



**UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES:**



**Next:**  
**Wednesday, January 20, 2016**  
*(for March benefit)*

**Future:**  
**Monday, February 22, 2016**  
**Wednesday, March 23, 2016**

**MAX BENEFIT INCREASES TO \$255 ON 1 MARCH 2016**

As a result of the recently passed "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016" the Internal Revenue Service has updated the maximum amount of transit benefits an employer may provide their employees from \$130 to \$255 for 2016. This change will take effect for Transportation Incentive Program participants on 1 March 2016. Participants who have a certified commuting cost on file that is greater than \$130 will see the increased amount (up to \$255) loaded onto their TRANServe debit card on 10 February 2016 for March commuting.



**My vanpool costs \$150 per seat; do I need to do anything to get the higher amount?** If your actual certified commuting cost is correct in the Transportation Incentive Program System (TIPS), then you do not need to take any action to receive the higher certified commuting cost on 10 February. The Department of Transportation will automatically load the higher amount on file.

**But what if I put \$130 in my application since that was all I was going to get anyway, but my bus pass actually costs \$150 every month.** Whoops! That's not correct. Participants should always certify their actual commuting cost even if it is greater than the current maximum benefit. If you have not certified what your actual commuting cost is each month, then you will need to log into TIPS and submit a change application to update your certified commuting cost.

**Is everyone eligible for \$255 per month?** No, not all employees are eligible for the full maximum amount. Only those participants in transit markets that have actual expenses that meet or exceed that amount are eligible for the maximum benefit. Most transit markets provide transit services at a monthly cost significantly less than \$255 per month. Employees may only claim the maximum benefit if their actual costs meet or exceed \$255.

**My vanpool has a group invoice and is certified at \$160 per seat, but we each currently pay \$130 in transit benefits and \$70 out-of-pocket because two of our 10 seats are empty. Now that the maximum benefit is \$255 will we each be eligible for \$200 in transit benefits to cover the cost of those empty seats?** Participants cannot use transit benefit to cover the cost of empty seats, so even at the higher maximum benefit amount, some participants will have out-of-pocket expenses if there are empty seats in their vanpool. In the above scenario, each participant would be eligible for \$160 in transit benefits, but would be

required to pay \$40 out-of-pocket each month to cover the two empty seats in the van. These out-of-pocket expenses provide a financial incentive for vanpool participants to recruit more riders.

**Will this higher maximum amount expire at the end of the 2016?** No, Congress did not include expiration language in the most recent bill. This means that the new maximum amount will not automatically drop back down to the lower level like it has in the past. It will remain at \$255 unless the IRS adjusts it for inflation or Congress takes a new action on transit benefits.

The bottom line is that more TIP participants will have a greater portion of their commuting cost covered under the new maximum benefit and that is good news for the mass transit user.



**QUESTION OF THE MONTH:**

**When must vanpool logs be uploaded to the Transportation Incentive Program System (TIPS) for review?**

Vanpool logs must be uploaded to TIPS by the fifth day of the month following the commuting month.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION TOOL EXPANDED**

The email functionality in the Transportation Incentive Program System (TIPS) has previously prevented reviewing officials from emailing participants who were in a withdrawn status. However, in some situations reviewing officials may need to contact a former participant regarding a transit benefit issue. In the most recent technical release of TIPS, reviewing officials and supervisors are now able to send an email notification to a participant who is in a "withdrawn" status. This new feature will help ensure that all email communication with a participant or former participant can be stored with the participant's application history. To send an email to a withdrawn participant using TIPS:

1. Select the checkbox next to the participant's Application ID
2. Select the "Send Email" from the Actions drop-down menu
3. Select the checkboxes next to the people who you want to receive the email (participant, supervisor or both)
4. Select the checkbox to "Include Withdrawn"
5. Enter text in the subject field.
6. If you have any attachments, click the "Browse" button to locate and attach the file.
7. Enter the text of the message.
8. Click the Send or Cancel button as appropriate.



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL OPERATIONS CONTACT INFORMATION**

**PROGRAM MANAGER:** 202-685-0399  
**PROGRAM ASSISTANT:** 202-685-0374

**MAILING ADDRESS FOR MONEY ORDERS:**  
Office of Financial Operations  
c/o Field Support Activity  
1013 O St., SE, Bldg 166, Suite 301  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374  
ATTN: Transportation Incentive Program

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:** TIP@navy.mil  
**APPLY ONLINE AT:** <https://tips.navy.mil>  
**TIPS HELP DESK:** 619-553-4684 **EMAIL:** [tips@spawar.navy.mil](mailto:tips@spawar.navy.mil)



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
TRANSERVE CONTACT INFORMATION**

**TRANSIT BENEFIT MANAGER:** 202-366-1641  
**ELECTRONIC MEDIA SUPPORT TEAM:** 202-366-9244

**MAILING ADDRESS FOR RETURNING VOUCHERS:**  
DOT/TRANServe  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Room W12-190  
Washington, DC 20590

**JP MORGAN CHASE:**  
**LOST OR STOLEN CARD CONTACT NUMBER:** 866-891-6951  
**TRANSACTION HISTORY ACCOUNT ACCESS:** <https://ucard.chase.com>

