

2008 Downtown Commuter Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Downtown Commuter Program?

The Downtown Commuter Program is funded by a grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation. The program focuses on reducing drive-alone commuting in Olympia's downtown core. The City of Olympia is implementing this grant program in partnership with other agencies and Downtown organizations.

What is the goal of this program?

The goal of the program is to reduce traffic congestion on our streets, increase the availability of parking for Downtown visitors, and to reduce pollution generated by motor vehicles.

Who is eligible for this program?

The program is available to anyone who works within the boundaries as described in the General Rules of the program. At this time, the grant does not include people who work at worksites affected by the Commute Trip Reduction Law, which are generally worksites with over 100 employees.

How can I be eligible for the drawing?

If you walk, bike, carpool, vanpool or ride the bus, keep track of your total commute trips. If 60% of your total commute trips are by one of these modes, you qualify for the drawings.

How do the prize drawings work?

Everyone who commutes by walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling or riding the bus for 60% of their monthly commute trips are eligible. Participants must turn in a completed Commute Calendar on paper, or submit an online calendar by the 5th of each month. Program staff will notify winners to arrange for delivery of the reward. If after a reasonable amount of time and attempts to reach a winner fail, a new winner will be drawn.

How do I use the Commute Calendar?

Go to www.washingtoncommuter.org and follow the instructions. You will be asked a series of questions regarding your work and commute schedule. This information will be used to establish a Commute Trip Reduction baseline survey, as well as to create your user profile. Be sure to make a note of your user name and password. You will need those each time you log on to record your daily trips! Click the calendar to get started and begin tracking your daily commute trips!

Are there any tax consequences for winning a reward?

The Downtown Commuter Program will comply with the IRS reporting requirements for rewards winners. According to the 2007 IRS instructions, a 1099-MISC is required for any person receiving over \$600 in prizes and awards.

What commute trips do I record on my Commute Calendar?

Record all of your commutes to work. It doesn't matter what mode of travel you use. If you use different alternate modes of travel, the calendar gives you different options for every day. If you drive alone to work, you will also record that commute trip for that day. If it is your day off, you can mark that choice as well.

What is the purpose of tracking my trips?

The Downtown Commuter Program focuses on promoting walking, bicycling, riding the bus and ridesharing as alternate ways to get to work for people who commute into Downtown. We believe it is a positive way to impact congestion, parking and pollution. By keeping a Commute Calendar you qualify for the incentives and rewards offered by the program. By using the calendar you will also be able to see the result of your commute in terms of miles not driven, money saved, and pounds of CO2 not released into the air!

How do we compute the amount of pollution and money saved?

We use the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Emission Fact Sheet to calculate the average emissions and fuel consumption for vehicles. For more information and other calculations, visit the EAP website at www.epa.gov/otaq/models.htm.

We use AAA statistics for the average gas price in Washington to calculate money saved on gas. We will periodically update these prices, as changes in the state average warrants. We also add in 52.5 cents per mile for maintenance and other costs of owning a car.

Do scooters and motorcycles count in this program?

Scooters and motorcycles are considered motor vehicles. So, they do not count in the program. However, up to three scooters or motorcycles can park in one parking stall, saving on parking costs.

Where do I get forms if I can't print them?

You can pick up forms at the Parking Services office at 117 Legion Way, SW. You can turn in printed copies of your calendar or any other program documents there as well.

Need more information?

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