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HRDG 4080 - Transit Incentive Program - Section B

Last Modified:

Subchapter 4080

Transit Incentive Program

Section B - Eligibility & Applying for Transit Benefits

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You are eligible for this program if you are a current USDA, MRP employee (headquarters or field) and you use public transportation or a qualified vanpool for at least 50 percent of your regular monthly commuting trips to **and** from work.

Example: You are normally scheduled to work in Riverdale 15 days and at home 5 days per month. Fifteen days is considered 100 percent of your regular monthly commute. To meet the 50 percent requirement, you would have to commute via public transportation or registered vanpool at least 8 or more days per month; anything less (due to TDY, leave, etc.) would make you ineligible for benefits for that month. You must return vouchers in any month that this occurs.

Part-Time, Temporary, and Intermittent Employees are eligible to participate in this program for the days they work for MRP and use public transportation and/or a registered vanpool for at least 50 percent of their regular monthly commuting trips to **and** from work. Student Volunteers and Interns including Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) and The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) are also eligible to participate.

Eligibility

Vanpools are also eligible; however, they must be registered with your local transit authority. If your vanpool is not registered, contact your local transit authority to find out how. Headquarters employees can register and/or check if their vanpool is already registered by contacting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (www.wmata.com).

As a vanpool owner or driver you may claim costs if you actually pay to ride in the vanpool and can provide evidence of such payments if requested (e.g., a canceled personal check payable to your vanpool company).

Note: Vanpool owners are solely accountable to the IRS in the event of any audit.

Carpools are not eligible for this program. The program targets single occupancy vehicles and encourages those riders to convert to either mass transit or vanpools. The Government's goal is to ease traffic congestion and improve air quality.

To apply for this program, complete the electronic transit benefits application and forward it to your supervisor and transit benefit coordinator. The electronic transit benefits application can be found at: [USDA | US Department of Transportation](#) (select USDA Transit Benefit Program Application System).

HQ Employees - If you ride modes of transportation that exclusively accept the SmarTrip Card, you must register your card online with Metro at www.wmata.com and include your card number on your application. Applications received by DOT by the 15th of the month will be processed and benefits will be received by the 1st of the following month.

Applying for Transit Benefits

Field Employees - Apply for a TRANServe VISA Credit Card using the USDA-Transit Benefit Program Enrollment/Change Application. Applications received by DOT by the 20th of the month will be processed and a TRANServe VISA Credit Card will be sent beginning the next month (e.g. if required information is submitted by November 20th, credit card will be sent in December. Credit Card will be funded December 10th through January 4th for January's fare/pass/ticket, etc.).

Split Benefits - Split Benefits are when participants ride multiple modes of mass transit and require two different types of benefits, Smart Benefits and Credit Card benefits. Specifically, for HQ employees who ride Metro rail and/or bus and a mode of mass transit that accepts the TranServe Credit Card (MARC Train, VRE, Commuter Buses, etc.). Employees must specify, in the Split Benefits section of the transit e-app, exactly how much they will need in Smart Benefits and on their Credit Card. The total amount must not exceed the \$280 monthly maximum allowed for transit subsidy.

**Parking/Fuel
Costs**

Parking or fuel costs (or other vehicle maintenance costs) cannot be claimed. MRP employees who meet the eligibility requirements may apply for the Pre-Tax Parking Program.

MRP employees: You may contact your transit coordinator to apply for the Pre-Tax Parking Program.

**Can I Receive
Cash in Lieu of
Transit
Subsidy?**

No, you may not receive cash. When fare media is unavailable at a particular location, the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) is used to Reimburse you. Provide proof of transportation usage at the end of each month (e.g., travel receipts) along with a completed SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, to your MRP transit coordinator. Your MRP transit coordinator works with your local financial specialist to obtain reimbursement. The financial specialist uses a “No Obligation” (NO) FFIS for to obtain reimbursement.

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