



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

DATE: August 15, 2022
TO: Board of Health
FROM: Doug Gieryn, Public Health Director
RE: Qualitative Data Grant

Background:

Lack of affordable transportation emerged as an issue facing many middle and high school students in Oshkosh in 2013. Transportation is crucial for people to be able to access opportunities and services, attend school, find stable and sustaining employment, and engage in community. Traditional school buses did not serve students in Oshkosh because the city has a public transit service, GO Transit. Increasing fares (\$1.50 per one-way ride with no discounted fares for students or families) were a significant barrier for students who relied on public transit to get to and from school, work, and activities.

The City of Oshkosh, Oshkosh Area School District, and private funders worked together and approved in February 2020 a two-year pilot program to provide rides to students in public and private K-12 schools in Oshkosh free of charge on GO Transit. Due to the impact of COVID-19, school closings, and virtual schooling, the pilot had a slow start and was extended to three years. Student ridership steadily increased and exceeded expectations with 7,688 rides provided in 2021 and 86,979 rides in 2022. The pilot program and free fares for students is set to expire in May 2023 unless a funding agreement can be reached.

The goal of this grant project will be to hear from students and parents in Oshkosh about transportation access to and from school. A focus of this project will be to learn how utilizing public transit has impacted overall well-being for students and families, financial implications, and opportunity to reach jobs and resources.

The current grant funding agreement with DHS runs to May 31, 2023. Funds will be used to pay a consultant and student intern to develop, conduct, and analyze surveys and focus groups to learn about transportation access experiences from students and parents. There will be a community event at the end of the project to share back the findings.

Policy Discussion:

This program is fully grant funded.

Requested Action:

To approve the budget transfer for allocation of the qualitative data grant funds.

Committee Action:

JON DOEMEL
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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