

**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 into the program 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. (Click on the "Ride Guide" option.)

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

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
- 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** cost
- 4) if you ride a Metrobus, remember to discount the cost when using a Metrorail transfer
- 5) add your subway and bus (if applicable) costs together
- 6) if you are a **full-time** employee, multiply this figure by 21 to get your **monthly** cost.
If you are a **part-time** or **telecommuting** employee, you should multiply this figure by the number of days per month you are actually scheduled to work.

The sum of this calculation is the amount that should be claimed on the front of your application form.

If you commute via MARC, VRE, commuter bus, or van pool--

Those costs should also be documented in pencil on the back of the application form. Please note, if you are a full-time employee 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 Fare = \$(fill in the blank)" on the back of the form.

KEEP A COPY OF YOUR APPLICATION FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Information: Most of the Transit Subsidy Program's policies and procedures can be found in the attached Frequently Asked Questions document. The Transit Subsidy Office will send email confirmation of receipt of your application. 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 pick up.

Questions? Contact Joyce Madoo at 616-7930 or at transitsubsidycoordinator@usdoj.gov.

TRANSIT SUBSIDY PROGRAM
Frequently Asked Questions
Civil Division, Washington, DC

What is a “transit benefit”?

A transit benefit is an employer-provided fare subsidy that is offered to all eligible employees to encourage the use of mass transportation to and from work.

Why is there a transit benefit program?

The program was established by Presidential Executive Order 13150 in April of 2000. The subsidy is provided pursuant to Public Law 103-172, the 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 motor vehicles.

Who is eligible for a transit benefit in the Civil Division?

Any salaried Civil Division employee or unpaid volunteer employee who uses mass transportation to commute to and from work is eligible. Employees who receive Government-subsidized parking, and any car pool members listed on a car pool application for Government-subsidized parking are not eligible. Contract employees are not eligible.

How much may I receive?

You may receive \$105 per month or your actual commuting cost, ***whichever is lower***, rounded up to the next dollar. Since the transit benefit subsidizes only mass transportation expenses, the cost of parking at Metro lots should not be claimed on your application or factored in when computing your actual monthly commuting costs.

Is the transit benefit taxable?

No, the transit benefit is not taxable and does not have to be reported as income.

How do I use the transit benefit?

Transit benefits are distributed in the form of Metrochek vouchers. These vouchers may be used on the Metrorail system or exchanged to purchase other fare media such as bus or train tickets. For details, visit www.wmata.com and click on “Metrochek” and “Participants.” If you commute via private bus or van service, contact that company directly for instructions on how to convert your fare media.

How do I apply for the transit benefit?

Complete a *U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division, Transit Subsidy Application* and send it to the Transit Subsidy Coordinator: Martha J. Montague, 1100 L Street, Room 9002. Because we need an original signature, we cannot accept applications sent through email or facsimile. Send your application via tripsheet (pre-addressed copy attached) or deliver it in person.

Is there a deadline for submitting my application?

Applications must be received by the Transit Subsidy Coordinator on or before the 15th day of the month preceding the month in which eligibility begins. Applications received after the 15th will become eligible the month after that. E.g., for an application submitted on or before January 15, eligibility will begin on February 1; for an application submitted on or after January 16, eligibility will begin on March 1. Send your application via tripsheet, with a designated delivery deadline, to ensure timely submission.

Where and when do I pick up my transit benefit?

When your application has been approved, you will be sent an email with detailed instructions of where, when and how you can make your first pick up. Depending on the date your eligibility commences, you will either make your first pick up onsite at a DOJ/CIV building or at DOT headquarters. Onsite distributions are made on a quarterly basis. An agent of the Department of Transportation will distribute the subsidies from a predetermined conference room in each building where Civil Division employees work, with the exception of the Main (RFK) Building. You may pick up your benefit at any of the distributions locations. You will be asked to show your DOJ photo ID (driver's licenses are not acceptable), give the last four digits of your Social Security number, and sign for the transit subsidy. Once you have received your benefit for a given month, you cannot receive any additional transit benefits for that month.

What if I am not at work (e.g., on leave or travel) on the distribution date?

You may designate a proxy to pick up your transit benefit, if you wish. If you designate a proxy, we recommend that you choose a trusted colleague who works nearby and is likely to know your schedule. We do not recommend designating your secretary since secretarial assignments are usually transitory. Recipients may designate only one proxy, i.e., if you and your designated proxy cannot make an onsite pick up, you must make the pick up at DOT headquarters. Good communication between you and your proxy should ensure that your benefit is not claimed twice in one quarter. If your proxy loses your benefit, the Government will not replace it. The dates and times of distribution will be staggered among buildings. If you or your proxy miss the distribution in your building, you or your proxy may claim your benefit at any other Civil Division distribution location.

If both you and your proxy are unable to pick up your transit benefit at any of the scheduled distribution dates, you cannot designate an alternate proxy. In these instances, only you (not your proxy) may pick it up at the Department of Transportation, Parking and Transit Benefit Office, 400 7th Street, SW, Plaza Level, Room 206. Directions: take the Blue, Yellow, Orange, or Green line Metro to the L'Enfant Plaza station; use the exit marked 7th and D streets. Enter at the southwest corner of the building. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. You will be asked to show a DOJ photo ID, give the last four digits of your Social Security number, and sign for the transit subsidy. Subsidies not picked up by the close of business on the last day of the month are forfeited for that particular month. For example, the benefit for August is forfeited if it is not picked up by the last business day of August.

I'm a new employee. What if I miss the quarterly distribution, am I still eligible to receive that quarter's distribution?

Yes, you become eligible to receive a prorated portion of the quarterly distribution after submitting your application to the Transit Subsidy Coordinator. Employees whose applications are received on or before the 15th of the month are eligible on the first day of the following month. Employees whose applications are received after the 15th of the month will become eligible the month after that. After your application has been processed and forwarded to DOT, you will receive an email with the first date you can make your first pick up. Only you may pick up your transit benefit at the Department of Transportation, Parking and Transit Benefit Office, 400 7th Street, SW, Room 0327. (See directions above.) You will be asked to show a DOJ photo ID, give the last four digits of your Social Security number, and sign for the transit subsidy. Check with your supervisor before going to pick up your benefit. Once you have received your benefit for a given month, you cannot receive any additional transit benefits for that month.

Is there a time limit on my transit subsidy?

While WMATA does not limit the period you may use a Metrochek, there are legal limits on your Government-subsidized transit subsidy. In any given month, you should not use a benefit greater than \$105, the ceiling established by law. If your public transit commuting cost exceeds the monthly limit, then you must pay the difference with your own funds rather than use the Government-provided transit benefit designated for use in a future month. If you leave the Civil Division, as part of your exit process, you are responsible for returning a pro-rated portion of the subsidy you have received that would have been used after your departure. The amount of pro-rated reimbursement will be calculated and an email notice sent to you shortly before your departure.

What should I do if I know that my transit costs are going to increase during the period covered by an upcoming distribution?

Submit a revised transit subsidy application documenting any applicable changes like a new address, commuting routine, and costs. Your revised application must be received by the deadline to become effective in the applicable month. See deadline information detailed above.

You have two options to determine when your increase will take effect:

1) Accept only one or two months at your present level, then submit another application form (within deadline). After your application has been approved, you will receive detailed instructions on where, when, and how you can pick up your benefit for the remaining month(s) at DOT headquarters. This option allows your increase to take effect one or two months later (which ever is applicable).

2) If you do not want to go to DOT headquarters to make a pick up, you can elect to accept all three months at your present benefit level at an onsite distribution, then submit another application form (within deadline). After your application has been approved, you will receive confirmation that the increase will take effect at the beginning of the next quarter. This option saves a trip to DOT headquarters but postpones the date your increase takes effect.

Once you accept your transit subsidy for a particular month, you cannot receive any additional benefits for that particular month. For instance, if your commuting costs increase during the second or third month covered by an upcoming distribution, you cannot accept the transit subsidy for those months at your current level and then receive an additional amount (covering the increase).

What if I plan to leave the Civil Division, or stop commuting by public transportation, during the period covered by an upcoming distribution?

If you know that you will be leaving the Civil Division or will otherwise become ineligible to receive a transit benefit during the period covered by an upcoming distribution, you should request and accept the specific amount of the benefit to cover your costs up to your date of departure/ineligibility. You can always accept less than the full amount of your transit benefit at any distribution. In the case where a recipient knows that he/she will be leaving the Division or the Transit Subsidy Program in the near future, reducing the amount of benefit received at a distribution can reduce or eliminate the amount that must be refunded back to the Division.

What if my normal commute sometimes involves a place other than my residence?

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.

What if I lose my Metrocheks?

Metrocheks that are lost will not be replaced by the Government. WMATA offers SmarTrip™ Cards which can be replaced if lost or stolen. For more information on this offer, visit www.wmata.com.

I have more questions, where can I find the answers?

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) and 202-962-1326 (Metrochek information). You may also contact the Civil Division's Transit Subsidy Office at TransitSubsidyCoordinator@usdoj.gov or telephone 202-616-7930.

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 _____ Telephone Number _____ Transit Subsidy Coordinator 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) _____