



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Vehicles for Change Inc. (VFC) empowers families, with financial challenges, to achieve economic and personal independence through car ownership and technical training

### **Objectives**

- To help those who want to work become self sufficient and financially independent by addressing their need for transportation. To help them gain access to better jobs and salaries by having a car to get to less accessible places of employment.
- To help individuals with life challenges increase their sense of independence, self-confidence and self esteem.

## **CHANGING LIVES**

VFC provides cars in Maryland, Virginia and Washington DC.. Grants were received in from The Abell, the Annie E. Casey, Walmart, Harry and Jeanette Weinberg and the Washington Area Women's Foundations. Providing over 4,300 families with a car since October 1999 VFC has impacted over 15,000 individuals. VFC currently awards 35 to 50 cars per month and will provide 500 cars to worthy families in the FY 2014. VFC will open a Detroit car award program in the spring of 2014. Detroit will be the first of several new locations as VFC looks to build a national program.

VFC also trains individuals in the career path of automotive detailing and soon will add automotive mechanic training to the Academy for Automotive Careers.

## **PARTNERS**

Vehicles for Change has partnered with Comcast, WTOP, Fisher Auto Parts, over fifty local garages, BB&T Bank, PNC Bank, Precision Tune Auto Care, Century Engineering and Jasper Engines to make the VFC program possible.

The public is our greatest partner. They donate 100% of the cars provide to our worthy families. Not only do they enjoy the great feeling of making a difference in the family's life but they also enjoy a much greater tax deduction. Donors are able to deduct the maximum amount allowed, fair market value of the car when it is awarded to a worthy family.

## **FUNDING**

The cost of providing one car to a low income family is \$5,400. VFC obtains its funding in three ways. The recipient pays an average of \$750 per car, the sponsoring county/agency pays an average of \$2400 (46%) per car and VFC internally funds approximately \$2,050 per car. VFC's funding is generated through cars sold on our retail lot "Freedom Wheels" ([www.freedomwheels.org](http://www.freedomwheels.org)) and older cars sold at auction.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

### **Donations**

Car donations are solicited from the general public. The public is made aware of the VFC program via radio and newspaper advertising. Currently 170-200 cars are donated monthly.

## **Repairs**

VFC determines if the donated car is repairable (keeper) based on an initial review of the general condition, mileage, year and make of the vehicle. Those deemed not repairable are sold at auction. Keepers are mechanically reviewed and repaired in the VFC garage. The average Kelly Blue Book value of cars awarded to a recipient is \$3500. Repairs are completed in either the VFC garage or other partner garages. Parts are purchased at wholesale.

## **Recipients**

The recipients are a low-income individual/family needing a vehicle to reach his/her place of employment and to perform daily transportation functions such as getting children to day-care, school and doctor appointments. Most recipients are single mothers with children but some specific programs are designed to work with the ex-offender population and displaced fathers.

Recipients must meet the following criteria:

- Have a bona fide job or job offer
- Identified as low-income and cannot otherwise afford to purchase a car
- Is insurable/has a relatively clean driving record; (DWI, DUI etc.)
- Has no extensive criminal background; (reviewed on a case by case basis)
- Drug free

## **Car Awards**

VFC sells the vehicle for approx. \$750 and provides a six-month warranty and guaranteed twelve-month bank loan in the recipient's name. Recipients are responsible for their car insurance and taxes, tags and title fees and attend a two-hour "Car Owner" course prior to obtaining their car.

## **RESULTS**

A recent study of 45 customers revealed that Vehicles for Change (VfC) is "Changing Lives". 73% of them have obtained better jobs/promotions and have increased their income by an average of \$7,000.00. Recipients feel better about themselves, the independence they have gained and what they can do for their children. They feel healthier and less stressed, attend religious services on a regular basis, care for aging family members and spend more time with family and friends.

Most importantly their car has helped strengthen their family as new opportunities for the children are attainable. The children participate in after-school activities, sports and recreational programs never before possible. All customers stated they are now able to get their children to doctor's appointments and daycare.

Cars do make a difference. Customers have the opportunity of obtaining financial independence and are taking advantage of it. Not only are they making a better life for themselves and their families, they are saving taxpayers millions of dollars. The average family of three cost the State \$9,360.00 in Temporary Cash Assistance and Food Stamps each year (per Carroll County DSS). Cars are keeping these families off state assistance!

## **FREEDOM WHEELS ( a social enterprise)**

Freedom Wheels, VFC's retail used car business, opened in December 2005. Cars between \$3,000 and \$6,000 are sold to the general public. All proceeds are used to support VFC. The cars are obtained mostly through cars donated where the donors would rather see VFC use the donation as a fund raising tool or the car needs significant improvement beyond what VFC can afford when providing it to a low income family. A program was established in 2012 to provide low interest loans, to purchase a car from Freedom Wheels, to families who are still considered "low income" but do not qualify for a VFC car. This program allows us to serve a greater number of low income families.