

# **TRANSIT SUBSIDY INTEGRITY TRAINING**



Presented By:

**TRANServe for EPA**

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# Training Objectives

- Clarify transit subsidy requirements.
- Emphasize internal controls in place to minimize fraud and abuse.
- Learn consequences of non-compliance.
- Enhance understanding through real life scenarios.
- Educate participants on their roles and responsibilities.

# Topics

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

# Background

- 1993 - Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act.
- 2000 - Executive Order 13150 Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit.

# Program Objectives

- Reduce Air Pollution.
- Reduce Traffic Congestion.



# TRANServe's Role

Service Provider to:

- Distribute Transit Benefit to Qualified Employees.
- Administer the Transit Benefit Program for the Region III, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Establish Best Practices.

# **Program Resources**

## **TRANServe.dot.gov**

- ✓ Application & Recertification.
- ✓ Expense & Verification Worksheet.
- ✓ Transit Subsidy Integrity Training.
- ✓ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
- ✓ Best Practices & Internal Controls.
- ✓ GAO/OIG Audits & Findings.
- ✓ Fraud & Abuse Penalties.

# Legal Implications

## Tax Evasion & Fraud

- ✓ Participants who misuse transit subsidies are subject to appropriate administrative action including discipline and disqualification from EPA Transit Subsidy in the future.
- ✓ Disciplinary penalties may range from a letter of admonishment to removal from Federal service depending on the severity of the abuse.



# Knowledge Check

The Mass Transit Fringe Benefit Program's objective is to:

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

# The Answer

The correct answer is B.

Executive Order 13150, Federal Workforce Transportation, by William J. Clinton, in order to reduce Federal employees' contribution to traffic congestion and air pollution and to expand their community's alternatives, established the Federal Workforce Transportation Fringe Benefit Program.

# Knowledge Check

If I misuse my transit benefit by selling it, sharing it, 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 penalties could range from a letter of admonishment to removal from Federal service depending on the severity of the abuse.

# Knowledge Check

The role of TRANServe's Transit Benefit Program is:

- A. Administer the Transit Benefit Program for my Agency.
- B. Establish Best Practices.
- C. All of the above.

# The Answer

The answer is C. All of the above.

The Secretary of Transportation established TRANServe to administer the Transit Benefit Program, to distribute the transit benefit and to establish Best Practices around transit benefit programs.

# Certification is Required

- ✓ Anyone who signs up for the R3 transit benefit through TRANServe must certify that certain conditions are true.
- ✓ This program is a benefit, not an entitlement; thus, there is no retroactive reimbursement.
- ✓ The following slides define certification and elaborate on these conditions.

# What Does Certification Mean?

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





# Certification Statement

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 am either an EPA civil service employee as defined by 5 U.S.C. Section 2105, a student volunteer, law clerk, intern, or PHS Officer.
- ✓ 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 public transportation fare benefit, will use it for my daily commute to and from work by public transit, 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 monthly 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 any time 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 Part I

**“I certify that I am eligible for the Region III U. S. Environmental Protection Agency transit subsidy program and not named on a federally subsidized parking permit with 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 personally owned or leased vehicle at a government parking lot or garage.*

# Certification Part II

**“I certify that I am eligible for a public transportation fare subsidy, 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 commute to and from work.*
- ✓ *You will not give or sell your subsidy 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 Government provided fare media in excess of your monthly estimated commuting cost.*
- ✓ *After you use your monthly transit benefit, 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 research and know the cost of your commute.*
- ✓ *You will not falsify your monthly estimated commuting cost.*
- ✓ *You will not include any parking fees when computing your daily, weekly or monthly commuting costs.*

# Transit Benefit Application


- After Certification, employees must complete an electronic Transit Benefit Application including an expense worksheet in order to receive the transit. Following is an example -

TRANSIT BENEFIT APPLICATION WORKSHEET
All Transit Benefit Program Applicants are required to certify the "Total Monthly Expense" of their <u>Home to Work Mass Transit Commute</u> .
<b>Parking fees are not eligible for the transit benefit and must not be included in "Total Monthly Expense".</b>
Instructions: To calculate your "Total Monthly Expense"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Select your transportation method(s)</li><li>b. Enter the following information in the "To Work" and "From Work" row(s) of each transportation method:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Name of Company for your method of transportation (Metro, BART, Subway)</li><li>ii. Daily or Monthly Expense</li><li>iii. Number of days you routinely work in a month</li></ul></li><li>c. If you purchase a Monthly pass, divide the price of the pass by 2, and enter the information in the Monthly Expense column.</li><li>d. The Total Monthly Expense value automatically populates</li></ul>


# Sample of Expense Worksheet


\* indicates required field.

\*Reason for Certification:

I have completed the required Transit Benefit Integrity training for my Agency 

\*Select your transportation methods:

  Bus  Rail  Other Method  Vanpool

Employment Type:   Work Status:

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Always follow your Agency work schedule policy for specific guidance on the Days per Month entry.

Defined work schedule examples:  
 If you work a Basic schedule of 8-hours per day, the average amount of 20 Days can be entered into the Days per Month column  
 If you work a Flex Schedule of 9-hours per day, the average amount of 18 Days can be entered into the Days per Month column  
 If you work a Compressed schedule of 10-hour days, the average amount of 16 Days can be entered into the Days per Month column  
 If you telecommute or work part time, enter the number of days you actually commute to/from work.

Method of Transportation		Daily Expense	Days per Month	Monthly Expense
<b>Bus to Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text" value="SEPTA"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="2.43"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="19.44"/>
<b>Bus from Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text" value="SEPTA"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="2.76"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="22.08"/>
<b>Other Bus to Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
<b>Other Bus from Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
<b>Rail to Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text" value="PATCO"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="2.60"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="20.80"/>
<b>Rail from Work</b>	Name of Company <input type="text" value="PATCO"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="2.60"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="20.80"/>
<b>Every Transit Benefit Program Participant is responsible to adjust the amount of their transit benefit each month to reflect the actual cost of their home to work commute.</b>		Total Monthly Expense: <input type="text" value="83.11"/>		

# Knowledge Check

After riding the train for five years, Sharon just joined a carpool. She receives the maximum monthly transit benefit for her commute. She has decided to sell her subsidy at a 10% discount to her best friend since she believes the subsidy 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.

Unused transit subsidy must be returned to your Agency.

# Knowledge Check

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

TRUE

FALSE

# The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**.

The Federal government will provide employees up to the maximum subsidy amount for mass transportation commuting costs. The employee must cover the additional amount, “out of pocket”.

# Scenarios

The following scenarios were developed from the EPA Program Policy and Guidance Document and from the Frequently Asked Questions on the DOT [TRANServe](http://TRANServe.dot.gov) Internet Site at [\*\*\*TRANServe.dot.gov\*\*\*](http://TRANServe.dot.gov)

# Scenario 1

My commuting costs have changed.

**What do I do?**

# Scenario 1

## My commuting costs have changed.

You must update your application whenever you have a change to your costs, address, name or office. Follow these steps:

1. Go to [TRANServe.dot.gov](https://TRANServe.dot.gov).
2. Click the “Participants” Page.
3. Click [EPA Transit Benefit Enrollment/Change Applications](#).
4. Log in using your government email address.

# **Scenario 1**

## **My commuting costs have changed.**

Application Update Steps continued:

5. Choose “Certify/Enroll”.
6. Read and Click “I Agree” if appropriate.
7. Enter “Reason for Certification”.
8. Complete and Submit the Application Worksheet and the Transit Benefit Application.
9. You will receive email notifications throughout the approval process.

# 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 benefit.

# Scenario 3

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

**Can I use my transit benefit to pay for parking in the 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.

# Scenario 4

I plan to go on extended leave.

**Can I still receive my transit benefit while on extended leave?**

# Scenario 4

## I plan to go on extended leave.

If you are out on extended leave (30 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 [TRANServe.dot.gov](https://TRANServe.dot.gov).
2. Click the “Participants” Page.
3. Click [EPA Transit Benefit Enrollment/Change Applications](#).
4. Log in using your government email address.

# **Scenario 4**

## **I plan to go on extended leave.**

Application Update Steps continued:

5. Choose “Certify/Enroll”.
6. Read and Click “I Agree” if appropriate.
7. Enter “Reason for Certification”.
8. Complete and Submit the Application Worksheet and the Transit Benefit Application.
9. You will receive email notification throughout the approval process.

# Knowledge Check

Rhonda is leaving EPA to work for DOJ. She believes the correct way to handle her leftover transit benefit is to:

- A. Give the leftovers to her sister.
- B. Sell her extra transit benefit to her co-worker.
- C. Return the card to the Regional Transit Coordinator.

# The Answer

The correct answer is C.

The transit benefit is not transferable and must not be sold.



# Scenario 5

I have been on detail, out of the Region III commuting area for the past two months.

**How do I get my transit benefit for the months I missed?**

# **Scenario 5**

**I have been on detail out of the commuting area for the past two months.**

This is a monthly benefit based on the actual cost of your home-to-work-to-home commute. If you are not coming to work, you are not paying to commute and must not accept transit subsidy.

# Scenario 6

I plan to telework.

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

# **Scenario 6**

## **I plan to telework.**

Yes, if your commuting costs change when your work schedule changes you must update your application. To do this:

1. Go to [TRANServe.dot.gov](https://TRANServe.dot.gov).
2. Click the “Participants” Page.
3. Click [EPA Transit Subsidy Enrollment/Change Applications](#).
4. Log in using your government email address.

# **Scenario 6**

## **I plan to Telework.**

Application Update Instructions continued:

5. Choose “Certify/Enroll”.
6. Read and Click “I Agree” if appropriate.
7. Enter “Reason for Certification”.
8. Complete and Submit the Application Worksheet and the Transit Benefit Application.
9. You will receive email notification throughout the approval process.

# Scenario 7

I didn't use all my transit benefit.

**Can I give it to a co-worker?**

# **Scenario 7**

## **I didn't use all my transit 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\\_fslg.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/fringe_benefit_fslg.pdf)

**The unused funds will be swept back at the end of the funding period.**

# Knowledge Check

Marie will be on maternity leave beginning November 1, 2015. She plans to return to work on February 1, 2016. The correct way to change her transit benefit is to notify her supervisor.

TRUE

FALSE



# The Answer

The correct answer is **FALSE**. When you are out on extended leave (30+ days), you must withdraw from the program and re-enroll when you return. To withdraw follow the steps below:

1. Go to [TRANServe.dot.gov](https://TRANServe.dot.gov).
2. Click the “Participants” Page.
3. Click [EPA Transit Benefit Enrollment/Change Applications](#).

# **Withdrawal Instructions, continued**

4. Log in using your government email address.
5. Choose “Certify/Enroll”.
6. Read and Click “I Agree” if appropriate.
7. Enter “Reason for Certification”.
8. Complete and Submit the Application Worksheet and the Transit Benefit Application.
9. You will receive email notifications throughout the approval process.

# ✓ CONGRATULATIONS!

**You have successfully completed**

**Region III**

**Environmental Protection Agency**

**TRANSIT SUBSIDY INTEGRITY TRAINING**

**To get credit for completing the training**, please send the following statement: “I certify that I have completed the mandatory Transit Subsidy Integrity training on month/day/year” to

1. your Approving Supervisor and
2. [R3\\_Transit\\_Subsidy@epa.gov](mailto:R3_Transit_Subsidy@epa.gov)