

**Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Commuter Connections
'Pool Rewards for Vanpools Program**

**Participation Guidelines
Last Updated: 5/7/12**

'Pool Rewards for Vanpools is a service operated and funded by Commuter Connections, MWCOG's regional commuter assistance program. The program is designed to reduce rush hour congestion and improve air quality in the region. The program offers a monthly financial incentive to newly-forming commuter vanpools to offset their monthly lease cost charged by one of the vanpool companies under contract with MWCOG.

Vanpool Eligibility

'Pool Rewards for Vanpools offers a \$200 monthly subsidy to vanpools that:

1. Have either an origin in Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or the District of Columbia and a destination anywhere in the Washington 8-hour Ozone Non-Attainment area as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. See map on page 4.
2. Are newly-forming vanpools. Newly-forming vanpools are defined as vanpools that have not previously been in operation within 30 days prior to the submission of the 'Pool Rewards for Vanpools application.
3. Are registered with Commuter Connections.
4. Have a 7 to 15 passenger capacity (including the driver).
5. Submit an application for the program through one of the qualified vanpool providers: VPSI Inc. or Enterprise Rideshare.

Existing vanpools and customers of private transit, private shuttles, or private vanpools are not eligible to enroll. Existing vanpools are not permitted to dissolve and reform in order to qualify.

Participant Eligibility

In order for a vanpool to qualify, the vanpool's passengers must meet the following requirements:

1. Passengers in the vanpool must currently be driving alone to work in order to qualify for this program. Driving alone is defined as operating a motor vehicle to travel to work with no other adult passengers occupying the vehicle.
2. Participants must not have used an alternative commute mode (carpool, vanpool, transit, bicycle, walk) more than 4 days in the 30 days prior to your submission of the 'Pool Rewards for Vanpools application.

3. Participants may only earn an incentive for their involvement in one specific vanpool.
4. Participants must be commuting to and from work to qualify for this program. Students commuting to school are not eligible.

Maintaining Enrollment

Once enrolled, a vanpool must fulfill the following requirements in order to maintain eligibility:

1. Respond by deadline to Commuter Connections and contracted vanpool providers requests for information, such as:
 - Confirming trips using the online 'Pool Rewards software;
 - Available seats listing;
 - Monthly passenger and expense reports;
 - Odometer reading report;
 - Current driver and alternative driver contact information; and
 - Other select surveys as needed
2. Maintain a minimum of 80 percent vehicle occupancy. Vehicle that fails to maintain 80 percent vehicle occupancy for 3 consecutive months may be changed to either a more appropriately-sized vehicle, or be terminated from the Program.

Application Process

To apply, you must submit an application through one of the qualified vanpool providers: VPSI Inc. or Enterprise Rideshare. The vanpool driver must submit the form by the 15th of the current month to be considered for enrollment on the 1st of the following month, e.g., apply by May 15th to be considered for enrollment on June 1st.

Program Rules

1. The incentive amount will be paid directly to the vanpool provider on contract with MWCOCG. The incentive will be passed on to vanpool passengers in the form of a subsidized monthly vanpool user fee.
2. There is no limit on the number of months that a vanpool can receive the subsidy. Vanpools may earn the monthly incentive indefinitely as long as the program is in operation and the vanpool and its passengers abide by the Program Guidelines.
3. Space in the 'Pool Rewards for Vanpools program is limited. Commuter Connections reserves the right to establish a waitlist for vanpools to participate in the incentive program. This option may be exercised at Commuter Connections' discretion at any time.

4. The dispersal of the incentive is contingent upon the prompt and accurate submission of daily, monthly, and annual reporting. Commuter Connections reserves the right to withhold subsidy payments, or to terminate a vanpool from the program, for failure to provide timely responses to reasonable requests for information such as listed above. Vanpools that fail to submit required data for three or more months during a 12-month period will be discontinued from the program.
5. Commuter Connections maintains the right to terminate the program with or without notice at any time for any reason.
6. All information supplied by you must be accurate, current, and complete. Commuter Connections reserves the right to refuse your application and/or discontinue your participation in this program, including the right to withhold payment of your incentive, if we believe you have failed to meet this obligation.
7. If a dispute arises regarding any aspect of the 'Pool Rewards for Vanpools program, including, but not limited to, interpretation of the Participation Guidelines, accuracy of the information provided by you, or your eligibility to participate in the program, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments/Commuter Connections Program shall be the final decision-maker regarding such a dispute. Any decisions will be final.

