

TRANSIT BENEFIT INTEGRITY TRAINING

Presented By:

U.S. Department of Transportation



Training Objectives

- Clarify transit benefit requirements
- Emphasize internal controls in place to minimize fraud and abuse
- Address ramifications of non-compliance
- Provide real-life scenarios to enhance employee understanding
- Educate participants to their roles and responsibilities



Topics

- **Program Overview**
 - **Background and Objectives**
 - **Role of TRANServe**
 - **Website Content**
 - **Legal Implications**
- **Understanding the Certification Statement**
- **Scenarios**



Background

- Established in 1991, as a Federal Transit Administration pilot program
- Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act in 1993
- Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit – EO 13150 April 21, 2000



Program Objectives

- Air Pollution Reduction
- Reduce Traffic Congestion



Role of TRANServe

- **Fee for Service**
- **Distribute Transit Benefits to Qualified Employees**
- **Administer the Transit Benefit Program**
- **Establish Best Practices**



Website Content

www.transerve.dot.gov

- ✓ Application & Recertification
- ✓ Expense & Verification Worksheet
- ✓ Best Practices & Internal Controls
- ✓ Transit Subsidy Benefit Integrity Training
- ✓ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- ✓ Point of Contact (POC) Guide
- ✓ SmartBenefits® Presentation
- ✓ Fraud & Abuse Penalties
- ✓ Transit Links



Legal Implications

Tax Evasion & Fraud

Employees who misuse transit subsidies will be subject to appropriate action up to and including discipline and disqualification for future Transit Benefits. Disciplinary penalties may be taken up to and including removal of employment.



Knowledge Check

The Transit Benefit Program objective is to:

- A. Increase compensation of federal employees per month.
- B. Provide incentive to federal employees to use public transportation to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.
- C. Reward the employees for their hard work.



The Answer

The correct answer is B.

The Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit Program under Executive Order 13150 was put in place to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.



Knowledge Check

If I misuse my transit benefit, such as selling my benefit or overestimating my commuting cost, I could be removed from service to the federal government.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

*The correct answer is **TRUE**.*

Disciplinary action may be taken up to and including removal from employment.



Knowledge Check

The role of TRANServe's Transit Benefit Program is :

- A. Distribute Transit Benefits to CFPB employees.
- B. Administer the Transit Benefit Program.
- C. Establish Best Practices.
- D. All of the above.



The Answer

The answer is D. All of the above.

The TRANServe program was put in place by the Secretary of Transportation to administer the Transit Benefit Program, to distribute the transit benefit to CFPB employees and to establish Best Practices around transit benefits.



Certification Required

Anyone who signs up for transit benefits through TRANServe must certify that certain conditions are true. The following slides describe these conditions.



What does certification mean?

“To formally and legally attest a specific statement to be true”



Certification Statement

WARNING !

This certification concerns a matter within the jurisdiction of an agency of the United States. Making a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may constitute criminal violations punishable under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, by imprisonment up to five years and fines up to \$10,000 for each offense, and/or agency disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

- I certify that I am employed by the U.S. Federal Government.
- I certify that I am not named on a federally subsidized parking permit with any other federal agency.
- I certify that I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work by public transit or vanpool, and will not give, sell, or transfer it to anyone else.
- I certify that in any given month, I will not use the Government-provided transit benefit in excess of the statutory limit. If my commuting costs per month on public transit exceed the month statutory limit, then I will supplement those additional costs with my own funds rather than use a Government-provided transit benefit designated for use in a future month.
- I certify that I will not claim the transit benefit in excess of my actual monthly commuting expense. If at anytime during a given month I am out of work due to sickness, vacation or any other reason, on official travel, or use a private vehicle for commuting, I will claim less and adjust the amount of my transit benefit the following month if appropriate.
- I certify that my parking fees are not included in the computation of the daily, weekly or monthly commuting costs for my transit benefit.

I Agree

I Do Not Agree



Certification

What did I just agree to?

- I am employed by the CFPB.
- I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit.
- I will only use the transit benefit for my daily commute to and from work.
- I will not give, sell or transfer my transit benefit to anyone else.
- I will not use the Government-provided transit benefit in excess of the subsidy provided by the CFPB.
- I will not include parking fees in the computation of the daily, weekly or monthly commuting cost.



Certification Part I

“I certify that I am employed by the CFPB and not named on a federally subsidized parking permit with the CFPB or any other federal agency.”

This means:

- ✓ *You do not have federally subsidized parking*
- ✓ *You are not listed on any federal parking pass*
- ✓ *You do not park your personal/leased vehicle at a government parking lot or garage*



Certification Part II

“I certify that I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work, and will not transfer it to anyone else.”

This means:

- ✓ *You are qualified to receive the transit benefit*
- ✓ *You use mass transportation to/and from work*
- ✓ *You will not give or sell your subsidy benefit to anyone*



Certification Part III

“I certify that in any given month, I will not use the Government provided transit benefit in excess of the statutory limit.”

This means:

- ✓ *You will not use more than your monthly estimated commuting cost.*
- ✓ *If you have commuting cost in excess of those provided by the CFPB benefits, you agree to pay additional cost, out of pocket.*



Certification Part IV

“I certify that I will not claim the transit benefit in excess of my actual monthly commuting expense and that parking fees are not included in the computation of the daily, weekly or monthly commuting costs.”

This means:

- ✓ You will not claim more than your monthly estimated commuting cost*
- ✓ Your parking fees are not included in the computation of your daily, weekly or monthly costs*



Knowledge Check

Sharon has joined a carpool after commuting via train for 5 years. She receives the maximum benefit per month for her commute. She has decided to sell her benefit at a 10% discount to her best friend since she believes the benefit belongs to her. Is this the correct course of action for Sharon.

YES

NO



The Answer

*The correct answer is **NO**.*

It is against the law to sell or give away your transit benefit. If there are unused benefits, they need to be returned.



Knowledge Check

Carmen travels from Virginia to get to work. His commuting costs are \$264 per month. He is qualified to receive additional transit benefit since his commute is so costly.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**.

The CFPB currently provides employees up to the maximum tax free subsidy amount (for 2013, \$245) for mass transportation commuting cost. The employee must cover the additional amount, “out of pocket”.



Scenarios

The following scenarios were developed from the DOT Program Policy and Guidance Document and from the Frequently Asked Questions on the CFPB Transit Subsidy Benefit Intranet Site, http://team.cfpb.local/wiki/index.php/Transit_Subsidy_FAQ



Scenario 1

My commuting costs have changed.

What do I do?



Scenario 1

My commuting costs have changed.

All changes to your commuting costs must be updated on your application. To make these changes, follow these steps:

1. Go to:

<https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/index.cfm?method=passport.showLogin&CFID=895132&CFTOKEN=31581240>

2. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”

3. Click on “Change Existing Account”

4. Follow the step-by-step directions to update your application.



Scenario 2
I ride in a carpool.

***Do I qualify for the transit
benefit?***



Scenario 2

I ride in a carpool.

No.

A carpool does not meet the definition of mass transportation and its riders are not eligible to receive the Transit Subsidy Benefit.



Scenario 3

I ride mass transit and park in the lot near the station.

Can I use my benefit to pay for parking at my commuter lot?



Scenario 3

I ride mass transit and park in the lot near the station.

No.

Indirect costs, such as gas, mileage, or parking cannot be included as part of the estimated commuting cost.

Note: *This question is specific to participants in the National Capital Region.*



Knowledge Check

Chris is going to an offsite meeting. She is taking mass transit to and from the meeting, and decides to use her transit benefit. This is the correct course of action.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**.

Travel to an offsite meeting or training class is an office expense. The Transit Benefit is provided solely for your home-to-work-to-home commute via mass transportation.



Scenario 3

What do I do when I leave the agency?

What can I do?



Scenario 3

What do I do when I leave the agency?

1. Go to:

<https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/index.cfm?method=passport.showLogin&CFID=895132&CFTOKEN=31581240>

2. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”

3. Click on “Withdraw from Program”



Scenario 4

I plan to go on extended leave.

Can I still receive my transit benefit?



Scenario 4

I plan to go on extended leave.

If you are out on extended leave (90 days or more), you must withdraw from the program and re-enroll when you return. To do this, follow the steps below:

1. Go to:

<https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/index.cfm?method=passport.showLogin&CFID=895132&CFTOKEN=31581240>

2. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”

3. Click on “Withdraw from Program”



Knowledge Check

Shandra is leaving the CFPB to work for DOJ and she has determined that the correct way to handle her leftover transit benefit is to:

- A. Give the leftovers to her sister.*
- B. Sell her leftovers to her co-worker.*
- C. Withdraw from the program.*



The Answer

The correct answer is C.

Benefits are not transferable and are not to be sold.



Scenario 5

I have been working on-site at a bank or
working from home
for the past two months.

*Can I still get my Transit
Benefit for the months I
missed?*



Scenario 5

**I have been working on-site at a bank or
working from home
for the past two months.**

No.

If you are NOT commuting to a CFPB Headquarters office or regional office daily, you are not eligible for the program.

See guidelines for eligibility.



Scenario 6
I plan to telecommute.

***Do I need to change my
benefit amount?***



Scenario 6

I plan to telecommute.

Yes, if your commuting costs changed when your work scheduled changed. All changes must be updated on your application. To make these changes, go to:

1. <https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/index.cfm?method=passport.showLogin&CFID=895132&CFTOKEN=31581240>
2. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”
3. Click on “Change an Existing Account”



Knowledge Check

Martha has come to an agreement with Human Capital and her supervisor to adjust her work week in the office to 3 days per week and will telecommute 2 days per week, indefinitely. She currently receives \$25 per week in transit benefit. The correct course of action to take based on this change is to:

- A. Thank her supervisors' for his/her understanding.*
- B. Continue claiming her transit benefit without change.*
- C. Change her transit benefit to \$15 per week.*



The Answer

The correct answer is C.

You must change your benefits if your transit expenses change.



Scenario 7

What if my fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Who do I contact?



Scenario 7

What if my fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Paper Fare Media

Once the fare media is distributed to you, you are responsible for its safekeeping. Lost or stolen fare media will not be replaced by the Department. Some transit authorities have methods to exchange damaged fare media. Your Point of Contact may also be able to advise you in the handling of damaged fare media.



Scenario 7

What if my fare media is lost, stolen or damaged?

Electronic Fare Media

When you purchase a reloadable electronic fare media card, be sure to register it with the Transit Authority Provider, if this option is available.

Registration prevents a permanent loss of irreplaceable Transit Benefit funds. The electronic fare media on a lost, stolen or damaged card can be transferred to the new card.

Note: *You must pay for the new card with personal funds.*



Scenario 10
I didn't use all my benefit.

Can I give it to a co-worker?



Scenario 10

I didn't use all my benefit.

No. Your transit benefit belongs to you, and no one else. Did you know it's against the rules (and the law) to sell or give your transit benefit to someone else? The program was designed to assist employees with public transportation costs in an effort to cut-down air pollution and relieve traffic congestion. The IRS code states that this is a tax-free benefit. http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/fringe_benefit_fslq.pdf



Knowledge Check

Marie is going out on maternity leave for three months. The correct way to change her transit subsidy benefit is to notify her supervisor.

TRUE

FALSE



The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**. If you are out on extended leave (90 days or more), you must withdraw from the program and re-enroll when you return. To do this, follow the steps below:

1. Go to

<https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/index.cfm?method=passport.showLogin&CFID=895132&CFTOKEN=31581240>

2. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”

3. Click on “Withdrawal from the Program”



✓ CONGRATULATIONS!

(Participant Name Here)

**You have successfully completed
TRANSIT BENEFIT INTEGRITY TRAINING**

