



# EMPLOYEE TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY





# Employment Transportation Assistance Program

The Employment Transportation Assistance Program helps individuals in overcoming transportation barriers, allowing them to successfully retain employment and develop the capacity to earn a life-sustaining income.

The program utilizes already existing coordination structures including River Valley Transit (RVT) and STEP's Shared-Ride to provide the most cost-effective means of transportation assistance. Transitional transportation assistance is available through bus passes, shared-ride transportation, mileage reimbursement, and for child care transportation.

Participants may receive benefits for a maximum of one year, with a maximum lifetime allowance of \$12,000. Assistance is provided on a gradually declining basis as participants achieve longevity in their employment and have the opportunity to develop self-sufficient means of transportation.

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# Transportation Grant Eligibility

To qualify for ETAP, persons not receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance must be part of a household that meets the definition of a needy family:

- A needy family is defined as a minor child and his or her parent(s) or other adult-specified relative with whom he or she lives, and who meet the income and resource standards established under the state’s TANF program.
- A minor child is under age 18, or age 18 and a full-time student in either a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
- A specified relative is defined as an adult who is exercising responsibility for the care and control of the child by making and carrying out plans for support of the child.
- Pregnant women who have no other children living with them are also eligible for TANF.

Total household income includes any earned and/or unearned income - Social Security, unemployment compensation, wages, pensions, Supplemental Social Security, child support, and interest income. Percentage of total income should be calculated as income pre-tax, or gross income.

2025 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines		
200%		
Persons	Monthly	Annual
1	\$2,609.00	\$31,300.00
2	\$3,525.00	\$42,300.00
3	\$4,442.00	\$53,300.00
4	\$5,359.00	\$64,300.00
5	\$6,275.00	\$75,300.00
6	\$7,192.00	\$86,300.00
7	\$8,109.00	\$97,300.00
8	\$9,025.00	\$108,300.00
Each additional person	\$917.00	\$11,000.00

# Objective of the Guidelines

## **The objective of the Employment Transportation Assistance Program:**

1. To temporarily assist low-income individuals with overcoming transportation barriers that prevent them from being hired in competitive jobs and from being dependable employees.
2. To transition individuals from dependence on transportation assistance programs to independence.

## Program Limits

### **Term & Financial Limits**

An individual may be eligible to receive Employment Transportation Assistance Program (ETAP) benefits for a maximum of one year or the program limit of \$12,000.

## Eligibility Criteria

Total household income cannot exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Income

The household must meet the definition of a needy family.

The individual must be employed, work a minimum of 80 hours a month, and show documentation proving employment. Proof of employment must be verified monthly.

Seasonal and/or self-employed workers are not eligible.

# Goals

## **Goals of the Employment Transportation Assistance Program:**

- Each individual must be assigned the proper mode of transportation based on the Employment Transportation Assistance Program budget and individual needs.
- County Employment Transportation Assistance Program managers must assess each individual's needs prior to approving individuals for shared-ride services.
- Fixed-route service is subsidized to make transportation affordable for commuters and low-income individuals.
- In priority order, the most affordable mode of transportation that will meet the needs of the individual must be used:
  1. Fixed Route
  2. Mileage Reimbursement
  3. Shared-Ride Services
  4. Ride-Sharing Reimbursement

## **Transition Planning**

Transitioning from dependence on ETAP to being responsible for one's own transportation is a basic goal of the program and must be enforced for every individual receiving benefits/assistance.

- Each eligible individual is authorized to receive ETAP assistance for up to one year, regardless of use.
- If there are breaks in employment, an individual may be authorized for two additional three-month periods, upon PennDOT approval.
- In no case will any individual receive more than 1.5 years of ETAP benefits.
- All agencies must update their transportation plans to ensure that individuals have transitioned from ETAP.

## Eligible Program Expenses

The following is a description of services the Bureau of Public Transportation will reimburse under ETAP:

These services are only reimbursable upon presentation of satisfactory documentation by individuals verified as eligible by the CAO and only within the ETAP guidelines on term and financial limits (**see page 2: Program Limits**).

- Individuals must be deemed eligible and approved for services prior to requesting reimbursement.
- Services completed prior to eligibility will not be eligible for reimbursement by PennDOT.
- PennDOT has the right to accept or deny any request for reimbursement.
- All requests and pre-approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis.

# Eligible Transportation Expenses

## **Fixed Route Bus Passes**

Condition: monthly documentation of employment, a minimum of 20 hours must be worked per week.

## **Shared-Ride Services**

Condition: documentation from the employer validating that the individual's work hours are consistent with the trips taken using the Shared-Ride Service.

## **Mileage Reimbursement**

Condition: documentation from the employer that the individual is a current employee. This must include verification that the individual worked the required number of days to warrant the claimed mileage reimbursement. Mileage claimed for reimbursement must be verified using web-based mapping software to determine the distance between the individual's home address and the address of employment.

- PennDOT will reimburse mileage at the federal mileage reimbursement rate to individuals using their own vehicle for work-related trips.
- PennDot will reimburse mileage up to a maximum of \$1,000/month per individual.
- Individuals receiving mileage reimbursement from their employer are not eligible for ETAP Mileage Reimbursement assistance.

## **Ride-Sharing**

Condition: documentation from the employer that the individual is a current employee. This must include verification that the individual worked the required number of days to warrant the claimed trips.



# Employment Transportation Assistance Program

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