



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

NEWS

June 27, 2016

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Employers Receive Awards for Outstanding Commute Alternative Programs

Programs Help Reduce Millions of Vehicle Miles Traveled in the Region

Washington, D.C. – The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) today announced the winners of the 19th Annual Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards, recognizing employers in the region for their exceptional commitment to advancing alternative commute options to help mitigate traffic congestion and contribute to cleaner air through reduced auto emissions. The awards ceremony was held at the Washington Marriott at Metro Center.

Nominations for the Employer Recognition Awards are accepted each year in three categories: Incentives, Marketing, and Telework. This year's winners include Toole Design Group of Silver Spring, Maryland, for Incentives; MITRE Corporation of McLean, Virginia, for Marketing, and United Educators of Bethesda, Maryland, for Telework. Collectively the winning firms achieved a reduction of more than 8 million vehicle miles traveled this year in the metropolitan Washington region.

COG also presented two Employer Services awards for Organization Achievement and Sales Team Achievement to the District of Columbia's goDCgo program, and to Arlington County Commuter Services' Arlington Transportation Partners program.

"The Annual Employer Recognition Awards recognize and support the important role of employers in promoting commuter transportation alternatives in the region," said Nicholas Ramfos, Director of Commuter Connections. "Employers that support daily commuting transportation alternatives, such as ridesharing, bicycling, transit, and teleworking help create a better quality of life for their employees. Transportation benefits programs help attract and retain highly qualified employees, improve regional mobility, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Representatives from COG's Commuter Connections program and local elected officials were on-hand for the awards ceremony, including National Capital Region

Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Chairman and City of Alexandria Councilman Tim Lovain, and TPB Second Vice Chairman and District of Columbia Councilmember Charles Allen.

Incentives Winner, Toole Design Group of Silver Spring, Maryland, has supported alternative commuting since 2009 by providing its employees with a robust commuter benefits program. As an incentive for employees to use mass transit, the engineering and architecture firm offers full-time employees a pre-tax transit benefit up to \$125 per month. To accommodate employees who bike and walk to work, Toole Design Group provides secure bicycle parking in their garage as well as on-site showers and lockers. Employees are also provided \$25 toward Capital Bikeshare annual memberships, and are also rewarded twice a year through the company's Human Powered Commuting Incentive, a program which awards cash incentives to participating employees, depending upon the number of trips taken in that given timeframe. Eighty-nine percent of employees utilize alternatives to drive-alone commutes.

Marketing Winner, The MITRE Corporation of McLean, Virginia, has operated a transportation demand management (TDM) program for the past 15 years as a way to increase commuting options for its employees, promote sustainable and environmentally friendly practices and reduce the number of single-occupant vehicle trips. The company promotes alternative commuting options to employees through weekly employee emails, electronic signage, transportation articles, MITRE's intranet homepage and "Commuting in McLean," MITRE's social media site. The company provides employees with commuter links and resources, including an internal message board for car/vanpool users, upcoming events, the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program, and timetables for the company's dedicated Metro and interoffice shuttle. Twenty three percent of employees participate in commute alternatives.

Telework Winner, United Educators of Bethesda, Maryland, launched its telework program in the early 2000s to improve employee work/life balance and increase the firm's ability to attract new hires. Employees become eligible for telework after one year of employment, and are supplied with a computer, dual screens, printer, and reimbursement for phone/Internet charges. In an effort to encourage participation by top-performing staff, UE extended its telework program to include both hourly and part-time employees. To promote the program, UE distributes a questionnaire designed to help employees determine if teleworking is right for them, and hosts quarterly meetings and "brown bag lunches" to review telework best practices and challenges within the program. Sixty four percent of employees telework an average of three days per week.

For more than 40 years, Commuter Connections Employer Services has provided free assistance to employers on transportation solutions that help reduce gasoline consumption, ease traffic congestion and the stress that long commutes place on employees, from transit subsidies and pre-tax benefits to telework and ridesharing programs. These benefits provide employees with better work-life balance and

flexibility, which can help reduce absenteeism, increase morale and productivity, and enhance the economic vitality and quality of life of the metropolitan Washington region.

For more details on the Employer Recognition Awards Program visit: <http://www.commuterconnections.org/employers/employer-awards/>

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[Commuter Connections](#) is a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, www.mwcog.org. Commuter Connections promotes bicycling to work, ridesharing, and other alternatives to drive alone commuting, provides ridematching for carpools and vanpools, and offers the free Guaranteed Ride Home program. Commuter Connections, www.commuterconnections.org is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and U.S. Departments of Transportation.