

**Maryland Department of Transportation
Baltimore Commutes Vanpool Program
Operated by Commuter Connections**

**Participation Guidelines
Effective February 1, 2025
Last Updated: August 4, 2025**

The Baltimore Commutes Vanpool Program is a service funded by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and operated by Commuter Connections, a regional commuter assistance program. The program is designed to reduce rush hour congestion in the area surrounding the Key Bridge and improve air quality in the region. The program offers a monthly financial subsidy to commuter vanpools to offset their monthly lease cost charged by the vanpool company under contract with MWCOG.

Vanpool Eligibility

The Baltimore Commutes Vanpool Program offers a \$500 monthly subsidy to vanpools that:

1. Have a destination in the City of Baltimore, or Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties. Vanpools may have an origin in any of these jurisdictions or other jurisdictions in Maryland, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, or Delaware. Additional origins may be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Vans that qualify for the Vanpool Alliance Program (traversing the Virginia portion of the Washington DC urbanized areas) and vans that qualify for the Commuter Connections 'Pool Rewards Program will not qualify for the Baltimore Commutes Vanpool Program.
2. Vanpools and participants are registered with Commuter Connections.
3. Vehicle has a capacity to carry 7 to 15 passengers (including the driver).
4. Vanpool must routinely commute to/from the workplace a minimum of two days per week. Travel may occur any time of the day; any day of the week.
5. Vanpool provider/operator has an active contract with Commuter Connections to participate in the Baltimore Commutes subsidy program. Current authorized vanpool provider/operators include: Commute with Enterprise and Sympawthy. Prospective operators should contact Stacey King, Program Manager, at sking@mwkog.org to become an authorized vendor of the program.
6. Vanpool has been vetted and approved by Commuter Connections.
7. Vanpools may only participate in one regional vanpool incentive program administered through Commuter Connections, although employers and local commuter programs may provide additional subsidies.

Customers of private transit, private shuttles, or private vanpools are not eligible to enroll.

Participant Eligibility

In order for a vanpool to qualify, the vanpool's passengers must be commuting to and from work. The vanpool roster may comprise of both frequent/daily riders, and flexible riders. 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 vanpool provider's/operator's trip tracking software;
 - Available seats listing;
 - Monthly passenger and expense reports;
 - Odometer reading report (annually);
 - Current driver and alternative driver contact information; and
 - Other select surveys as needed
2. Maintain a minimum of Average Vehicle Occupancy (AVO) of 50% per commute trip. Vehicles that fail to maintain the minimum AVO for two consecutive months may be denied the monthly subsidy until AVO rates regain compliance.

Application Process

To apply, you must submit an application through an authorized vanpool provider/operator, Commuter Connections must be in receipt of an application prior to the start of the enrollment month, e.g., apply by May 31st 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 MWCOG. 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 Baltimore Commutes Vanpool 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 two or more months during a 12-month period may 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 Baltimore Commutes Vanpool 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.

Program Rules

Vanpool applicants must acknowledge and agree to these Participant Guidelines by completing an [online acknowledgement form](#).