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USHR Transit Benefit Integrity Awareness Training

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Program Overview

- **Transit Benefit Program:**
  - **Reduce air pollution**
  - **Reduce traffic congestion**
  - **Increases use of mass transit**
- **Studies show that congestion wastes:**
  - **3.7 billion hours of travel delays**
  - **$63 billion per year nationally**
  - **$850 and $1,600 in lost time and fuel each year per commuter**
- **Tax-free subsidy for *actual* costs of transportation**
  - **Up to $130 per month**

Background

- **Program History**
  - 1991 - Federal Transit Administration pilot program
  - 1993 - Clean Air Initiatives Act
  - 2000 - Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit
  - 2005 - SAFETEA-LU
- **Eligibility**
  - All USDA employees working in full or part time paid status
  - All USDA interns and volunteers working in a non paid status

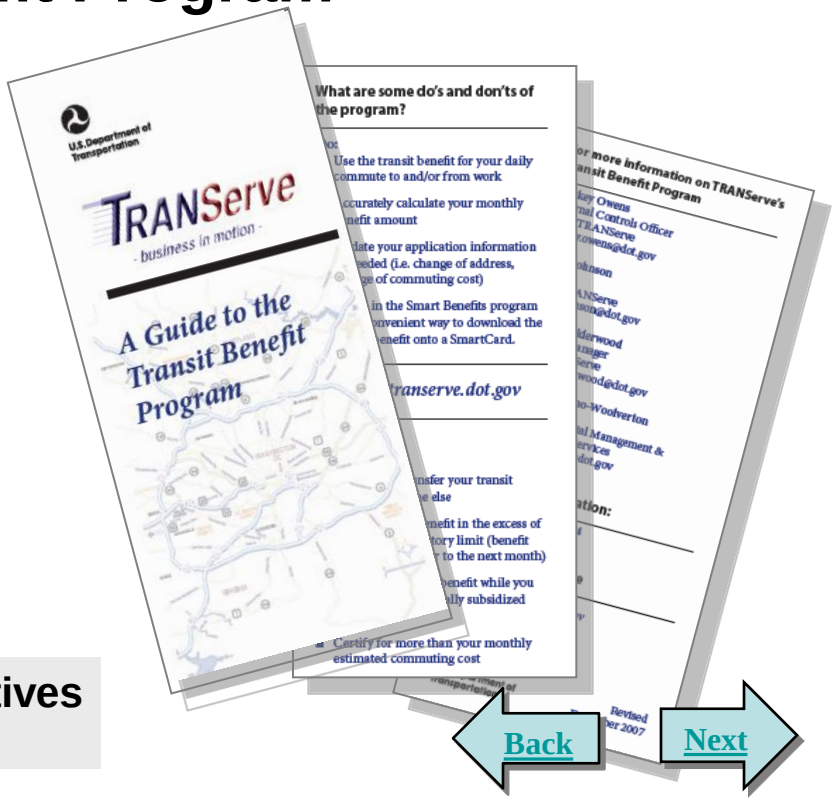
Mass Public Transportation

- Rail
  - Subway
  - Commuter
  - Light Rail
- Bus
  - Transit authority
  - Commuter
- Ferries
  - Pedestrian or bicycle

- Qualified vanpools
  - Commercial/private vehicle
  - At least six adults excluding the driver

Role of TRANServe

- Provides fee for service
- Distributes transit benefits to qualified employees
- Administers the Transit Benefit Program
- Establishes best practices
- Provides answer and support to program participants



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Employee Roles and Responsibilities

- Understand the scope and limitations of the Transit Benefit Program
- Not to sell or transfer the benefit or make false claims
- Understand the penalties involved in misuse or false claims

It is a violation of law to provide false or fraudulent information to obtain the transit benefit, to transfer, or to sell the transit benefit.

Employee Roles and Responsibilities

- Not to be named on a worksite parking permit at any Federal agency, nor otherwise participating in a carpool
- Use transit benefit only for home to work and work to home transportation
- Ensure the amount of transit benefit received does not exceed actual monthly commuting cost of public transportation
- Responsible for updating commuting costs upon changes to commuting method, work schedule, or change of address

Employee Roles and Responsibilities

Once fare media is distributed, you are responsible for its safekeeping. Lost, stolen or damaged fare media will not be replaced.

- **In the National Capital Region (NCR), lost, stolen or damaged SmarTrip® cards may be replaced. Contact Metro via a sales office or online at www.wmata.com.**
- **For lost, stolen or damaged Debit Cards, contact JP Morgan Chase at UCARD Center (https://ucard.chase.com)**

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Legal Implications

Employees who misuse the transit benefit will be subject to appropriate administrative action including discipline and/or disqualification from future USDA transit benefits. Disciplinary penalties could range from a letter of admonishment to removal from Federal service depending on the severity of the abuse.

TRANServe Website

transerve.USDA.gov

Website Pages:

- Home
- Debit Card
- Return of Excess Benefit
- Resources
- Participants
- Contact Us
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Enrollment Process

1. Log into the TRANServe Electronic Transit Benefit Application System (http://transerve.dot.gov/participants.html)
2. Scroll down to U.S. House of Representative and click on #1
3. First time enrollments click the “Register” button and complete required information
4. Login using government email address and password
5. Click on “Transit Benefit Application”
6. Choose what to do:
   - Request information
   - Withdraw from the program
   - Certify/Enroll

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Knowledge Check 1

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 employees for their hard work.**

Knowledge Check 1 - Answer

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

Knowledge Check 2

- **If I misuse my transit benefit, such as selling my benefit or overestimating my need for the benefit, I could be removed from service to the federal government.**
  - ❑ **True**
  - ❑ **False**

Knowledge Check 2 - Answer

- **If I misuse my transit benefit, such as selling my benefit or overestimating my need for the benefit, I could be removed from service to the federal government.**
  - ☑ **True**
  - ☐ **False**

Disciplinary penalties could range from a letter of admonishment to removal from Federal service depending on the severity of the abuse.

Knowledge Check 3

The role of TRANServe is:

- ❑ **A. To distribute transit benefits to federal employees.**
- ❑ **B. To administer the Transit Benefit Program.**
- ❑ **C. To establish Best Practices.**
- ❑ **D. All of the above.**

Knowledge Check 3 - Answer

The role of TRANServe is:

- ❑ A. To distribute transit benefits to federal employees.
- ❑ B. To administer the Transit Benefit Program.
- ❑ C. To establish Best Practices.
- ☑ **D. All of the above.**

TRANServe administers the Transit Benefit and establishes best practices.

Knowledge Check 4

- **Wayne plans on teleworking. The correct course of action based on this is:**
  - ❑ **A. Inform his supervisor.**
  - ❑ **B. Continue claiming his transit benefit without change.**
  - ❑ **C. Submit an updated application.**

Knowledge Check 4 - Answer

- **Wayne plans on teleworking. The correct course of action based on this is:**
  - ❑ A. Inform his supervisor.
  - ❑ B. Continue claiming his transit benefit without change.
  - ☑ **C. Submit an updated application.**

You are responsible for updating commuting costs upon changes to commuting method, work schedule, or change of address.

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Certification Required

- **Anyone who enrolls for the Transit Benefit Program must certify that certain conditions are true.**

***Certify*:**

"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.

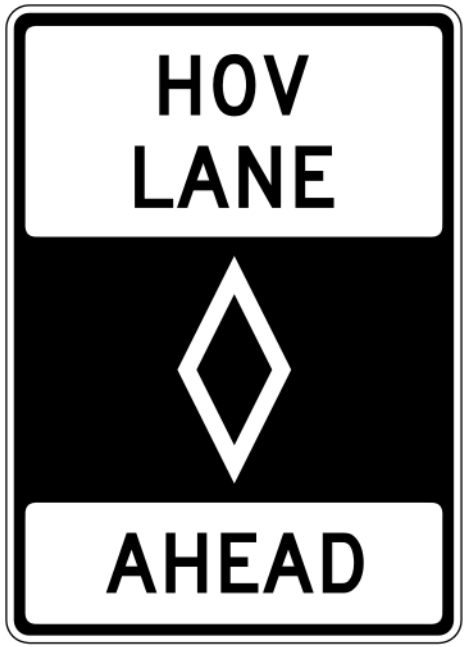
I Agree | I Do Not Agree

Certification

What did I just agree to?

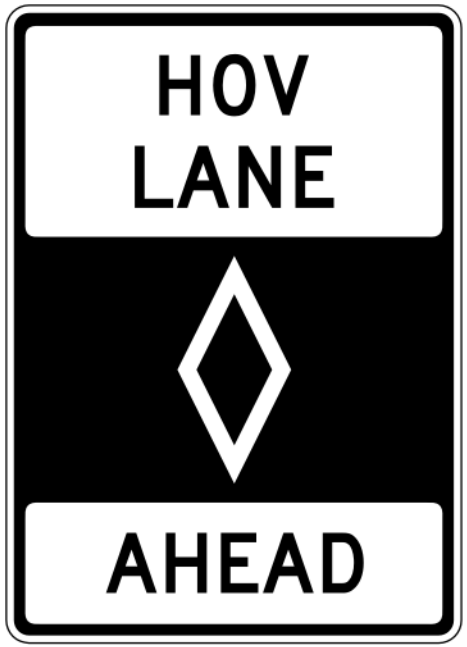
- I am employed by the U.S. House of Representatives
- I am eligible for a public transportation fare benefit
- I will only use the transit benefit for my daily commute to and from work
- I will not give, sell, or transfer my transit benefit to anyone else
- I will not use the Government-provided transit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

Knowledge Check 5



- **Lynne joined a carpool after commuting via train for 5 years. She received the maximum benefit per month for her commute. She sells her benefit since she believes the benefit belongs to her. Is this the correct course of action?**
  - ❑ **Yes**
  - ❑ **No**

Knowledge Check 5 - Answer



- **Ram joined a carpool after commuting via train for 5 years. He received the maximum benefit per month for his commute. He sells his benefit since he believes the benefit belongs to him. Is this the correct course of action?**

  - ☐ Yes
  - ☑ No

It is against the law to sell or give away your transit benefit.

Knowledge Check 6

- **Ellery commutes from Virginia to get to work. His commuting costs are $284 per month. He is eligible to receive additional transit benefit since his commute is so costly.**
  - ❑ **True**
  - ❑ **False**

Knowledge Check 6 - Answer

- **Ellery commutes from Virginia to get to work. His commuting costs are $284 per month. He is eligible to receive additional transit benefit since his commute is so costly.**

  - ☐ True
  - ☑ **False**

The U.S. House of Representatives will provide employees up to $130 for mass transportation commuting cost. The employee must cover the additional amount, "out of pocket".

Knowledge Check 7

- **Bonnie rides in a carpool. She is eligible to receive the transit benefit.**
  - ❑ **True**
  - ❑ **False**

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Knowledge Check 7 - Answer

- **Bonnie rides in a carpool. She is eligible to receive the transit benefit.**

  - ❑ True
  - ☑ **False**

The Federal Transit Benefit is for federal employees who choose to commute using mass transit in a commuter highway vehicle. This includes bus, rail, light rail or an authorized vanpool.

Knowledge Check 8

- **Tatjana rides mass transit and parks in the lot near the station. She includes her parking fees in the computation of her monthly commuting cost. She is right to do this.**
  - ❑ **True**
  - ❑ **False**

Knowledge Check 8 - Answer

- **Tatjana rides mass transit and parks in the lot near the station. She includes her parking fees in the computation of her monthly commuting cost. She is right to do this.**

  - ☐ True
  - ☑ **False**

The Federal Transit Benefit is provided solely for your home-to-work-to-home commute via mass transportation. Any other use of these funds is actionable as fraud, waste, or abuse of federal funds.

Knowledge Check 9

- **Melanie has come to an agreement with HR and her supervisor to work in the office 3 days and telework 2 days per week indefinitely. She currently receives $25/week in transit benefits. The correct course of action based on this change is to:**

  - ❑ **A. Thank her supervisor for his/her understanding.**
  - ❑ **B. Continue claiming her transit benefit without change.**
  - ❑ **C. Change her transit benefit to $15 per week or $60 per month.**

Knowledge Check 9 - Answer

- **Melanie has come to an agreement with HR and her supervisor to work in the office 3 days and telework 2 days per week indefinitely. She currently receives $25/week in transit benefits. The correct course of action based on this change is to:**
  - ❑ A. Thank her supervisor for his/her understanding.
  - ❑ B. Continue claiming her transit benefit without change.
  - ☑ **C. Change her transit benefit to $15 per week or $60 per month.**

You must change your benefit amount if your commuting expense changes.

Knowledge Check 10

- **Wendy is going to an off-site meeting. She is using mass transportation to and from the meeting, and decides to use her transit benefit. This is the correct course of action.**

  - ❑ **True**
  - ❑ **False**

Knowledge Check 10 - Answer

- **Wendy is going to an off-site meeting. She is using mass transportation to and from the meeting, and decides to use her transit benefit. This is the correct course of action.**
  - ☐ True
  - ☑ False

Travel to an off-site 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.

Congratulations!

You have successfully completed

TRANSIT BENEFIT INTEGRITY TRAINING

_____

(Print this page and Print Name legibly above)

Provide this certificate to Payroll & Benefits

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