



**UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:**

- Next:**  
**Thursday, October 17, 2013**
- Future:**  
**Monday, November 18, 2013**  
**Friday, December 13, 2013**



**QUESTION OF THE MONTH:**

**When will the government shutdown end?**

Your guess is as good as ours.

**GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IMPACTS TRANSIT BENEFITS**



The government shutdown will impact the Transportation Incentive Program for Outside the National Capital Region in the following ways:

- INDIVIDUAL RIDERSHIP RULE:** The individual ridership requirement for participants who purchase a monthly pass for October 2013 has been waived. Participants will not be required to ride at least 50% of their eligible work days in order to receive transit benefits for October 2013. Participants will not be required to repay the government if they fail to ride at least 50% of their eligible work days in October 2013.
- 80/50 RULE FOR VANPOOLS:** The 80/50 rule for vanpool eligibility for October 2013 has been waived. Vanpools who fail to meet the minimum requirements of the 80/50 rule will not be penalized, nor will October 2013 be considered a warning month for this calendar year.
- NOVEMBER BENEFITS:** Although many DoD civilian employees have been called back to work, funding for transit benefits has not yet been authorized. This means that no additional benefits can be loaded on debit cards and no additional physical fare media will be mailed by the Department of Transportation until funding is provided. Participants should not expect their debit card to be loaded on 10 October for November commuting. This includes Working Capital Fund (WCF) employees. Any participant who has set up and automatic payment with their transit authority or vanpool company to purchase their November mass transit should contact their transit authority or vanpool company to notify them that transit benefits will not be available on 10 October. The Office of Financial Operations will work with the Department of Transportation to provide transit benefits as quickly as legally possible once the government reopens.
- NON-APPROPRIATED FUND EMPLOYEES:** Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) employees (MWR, LODGING, EXCHANGES) are not funded

directly by Congress and should not experience a delay in transit benefits. The Department of Transportation will continue to mail physical fare media and load debit cards for NAF employees. NAF employees should expect their debit cards to be loaded on 10 October for November commuting.

**TIP MOVES TO WEB-BASED APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Office of Financial Operations and the Department of Transportation will no longer accept paper applications for transit benefits. All new enrollee applications as well as any changes or withdrawals must be submitted through the Transportation Incentive Program System (TIPS). Reviewing officials who have not yet attended training must attend a training session in order to receive a reviewing official account. The following three training dates are available:

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|---|----------------------------|
| Date: <b>Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup></b> | Time: <b>1100-1200 EDT</b> |
| Date: <b>Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup></b>  | Time: <b>1400-1500 EDT</b> |
| Date: <b>Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup></b>  | Time: <b>1400-1500 EDT</b> |

Reviewing officials should contact the Office of Financial Operations for call-in information and web link for the Defense Connect Online training session. Participants can access TIPS at: <https://tips.navy.mil>.

**MAXIMUM BENEFIT SET TO EXPIRE BACK TO \$125**

The maximum benefit for the Transportation Incentive Program (TIP) is scheduled to be reduced to \$125 for commuting in January 2014. The mass transportation fringe benefit program is a tax-exempt subsidy intended to offset the cost of using mass transportation. Executive Order 13150, instituting the program in the summer of 2000, noted that this subsidy was being established, "in order to reduce Federal employees' contribution to traffic congestion and air pollution." The maximum monthly tax exempt limit that may be distributed to participants is provided in the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). On January 2, 2013, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA) and subsequent regulations by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) amended the IRC by increasing the tax exempt transit benefit statutory limit to \$245. However, the increase to \$245 was not permanent. Under ATRA the temporary increase in the maximum mass transit subsidy will sunset on December 31, 2013. If Congress does not take action before 30 November 2013, the benefits distributed in December for January 2014 will be limited to \$125.



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