

**Transportation Solutions: Keeping
Employment Equals Your Success
(KEYS) Program of Contra Costa
County: Proposal for a Comprehensive
Program in Alameda County**

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SERVICE GAP: Limited Transportation Access

Access to reliable transportation is a fundamental determinant of success for individuals enrolled in social welfare programs such as CalWORKs and CalFresh. The ability to commute to work, attend educational programs, and access essential services directly impacts participants' capacity to achieve self-sufficiency. While existing transportation support mechanisms in Alameda County, such as BART and bus passes, partially address these needs, there remains a significant gap in providing comprehensive solutions, particularly in facilitating vehicle ownership.

Background: Keeping Employment Equals Your Success (KEYS) Program, Contra Costa County

Since its inception in 2001, the KEYS Program in Contra Costa County has served as a model for an effective transportation assistance program. By offering auto loans to eligible CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients, the KEYS program enables individuals to purchase low-cost, retired county vehicles, thereby enhancing their mobility and economic prospects. Administered in collaboration with a local credit union, the program boasts a commendable success rate of 93%, underpinned by stringent eligibility criteria and robust financial management support.

The KEYS program in Contra Costa County was approved in 2001. It was an idea that spawned from similar programs in other counties and the belief of a need for a similar program in Contra Costa County. It was well-implemented and successful due to the strategic planning by Joel Flamand for approximately one year. In 2003 the KEYS program issued its first loan. Joel Flamand's dedication and effort in developing the program has made the program a success

from the start by studying and implementing what worked well for the other counties that were also participating at that time. The thorough screening process and criteria for applicants indicates a commitment on their part and ensures that the program serves those who genuinely need it and are willing to participate in the process.

The screening process and criteria consists of current employment of the applicant, willingness to provide verifications, successful completion of a money management course, building a financial relationship with a banking institution, consistently meeting with the management team of the program, and various other requirements that need to be fulfilled to be approved.

Proposal: Alameda County Transportation Empowerment Program (ACTEP)

Building upon the success of the KEYS Program of Contra Costa County, this proposal advocates for the establishment of a similar initiative in Alameda County to address the transportation needs of CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients. The proposed program, tentatively named the "Alameda County Transportation Empowerment Program (ACTEP)," aims to provide comprehensive support to individuals striving for self-sufficiency through vehicle ownership. ACTEP will introduce the customer to vehicle ownership by assisting them through the loan process, providing access to low-cost, well-maintained vehicles from the GSA Fleet Services department, and helping the customer to effectively manage vehicle ownership.

- Agree to establish the Alameda County Transportation Empowerment Program (ACTEP).

- Establish a budget for the operation of the ACTEP program.
- Develop detailed program guidelines for the operation of the ACTEP program.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders and develop partnerships with local credit unions, auto dealerships, and community organizations to garner support and leverage resources.
- Establish a comprehensive application and screening process.
- Designate a dedicated team responsible for overseeing program implementation, participant support, and program performance.
- Establish clear mechanisms for data collection, reporting, and evaluation to measure program effectiveness, identify areas of improvement, and ensure accountability.
- Provide ongoing support services, that include but are not limited to financial counseling, budgeting assistance, and vehicle maintenance workshops, to empower participants and promote long-term success.

Expected Outcomes

The successful integration of the Alameda County Transportation Empowerment Program (ACTEP), through the provision of vehicle ownership opportunities, is poised to result in the following positive outcomes, particularly for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients:

- **Increased Mobility:** By facilitating vehicle ownership and accessibility to consistent and reliable transportation, the ACTEP program will enhance clients' ability to commute to work, attend educational programs, and access essential services, regardless of geographical constraints or public transportation limitations.

- **Enhanced Employment Opportunities:** Access to reliable transportation enables clients to explore job opportunities beyond their immediate vicinity, increasing their chances of finding employment that aligns with their skills, interests, and career goals.
- **Improved Access to Education:** With reliable transportation, clients can easily access educational institutions, training programs, and vocational classes, fostering lifelong learning and skill development essential for career advancement and personal growth.
- **Augmented Financial Stability and Creditworthiness:** The ACTEP program endeavors to cultivate a landscape of enhanced financial stability and creditworthiness among its participants by fostering responsible vehicle ownership practices and adherence to timely loan repayments. By instilling principles of financial prudence and accountability, the program seeks to fortify participants' financial standing and augment their prospects for future economic endeavors.
- **Greater Independence:** Owning a vehicle provides clients with greater autonomy and control over their daily schedules, reducing reliance on external transportation services and empowering them to make independent decisions about their mobility needs.
- **Community Engagement:** Access to reliable transportation facilitates clients' participation in community activities, social events, and volunteer opportunities, fostering a

sense of belonging and social connectedness within their communities.

In summary, the ACTEP program will serve as a catalyst for empowering clients to surmount the formidable hurdles posed by transportation constraints, thereby propelling them toward a trajectory of enhanced self-sufficiency and personal fulfillment. By providing access to reliable transportation options, the program not only facilitates the attainment of short-term goals, such as securing employment and accessing essential services but also fosters a conducive environment for the pursuit of long-term aspirations by assisting them to build their credit and operate with unwavering confidence. Ultimately, the holistic impact of the ACTEP program extends beyond mere transportation assistance, permeating into every facet of clients' lives and nurturing an environment conducive to overall well-being and an elevated quality of life.

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Appendix: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What is the purpose of the Alameda County Transportation Empowerment Program (ACTEP)?

A: The ACTEP program aims to provide comprehensive transportation assistance to CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients in Alameda County, facilitating vehicle ownership and improving access to employment, education, and essential services.

Q: Who is eligible to participate in the ACTEP program?

A: Eligibility criteria include active participation in the CalWORKs or CalFresh programs, stable employment for a minimum duration, satisfactory credit score, clean driving record, and completion of financial literacy courses. Specific eligibility requirements will be outlined in the program guidelines.

Q: How does the ACTEP program differ from existing transportation assistance programs in Alameda County?

A: While existing programs may offer temporary solutions such as transit passes or mileage reimbursements, the ACTEP program focuses on providing long-term transportation solutions through vehicle ownership. By offering auto loans and financial support, the program empowers participants to purchase reliable vehicles and achieve greater mobility and independence.

Q: How will the ACTEP program be funded?

A: The ACTEP program can be funded through a dedicated allocation from the Welfare to Work budget in Alameda County, supplemented by potential grant opportunities and partnerships with financial institutions. Detailed budgetary considerations and funding sources will be outlined in the program implementation plan.

Q: What types of vehicles are available through the ACTEP program?

A: The ACTEP program will facilitate the purchase of low-cost, reliable vehicles from reputable dealerships or through partnerships with GSA fleet services. Participants will have the opportunity to select vehicles based on their individual needs, preferences, and budgetary constraints.

Q: What are the repayment terms for auto loans under the ACTEP program?

A: Repayment terms will be determined based on participants' financial capacity and loan agreements negotiated with partnering financial institutions. Flexible repayment options, including affordable monthly installments and low interest rates, will be offered to ensure accessibility and sustainability.

Q: Will participants receive any additional support beyond vehicle financing?

A: Yes, participants will have access to comprehensive support services, including financial counseling, budgeting assistance, and vehicle maintenance workshops. Additionally, the program may collaborate with community partners to offer supplementary services such as childcare support, job training, and access to healthcare resources.

Q: How will the success of the ACTEP program be measured and evaluated?

A: The success of the ACTEP program will be measured through various indicators, including participant retention in employment and educational programs, loan repayment rates, and overall improvement in participants' economic stability and mobility. Regular monitoring, data collection, and program evaluation will be conducted to assess effectiveness and identify areas for enhancement.