

## **ARTICLE 22 TRANSIT SUBSIDY**

**22.01 - Purpose.** To encourage employees to use mass transit, carpools, vanpools, and other ecologically friendly means of commuting, e.g. bicycles.

**22.02 - Eligibility to Receive Transit Subsidy.** All employees are eligible to receive a monthly transit subsidy from the Department. The Department will pay such subsidy equal to 100% of the employee's commuting costs for mass transportation, or vanpools, up to the maximum amount currently allowed by law. The Department's subsidy reimbursement will be based on a direct route between the employee's home and duty station.

Employees who work compressed work schedules or telecommute will be eligible to receive the monthly transit subsidies. Employees must disclose their work schedules, including telecommuting days, on the application. The most cost effective transit subsidy purchase shall be utilized by the employee, which may include a monthly pass.

**22.03 - Transit Subsidy Amount/Changes.** The maximum amount of the transit subsidy will change whenever the Department is directed to change it by law or Executive Order. The change in allotment will be effective immediately and will be implemented along with any retroactive payment as soon as possible.

**22.04 - Vanpools.** Employees may utilize their transit subsidy to pay for vanpools. The Department will help employees identify commercial parking near the work location for vanpools.

**22.05 - Bicycles.** Employees who regularly use a bicycle for a substantial portion of their commute between the employee's residence and work may apply using the HUD-80 form to receive a \$20 monthly transportation subsidy for bicycle commuting costs incurred. An employee receiving a bicycle transit subsidy may not receive other transportation subsidy concurrently. . If the employee stops regularly bicycling to work, the employee shall immediately notify management to stop the monthly bicycling reimbursement.

### **22.06 - Applying for Transit Subsidy.**

- (1) Employees who wish to apply for the transit subsidy will self-certify their monthly costs for commuting via public transportation or vanpool on the HUD-80 and will be immediately eligible for transit subsidy.
- (2) Employees whose commuting patterns change must self-certify the change in their monthly commuting costs using the appropriate form provided by the Department.
- (3) The Department will process employee requests to begin receiving a transit subsidy or change the amount of the subsidy within two (2) pay periods of its receipt of the completed application form, and will notify the affected employee.

**22.07 - Receipt of Transit Subsidy.**

- (1) The Department will distribute the transit subsidy according to the distribution schedule for the local area.
- (2) In instances where the transit subsidy is available and/or allowable in more than one format; e.g., Metrocheck, transit voucher, or credit card; the Department will make available the format that is most convenient for employees to use for their transit expenses, while maintaining necessary security in the program.
- (3) Any issues with the Department's transit subsidy disbursement can be directed to the Transit Subsidy Unit in Headquarters or the servicing Regional Support Manager (RSM) or Administrative Officer in the field. In the event the transit check arrives after the deadline (e.g. monthly or quarterly) due to no fault of the employee, bargaining unit employees shall receive reimbursement for the transit expenses incurred upon providing evidence of payment (e.g. receipts). Employees are encouraged to contact the Transit Subsidy Unit/servicing RSM or Administrative Officer, if the transit pass does not arrive by the deadline, who will assist in making the appropriate arrangements if reimbursement is necessary. Employees must return any commuter checks that are later received beyond the disbursement amount.

**22.08 - Employee Notification of Transit Subsidy Termination.** If transit subsidy is to be involuntarily terminated for any employee, the Department shall coordinate with Employee and Labor Relations and will first give reasonable notice to the employee and the employee's Local union.

**22.09 - Recertification.** Employees shall be given at least 30 days notice to provide annual recertification, which is generally due at the beginning of each fiscal year. The Department agrees to notify all employees from whom no recertification has been received and notify employees who have not completed recertification fifteen (15) days prior to termination.

**22.10 - Leave.** It is the employee's responsibility to inform the Agency when extended leave is approved and the employee will not be commuting to work. During that time, the employee may not use transit subsidy. If the employee is on continuous leave for more than 60 days, the Agency may suspend the employee from participation in the transit subsidy program.

**22.11 - Local Bargaining.** It is recognized that transit systems are different in each area where the Department's offices are located. The Department shall notify the local union 30 days before there is any change or delay in the form of distribution of funds, to the extent that the Department has received 30 or more days notice. When requested, AFGE Locals shall be able to conduct bargaining on local concerns regarding the Department's subsidized travel, in accordance with Article 49. The allowable frequency of changes to the mode of transportation shall be subject to local bargaining.

**22.12 - Funding.** The Department will implement any laws, regulations and/or Executive Orders regarding the Transit Subsidy Program. The Department and the Union recognize that the program is subject to the availability of funds.