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Fare Subsidy Program

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PREFACE

P.1 PURPOSE

P.1.1 This Headquarters Procedural and Requirements (HPR) describe the eligibility and procedures for obtaining a fare subsidy card to commute to work utilizing public mass transportation.

P.2 APPLICABILITY

This HPR is applicable to NASA Headquarters civil service employees, including full-time, part-time and temporary personnel, detailees and Cooperative Education Program participants whose duty location is in the National Capital Region (see Definitions). Civil Service employees on detail to NASA Headquarters from NASA Centers or other Federal Agencies are also eligible for the subsidy.

P.3 AUTHORITY

- a. 5 U.S.C. § 7905, (Pub.L. 103-172, 107 Stat. 1995)
- b. 26 U.S.C. § 132, (Pub.L. 102-486, October 24, 1992)
- c. Exec Order No. 13,150, 3C.F.R 260 (2000 compilation), Federal Workforce Transportation (April 21, 2000)
- d. HQPD 9730.1A, Fare Subsidies for NASA Headquarters Employees Utilizing Public Mass Transportation

P.4 APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

- a. NASA Headquarter Form 201, Application for Fare Subsidy Program (FSP)
- b. NASA Headquarter Form 304, Temporary Benefit Suspension – SmarTrip and Fare Media
- c. The Fare Subsidy Program Desk Guide (Standard Operating Procedures)

P.5 MEASUREMENT/VERIFICATION

P.5.1 Internal and external third party audits and evaluations shall be used to assess the effectiveness of this procedure. FSP participants shall be contacted annually by the FSP Program Administrator or the designee to recertify application information and verify continued program eligibility.

P.6 CANCELLATION

None.

/S/

Christopher T. Jedrey
Executive Director
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CHAPTER 1. Fare Subsidy Program

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 The Fare Subsidy Program (FSP) was established to reduce petroleum consumption and traffic congestion, and to improve air quality through encouraging the use of public mass transportation. This program is available for employees utilizing public mass transportation to commute to work. There are two different benefits available: a mass transit subsidy or the option to exclude mass transit commuting costs from taxable wages and compensation. This directive sets forth the policy, responsibilities, delegations of authority, and requirements for implementation of the mass transit benefit of FSP at Headquarters (HQ). Executive Order 13150 link: <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/eos/eo13150.html>.

CHAPTER 2. Responsibilities

2.1. Headquarters Transportation Officer

2.1.1 The responsibilities of the Transportation Officer are:

- a. Provide HQ oversight and implementation of the FSP in accordance with this HPR.
- b. Develop and implement a procedure to ensure: 1) responsible financial management including tracking payments for fare media and monitoring total costs; and 2) funds, property, and other program assets are properly accounted for and safeguarded against fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, or misappropriation. Any findings of potential fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement or misappropriation shall be referred to the Office of the Inspector General.
- c. Establish processes for the dissemination of fare media and other pertinent program-related information to employees.
- d. Refer to the Labor Relations Office issues that may affect respective labor organizations as appropriate.

2.2 The FSP Program Administrator or designee:

2.2.1 The responsibilities of the FSP Program Administrator or designee are to:

- a. Process and verify applications for the fare media subsidy and ensure all required data elements are supplied by the applicant.
- b. Document the number and type of fare media issued to employees and the funds expended in the program.
- c. Ensure that program participation is extended only to eligible employees (see Definitions).
- d. Monitor the list of employees receiving this subsidy to ensure that no employee is simultaneously receiving a second benefit in the form of subsidized parking as an individual or as a member of a carpool, and that employees are receiving the appropriate amount.
- e. Obtain the appropriate quantity of fare media each month from approved providers of public mass transportation, and ensure that a chain of accountability exists for the media from the time of receipt until final disposition. Excess fare media shall be retained at the end of each period and reutilized the following period.
- f. Confirm that the mode of transportation meets the criteria of public mass transportation for participation in HQ's FSP.

g. Safeguard fare media at all times, to include storage in a safe (or by another appropriate method) when the fare media are not actively being distributed, inventoried, or needed for other purposes.

h. Refer suspected instances of fraud to the NASA Office of the Inspector General for investigation.

2.3 Employees

2.3.1 Employees participating in the FSP shall:

a. Use the fare media exclusively for their own qualified mass transit commuting costs to and from work. Indirect costs such as gas, mileage, parking, or an employee's personal leased vehicle, cannot be included as part of the cost qualifying for the fare subsidy. Overestimating transit costs, giving or selling transit benefits to others, or purchasing fare media from another is prohibited.

b. Notify FSP Program Administrator or designee when withdrawing from the FSP or when no longer a NASA HQ employee.

c. Notify the FSP Program Administrator or designee of any changes in application information for example (e.g., name change, change in mode of transportation, or address).

d. Notify the FSP Program Administrator or designee of any changes in work schedules such as extended leave from Headquarters (i.e. TDY, worker's compensation, sick leave or maternity leave) of more than 30 days.

2.3.2. Employees participating in the program are subject to appropriate administrative action for misuse of the fare subsidy.

2.4 Distributors of Fare Media

2.4.1 Distribution of fare media shall be in accordance with procedures established by the HQ Transportation Officer.

2.4.2 Safeguard fare media at all times, to include storage in a safe (or by another appropriate method) when the fare media are not actively being distributed, inventoried, or needed for other purposes.

CHAPTER 3. Criteria

3.1 Eligible Employees

3.1.1 In order to receive a fare subsidy, eligible employees shall use public mass transportation using the appropriate fare media. (see definitions) to and from work for a minimum of 10 workdays during the month for which the subsidy is given.

3.1.2 An employee receiving a transportation subsidy from NASA Headquarters may not receive another form of subsidy (either parking or fare) from any other Federal agency unless using NASA distributed Parking Garage Validation Stickers whereby the difference between the discounted price and the retail value of the parking expense must be deducted from the monthly fare subsidy allocation.

3.1.3 Employees on extended leave from NASA Headquarters are not eligible to receive or use fare media while absent from the Headquarters duty station, and must deduct that amount from their monthly allocation.

CHAPTER 4. Process

4.1 Enrollment

4.1.1 To enroll in the Fare Subsidy Program, employees shall make application through the Parking and Fare Subsidy Software (<http://oim.hq.nasa.gov/oia/hgfac/govpark.html>) on HQ's Facilities and Administrative Services Home Page. Other program specifics are also located on this page.

4.1.2 Civil Service employees on detail from NASA Centers or other Federal Agencies shall submit documentation of their official duty station and NHQ Form 201 to the FSP Program Administrator or designee by the 14th day of the month in order to be eligible for the program beginning with the following month's subsidy.

4.1.3 An employee's participation in this program is subject to approval by the program administrators based on the established criteria. Applications shall be retained as a record for two years.

4.2 Subsidy Distribution

4.2.1 Distribution of the fare media at HQ is conducted quarterly by the Headquarters Facilities and Administration Services Division. Employees shall pick up their monthly fare media after identity verification using their government identification card at the designated location and signing the FSP Certification Log. The FSP Certification Log shall contain the names of FSP participants and the amount of their benefit.

4.2.2 Distribution of fare media to employees at other locations shall be coordinated with the FSP Program Administrator.

4.2.3 Employee is responsible for reporting any lost or stolen SmarTrip card to the HQ FSP Program Administrator or designee.

4.2.4 Demagnetized or otherwise damaged fare cards shall be returned by the holding employee to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Offices located at Metro Center for resolution, including reimbursement or replacement.

4.3 Program Restrictions

4.3.1 Smart Trip card users are required to activate their benefits on a monthly basis. Failure to do so shall result in forfeiture of the fare media for that month.

4.3.2 Failure to pick up fare media for two consecutive quarters shall result in termination of enrollment in the Program unless a written explanation is submitted to the FSP Program Administrator or Transportation Officer. A new application through the Parking and Fare Subsidy Software (<http://oim.hq.nasa.gov/oialhgfac/govpark.html>) on HQ's Facilities and Administrative Services Home Page will be necessary to be reinstated in the program.

4.3.3 Since actual currency cannot be distributed to an employee, FSP participation is subject to the availability of appropriate fare media. This media must be acceptable as payment by the mass transit operator used by the employee.

APPENDIX A. DEFINITIONS

A.1 Eligible Employee. NASA civil service personnel, who may include full-time, part-time personnel, term personnel, temporary personnel, detailees, Cooperative Education Program participants (Co-ops), and students whose duty station in the National Capital Region is NASA Headquarters.

A.2 Fare Media. Fare Card and SmarTrip Benefit

- a. SmarTrip Card. NASA distributed plastic card that can load fare from WMATA authorized machines.
- b. Electronic Fund Transfer for Van Pools only. Self-sign-up at Metro website (<http://www.wmata.com/smartbenefits>) to electronically transfer commuting funds to van pool provider.

A.3 National Capital Region (NCR), The District of Columbia; Montgomery, Prince George's, and Frederick Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties in Virginia; and all independent cities within the geographic area bounded by those counties (e.g., Alexandria).

A.4 Parking Garage Validation Stickers. NASA distributed parking validation stickers that are sold to civil servants who occasionally park in the HQ Garage at a discount. The difference between the discounted price and the retail value of the parking fees must be deducted from the monthly fare subsidy allocation.

A.5 Public Mass Transportation. Any public bus or rail transit system, whether or not publicly owned. Any highway vehicle (including vanpools):

- a. that seats at least six adults (not including the driver); and
- b. at least 80 percent of the mileage use is to transport employees between their residences and their place of employment; and
- c. the number of employees transported for such purposes is at least 1/2 of the adult seating capacity (not including the driver); and
- d. transportation is provided by any person in the business of transporting persons for compensation or hire.

APPENDIX B. ACRONYMS

Co-ops – Cooperative Education Program Participants FSP – Fare Subsidy Program

HQ – Headquarters

NCR – National Capital Region

TDY – Temporary Duty

WMATA – Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority