

DRISI

CALTRANS DIVISION OF RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

Research Notes

Planning, Policy
and
Programming

MAY 2024

Project Title:
Improving Access and Efficiency to
Transportation Affordable Programs
in California

Task Number: 3379

Start Date: May 1, 2023

Completion Date: June 30, 2024

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Improving Access and Efficiency to Transportation Affordable Programs in California

Comparison to non-transportation entitlement programs.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

Despite transportation being the second largest expenditure category for low and moderate-income households, frameworks and actions supporting comprehensive transportation affordability policies lag far behind other basic service programs (utilities, housing, food) offered at local, state, or federal levels. Existing assistance programs often function as discretionary rather than entitlement programs. These programs are first-come, first-serve, and often over-subscribed. They tend to use limited dollars to channel large benefits to relatively few beneficiaries, leave many eligible households unassisted, and are rarely evaluated.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The research takes a three-part approach. The first part will include building an inventory of travel discount programs for analysis. The research team will analyze the income-related discounts provided by major travel service agencies by reviewing agency websites and interviewing agency personnel in twelve (12) pre-selected major metro areas in California. In addition, they will review California Air Resources Board (CARB) documents to quantify past, current, and future funding for clean shared mobility programs and electric vehicle (EV) purchase programs in underserved areas. They will collect background information for each of the metro areas. Using this data, the team can construct metrics to evaluate the potential need for discounted services and how this compares to needs met by current programs in metro areas.

The second portion of the project will be to compare transportation entitlement programs to non-transportation entitlement programs, such as housing, food, and energy.



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knowledge that improves
California's transportation system

The objective would be to secure information consistent with that gathered in the first portion. The research team will compare travel discount programs and additional entitlement programs with this information to identify key differences, similarities, and potential for integration.

The third portion of this research will be to analyze lessons learned from Universal Basic Mobility (UBM) pilots. The research team is assisting the San Joaquin Council of Governments and the City and County of Los Angeles (Metro and LADOT) in developing their uUBM pilots. Other UBM pilots have been implemented (Sacramento, Stockton Oakland, and two in Portland) or will soon be implemented (Pittsburgh). The research team will update expert interviews and describe the Stockton and Metro and LADOT UBM pilots.

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this research is to assess the landscape of income-related multi-modal service discounts, comparing this landscape of non-travel entitlement programs, and developing lessons learned from UBM pilots/programs. Based on this analysis, the researchers will identify near and longer-term opportunities to provide more effective UBM programs.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

The outcomes of this project will recommend reforms and pathways for scaling, simplifying, and making transportation discount programs more impactful for universal mobility and household welfare outcomes.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

First quarter progress on this project includes the initial review of the Los Angeles Area and Bay Area transit discount programs for income eligible residents and have and the research team has updated the lessons learned from UBM as of 9/30/2023.

IMAGES



Image 1: An example of an affordable transportation program in California is the BLULA electric carsharing program.