



Powerful Partnerships, Effective Solutions

Cars: A critical need that many take for granted

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Think for a moment about how you move from place to place. If you're like 93% of American adults, a car, van or truck is your primary form of transportation. Now imagine if that vehicle was taken away from you.

This is why [Cars for Neighbors](#) exists. We are a nonprofit organization that assists in funding people's vehicle repairs at little to no cost to them. Located in Blaine and formerly known as Free2B!, we serve low-income individuals and families in Anoka County.

We meet a critical and often overlooked need in Anoka County. Despite being the fourth largest county in Minnesota, public transportation is very limited here. The bus lines only cover certain areas, and they shut down at 6 p.m., creating a transportation gap for residents. Due to this gap, many Anoka County residents rely on a personal vehicle to commute each day. According to the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), 59% of Anoka County working residents travel to another county for work and 45% of all working residents have anywhere between 30 minutes to over 1-hour travel time to work.

Many people on fixed incomes don't have extra cash to pay for vehicle repairs. We understand that the repairing of vehicles has a multiplier effect—with a safe, working vehicle clients have better access to jobs, can drive their children to school or other activities, and attend important appointments.

When a client comes to us with vehicle issues, we, in collaboration with our trusted partner Meineke Car Care Center in Ham Lake, conduct a comprehensive inspection. We don't just want to fix the problem area; we want to fix the whole car so that that person can drive away with a safer and more reliable vehicle. Most Minnesotans will use their vehicle until it dies, and our goal is to extend the life of these vehicles as much as safely possible.

This is a big year for Cars for Neighbors. It's our 20th anniversary, and we're expanding our partnerships in a big way. One of those partnerships is with Environmental Initiative. We're proud to be a partner organization for the Project CAR program—which allows us to go the extra mile for our lower-income clients. Thanks to this innovative program, we can identify and repair older cars with broken emission controls, oxygen sensors, or exhaust equipment. Did you know that having bad oxygen sensors and air filters in your vehicle can reduce your gas mileage? We are thrilled to be part of this program which delivers the win-win of helping people and cleaning up the air.