

**Caroline County
Board of Supervisors Agenda
Executive Summary**

Meeting Date: **January 14, 2020**

Title: **New Business – Discussion of Proposal for Transportation Assistance Fund**

(Check Mark)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consent | <input type="checkbox"/> Closed Meeting |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No Action (Information Only) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Presentation |

Background: Staff and Supervisor Jeff Black have had discussions with Social Services Director Wendy Sneed about ideas for transportation assistance for citizens following the elimination of FRED Transit bus service in Caroline. Attached is a proposal developed by Ms. Sneed. She will attend the January 14th meeting to discuss the proposal with the Board of Supervisors.

King George County DSS was allocated \$30,000 for similar transportation assistance services as Ms. Sneed proposes after FRED bus service was discontinued in that locality. The funding was provided after King George unsuccessfully explored other alternatives such as connecting to the transit system in the Town of Colonial Beach and partnering with local churches for ride sharing.

Budget Impact: See attached proposal; there is no funding for the proposed program in the adopted FY 2020 budget. Therefore, any approved funds would be taken from the FY 2020 Undesignated General Fund Balance.

Requested Action(s) of Board: Discuss and direct staff

Proposal for Transportation Assistance

Caroline County Department of Social Services currently provides a variety of transportation-related assistance to clients participating in our employment services program (VIEW – Virginia Initiative for Education and Work). Eligibility for assistance requires satisfactory participation in the program. This may include employment, education, training, and/or job search. The assistance is provided to remove barriers to the individual's ability to participate in these required activities and to move toward self-sufficiency.

Transportation assistance includes gas cards, vehicle repair, vehicle purchase, insurance, taxes, DMV fees, and court fines. Gas cards are typically issued at a rate of \$50 every 30 days for clients satisfactorily engaged in work activities or educational activities. A spending limit for vehicle purchases was set at a maximum of \$4,000 to ensure that clients could obtain reliable transportation. A request for payment of a vehicle repair can be approved if the general condition of the vehicle justifies the cost of the repairs. The participant must provide documentation of:

1. required insurance coverage for the vehicle;
2. a valid driver's license; and
3. a registration showing the vehicle is in the participant's name. The vehicle may be co-owned if the participant is one of the co-owners on the registration.

The VIEW program is federally funded, and CCDSS receives a sizeable allocation for purchase of services each fiscal year. In FY2019, we spent \$54,129.50 in this category for transportation assistance as follows:

Type of assistance	Clients served	Amount
Car repair	13	\$12,528.14
DMV fees	4	\$620.00
Court fines	3	\$865.15
Car purchase	9	\$26,816.21
Gas cards	73	\$13,300.00

Caroline DSS has recently been informed that the Virginia Department of Social Services is expanding the SNAP Employment and Training program to all localities in the state. This provides for an employment services program almost identical to our VIEW program for TANF recipients. This includes funds to assist SNAP participants with supportive services such as transportation assistance. This only covers a limited group in our SNAP program (about 280 participants will be eligible). They are the ABAWD group (Able Bodied Adults) that are only eligible for SNAP for 6 months at a time.

This agency has found that removing individual barriers to transportation is the most productive way to move people off of assistance and to self-sufficiency through employment. With FRED no longer in the county, we propose that a transportation

assistance fund be established to assist the general population that is not eligible for VIEW or SNAP-ET. Citizens could apply at Social Services for transportation assistance as defined above. They could provide proof of employment that indicates that they meet the State Median Income Scale (attached) based on income and household size (for certain current services, Social Services uses the 50% level of State Median Income scale.) Receipt of gas cards could potentially be limited to 24 months, which is the limit of the VIEW program.

An initial allocation for the first year of the program could be \$20,000. With Social Services administering the program, there would be no administrative cost and all funds would go directly to benefit citizens.