

How to sign up for the Transit Subsidy

The Transit Subsidy offers \$150 per month to help to cover the costs of taking the bus, train, light rail or any other mass transit, including Vanpools, and paratransit.

Transit Subsidy Basics

- Money can be spent on high value monthly transit passes, or loaded as cash value onto a Clipper Card or credit card for use across multiple transit providers.
- Expenses over \$150 and under \$270 per month will be automatically [deducted from your paycheck pre-tax](#). Depending on your tax bracket pre-tax expenses can be significantly lower than regular spending. Expenses over \$270 will be deducted from your paycheck post-tax.
- The deadline for inputting or making changes to a Transit Subsidy order is the 10th of the month previous to the benefit month. For example, orders or changes for the month of February would need to be input by the 10th of January.
- Electing to receive this benefit will not affect your County parking permit in any way.
- You may elect to take the Transit Subsidy or Commute Cash, but not both.
- You may not use your \$150 to pay for parking.
- Please use one Clipper Card for all Transit Subsidy expenses and for the Go Pass, if applicable. Your card will automatically differentiate between transit providers.

How to sign up for the Transit Subsidy

STEP 1: Create an Edenred account.

1. Open your browser and navigate to login.commuterbenefits.com.
2. 'Employee' will be pre-selected, click NEXT.
3. Click on "New User Sign Up".
4. Enter the Company ID: SMCGOV.
5. Enter your First Name, Last Name and Home Zip Code as they appear in your Workday profile. If you have a hyphen or apostrophe in your name, replace the hyphen or apostrophe with a space when you are registering. If you would like it to be added, please contact commute@smcgov.org and they will update your account.
6. Your username will be your County email address. Create a password and click NEXT.
7. You are now registered and logged in.

STEP 2: Decide how you'll be spending your subsidy dollars

Clipper E-Cash is the most flexible of the Transit Subsidy options, as it functions as cash value anywhere which accepts a Clipper Card (most Bay Area public transit providers). This is a good option if you are unsure of your expected travel expenses, if your mode of travel changes frequently, or if a single provider pass might not cover your needs.

High value transit passes, such as BART high value cards, or CalTrain Zone Passes are great if you know that you use a particular transit provider often, as these passes allow you to stretch your subsidy dollars. This option can also be good for the public transit providers who do not take Clipper Cards.

Commuter Credit Cards are an option available for employees who take a form of transit to work which is not compatible with Clipper, or for which there are not direct transit pass purchases available. These include services such as paratransit.

Vanpools are groups of 5-14 commuters who collectively lease a van, set their pickup and drop off locations and times, and take turns driving (though not everyone has to drive). The \$150 subsidy goes towards covering the costs of gas, maintenance, and vehicle rental fees. They are excellent for those who do not live close to public transit lines.

Please also note:

You may submit multiple orders, for multiple transit passes, from multiple providers. For example, a rider traveling from the East Bay might have a monthly pass for AC Transit, and a high value ticket for BART, as well as use some of their funds for Clipper E-Cash.

For all orders, please review your order summary and read the Terms of Service. When you agree to the terms of service, you are agreeing that the County can deduct money from your paycheck to cover the "pre-tax contribution" and "post-tax contribution" line items listed in the Order Summary.

Step 3: Place an order

Page 4... **Bus, train, or most other public transportation (Clipper E-cash or direct transit passes)**

Page 5... **Paratransit or Mass Transit not serviced by Clipper (Commuter Check Voucher and Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard)**

Page 7... **Enterprise Vanpool**

Bus, train, or most other public transportation (Clipper E-cash or direct pay transit passes):

1. Login to your Edenred account (login.commuterbenefits.com.)
2. Select “Place an Order” from the toolbar on the left side of your screen.
3. Select your transit mode from the row of icons.
4. Select your preferred product from the “Most Popular” or “Local Transit Authorities” lists.
5. If you do not see the product that you need, try:
 - a. Typing the name of your preferred transit agency in the search bar. All of their products will appear in a list. Choose from the list.
 - b. Changing your home zip code to reflect the zip code of the station/stop where you will be getting onto transit in the morning.
 - c. If your desired transit agency does not accept direct pay or clipper cards, check out the next section of this document.
6. The order is set to automatically recur each month. You can click the toggle button to turn this feature off. You can also specify which months you might NOT want to place your order.
7. Proceed to Checkout

Paratransit and Mass Transit not serviced by Clipper (Commuter Check Voucher and Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard)

1. Check if your desired transit provider accepts Commuter Check Credit Cards by calling them directly.
2. Login to your Edenred Account (login.commuterbenefits.com.)
3. Select "Place an Order" from the toolbar on the left side of your screen.
4. Select "Vanpool" from the row of icons.
5. Select "Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard" If you do not see this option, try searching "Commuter Check Credit Card", or changing your home and work zip codes.
6. Calculate your monthly expenses and continue to checkout. Do not forget your activation code!
7. A credit card will be mailed to the address you provide.
8. Once you have the card, activate it using your code. You can now use your card to pay for transit expenses from select providers. Please use your card like a credit, not debit card.

Commuter Check Voucher and Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard FAQ

What is a Commuter Check Voucher?

A Commuter Check Voucher is a money voucher that can be used to pay for transit expenses which may not be accessible by direct pay or a Clipper Card. It is delivered monthly by mail, and is valid for 15 months. You are responsible for using your Commuter Check Vouchers to then purchase transit passes. Not all transit agencies or organizations accept Commuter Check Vouchers, please check whether the transit provider you wish to use will accept one before ordering one.

Please note: if your transit pass costs less than the amount on your Commuter Check Voucher, you will not get cash back. Meaning if you order a \$200 voucher but your Transit monthly pass only costs \$175, you will not get \$25 back.

What is a Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard?

A Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard acts like a debit card you can use to pay for transit expenses which may not be accessible by direct pay or a Clipper Card. Money is loaded into an account of the 1st of the month for you to access. You are then responsible for using your Mastercard to purchase transit products. Popular expenses are paratransit and transit passes.

I'm getting this error message when I try and select the Mastercard: "Sorry! The Commuter Check Prepaid Mastercard® cannot be ordered with other products of the same benefit type. Please review your current pending order on the Dashboard"

You may not have an order for a Commuter Check Card, and an order for a transit pass or Clipper Cash at the same time. To receive a Commuter Check Card you must first cancel your existing transit orders. Once your card arrives and is activated, you may then use it to purchase your transit passes directly from the transit provider. For example, you might elect to use paratransit services (which take only the credit card), and also have a SAMtrans bus pass (which can be loaded onto a clipper card). To accomplish this, you would add your estimated paratransit costs to the cost of a monthly bus pass, and then would elect to have that total amount loaded onto your Commuter Check Card. Once activated, you would then use the Commuter Check Card to purchase both items.

How much can a Commuter Check Card hold?

The card can hold a maximum of \$3,000. These funds can be a mix of subsidy dollars, pre-tax and post-tax contributions.

What happens when I terminate as a San Mateo County Employee?

Upon employee termination, the Commuter Check Card will remain active for the following benefit month, after which it will automatically be cancelled and funds will be returned to the County. Pre-tax and post-tax money will then be returned to the employee.

Enterprise Vanpool

Joining a vanpool

- Contact the Enterprise Account Manager and Shift (commute@smcgov.org) to find out whether there are existing vanpool groups that meet your commute needs. In your email, include:
 - Home City
 - Work City
 - Workday schedule, and indicate if your start/end time at work has any flexibility
- Once you are matched with a vanpool group, reach out to the vanpool coordinator and ask for the following information so you can set up your payment:
 - Vanpool ID
 - Customer/Participant ID
 - Monthly per person cost estimate that includes fuel and toll for the fuel card
- Communicate to Enterprise and your vanpool coordinator any changes in your status – if you will be absent for a month, or if you wish to be removed from the vanpool.

Place Your Vanpool Order

- Log into your Edenred Account (login.commuterbenefits.com.)
- On the left, select Place an Order.
- Select "Vanpool" from the row of icons.
- Search "Enterprise" in the search bar.
- Select "Direct Pay offered by Enterprise" or "Enterprise Rideshare National".
- Select the product that appears.
- Enter your vanpool reference number, and your Enterprise Participant ID. Your vanpool coordinator should have these numbers for you.
- Enter the FULL AMOUNT that you owe Enterprise each month, as indicated by the estimate that Enterprise gave your vanpool coordinator.
 - The first \$150 will be paid for with the County's \$150 subsidy. Any remaining balance up to \$270 will be pulled from your paycheck pre-tax.
- Proceed to Checkout.
- Confirm delivery information, which should reflect your home address. This is required for all products ordered through ECBS. Your order will still be sent directly to Enterprise and will not be delivered to the delivery address.
- Click on "My Dashboard".
- Check which month your order is being set for. If that month is the month you plan to start riding vanpool, you are done! If that month is a month after you plan on starting to ride your vanpool (ex: if you plan on starting to vanpool in February, and your vanpool order is showing up in the "March Order") please continue with the steps below.
- To pay for your vanpool before your Edenred payment begins, please send a check to Enterprise. If you are joining your vanpool in the middle of the month, your monthly cost estimate should be prorated accordingly. Your vanpool coordinator will provide an estimated cost. Enterprise accepts payment by check or online.

Send checks via Fed Ex to:

Attn: Ricardo Oliva
 2633 Camino Ramon, Suite 400
 San Ramon, CA 94583

Tips

- If you pay Enterprise directly, send the receipt or proof of payment to commute@smcgov.org so that you can get reimbursed up to the \$150 subsidy amount for that month.
- There may be complications with your van rental if you pay less than the full amount that Enterprise has invoiced you for. It is better to overpay Enterprise and have the extra cash added to your fuel card (remember it's pre-tax!), than to underpay Enterprise and then have to pay out of pocket (post-tax) for fuel and tolls because the cash on your fuel card ran out before the end of the month.

Resources

Tutorial	Making a Payment	https://www.youtube.com/embed/HHXht35plng
Tutorial	Account Summary	https://www.youtube.com/embed/AxqSgdVHB6Y
Tutorial	Trip Recording	https://www.youtube.com/embed/hw-E0qcwTJc

Enterprise Vanpool FAQ

Who owns the van?

Shift supports employees in riding vans which are leased by Enterprise, or another transit provider. Vehicles owned by individuals are not eligible.

Who drives?

A commuter who has committed to taking four to 14 other people to and from work each day. The driver may drive every day or share the driving with back-up drivers. In some vanpools, everyone takes turns driving.

How long do I have to commit to be in a vanpool?

The commitment and payment are month-to-month for both driver(s) and passengers. You may leave the vanpool by giving the coordinator the agreed upon amount of notice (usually 30 days).

Where do the vanpools pick up and drop off?

Each vanpool group sets its own route and schedule. Most vans have central meeting points such as church parking lots or park & ride lots to reduce travel time.

Is eating or smoking permitted?

Vanpool participants collaborate on rules. In addition to establishing rules about eating and smoking, other policies may address wait time, perfumes/colognes and radio station selection.

What if a driver or passenger is late, sick or on vacation?

If you're the driver and you're late or sick or going on vacation, you are responsible for making alternate arrangements. Fortunately, each vanpool has back-up drivers who occasionally drive the van in exchange for a reduced fare and other benefits.

If you're a passenger and you're sick or late for your vanpool, call the driver or another passenger. If you're going on vacation, make arrangements with the driver and coordinator in advance. Standard fare usually reserves your seat for the entire month. Some vanpools have waiting lists of occasional riders who could sublet your seat.

What if I have to work late or there is an emergency?

If your vanpool driver works late or leaves work early for an emergency, the back-up driver should have the second set of keys. If there is no opportunity to exchange the van keys with a back-up driver and a back-up driver does not have the second set with them, you and other riders may use the [Emergency Ride Home program](#).

If you are a vanpool rider and you have to work late/leave early for an emergency, please notify your driver or another passenger. You may also use the [Emergency Ride Home program](#) in qualifying circumstances.

What are the driver's responsibilities?

Drivers are responsible for picking up and dropping off passengers, arranging for van maintenance, fueling the van and collecting fares if there isn't a designated fare coordinator.

Each van has a coordinator, driver(s), and passengers; the coordinator is Enterprise's point of contact for the group. The Enterprise maintenance team reaches out to the coordinator when the van needs maintenance or a routine service. The driver(s) is responsible for picking up and dropping off passengers, or making alternate arrangements if they are sick or going on vacation.

Is a special driver's license required to drive a van?

No, drivers and back-up drivers of vanpools need only a regular C class driver's license.

What are the rules for personal use of a leased van?

Depending on the program, limited personal mileage may be allowed, and the driver and back-up drivers may use the van for personal purposes.

Who recruits new passengers?

It benefits everyone to recruit new passengers, which keeps seats occupied and vanpool fares low. You can recruit your friends and colleagues, or you can reach out to Enterprise, who has ride match services. Bay Area 511 is another resource; they have [vanpool consultants](#) who will help you keep seats filled through the free [511 RideMatch Service](#).