



BC TRANSIT TICKET ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REPORT December 2002

TICKET DISTRIBUTION April 2001 to March 2002

- 28 not-for-profit service providing agencies participated in the Ticket Assistance Program.
- 15,000 free tickets and 100 free day passes were distributed to participating agencies.
- 14,920 tickets and 77 day passes were purchased by participating agencies through the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program.
- In total, 29,920 tickets and 177 day passes were distributed to participating agencies to give free of charge to their clients with urgent transportation needs.
- 26 out of 28 participating agencies reported on the use of 23,939 tickets (includes day passes).

RECOMMENDATION

Whereas:

Accessibility to transportation is fundamental to the quality of life of families and individuals across the Capital Region.

The BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program is very effective because it

- increases bus ticket sales purchased from participating agencies,
- increases use of buses by more staff, clients and families, and
- provides essential support to people in urgent need of transportation.

There is increased demand for more tickets from the participating agencies, that will continue to purchase one ticket for every free ticket provided.

Therefore, the Community Council and participating agencies in the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program recommend

that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission increase the number of free tickets allocated to the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program to 20,000 per year. These tickets would be matched by tickets purchased by non-profit agencies through the Community Council, thus providing up to 40,000 free tickets to individuals and families with urgent transportation needs.

REPORTED USE OF TICKETS April 2001 to March 2002

Participating agencies reported on the use of 79% of the total tickets distributed. Data is limited by the percentage of agencies reporting and the variations in rigour of tracking systems used by participating agencies.

More tickets were used this year in all usage categories. However most percentages of the total remained constant in most usage categories, except for an increase in employment related travel and decrease in travel related to health issues and visits with Financial Assistance Workers.

Table 1. Ticket usage as reported by participating agencies by year from April 1 to March 30

<i>Usage category</i>	<i>2001-02</i>	<i>2000-01</i>	<i>1999-2001</i>
Employment related	7900 (33%)	4026 (26%)	3065 (26%)
Health/medical/counselling	5447 (23%)	3954 (26%)	2593 (22%)
Basic Needs	3920 (16%)	2603 (17%)	1986 (17%)
Financial Assistance Worker	2496 (10%)	2002 (13%)	2020 (17%)
Children/family	1561 (7%)	1077 (7%)	1223 (10%)
Court	928 (4%)	487 (3%)	481 (4%)
Other	1687 (7%)	1097 (7%)	581 (5%)
	23939	15246	11949

7900 tickets (33%) were used for employment related travel, an increase of 7% from last year. This includes seeking employment (18%), travel to work (11%), school/training which are not part of government-funded programs (4%).

5447 tickets (23%) were used for travel for health /medical (15%) or counseling (8%), down from 26% last year.

3920 tickets (16%) were used to meet basic needs – to seek housing (8%), travel to/from food bank (5%), and pick up clothing/furniture (3%). This number has remained relatively constant over the past few years.

2496 tickets (10%) were used for travel to meet with Ministry Financial Assistance Workers. This percentage has been declining over the years of the program.

1561 tickets (7%) were used for children and family-related matters. This percentage has remained relatively constant.

928 tickets (4%) were used for travel for court related reasons. This percentage has remained relatively constant.

1687 tickets (7%) were used for travel that fell outside of the categories provided.

For the first time in 2001-02, ticket use was broken down by gender. Overall, 16,362 tickets were used by men (68%) and 7577 tickets (32%) were used by women. In the CRD in 1996, 16.6% of females and 14.2% of males lived below the poverty line. The wide difference in ticket use by gender is linked with the type of services provided by and the purchasing power of participating agencies.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TICKET ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Growing need

The program has grown over the years, and in particular this year. The number of free tickets ordered each month by participating agencies has increased by 22.4% from last year.

Table 1. Average monthly order of free tickets by participating agencies

<i>Time period</i>	<i>Average monthly order of free tickets</i>
April 2001 to March 2002	1250
April 1 2002 to December 2002	1530

“People need work and must have bus tickets... when the weather is bad we need tickets badly.”
Open Door

Supports transit use and the local economy

The program helps the economy by supporting employment related activities as seen through the increased use of tickets for employment related travel from previous years.

“Once again, thank you! The extra tickets assisted participants in our new Homeless to Work initiative.”
Cool Aid Employment Services

The program increases long-term bus use as individuals are encouraged to use transit to get to work and get into the habit of purchasing monthly transit passes.

“As always, this is an extremely valuable service. Our clients really access the program on a regular basis.”
Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Opportunity Centre

Supports community service agencies

As government policies have shifted and government offices have closed, agencies are reporting an increased need for transit.

“What would we do without this program?”
Mustard Seed Street Church

More agencies are now buying bus tickets that did not previously buy them. Through this program, agencies with small or no budget lines have become active users of BC Transit.

“We appreciate your support. Our program wouldn't be the same without it. There are generally more requests than there are tickets.”
Margaret Laurence House

Supports Individuals in time of need

This program reduces isolation. The use of community services through transit increases integration into the community.

“The bus tickets are very helpful to our clients who wouldn't be able to attend (counseling sessions or group meetings) without them.”
Dallas Society

Ticket Assistance Program reports indicate a shift in urgent transportation needs since the initiation of the program. In the first years of the program, approximately 30% of the tickets were used for clients to travel to meet their Financial Assistance Worker. The participating agencies met with regional representatives of the Ministry to discuss this cost to their organization, and the implications. As a result, the Ministry changed the policy to provide transit tickets to their clients.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES - 2001-02

28 agencies participated in the Ticket Assistance Program from April 2001 to March 2002. There is great diversity in the type of agency, and in the capacity to purchase, and in the way they choose to distribute the tickets to their clients. An evaluation of the program in 2001 showed that each participating agency develops clear criteria for ticket distribution based upon their knowledge of their clients and the need..

Emergency Services

Action Committee of People with Disabilities
AIDS Vancouver Island
Burnside Gorge Community Association
Dallas Society
Esquimalt Neighbourhood House – Best Babies
Fernwood Community Centre
Greater Victoria Citizen’s Counselling Centre
Cridge Centre – Hill House
John Howard Society
Margaret Laurence House
Mustard Seed Street Church - Food Bank
Open Door
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Salvation Army
Sooke Family Resource Society
Sooke Transition House
The Upper Room Society

Victoria Cool Aid Society - Cool Aid Health Centre, Streetlink
Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson’s Centre
Victoria Human Exchange Society
Victoria Women’s Transition House
Victoria Youth Empowerment Society
YM-YWCA Youth Outreach Services
Young Parents Support Network

Employment Services

Blanshard Community Centre – Workstreams
Boys & Girls Club Services
Esquimalt Neighbourhood House – Opportunity Centre
InterCultural Association of Greater Victoria
Worklink Employment Society
Victoria Cool Aid Society – Employment Services
Youth Employment Project

BACKGROUND

Since September 1997, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission has had a unique relationship with voluntary organizations throughout the Capital Region through a partnership with the Community Social Planning Council. Based on an understanding that accessibility to transportation is fundamental to the quality of life of families and individuals across the Capital Region the partnership has focused on addressing the urgent transportation needs of individuals and families. Accessible public transportation is critical for individuals and families, particularly those living with low income. Transportation is a critical link to access to basic needs (food, shelter, clothing) and to strengthen economic independence.

This unique partnership, the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program, currently provides 30,000 free tickets to individuals and families. Human service-providing agencies purchase transit tickets and day passes through the Community Social Planning Council. These tickets are matched with free tickets on a 1:1 basis through the Ticket Assistance Program. All participating agencies contribute to the design and maintenance of this valuable program. There is a wide variation in the type of services provided by participating agencies, and in the number of tickets that agencies are able to purchase.

To participate in the Ticket Assistance Program, non-profit agencies must:

- have a mandate to work primarily with people of low income,
- provide assurance that all tickets received through the program are being distributed free of charge to assist people of low income with urgent transportation needs
- complete Ticket Assistance Program information reports indicating how their tickets have been used, and
- attend an annual BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program meeting.