

## Transportation Spending Accounts (TSA) - Commuter Benefits FAQs

**What expenses can be pre-tax?** Public transportation, vanpools or commuter highway vehicles, as well as parking at or near your place of employment are all eligible pre-tax expenses. In addition, parking at a location from where you commute to work by public transit, vanpool or carpool, is also a qualified expense.

**What are the monthly pre-tax limits?** For 2015, the monthly pre-tax limit for parking expenses is \$250 and the limit for transit and vanpool combined will be \$130. These limits are set by the federal government and are generally adjusted annually. You are allowed to participate in both transit and parking.

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### How does Our Plan Work?

- The program is funded through employee voluntary pre-tax payroll deductions.
- All full-time, and reduced-contract employees are eligible for the plan.
- To enroll, you must complete and submit at least 10 business days prior to the first of the month the Commuter Transportation Benefits Plan Enrollment and Change form available from the Benefits Unit.
- Your enrollment will be effective the first of the month following completion and submission of the enrollment form.
- To receive reimbursement, you complete and submit to the Benefits Unit the Commuter Transportation Benefits Plan Reimbursement Request form along with the original receipt or cancelled check by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month or no later than termination date or cancellation of enrollment.
- Any unreimbursed amount will be carried over to the following month. You are eligible for reimbursement for any monies left in your account as long as you are actively employed. Upon termination, any money left in your account will be forfeited.
- To make changes or to cancel your enrollment, you must complete and submit at least 10 business days prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month the Commuter Transportation Benefits Plan Enrollment and Change Form. Any change will be effective the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following correct completion and submission of the form.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Enrolling

- **Significant Tax Savings**  
The program is funded through employee voluntary pre-tax payroll deductions. Contributions you make to the Commuter Transportation Plan are exempt from federal, state, Social Security and Medicare taxes.
- **Cost Saving**  
Because of the tax savings, expenses for which you are reimbursed cost you less than if you paid for them with after-tax income.

### What are some sample eligible transit expenses?

Fare cards: Monthly fare passes purchased from affiliated transportation authorities

Vouchers: Vouchers used as means of payment for fare cards purchased directly from transit authorities

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Smart Card: Cards used for both parking and transit

## What Qualifies for Transit Reimbursement?

### Qualified Parking Expenses

Parking at or near the employer's business location or parking at or near a location from which the employee commutes to work via mass transit (park & ride). This does not include parking on or near your homes.

### Transit Passes and Fare Card Costs

A transit pass is any pass, token, fare card, voucher or similar item entitling a person to ride, free of added charges or at reduced rates, on one of the following:

**Mass transit:** Bus, rail, subway, light rail or ferry, publicly or privately operated.

**Vanpools:** A commuter highway vehicle that is used for transportation from the employee's home and workplace.

### Commuter Highway Vehicle

Any highway vehicle that seats at least 6 adults (not including the driver) where it is reasonably expected that at least 80% of the vehicle's mileage will have transpired in transporting employees between their homes and work.

## What expenses aren't included in this program?

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The law excludes mileage, tolls, fuel and carpooling expenses from this program. Business travel and other reimbursed travel expenses are also excluded from this benefit.

### How to request reimbursement?

To receive reimbursements for parking and/or transit expenses, you are required to remit receipts to the District HR/Benefits Unit. You will need to elect a dollar amount to be withheld from your paycheck and contributed to your account.

For reimbursement, please submit a completed claim form and your receipt to the Benefits Unit at **FAX# 650-949-6299** or pdf/email to [MyBenefits@fhda.edu](mailto:MyBenefits@fhda.edu).

*Claims received by NOON on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month will be processed by the Benefits Unit for receipt on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.*

For **Transportation Spending Accounts**, you are allowed to elect, change, or stop contributions at any time by submitting the Change of Election for Commuter Reimbursement Accounts to the Benefits Unit. The deadline for any changes is the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.

## Deadline for Claims Reimbursement and Unused Funds

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- The IRS requires that the Plan Administrator must received ALL claims for qualified expenses *within 180 days after the service is provided* in order for it to be considered for reimbursements.
- Unused funds not requested for reimbursement upon termination of employment are forfeited.
- Unused fund(s) will be rollover for the next plan year for active participants.