



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Stafford

Program Title: Data Driven Vehicle Replacement Program

Program Category: Organizational Development

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Thomas C. Foley

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

## **1. Program Overview**

Stafford County Government has implemented a new Vehicle Replacement Program that uses data and objective criteria to score and determine a vehicle's need and placement. Previously, departments purchased vehicles for their particular needs and kept the vehicle for its entire lifespan. A cross-departmental Vehicle Replacement Committee was formed to analyze and evaluate the current inventory of vehicles owned by the County. The committee interviewed staff within various departments that utilize County vehicles to assess their needs. They devised a process and procedure to score all the vehicles on multiple criteria, including mileage, anticipated mileage, fiscal year costs, upcoming costs and the age of the vehicle. The new program, which excludes public safety vehicles and Utilities vehicles, consolidates vehicles into a vehicle pool, instead of individual departmental vehicles, and plans for the usefulness of the vehicle for every stage of its life. Vehicles are purchased based on the criteria with a focus on maximizing their usefulness. Trucks are specifically purchased with the capability of eventually being reprogrammed and then utilized to support Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities work. Cars are being phased out, with a focus on the purchase of small SUVs which are more versatile in use. The newly developed procedure stipulates that the full inventory of vehicles will be reviewed yearly by the committee to make sure they are adhering to the plan.

## **2. The Problem or Need for the Program**

Stafford County had a fleet of vehicles, purchased from the General Fund, that were aging and not being utilized to their fullest potential. Individual departments had purchased vehicles based on need and for their particular uses. This approach did not fully analyze future utilization or repurposing of the vehicles. Fourteen vehicles were older than fourteen years, with some being

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20 years old, and many of those had low mileage. Previously, cars with low mileage were kept regardless of their use. This was partially due to the economic downturn and the subsequent lack of funding for new vehicles. The older fleet vehicles lacked more modern safety options and fuel efficiency. As well, the cost of repairing older vehicles was starting to outweigh the value. Some of the vehicles in the fleet were not being used because they were the oldest and staff felt unsafe. Some departments had vehicles that only averaged 5,000 miles a year. The Budget Office determined one of the challenges was that vehicles had been purchased for individual departmental purposes and not with a data-driven, system-wide vehicle replacement plan.

### **3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

- a.** Innovation – This program was innovative because it was created from scratch by the Vehicle Replacement Committee, made up of County employees. The Budget Office determined there had to be a more efficient and data driven way to facilitate the vehicle program. The committee created a program that used a multi-pronged approach to meet the needs of the all-County users. The entire program focused on a vehicle having multiple uses during its lifespan and having certain capabilities that provide opportunity for repurposing through its lifecycle. This was a completely different approach to purchasing vehicles for Stafford County. It was innovative because it resulted in changing the profile of the vehicles within the fleet; saving money and cutting vehicles from the fleet that were a drain on the program and departmental budgets.
- b.** Partnering – The Budget Office could not have completed this transformation without the buy-in and partnership from various Stafford County departments as well as Fleet Services, which manages County vehicles for both County Government and Schools.

Members of the Budget team partnered with Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, Risk Management and Fleet Services personnel to evaluate the program, streamline procedures and processes, create recommendations for the newly revamped program and develop a timeline for implementation. Without this partnership, it is doubtful the Budget Office could have compelled departments to change over to a system which reduced their control of their own vehicles.

- c. Model for Other Localities – This program is perfect for other communities to model. First of all, it is a great blueprint for how to collaborate for an organization-wide impact. A committee of rank-and-file employees, those who had the strongest knowledge of needs, was established to design this very important program. The group was very clear in its mission and purpose and did an excellent job of communicating this to other departments and gaining their cooperation in the program. They were also very detailed and organized in creating a charter for the committee and a plan for the Vehicle Replacement Program as well as a procedure for how to determine the value of a vehicle. All three of these items are attached as appendices at the end of this nomination. The steps for the program are very clearly laid out for others to replicate and personalize.

#### **4. Description of the Program**

Before the advent of the vehicle replacement program, individual departments purchased their own vehicles for their particular uses and kept those vehicles for the entirety of their usage in Stafford County. Some cars were as old as 20 years and had low mileage. Some cars were sitting in the car fleet and no one was using them because they were old. The question became what should Stafford do with cars that were not being utilized to their fullest that were perfectly good

cars with low mileage? The answer became that every car should be reviewed annually and should be purchased with a plan in place to maximum its usefulness for every year of its life.

### **Vehicle Replacement Committee**

The Budget Office initially recognized the issue with the cars and decided there had to be a better way. They helped form a Vehicle Replacement Committee. The committee consisted of members from Budget and the departments who used the most vehicles – Public Works, Risk Management and Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities, plus a representative from Fleet Services, the entity that maintains the cars. The committee devised a mission – to identify non-public safety vehicles that will be targeted for replacement or reassignment, as well as those that should be removed from service. The committee has the responsibility to review all non-public safety vehicles purchased each year from the General Fund. The committee provides a final report to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who approves the recommendations and authorizes the replacements. The committee also has the responsibility to annual review the Vehicle Replacement Procedure to see if it needs amending, notify department heads when the committee will meet and give departments the opportunity to document their unique needs and request that departments provide additional info and supporting documentation. The group decided to convene at least two times per year.

### **The Process**

The committee devised a rating system based upon current mileage, anticipated mileage for the upcoming year, fiscal year repair costs, upcoming costs and the age of the vehicle. There were three possible scores for each category. The certified mechanics at Fleet Services inspected each vehicle and immediately flagged four vehicles to be removed from the pool.

The committee analyzed the resulting scores and data and made recommendations to the CFO.

The committee may make a recommendation that the vehicle is placed into the staff vehicle fleet for local travel. The committee may make further recommendations to move vehicles from departments that have limited mileage and needs to those with larger annual mileage requirements so that vehicles can be utilized over a greater time. All movement of vehicles was subject to the department director's approval.

The committee spent a significant amount of time meeting with department heads and members of departments to outline the process the committee had devised and to explain how the centralized program would benefit everyone in the long run. Without the cooperation of the departments, this effort would have failed.

The first sweep of the fleet resulted in removing 11 vehicles from the fleet, equating to a 10% reduction of the fleet. Seven vehicles were reprogrammed to different departments. The group proposed to replace 15 vehicles.

Moving forward, replacement vehicles will be selected with an end purpose in mind. All truck purchases, for example, require a minimum of options for standardization purposes: ¾ ton; four-wheel drive; and crew cabs for carrying multiple personnel. The end goal is for these trucks to be used for heavy duty purposes like the removal of snow at the end of their life, to maintain their usefulness. New vans must have: 15 passenger capacity; Americans with Disabilities Act compliancy; or be cargo vans that could later be used for mail or mechanics. Cars are being phased out in favor of small sport utility vehicles with four-wheel drive and four-doors.

## **5. The Cost of the Program**

The initial cost of implementing the program is \$100,000 of ongoing funds and a one-time infusion of \$334,000 from the general fund. The committee expects to be able to inject money

from the sale of unwanted vehicles back into the program.

## **6. Tangible Results or Measurable Outcomes of the Program**

The total fleet of 111 cars was reduced by 10% or 11 vehicles. The average age of the vehicles was raised – directly improving repair costs, reliability and streamlining usage. Cars were reprogrammed for more useful purposes. Most importantly, a yearly process was established to review the fleet to continue the process of weeding out vehicles that have come to the end of their life and usefulness and to find the next use of a vehicle depending on its age and mileage. And, this program was centralized based upon objective data and facts, instead of individual needs.

## **7. Brief Summary**

Local government is structured in such a way that can lead to operating in silos, putting individual departmental needs first. In reality, pooling resources and needs can sometimes save money – as in insurance groups and car pools. Stafford’s Vehicle Replacement Program is an efficient way of evaluating the usage and life of a vehicle, saving money on repairs and maintenance of unnecessary vehicles, increasing safety and constantly looking for a way of streamlining County needs. It is easily replicated and could be adapted for use in evaluating and reviewing other necessities of local government over and above vehicle replacement. This innovative way of scoring the usefulness of vehicles was created entirely by Stafford County staff and has instituted a process where once there was a random system. This also makes for more efficient and transparent use of taxpayer funds. For these reasons, the Stafford County Vehicle Replacement Program is worth of a Virginia Association of Counties 2019 Achievement Award.

## **Supporting Information**

- I. Vehicle Replacement Committee Charter
- II. Vehicle Replacement Procedure
- III. Example – Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities (PRCF) Vehicle Rotation Plan