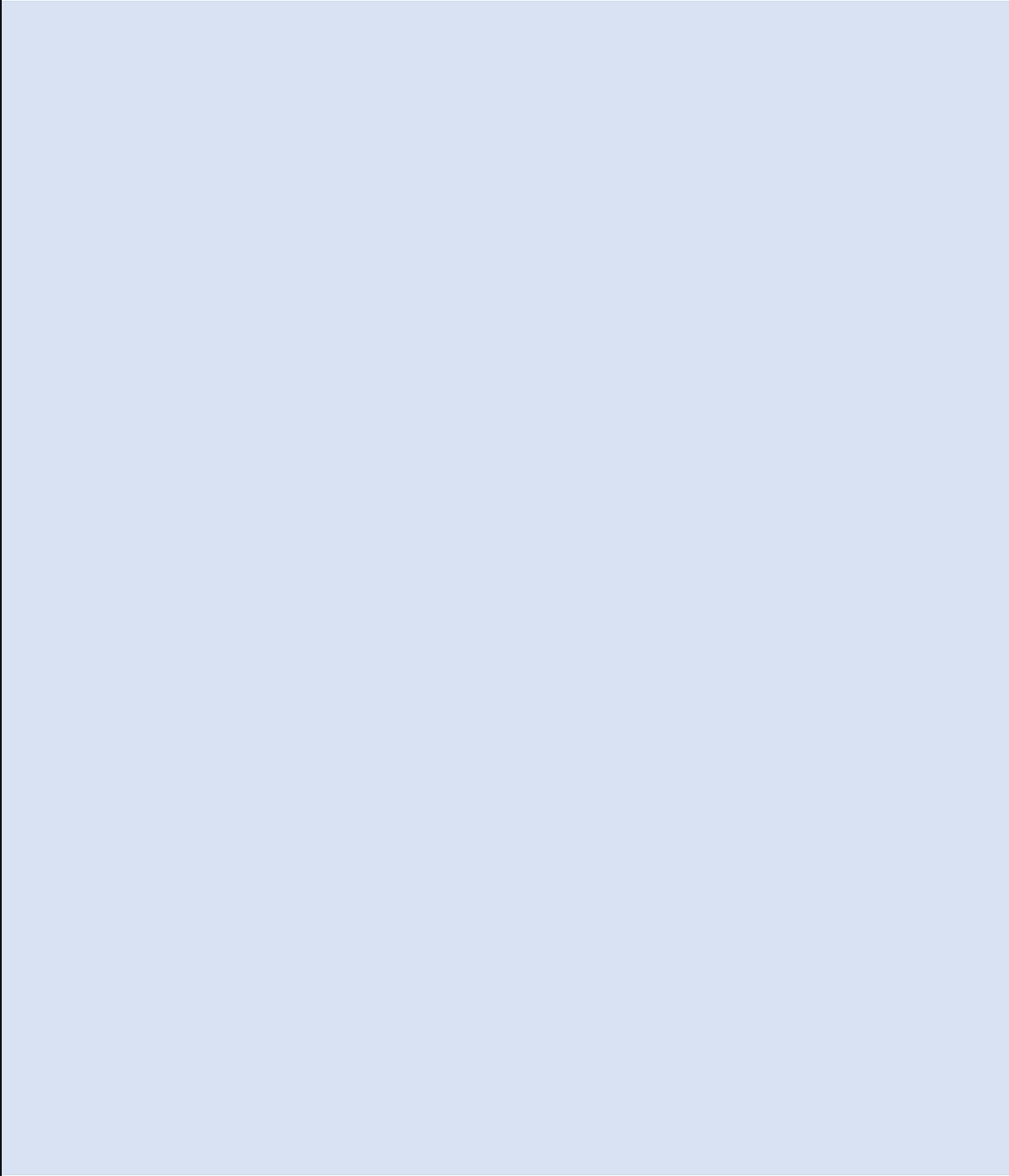
1. Project Description

Please provide an overview of the proposed project and the transit services to be funded with Free Transit Fare program funds. Please detail the project overview, purpose and need, and project approach.



2. Accessibility and Mobility Benefits

Please discuss the existing mobility challenges that the TANF eligible persons to be served by this project have and discuss how the proposed project will improve access to employment and/or job training.



3. TANF Eligibility Reporting

Please describe the subrecipient’s existing programming for TANF eligible persons and the ability to identify, assist, and track TANF eligible persons for purposes of this grant.

4. Outcome Reporting

Estimate project outcomes as defined in Section 3-C of the program guidelines and describe the subrecipient’s proposed approach to track and report project outcomes.

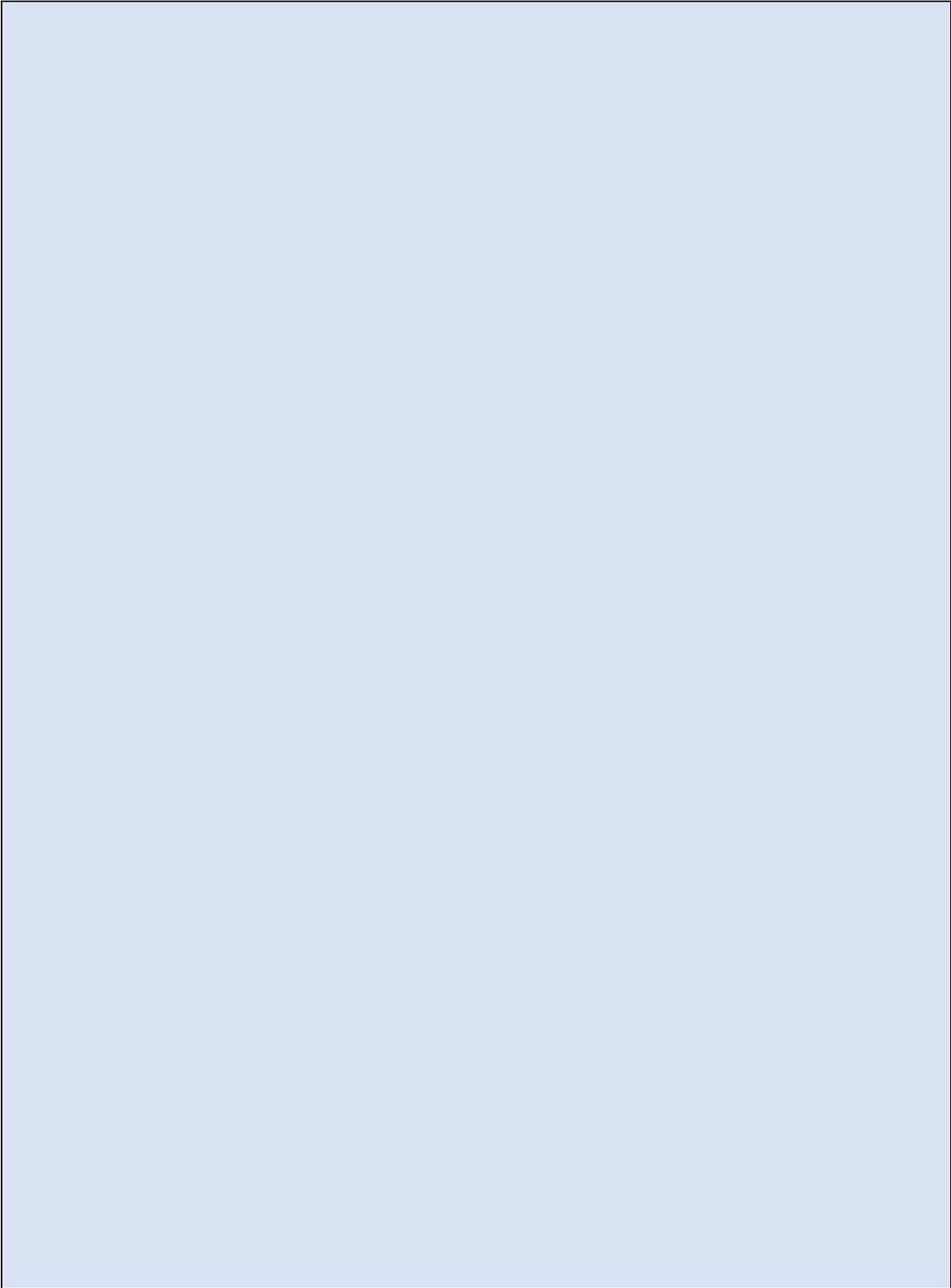
Required

- The number and amount of transit fare provided (e.g., number and monetary value);
- The number of persons served; and
- The type of service provided (e.g., fixed route vs on demand).

Desired

- Ridership data to include boardings and qualitative information regarding destinations; and
- Whether individuals are using the provided transit service to travel to employment locations, job training programs, or both.

If there is a strategic partnership with one or more transit organizations, please describe. Subrecipients are encouraged to be specific with how outcome data and ridership will be tracked.



5. Start-up Capacity

Given the compressed performance period for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 program, describe how quickly the project can begin after the anticipated September 15, 2020 notice to proceed.

[Empty response area for Section 5]

6. Project Cost

Please describe the grant request and the estimated project costs as outline in the budget form once completed.

[Empty response area for Section 6]

Submission

Completed applications must be submitted by email to VTA by 4:00 PM on Friday, July 10, 2020. This application form, along with the required supplemental documents, should be emailed to:

Lisa Guthrie, Executive Director
Virginia Transit Association
Email: TANFgrant@vatransit.com

VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION
Cooperation Agreement with
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

\$180,750.00
Free Transit Fare for
Working Families Grant Program

This AGREEMENT made this 24th day of August 2020, by and between THE VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION ("VTA") and the City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development (the "Subrecipient") (hereinafter each a "Party" and collectively the "Parties").

WHEREAS, VTA is to be the Grantee and recipient of the Virginia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant funds ("TANF Grant") of up to One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Virginia Department of Social Services ("VDSS") to fund activities associated with VTA's Free Transit Fare Grant Program ("VTA Grant Program"), and

WHEREAS, VTA has awarded the Subrecipient's GO Ride Expansion and Regional On-Demand Transit Coalition Project ("Project") a grant in the amount of \$180,750 for eligible expenses as outlined in the Program Guidelines and the Subrecipient accepted the award, and

WHEREAS, the VTA Grant Program requires that a Cooperation Agreement be entered into between VTA and the Subrecipient, which authorizes the Project and obligates the Subrecipient to reimburse VTA for any expenditures found by VTA or VDSS to be ineligible; and

WHEREAS, the Subrecipient has agreed to indemnify VTA and hold VTA harmless from any liability resulting from the Project; and

WHEREAS, as part of the TANF Grant, VTA will enter into a Sole Source Agreement with VDSS (the "Grant Agreement") in which VTA will be identified as a Grantee of VDSS in the administration of the aforesaid Grant Agreement and the funding associated therewith; and

WHEREAS, the Subrecipient will be identified as a subrecipient of VTA in the administration of the aforesaid Grant Agreement and the funding associated therewith.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein and intending to be legally bound hereby, the Parties agree as follows:

1. **Status.** VTA shall serve in the capacity of a pass-through entity for purposes of receiving TANF Grant Funds for the Project in an amount of up to One Hundred Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred

Fifty Dollars (\$180,750.00). The Subrecipient shall be a sub-grantee to VTA, and shall comply with all statutory and program requirements throughout the implementation of the Project as specified in the Grant Agreement.

2. **Responsibility.** The Subrecipient agrees to be fully responsible for any and all obligations, monetary or otherwise, arising on behalf of VTA as a result of VTA acting as the conduit for TANF Grant Funds.

3. **Reimbursement of Ineligible Expenditures.** Provided that the Subrecipient undertakes the Project and desires to utilize public funding made available under the TANF Grant, VTA and Subrecipient acknowledge and agree as follows:

- a. In the event that VDSS having jurisdiction, or Court of final jurisdiction, determines that any of the grant funding received by the Subrecipient under the Grant Agreement has been an ineligible expenditure for the Project in accordance with the grant terms, VTA shall be reimbursed the full amount of any such ineligible expenditure as follows:
 - i. In accordance with the terms of the Cooperation Agreement between VTA and Subrecipient, the Subrecipient shall be responsible for directly reimbursing VDSS for any ineligible Project expenditure.

4. **Indemnification.** The Subrecipient also agrees to indemnify and hold harmless VTA from any and all liability that may arise from the Project and any expenditures found by VTA or VDSS to be ineligible for the Project.

5. **Administration.**

- a. VTA shall provide professional personnel for general administration of the Grant Agreement with VDSS. In connection with the general administration of the Grant Agreement, general administration will include:
 - i. Preparation and administration of required reports to VDSS.
 - ii. Submitting for reimbursement for grant funds to VDSS.
 - iii. Providing reimbursement to the Subrecipient for Project expenditures upon VDSS approval and payment to VTA.
 - iv. Maintaining grant files and accounting records for the TANF Grant.
 - v. All other compliance requirements that may be issued by VDSS.
- b. VTA and Subrecipient must promptly execute all documents, writings, or other instruments necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the Grant Agreement.
- c. As Subrecipient, the Subrecipient shall be subject to and satisfy all Project-related terms and conditions of the Grant that are detailed in the Grant Agreement, TANF Free Transit Fare Program Guidelines, and the Subrecipient's grant application, attached hereto, to include but not limited to:

- i. Verifying and documenting that the Project solely serves TANF eligible persons and/or individuals with a dependent child whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.
 - ii. Paying Project expenses directly and submitting for reimbursement through VTA on a monthly basis.
 - iii. Submitting quarterly Programmatic Progress Reports in the form and content as required by VTA and VDSS. Reports will contain detailed descriptions of program activities and outcomes. The Progress Reports are due no later than August 15th, November 15th, February 15th, and May 15th each year.
 - iv. Maintaining full and accurate records with respect to the Project, including but not limited to TANF eligibility screening, transit ridership outcome reporting, and Project expenditures.
- d. Any modifications or amendments to the Project will be subject to prior written approval of VTA, the Subrecipient, and VDSS.
- e. The Subrecipient shall cause its contractors in any contracts related to the Project to comply with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and all applicable laws governing the Project, including, but not limited to, requirements relating to the payment of prevailing wages, bonding, and insurance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF AND INTENDING TO BE LEGALLY BOUND HEREBY, the Parties hereto by their duly authorized representatives, have executed this Agreement as of the day and year first above written.

ATTEST:


 NAME

VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION



 NAME *VTA Executive Director*

 NAME

 NAME

ATTEST:

City of Charlottesville Office of Economic
Development



Glen E. Pack
Comptroller



NAME

CHRISTOPHER V. CULLINAN
Director of Finance