



About GWRideConnect's New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program

GWRideConnect's New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program is designed to provide assistance to fill empty seats in currently established vanpools in the George Washington Region. The George Washington Region consists of Caroline, King George, Stafford and Spotsylvania counties, and the City of Fredericksburg. This pilot program is intended to assist existing, established vanpools travelling within or outside of the George Washington Region that have experienced a sustained loss of passengers. This program is, in part, a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused a surge in the number of days the average commuter teleworks in this region; however, traffic numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels. This program has been created to encourage commuters travelling to work sites at least 50% of full-time workdays to join a vanpool. The vanpool assistance is designed to cover a period of time sufficient to develop new traveling behavior.

The New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program is open to all vanpools that meet the requirements of the program. The program provides up to \$300.00 per eligible rider, per number of eligible months. See program details contained in this document for vanpool eligibility requirements and financial assistance terms and conditions. Program assistance will be granted based on eligibility, available funds, and at the discretion of the GWRideConnect Program Director or their designee. Funding for this program is limited.

All agreements under the New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program are between GWRideConnect and the Vanpool Service Provider (VSP). If you are a commuter seeking assistance with finding a vanpool, please contact gwrconnect@gwregion.org or visit www.gwrconnect.org to receive a list of available vanpools. VSPs on any lists provided by GWRideConnect are not guaranteed to meet the requirements of this New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program, and GWRideConnect does not guarantee that a vanpool will be available that qualifies for the program. All vanpools in the GWRideConnect region are privately owned and operated. Any ridership and/or payment agreements are solely between the VSP and the commuter. This program is intended to assist vanpools in finding new riders and does not involve itself with the relationship(s) between a VSP and their riders.

GWRideConnect's New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program is funded by a grant from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The program is implemented by George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC). For more information, contact Leigh Anderson, GWRideConnect Program Director at 540-373-7665 or leigh.anderson@gwregion.org.

This is a pilot program and may end at any time. Additional eligibility, monitoring, or administrative guidelines may be set by GWRideConnect at any time.

Benefits of Vanpooling

Reduce Stress - Vanpool commuters reported an average of 21% less stress than the SOV commuters, with vanpoolers reporting a 5% decrease in stress, and SOV commuters reporting a 16% increase in stress. – [sciencedirect.com](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Increase Quality Time – Commute to work in comfort, while making better use of your time, such as reading, preparing for your day, or sleeping instead of driving!

Save Money – Compared to the cost of driving alone for long distance commutes, vanpooling will save on average 50-75%. The monthly cost of each vanpool is shared among all the participants in the vanpool. The cost to vanpool is often comparable to what you pay for just gasoline. - [Commutessmart.org](https://www.commutessmart.org)

Protect the Environment – The average car emits 348 grams of CO2 per mile, and since this region has some of the longest commutes in the country, vanpooling can really make an impact. – [Energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)

New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program Eligibility Requirements

1. The vanpool that the New Rider is joining must originate in the George Washington Region which consists of Caroline, King George, Stafford, and Spotsylvania counties and the City of Fredericksburg.
2. The New Rider must not have been in a vanpool that originates from the George Washington Region for a period of 12 month prior to the application for this program.
3. The New Rider must physically join the vanpool for the vanpool to receive this pilot program's vanpool assistance. The first payment will not be released until the New Rider has completed two commutes with the vanpool.
4. The total monthly charge for the New Rider must not exceed the monthly charge to existing riders in the vanpool.
5. The Vanpool Service Provider (VSP) must not receive other financial incentives or payments, including SmartBenefits Commuter Benefits Program through the rider's employer, for the portion of the New Rider's monthly charge for a vanpool seat that is covered by the New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program.

6. The vanpool rider must ride in the vanpool at least 10 days per month to qualify.
7. The vanpool that the new rider joins must have been in the GWRideConnect database for more than six months.
8. The vanpool must not be currently receiving other financial assistance for vanpool start up or empty seats and must not have received any empty seat assistance in the past 12 months.
9. The vanpool must not receive assistance for more than 3 riders concurrently through the New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program (see table below).
10. The vanpool that the New Rider joins must meet the federal guidelines for a “commuter highway vehicle” under 26 U.S.C §132 (f) as shown below
 - a) the seating capacity of vehicle is at least 6 adults (not including the driver), and
 - b) at least 80 percent of the mileage use of which can reasonably be expected to be for the purposes of transporting employees in connection with travel between their residences and their place of employment, and on trips during which the number of employees transported for such purposes is at least ½ of the adult seating capacity of such vehicle (not including the driver).
11. The van must be appropriately insured under a Commercial Auto Policy or covered by the AdVANTage program, a self-insurance pool for Virginia vanpools.
12. The vanpool must be properly registered with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Terms and Conditions for New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program

The Vanpool Service Provider (VSP) must complete and submit the New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program application to become approved for the program. The monthly vanpool assistance per application will not exceed \$300 and will not continue for more than three consecutive months. The VSP must submit an updated application for each rider for each month of assistance. Payments will be made directly to the VSP.

Total Passenger Seats	Minimum Number of Riders (including New Riders)	Maximum Number of Seats Subsidized	Maximum Amount Subsidized per Seat Month 1	Maximum Amount Subsidized per Seat Month 2	Maximum Amount Subsidized per Seat Month 3
15	8	3	\$300	\$300	\$150
12	6	3	\$300	\$300	\$150
9	5	2	\$300	\$300	\$150
7	4	2	\$300	\$300	\$150

GWRideConnect staff will verify all information. Applications will be approved or disapproved based on eligibility, available funds, and at the discretion of the GWRideConnect Program Director or their designee. This is a pilot program and may end at any time. Additional eligibility, monitoring, or administrative guidelines may be set by GWRideConnect at any time.

In addition to the terms and conditions included above, the following terms and conditions apply to this program:

- (a.) Assistance will begin on either the 1st or 15th of a month. The Assistance Month will either be from the 1st to the last day of the month or from the 15th to the 14th of the following month.
- (b.) Assistance payments will be made to an approved VSP.
- (c.) All rider agreements are between the VSP and the rider.
- (d.) The VSP may not apply for monthly assistance in excess of what the VSP charges other riders in the vanpool. E.g., if each rider currently pays \$250 then \$250 is the limit that can be applied for.
- (e.) The New Rider assistance may be approved for less than what the VSP currently charges, based on the maximums outlined above.
- (f.) If the other riders in the vanpool currently pay more than the approved assistance for the New Rider through this program, the VSP may charge the New Rider for the difference.
- (g.) Failure to attain ridership for at least 10 days during the Assistance Month will end the vanpool assistance for any following months.

- (h.) The VSP will notify GWRideConnect if the New Rider fails to ride for the required number of days during the Assistance Month.
- (i.) Monthly Vanpool Rider Logs must be maintained and submitted by the VSP on or before the 5th day of the following Assistance Month (either the 5th or 19th) via email. Failure to submit the Monthly Vanpool Rider Log will result in immediate suspension of the incentive program and further financial vanpool assistance. The Monthly Vanpool Rider Logs must be signed by both the rider and the approved VSP.
- (j.) A copy of the VSP's IRS W-9 Form is required.
- (k.) The vanpools may be provided with project signage (magnetic signs, vinyl lettering, or logos) to display while commuting to increase awareness of vanpooling, the GWRideConnect program, and/or the New Rider Vanpool Assistance Pilot Program.
- (l.) Vanpools are encouraged to allow potential new riders to vanpool, space permitting, free of charge, for one to three days to determine if they will join the vanpool.
- (m.) Privacy Policy: The GWRideConnect Program may collect personal information from recipients of vanpool financial assistance, vanpool coordinators, drivers, and riders. This information is used solely for the purpose of fulfilling requests for financial assistance in the program and verifying eligibility. The GWRideConnect Program does not share this personal information with third parties.

**APPLICATION FOR GWRideConnect's
NEW RIDER VANPOOL ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMS**

Vanpool Service Provider (VSP) Information

VSP Contact Name: _____

VSP Contact Phone: _____

VSP Contact Email: _____

VSP Mailing Address: _____

Vehicle Make/Model/Type: _____

Vehicle Seating Capacity (including the driver): _____

Has vanpool been in the GWRideConnect database for at least 6 months: _____

Commercial Vanpool Insurance Information: _____

Pick-Up Point (If multiple, only use New Rider points):

Origination: _____

Time: _____

Drop-Off Point:

Destination: _____

Time: _____

Please include a copy of the van's Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles registration with this application.

Please include a copy of the van's insurance card with this application.

Please include a copy of the VSP's IRS Form W-9 if one is not already on file with GWRideConnect

**APPLICATION FOR GWRideConnect's
NEW RIDER VANPOOL ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMS**

New Rider Information

The start date for this program must be either the 1st or the 15th of a month

New Rider's Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

New Rider's Email: _____

Month: _____ Start Date: 1st of month 15th of month

Month of assistance: 1st 2nd 3rd

I, the Vanpool Service Provider, have checked to the best of my ability that this New Rider has not been in a vanpool that originates from the George Washington Region for a period of 12 months prior to the application for this program. Yes No

Is this the first month that this vanpool is receiving assistance for this rider under this program? Yes No

If yes, please continue to the Vanpool Passenger List

If no, check the appropriate box below:

I am including a copy of the ride log for this rider for the previous month.

I will submit a copy of the ride log for this passenger for the previous month

By _____ (must be either the 5th or 19th based on the passenger's start date). I understand that I will not receive payment until the ride log is submitted, and the application will become null and void if not submitted by the aforementioned date.

**APPLICATION FOR GWRideConnect's
NEW RIDER VANPOOL ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMS**

VANPOOL PASSENGER LIST

Please list all riders in the vanpool including riders that are receiving benefits from the Vanpool New Rider Assistance Pilot Program for the period of this application.

Passen- gers	Name	Email Address	Phone Number	New Rider?	Monthly Charge
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					

The monthly charge should show the amount the passenger listed on that line pays for the month this application covers. The New Rider column should state with a "Yes" or "No" if the passenger listed on the line is receiving benefits through this program for the month this application covers.

Name of Vanpool Coordinator: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

**APPLICATION FOR GWRideConnect's
NEW RIDER VANPOOL ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAMS**

I CERTIFY AND AFFIRM:

That I am familiar with and will comply with the program eligibility requirements and terms and conditions stated in this application.

That the matters and facts contained in the foregoing application are true and I am aware that the information I have provided is subject to review and verification.

Applicant Signature

Date

APPLICANT NAME (please print): _____