

Transit Subsidy Program – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Transit Benefit Program?

The Transit Benefit is an employer provided benefit designed to encourage employees to use mass transit for their home-to-work-to-home commute.

How much is my Transit Benefit?

You are eligible to receive dollar-for-dollar of your actual commuting expense up to the statutory limit. The amount currently permitted by the Internal Revenue Service is \$255 per month.

Is the expense worksheet required every month?

No the expense worksheet is required during initial application, annual recertification and whenever changes are made to your application.

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

When you purchase a reloadable electronic fare media card, be sure to register it with the [Transit Authority](#) Provider, if this option is available. The electronic fare media on a lost, stolen or damaged card can be transferred to the new card. Please note you may not use your Transit Benefit to purchase a reloadable electronic fare media card from the Transit Authority. You must pay for the new card with personal funds.

My commuting costs have changed. What do I do?

Always update your Transit Benefit application to document a permanent change to your commuting costs. To make these changes log into your TranServe account and click “Certify/Enroll” to make any changes to your application.

Can I use the Transit Benefit to go to/from meetings?

No. 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. Any other use of these funds is actionable as fraud, waste or abuse of federal funds.

My work schedule has changed. Do I need to adjust my Transit Benefit to account for the change?

Yes. You do if your commuting costs changed when your work schedule changed. You must document this change by updating your Transit Benefit application.

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

No. Indirect costs, such as gas, mileage, or parking cannot be included as part of the estimated commuting cost.

My SmarTrip® card stopped working. What should I do?

You must take two steps if your SmarTrip® card is lost or stops working.

1. Call 1-888-762-7874 to cancel your card and to request a new one. If the problem is in the chip, WMATA will transfer your benefit to a new card and send the card to you.
 - Immediately register your new SmarTrip® card (www.wmata.com) to protect your funds.
2. Complete a Transit Benefit Application change form so your transit benefit is re-assigned to the new card.
 - If your agency is already using the TRANServe's electronic application, that site is <http://transerve.dot.gov>.

Can I participate in the Transit Subsidy Program if I currently use a Department parking permit?

An employee must terminate participation in the Transit Subsidy Program if the employee has applied for or is currently in possession of a Department subsidized parking permit. Simultaneous enrollment in both programs is prohibited.

How can I check the status of my TranServe application?

Applicants can check the status of their most recent TranServe applications at any time by logging on to their TranServe account and selecting "Transit Benefit Application" from the menu. The current status of your application will be written in red across the top of the page.

How do I make changes to the application?

Program participants are required to submit new applications in TranServe to make changes to subsidy allotments, method of transportation or method of payment. Once you have logged in to your account, click the Transit Benefit Application link, and then select "Certify/Enroll" from the options to begin a new application. Your application will pre-fill with the information reflected on your most recent transit

Subsidy application. You should review all of the listed information and update the applicable fields in your application to request your transit subsidy change(s). You will receive email notifications to confirm your submission and instructions on what to expect next. Once your application is approved, it will replace any previous applications, and you will receive approval notification via email.

Are Transit Subsidy program participants allowed to share benefits or SmarTrip cards?

This program is intended for your use only. It is non-transferable. It is against the law and against program policy to sell or give your Smart Benefits/Transit Subsidy to someone else. Fraudulent activity may result in criminal and/or administrative action.

If my method of transportation is paid for with a TranServe debit card, how do I receive my card?

Once the Department of Transportation has processed and approved your application, a TranServe debit card will be ordered from JP Morgan Chase. Your card will be mailed to the home address provided.

How often is my Transit Subsidy loaded?

Subsidy is automatically loaded to your registered SmarTrip on the first of each month. Participants who have recently changed their SmarTrip card information or subsidy allocation may experience delays in funding. TranServe debit cards are loaded on the tenth of each month. Subsidy provided on the tenth is intended to purchase passes for the following month.

Can I receive a reimbursement if I am unable to claim subsidy?

Transit subsidy is not an immediate, retroactive, or reimbursable benefit. Out-of-pocket expenses are not reimbursed. Participants should plan accordingly to pay for subsidy during processing periods. Any remaining subsidy balance from the preceding month will be removed from the card before new benefits are added the following month.

Can I be automatically withdrawn from the Transit Subsidy Program?

Yes. If you do not claim your benefits for 6 consecutive months, Department of Transportation has been authorized to remove you from the enrollment. You must reapply to receive transit benefits.

How do I withdraw from the program?

Participants are required to submit withdrawal applications in TranServe to withdraw from the Transit Subsidy Program. Once you have logged on, select "Withdraw from the Program" from the menu of options.

What is the turnover time to receive benefits?

Applications received before the 19th of the month, should allow up to 7-10 business days. Applications received after the 19th of the month fall under the WMATA/METRO lockout period in which no changes or withdrawals can be made, only new participants are able to enroll at this time. Applications that are received during the lockout period will be processed the first of the following month. Federal Holidays are not included as part of the turnover time.

What should I mark on the application for "Days per Month"?

Employees on an 8 hour work day should mark "20". Employees on a 9 hour work day should mark "18" and employees on a 10 hour work day, should mark "16". Telework days should not be included in these days. Example; if an employee works 8 hour days but Teleworks every Friday, the employee should only be requesting subsidy for 16 days, not 20.

What is the "Name of Company"?

If you ride rail, the answer is WMATA or Metro. You can find a list [here](#), of other Names of Company's in the National Capital Region. DOT uses this information to discern if the participant will be receiving a TranServe debit card for their funds.