

Civil Division Transit Subsidy Program Policy and Procedures Washington, DC

A transit benefit is an employer-provided subsidy established by Presidential Executive Order 13150 in April 2000. The subsidy is provided pursuant to Public Law 103-172, Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act (5 U.S.C., Section 7905), which is designed to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and conserve energy by encouraging employees to commute by means other than single occupancy vehicles. The transit benefit is not taxable and does not have to be reported as income.

Eligibility

Any salaried, unpaid volunteer, part-time, full-time, and short-term employee of the Civil Division who uses mass public transportation to commute between home and work is eligible. Employees, who receive Government-subsidized parking, and any car pool drivers or members listed on a car pool application for Government-subsidized parking, are not eligible. Contract employees are not eligible.

Application

Complete a U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division, Transit Subsidy Application (attached) and send it to the Transit Subsidy Coordinator, 1100 L Street, Room 9027. Original signatures are required; applications cannot be submitted via email or facsimile. Send an original application via trip sheet mail. The trip sheet should be attached to the outside of the messenger envelope--or deliver it in person to 1100 L Street, Room 9027. Incomplete or inaccurate applications may cause a delay in benefits.

Deadlines

All applications must be received by the Transit Subsidy Coordinator on or before noon on the 1st day of the month preceding the month in which eligibility begins. For SmartBenefits recipients, applications received after noon on the 1st will become eligible the month after that. E.g., for an application received at or before noon on August 1, eligibility will begin on September 1; for an application received after noon on August 1, eligibility will begin on October 1. Send all applications via trip sheet, with a designated delivery deadline to ensure timely submission. This deadline is mandated by WMATA and DOT processing requirements. If you commute via MARC, VRE, Maryland Commuter Bus, or van pool, the Transit Office will inform you of your eligibility date based on DOT debit card program deadlines.

Notice of Application Receipt and Approval

Applicants will receive an email notice from the Transit Subsidy Coordinator within two business days of receipt of an application. If an applicant does not receive email confirmation within two business days of submission, the applicant should immediately contact the transit subsidy office at 616-7930 or send an email to "Transit Subsidy Coordinator."

Approximately two weeks after receipt, when an application has been approved, the applicant will receive an email with detailed instructions of where, when and how he/she can receive their initial transit benefit. If an applicant does not receive that email, he/she should immediately contact the transit subsidy office at 616-7930 or send an email to "Transit Subsidy Coordinator."

Maximum Benefit

Effective February 1, 2016, transit subsidy recipients may receive \$255 per month or his/her actual commuting cost, whichever is lower. The Civil Division's transit subsidy program is responsible for providing for the most economical route from the commuter's home to his or her office; if the commuter chooses another carrier or route for any personal reason, any added expense must be borne by the commuter and not the Government. The benefit does not cover travel for work. Since the transit benefit subsidizes only mass public transportation expenses, the cost of parking should not be claimed on an application or factored in when computing monthly commuting costs.

The Executive Order establishing the Transit Benefit Program allows the transit subsidy to be provided for costs incurred in commuting between an employee's residence and his/her work place. The only exception is when an employee's normal commute would involve a location other than his/her residence, and the costs incurred in this commuting pattern would be less than or equal to the cost of commuting to/from that employee's residence. The total amount of an employee's benefit cannot exceed the cost of commuting to and from his/her residence.

Benefit Distribution

When an application has been approved, the applicant will be sent an email with detailed instructions of where, when and how he/she can make the first pickup.

SmarTrip Benefits: Recipients who commute via Metro subway, Metrobus, Circulator, DASH, Ride On, Fairfax Connector, PRTC, CUE, Loudoun County Transit, or any carrier which accepts SmarTrip cards will receive their benefits via a SmarTrip card. SmarTrip is a permanent, rechargeable fare card. It is plastic-like a credit card—and is embedded with a computer chip that keeps track of the value of the card. The commuter must purchase a SmarTrip card with his/her own funds and provide the SmarTrip serial number to the Civil Division's transit subsidy office.

The card must be registered with WMATA BEFORE the application is submitted to the transit subsidy office.

Register your card at www.WMATA.com under the SmarTrip Card section. The card must be registered in your name in order to access your benefits.

Benefits are automatically loaded when you swipe your registered SmarTrip card at the Metro turnstile or bus fare box. See the attached FAQ for more information on Smart Benefits Auto load. For details about how to use a SmarTrip card, visit www.wmata.com and click on "SmarTrip" or call 1-888-762-7874.

MARC, VRE, Maryland Commuter Bus, and van pool riders will be issued a prepaid debit card to purchase tickets online. You will receive detailed instructions from our office once your application is approved.

Time Limits for Using Benefits

Please be aware that once a month has passed, benefits for that particular month cannot be claimed. Unused funds revert back to DOJ CIV at the end of the month. There are legal limits on the Government-subsidized transit subsidy. A commuter may not use a benefit greater than **\$255** per month, the ceiling established by law. If a commuter's commuting costs exceed the monthly limit, the commuter must pay the difference with his/her own funds rather than use the Government-provided transit benefit designated for use in a future month.

Reimbursements Due to Departure or Absence from the Civil Division

Participants should contact the Transit Office with their departure date. Smart Benefits recipients will be removed from the Transit Program on their last day in the office.

MARC, VRE, Maryland Commuter Bus, and van pool riders who have received passes for future months should be prepared to make reimbursement by personal check or money order before departure.

If a transit subsidy recipient transfers to another component of the U.S. Department of Justice and his/her new office is located in Washington, DC, the recipient may keep and use the remaining funds of the transit subsidy benefit that were issued for the entire last month of employment with the Civil Division. Exceptions are when the employee's official last work day falls at the beginning of a month and the first day of the month falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, then, the recipient would not be eligible for a benefit from the Civil Division for that particular month. Also, if the recipient takes leave or does not report to work for any period of time immediately prior to the official last day of work for the Civil Division, the recipient would only be eligible for a benefit on the workdays they actually commute to work.

If a recipient leaves the Civil Division and transfers to another component of the U.S. Department of Justice outside of Washington, DC, or changes duty station to a location outside of Washington, DC, the recipient must reimburse the Civil Division for any benefit received for the remainder of the month of departure.

Recipients who, for any reason, do not commute to their official office for a period of four weeks or more should refrain from accepting transit subsidy benefits for that period of time. This includes leave without pay, annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, sabbaticals, and official travel to a location outside of Washington, DC. Recipients who accept a transit subsidy benefit for these periods will be required to make reimbursement to the Civil Division.

Events Which Require an Updated Application

Transit subsidy recipients must submit an updated application if there is a:

- change of home address
- change of office address (office moves, transfers, detailed to another office)
- change in commuting habits
- change of name (all names must match on your application, SmarTrip card, work ID, and JCON)
- change in work schedule (AWS, telecommuting, part-time, school/students)
- change in commuting costs (including fare increases)

Lost/Stolen/Damaged SmarTrip Cards

SmarTrip cards that are lost, stolen, or damaged will not be replaced by the Government. All SmarTrip cards must be registered, by the commuter, with WMATA. For more information on lost or stolen SmarTrip cards and on how to replace your card, visit www.wmata.com and click on SmarTrip cards or call 202-962-5719. Once the card is replaced, the transit subsidy recipient must provide the card's serial number and last four digits of his/her SSN to the Civil Division's transit subsidy office so future benefits will be directed to the new card. To avoid errors, this information must be sent via email to "Transit Subsidy Coordinator." Participants should create an online SmarTrip account at www.wmata.com for a record of account activity and purse balances.

Information

Additional information may be found by visiting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's website at www.wmata.com or telephone 202-637-7000 (general information), 1-888-762-7874 (SmarTrip). Applicants and recipients may also contact the Civil Division's transit subsidy office at civil.transit.subsidy.coordinator@usdoj.gov or telephone 202-616-7930.

Department of Justice
Civil Division
Transit Subsidy Program

Application Instructions: To apply for a transit subsidy, carefully read and follow the detailed instructions below. Incomplete or incorrect applications cannot be processed and may cause your eligibility for a benefit to be delayed. Under the guidelines of the transit subsidy program, the subsidy is based on a commuter's actual costs, not the maximum limit of benefit. Assistance for calculating commuting costs can be found at www.wmata.com. (Use the "Trip Planner" guide on the main page.)

YOUR COMMUTING COST CALCULATION MUST BE WRITTEN IN PENCIL ON THE BACK OF YOUR APPLICATION

If you commute via WMATA subway and/or Metrobus—

- 1) write the name of the subway station from which you commute (should be the station nearest your home) and the name of the subway station nearest your office; if you ride a Metrobus, provide the route name and number
- 2) write the cost of a one-way trip from that subway station to the station nearest your office
- 3) multiply this figure by 2 to get your daily subway cost
- 4) if you ride both the bus and subway, remember to deduct the transfer discount in both your morning and evening commutes. See <http://wmata.com/fares/metro rail.cfm>
- 5) add your subway and bus (if applicable) costs together to obtain your daily round-trip cost
- 6) if you are scheduled to work in your Civil Division office 5 days a week, multiply this figure by 20 workdays to get your monthly cost OR if you work part-time, telecommute, or work an alternate work schedule, you should multiply the number of days per week you are officially scheduled to work in your Civil Division office by 4 (weeks) and then multiply this number by your daily round-trip cost (step #5, above). Contact the transit subsidy office at 616-7930 if your work schedule does not fall within the scope of the instructions in Step 6.
- 7) The sum of this calculation is the amount that should be claimed on the front of your application.

If you commute via MARC, VRE, commuter bus, or van pool—your costs should also be documented in pencil on the back of the application form. Please note, if you work in your Civil Division office five (5) days a week and commute via a transit company which offers monthly passes which are less expensive than the daily fares, please claim the monthly, rather than the daily, fare. This method should be documented as "Monthly Pass = \$[fill in the blank]" on the back of the form.

Application Submission: Duplicate and keep a copy of your application for future reference. Submit the original application via trip sheet mail. A pre-addressed trip sheet is attached; the trip sheet goes on the outside of the messenger envelope; do not leave your application in an outgoing mail box; instead, hand the trip sheet package directly to the mail messenger in your building. You may also submit your application in person to the transit subsidy office, 1100 L Street, Room 9027. If no one is in the office to accept the application, you must send your application via trip sheet mail. It is not recommended that you allow someone to submit your application on your behalf.

Confirmation of Receipt: The transit subsidy office will send email confirmation of receipt of your application within two business days. Please notify us if you do not receive email confirmation within a week. When your application has been approved and forwarded to the Department of Transportation, you will receive a second email which will provide instructions on how, when, and where you can make your first transit subsidy pickup. Please notify us if you do not receive that email within two weeks.

Questions and Information: Most of the transit subsidy program's policies and procedures can be found in the attached Policy and Procedures document. If you have any questions, contact the transit subsidy office at 616-7930 or send an email to Civil.Transit.Subsidy.Coordinator@usdoj.gov



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CIVIL DIVISION TRANSIT SUBSIDY APPLICATION

Please print clearly or type. Use blue or black ink. All information requested MUST be provided.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Office (check one):

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appellate | <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation & Admiralty | <input type="checkbox"/> Constitutional Torts | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Torts | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fraud | <input type="checkbox"/> FTCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration - Appellate | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration - District Courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Management Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> National Courts | <input type="checkbox"/> OAG |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Torts - New York, NY | <input type="checkbox"/> Torts - San Francisco, CA | | |

Building (where you work):

- | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Massachusetts Avenue | <input type="checkbox"/> 1100 L Street | <input type="checkbox"/> 1425 New York Avenue | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicentennial Building | <input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liberty Square Building | <input type="checkbox"/> RFK Main Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Patrick Henry Building | <input type="checkbox"/> National Place Building | <input type="checkbox"/> New York City |

GS/SES _____ Check here if _____ Work _____ Last four
Grade Level _____ you are a student _____ Telephone _____ digits of your SSN _____

Check one:

I am not currently a participant in the Civil Division's Transit Subsidy Program. This is the first application I have submitted.

I am already a participant in the Civil Division's Transit Subsidy Program. I am submitting this form to **update/change** my previous information.

Modes of transportation to be used to and from workplace. (Check as many as applicable.)

Bus Subway Train Van Pool Light Rail Ferry Other (Explain on back.)

Please identify the NAME of the transit company that you intend to use. _____

Is your card registered as a Reduced Fare SmarTrip card (for senior citizens or people with disabilities)? (Check one.) Yes No

Prior to applying for this benefit, did you commute via some form of mass transit? (Check one.) Yes No

Employee Certification

WARNING: This certification concerns a matter within the jurisdiction of an agency of the United States and making a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may render the maker subject to criminal prosecution under Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001, Civil Penalty Action, providing administrative recoveries of up to \$10,000 per violation, and/or agency disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

I certify that I am employed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division and do not receive a transit subsidy benefit from any other Government agency. I certify that I am eligible for a transit benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work and will not give, sell, or transfer it to anyone else. I certify that I do not receive/use a Government-subsidized parking pass, nor am I listed as a driver or member of a car pool which receives Government-subsidized parking. I certify that in any given month, I will not use the Government-provided transit benefit in excess of the legal limit. If my commuting costs per month on public transit exceed the monthly 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 accept a transit benefit, computed by month, which exceeds my monthly commuting costs (rounded up to the next highest dollar).

I certify that my usual monthly commuting costs are \$ _____ SmarTrip Card Serial Number _____
IMPORTANT: Commuting costs MUST be documented on the reverse side of this form. See application instruction sheet for directions. **IMPORTANT:** If you ride a mode of transportation which accepts SmarTrip cards, your application cannot be processed without a registered serial number.

I certify that I have read and understand the eligibility requirements described above and that the information I have provided is true and correct.

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Transit Subsidy Coordinator Authorization

Transit Subsidy Coordinator Signature _____ Date _____

Frequently Asked Questions About SmartBenefits Autoload

How do I use SmartBenefits Autoload?

At the beginning of each month, just present your enrolled SmarTrip card to a bus farebox or rail faregate, and your monthly benefits will be activated. That is why it is called Autoload – you don't need to do anything special.

Autoload works on Metrorail, Metrobus, and the following bus systems:

ART
CUE
DASH
DC Circulator
Fairfax Connector
Loudoun County Transit
PRTC OmniRide
Ride On
TheBus

However, MTA bus and rail systems, as well as Dillon's, Eyre, Martz/Gold Line, Atlantic Coast, and Keller commuter buses **ARE NOT** supported by Autoload.

How do I access my benefits?

Bus and Rail riders - just tap your card to the SmarTrip target, and your fare will be processed and reflected in the display window on the bus farebox and as you exit the Metrorail system. Once you exhaust your transit benefits, fares will be deducted from your personal purse. Each month, your benefits will be available in your SmarTrip card account.

Do I still need to claim or download my SmartBenefits at a farecard machine in a Metrorail station?

No.

I allocate funds to a van pool or other transit service. Do I need to tap my SmarTrip to a target?

No. You are not required to tap your card when allocating ALL of your transit benefits to a particular van pool service or transit provider, including Commuter Direct. However, we recommend that you tap your card to a target from time to time to make sure that the latest software is loaded. You can tap it to the target at the fare card machine in any Metrorail station. After tapping the card to the target, select the CANCEL button to close out the transaction.

What are the three “purses?”

Three purses have been created within each rider’s SmartBenefits account. However, since the Civil Division does not offer parking benefits, only two of the “purses” will be used.

In the Civil Division, funds stored in your SmartBenefits account will be separated into a Transit Benefit Purse or a Personal Purse. Funds will not be transferrable from one purse to another. Only your own money in the Personal Purse can be used to pay for parking.

Transit Benefit Purse: Funds from the Transit Benefit Purse will be used first, whether the funds are used for personal trips or to commute to work. Funds within the Transit Benefit Purse are paid by the Civil Division. Money in the Transit Benefit Purse cannot be used for parking, nor can these funds be transferred to the Parking Benefit Purse or Personal Purse. Balances can be viewed at WMATA fare gates, fare boxes, and through your online SmarTrip account.

Personal Purse: Your own funds in the Personal Purse can be used for transit or parking. The funds cannot be transferred to the Transit Benefit Purse or the Parking Benefit Purse. Balances can be viewed at farecard machines or through your online SmarTrip account. The maximum balance for this purse is \$300.

Parking Benefit Purse: The Civil Division does not provide a parking benefit. Therefore, all parking will be charged to the Personal Purse.

What happens to the value that was on my card the month prior to the SmartBenefits Autoload conversion?

The value will remain in your *Personal Purse*. Funds in this account can be used to pay for transit or Metro parking.

What happens if I don’t use all of my monthly transit benefits?

All unused funds are credited back to the Civil Division at the end of each month.

If the Civil Division changes the benefit amount or type after my revised application is approved, what do I need to do?

You will need to tap your card to a SmarTrip target during the two weeks prior to the beginning of the month in which the change is scheduled to take place.

Can I add funds to the parking or transit benefits purse?

No. Only employers can designate value to the restricted Parking or Transit Benefits purses, and the Civil Division does not provide a parking benefit. If you need additional funds to pay for parking or transit, you can add value to the Personal Purse onboard the bus or at a farecard machine at any Metrorail station.

How can I determine how much I have remaining for transit or parking benefits?

You can view the balance for:

Transit Purse on the farebox when you board a bus or at any fare gate when entering or exiting the Metrorail system

Personal Purse by tapping your SmarTrip card at any fare card machine. (Remember to press the “cancel” button if you are only looking for your balance.)

The *Parking Purse* does not apply to Civil Division employees.

All balances – plus transactions – by creating an online SmarTrip account at wmata.com. We strongly encourage you to do this immediately.

Note: If a portion of your transit fare comes from your Personal Purse because of insufficient funds in your Transit Purse, the amount displayed when commuting will be the balance from your Personal Purse and not your Transit Purse.

Why are transit and parking benefits separated on my card?

To be compliant with Revenue Ruling 2006-57, 2006-2 C.B. 911, which provides guidance to employers on the use of smartcards, debit or credit cards, or other electronic media to provide qualified transportation fringes under Internal Revenue Code §§ 132(a)(5) and 132(f). The separate Personal, Transit, and Parking Purses restrict comingling or transfer of funds.

Can I move funds from my Transit Purse to my Personal Purse or the Parking purse?

No, funds cannot be transferred among purses.

Contact the Transit Office at 616-7930 with questions. As always, contact us immediately if you replace your registered SmarTrip card.

CIVIL DIVISION TRIPSHEET

Please fill in all blanks.

Sender's Special Instructions and Deadline Information (date/time):	
P I C K U P F R O M	Name _____ Telephone Number _____
	Organization _____
	Address _____ Room Number _____
D E L I V E R T O	Name Transit Subsidy Clerk Telephone Number 616-7930
	Organization CIV/OMP/OA
	Address 1100 L Street Room Number 9027
*****FOR MAIL ROOM USE ONLY*****	
Messenger's Signature _____	
Problems with Pick-up/Delivery _____	
Overtime Information:	
Authorization _____ received _____ from _____	
Driver's/Messenger's _____ signature _____	
No. of hours worked _____ Time mail rec'd _____ Time mail delivered _____	
Recipient's Signature (Required) _____	Date/Time Received (Required) _____