

POLICY STATEMENT

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent provides residents and visitors with public transit services to access economic, social and cultural opportunities. The Municipality also recognizes that residents living in a low income household have specific financial challenges that can reduce their access to public transit. The Affordable Bus Pass Pilot Program is designed to minimize these barriers by offering eligible program participants the option of purchasing monthly passes at discounted rates.

PURPOSE

Overall Program Outcome Goals

The Affordable Bus Pass policy better enables Chatham-Kent residents who are living in a low income household to access transit through the purchase of monthly passes at a more affordable, discounted rate. The outcomes of the Affordable Bus Pass Program are:

- Enabling more residents who are living in a low income household, to purchase monthly transit passes and use transit services
- Making a positive impact on the budget of residents living in a low income household by enabling them to spend less on transportation costs and allocate more of their budget to basic needs such as food, clothing, child care and shelter
- Improving program participant's perceptions of overall wellbeing, and improving wellbeing through increased opportunities to participate in and contribute to their communities in ways such as; accessing educational, recreational, sporting and cultural opportunities; accessing medical care; reliable transportation so getting to work is not a barrier; and maintaining connections to family and friends.

Operational Program Goals

The program policy and procedures will:

- Provide a clear understanding of the program rules
- Ensure that the program is administered in a way that is citizen-centered, inclusive and respectful
- Effectively meet the overall program outcome goals
- Be consistent, transparent and equitable to all transit users
- Support access to Transit for eligible resident

DEFINITIONS

“Access”

The program is easily available to eligible residents. Barriers are addressed as they are identified.

“Citizen centred”

Staff considers and incorporates residents’ needs and concerns when designing and delivering the program. This process ensures that the program caters to the specific needs of program participants.

“Dependent”

A person living in the same household who relies on another member of the household for financial support. Generally this includes; a biological or adopted child or grandchild, a parent or grandparent

“Discounted Rate”

A price that is lower than usual price a customer can expect to pay to purchase a monthly pass.

“Family income”

The combined annual income earned by a household before-tax.

“Household”

One or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

“Low income”

A combined household annual income that is lower than the Statistics Canada Low Income Measures (LIM). Staff will update the Low Income Measures on an annual basis as it is made available to the public.

“Monthly Pass”

An accepted Municipal Transit fare media that provides the purchaser with unlimited trips on Transit. Each pass is valid for one calendar month.

“Municipality”

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

“Notice of Assessment”

A notice of assessment would have been sent to you because you filed a tax return or a return was filed for you.

“Program Participant”

An eligible resident who has applied to and been accepted onto the Affordable Bus Pass Program.

“Resident”

All persons who reside (live) within Municipality of Chatham-Kent limits.

“Transparent”

Stakeholders and residents can clearly see how and why decisions are made.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Municipal staff are responsible for:

- The ongoing development and improvement of the Affordable Bus Pass program, policy and supporting procedures.
- The design and delivery of appropriate administrative practices associated with the:
 - Affordable Bus Pass application and approval processes
 - Affordable Bus Pass sales at Municipal locations
 - The development and training of staff involved in administration, customer service and pass sales
 - Development and reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the program
 - Development of appropriate communications materials to support the program application, outreach and communication
 - Maintaining relationships with relevant support agencies to ensure potentially eligible residents are aware of and can easily access the program
- Providing input into the development and improvement of the Affordable Bus Pass Program including policy and supporting procedures
- Processing pass sales at Municipal locations
- Maintaining the operational pass inventory, distributing passes to sales locations and reconciling at month's end

1. THE AFFORDABLE BUS PASS PROGRAM

The Affordable Bus Pass Program enables eligible Municipal residents living in a low income household to purchase monthly bus passes at a discounted rate. The program supports improved access to public transit for those experiencing financial barriers. Municipal employees will administer the program.

2. FARE

1. The Affordable Bus Pass (ABP) fare will be set at a discounted rate of:

\$40 per month for the conventional service in the Community of Chatham (one year trial basis)

3. ELIGIBILITY

To access the program, applicants must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a resident of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Have an annual combined family income at or below the Statistics Canada before-tax Low Income Measures (LIM) table for their family size. The LIM table is updated every year and can be found on the Application Form.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

Accessing the Application form

Residents interested in applying for the Affordable Bus Pass program can access an application form on-line at <https://www.chatham-kent.ca/> or at one of the following locations:

- Chatham-Kent Civic Centre, 315 King Street W, Chatham

Completing the Application Form

1. Applicants must complete the application form in full. Incomplete forms will be returned to the applicant
2. All family members 18 years of age and over with an income and living at the same address must sign the application form
3. Online application forms must be printed so that all family members can sign the document
4. Staff are available to assist applicants to complete the form. However, the applicant must be able to provide the documentation required
5. Dependents under the age of 18 who reside in the household cannot apply as individuals

Documentation Required

Applicants must submit the required documentation along with their completed application form to verify their income. The following documentation is acceptable (photocopies are accepted):

- **Canada Revenue Agency Personal Income Tax Notice of Assessment.** This is not a copy of the personal income tax return. Note: If an applicant cannot submit a copy of their Notice of Assessment, they are encouraged to contact Canada Revenue Agency to request a copy. Note: ODSP clients may present current income statement.

- **One of the following supporting documents must be provided (for applicant and each family member):**

- Birth Certificate
- Driver's License
- Baptismal Certificate
- Passport
- Ontario Health Card (where the date of birth of card holder is imprinted on the card)

Period of Eligibility

Eligibility for the program is for twelve (12) months, from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Applicants must re-apply to the program prior to July 1, 2017 (provided that the program is extended beyond the 1 year trial basis).

Responsibility for informing the Municipality of changes to financial, residency or other circumstances pertaining to the Affordable Bus Pass (ABP) application and eligibility is the responsibility of the program participant. The program participant must notify the Municipality of changes within thirty (30) days of the change taking effect. If the program participant fails to

inform the Municipality of these changes, the Municipality reserves the right to terminate eligibility for the program.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

When an eligible resident becomes a program participant, they must abide by the following Affordable Bus Pass conditions of use.

- Purchased passes are only for use by the registered program participant to whom the pass has been issued. Passes cannot be sold, transferred, traded, given away or shared with anyone else.
- The Municipality will replace any lost or stolen passes ONLY if the original card identification number is provided. A \$5.00 Replacement Fee will also be required.
- The pass can be used on all CK Transit Conventional buses.

6. PASS SALES LOCATIONS

On acceptance to the Affordable Bus Pass Program, passes can be purchased at the following Municipal locations:

- Chatham-Kent Civic Centre – 315 King Street West, Chatham

7. PURCHASING PASSES

Program participants must present valid government issued photo identification each time they purchase a pass in person. In the absence of government issued photo ID, the Municipality may accept a program participant's previous month's bus pass along with identification.

Family members that are approved for the program may purchase passes on behalf of other approved program participants in the same household.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

The Municipality plans its programs, such as the Affordable Bus Pass program, with accessibility in mind. We do this by adhering to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As an example, the Municipality provides documents in accessible formats upon request such as the Affordable Bus Pass application form and program information; provides accessible public transportation; will engage individuals who come forward with feedback.

9. POLICY REVIEW

Municipal employees will review the Affordable Bus Pass Policy on an annual basis, or more often should the need arise.

10. RECORDS RETENTION & PRIVACY

All private information pertaining to the Affordable Bus Pass Program will be kept safe at the Municipality. The Municipality follows the Municipal Act, 2001, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990.

The Municipality reserves the right to terminate the eligibility of any participant if they are found to be in breach of this policy.