

May 12, 2025

Attn: State and Local Government Conference Committee, Chair Klevorn,  
Chair Nash, Conferees,

I'm Nas Nourkadi from Move Minnesota Action, I am our Policy and Community Specialist. We are in complete support of the provision regarding integrating the Transit Assistance Program onto the MNBenefits web portal.

Outside of the advocacy side of my work, I do canvassing. I'm not sure if there is someone who's conducted more individual interviews with transit riders and non-riders alike in the last couple years around here about how to envision a better system for us. I hold their stories, it's my responsibility to advocate for those who confided in me. While superimposing their stories over this provision, I can say with absolute confidence that this provision is a positive step our state can take to help as many people as possible with a simple, cost-effective fix.

The need for this provision is clear for two reasons.

1. Most individuals I had spoken to while canvassing did not know about the program, and in some cases, there were people who didn't know about it and would likely have qualified for the program. While the Metropolitan Council estimates 624,000 people in the metro are eligible for the TAP program by income alone, 2021 data suggests just 1 percent are using it.
2. The Transit Assistance Program works well. Metro Transit and recipients alike love the program, it works well and though they've done their best to advertise the program, it isn't enough.

We advertise and talk about the benefits portal as a consolidated list of ways to alleviate a difficult financial situation, yet TAP is missing. This is a clear matter of efficiency. It's our responsibility to ensure that every program that exists to help our most vulnerable is presented in front of us.

TAP recipients have told me the various, obscure ways they've heard of the program: whispers at an encampment, word to mouth from other recipients, scouring the Metro Transit website to see if they did giveaways for transit cards, etc..

This is a cheap, easy provision with a high impact potential. We should prioritize efficiency and ease in how we get our services to our neighbors. We were enthused to see it pass unanimously in the House's State and Local Government committee and we hope to continue to see this move forward.

*Nourkadi*

Nas Nourkadi, Move Minnesota Action