

Transit Subsidies

What are transit subsidies? They are a Federally funded subsidy payment for Federal employees using mass transportation (such as city subway system, commuter bus, vanpool, railway) to commute from their home to work or work to home. Transit subsidies can only be used for mass transit and cannot be used to pay for any parking fees. The maximum transit subsidy is currently \$280.00 per month. The maximum number of days subsidized is 21 days per month.

Transit subsidies accuracy: If you are returning to work after an absence, don't forget to verify the accuracy of your transit subsidies amount. Participants are responsible for keeping the subsidy information accurate. Update your transit subsidy application whenever there are changes in your commuting method, telework schedule, work or home address, or commuting costs. To make a change simply submit a revised application following the registration instructions below. If you make any change, also verify that your indicated supervisor is accurate too. An annual recertification is required, however, the recertification in 2021 was waived during COVID restrictions. All participants will be notified by email when the next recertification period occurs.

Information needed to register for benefits: Your agency name, supervisor's name, agency Transit Benefit Coordinator's name (see TBC contacts link below), and your estimated commuting costs are needed to register. Before you register, ask your supervisor if he or she is registered in the TranServe system. Your supervisor will need to be register in the TranServe system to approve your subsidy request. Supervisors register using similar registration instructions. However, they follow the USDA Approving Official Training and Guide available at: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve>

Training: Before you apply for Transit Subsidies you must complete Transit Benefit Program Integrity Awareness Training:

1. Navigate to website: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve>
2. Select: Participants
3. Select: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
4. Under "Training" select: "USDA - Transit Benefit Integrity Awareness Training" – Power Point Version
5. Follow the instructions to complete.

Steps to Apply, Reapply or Recertify for TranServe Subsidy:

First, Log into the TranServe application system

1. Navigate to website: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve>
2. Select: Participants
3. Select: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
4. Under "Application" select: USDA - Transit Benefit Application System.
5. Type in your government email address
6. If you are **enrolling for the first time**, select: Register.
 - a. Fill in your name, email address and phone number.
 - b. The TranServe system will email you a password to complete the registration.
 - c. Check your Email for your password (if it's not in your inbox, it may have gone to your Junk Mailbox).

- d. Use this generated password and the system will prompt you to change your password.
- e. Refer to the Applicant Guide if needed:
<https://www.transportation.gov/transerve/participants/dot-transit-benefit-application-system-guide>

If you **previously enrolled** for transit subsidies, enter your email address and password, or forgot password. The login page is: <https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/>. Refer to the Applicant Guide if needed: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve/participants/dot-transit-benefit-application-system-guide>

Second, Complete the Transit Benefit Application Worksheet and Application (The worksheet and application are on the same webpage in the system)

1. Log back into the system with your username (email) and reset password.
2. Read: The Rules of Behavior and select: I agree
3. Select: Transit Benefit Application.
4. Select: Certify/Enroll.
5. Read: Warning and select: I agree
6. Select: Reason for Certification (from the items on the drop-down menu. New participants will select "New Transit Benefits Participant")
7. Check: Training Certification box to certify you took the training
8. Select the Employment Type: Civilian or Military
9. Select the Work Status: Full time or part time
10. Select: All transportation methods that apply including name of Company
11. Compute the commuting expense by entering the daily expense and number of days you commute. The application system will do the calculation
12. Complete the application with:
 - a. Common Identifier: your last name and the last 4 of your SSN
 - b. Agency, Region, Agency Office (Most codes are the obvious initials, but the code for OCIO is IT and OSEC is SE1).
 - c. Work/home information: Full address where you commute to and your home residence address.
 - d. Select your supervisor from the list. If your supervisor is not listed in the systems menu, they must register in the TranServe system to approve your request. The complete application will route to the supervisor you selected.
 - e. Select TBC Certifier and POC from the list. These are usually the same person. See the TBC link below if you are unsure.
 - f. Manager Phone: Insert the best number to reach your supervisor.
 - g. For DC area only: Enter the Split Payment information if you would like a split payment for SmarTrip card and another method of transit. See more information about the SmarTrip card registration below.
 - h. Select "Continue" to submit your application. Your application will automatically be submitted to your supervisor to approve or reject.

- i. Use this card to purchase your transportation with the rail, bus, vanpool or metro system (excluding DC Metro, which has info below). It cannot be used for parking. The funds appear on this card on the 10th of the month if you applied by the 20th of the prior month.
- j. If approved, you will be notified by the system and the TranServe debit card will be mailed to your home address as entered in the application. Normally the card will be received within 5-7 business days.

DC Metro SmarTrip Card Registration:

If you commute using the DC Metro system, first purchase your SmarTrip card online or at a metro station to be used for to and from work commuting only. Then you must register your SmarTrip card for the funds to be load from Department of Transportation (the loading process takes 7-14 days). To register: Go to www.wmata.com; Select fares; SmarTrip; and create an account. Your SmarTrip card number is located on the back of the card. After your information is entered, your card is officially registered the same day. Please be aware that funds are loaded on the first of each month, provided you completed the application by the 15th of the month prior. For operator assistance call 1-888-762-7874.

For more information:

- TranServe DOT/USDA Website: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve/participants/usda>
- TranServe Login website: <https://transitapp.ost.dot.gov/>
- Applicant Guide: <https://www.transportation.gov/transerve/participants/dot-transit-benefit-application-system-guide>
- USDA Transit Benefit Coordinators: <https://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/policy/docs/TBCCContactRoster2018-updated.pdf>
- DC Metro SmarTrip Card registration: www.wmata.com
- For questions regarding the transit subsidy benefits, please contact your agency/office's Transit Benefit Coordinator. If they are unable to answer the questions, please contact Linda.Duncan@usda.gov.