

Program # 71014 - Bus Pass Program

Version 4/25/2005 s

Priority: Vibrant Communities

Lead Agency: County Business

Program Offer Type: Internal Service

Program Contact: Dave Boyer

Related Programs: 71002, 71009

Frameworks:

Executive Summary

The program encourages employees to use mass transit as part of the County's ride reduction program required by Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ's) Employee Commute Options mandate. The County commits to limiting traffic congestion and promoting clean air; eligible employees may receive a bus pass subsidized by the County.

Program Description

Use of the PassPort program supports the County's sustainability goals to protect the environment, reduce air pollution by supporting the use of mass transit both for commuting to work and between work sites each day, and encourages employees to exercise personal responsibility with their transportation choices.

Program Justification

This program supports Vibrant Communities in providing alternative transportation choices to employees. The County assists with carpool connections, provides reduced parking fees for carpool participants, provides secure bike parking at many locations, and subsidizes the bus pass program. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requires employers to survey employees annually to establish trip reduction goals. Failure to meet the established goals can result in penalties assessed to the employer by DEQ. The County currently has 5 sites which have failed to meet their goals. However, DEQ views the County's efforts, by providing the subsidized bus pass, as a good faith effort to improve statistics and has not assessed a penalty to the County. Many County work locations are sited in high density areas with limited parking resources. Encouraging use of mass transit frees up limited parking at County facilities for use by our customers/citizens.

The bus pass provides each employee with a safe, affordable, and environmentally sound transportation and commuting option, regardless of the weather. This program directly supports and maintains the region's mass transit infrastructure system – one of the factors that enables a thriving economy. The program also contributes indirectly to fostering Accountability – strengthening the environment needed to achieve quality results by offering an excellent benefit that helps attract high-quality employees.

Performance Measures

One performance measure is whether or not the County meets the 3 year ECO goals established by DEQ. This survey will be taken in June 2005. Our expectation is that many sites will be at or below the target commuting percentage.

We plan to add to the DEQ survey and capture data reporting how many business trips County employees take using the bus pass.

Summary of last year's program results and this year's expected results

48% of County employee commuting trips are done via alternate transportation. 37% of these alternative transportation trips use mass transit. The transportation survey tracks the daily commute – it does not track use of mass transit during the day. County employees frequently use their bus passes to travel between County work sites during their work day. We will investigate adding a tracking mechanism for this usage to the next transportation survey so it could be measured.

Prior to use of the PassPort program, employees purchased monthly passes from Tri-Met through the County. The purchase price was subsidized 75% by the County. At that time 29% of County employees obtained a bus pass.

Currently 84% of County employees carry a bus pass. With this participation, using the 75% subsidy arrangement, monthly passes would cost the County \$1,523,610 per year.

Our goal for the 2005/06 plan year is to increase the percentage of mass transit commuting trips, develop a means to measure use of passes for interdepartmental daily travel, locate a partner through newly established channels to access the Business Energy Tax Credit Pass-Through, and initiate the Emergency Ride Home program.

Program Mandate: 2 Mandated Program with Funding/Service Level Choice

The current benefit is included as a provision of each labor contracts. In addition, 340-242-0040 provides enforcement procedures and civil penalties in OAR, Chapter 340, Division 12 apply. Under OAR 340-012-0050(2), violations of the ECO rules are Class Two violations. Failure to achieve a ten percent trip reduction is not a violation; failure to make a good faith effort toward, or prepare and implement a plan designed to achieve, a ten percent trip reduction is a violation. Civil penalties are determined by the penalty matrix under OAR 340-012-0042. Penalties determined from this matrix can range from \$50 to \$10,000 for each day of each violation, but typically range from \$500 to \$2000 for each day of each violation.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2005	2005	2006	2006
Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$872,215	\$0	\$850,000
Internal Services	\$0	\$16,485	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	\$0	\$888,700	\$0	\$850,000
Administration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Program Support	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total GF/non-GF:	\$0	\$888,700	\$0	\$850,000
Program Total:	\$888,700		\$850,000	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Program Revenues				
Fees, Permits & Charges	\$0	\$872,215	\$0	\$850,000
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$0	\$872,215	\$0	\$850,000

Explanation of Revenues

Program is funded via the benefits administration charge to departments. We pay the cost of the program at the onset of the plan year (September) in order to receive a 5% discount on the total cost of the program.

Significant Program Changes

None