

Regional Travel Options (RTO) Commute Program



2019-2023 Metro RTO Grant Program Evaluation

Metro RTO's Commute program provides encouragement and support for people going to work and higher education sites using non-drive-alone commute options, such as walking, biking, ridesharing, and taking transit. **Metro funded 11 projects in the Commute program area through the 2019-2023 RTO grant cycle, totaling \$2,589,000.**

Commute Program Highlights



The program adapted to COVID-19 and supported commuters' changing needs by strengthening existing partnerships with employers so they could continue to offer transportation programming during the pandemic.



Programs successfully shifted focus to serve frontline and essential workers in response to the pandemic, with the Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA)'s Commuter Kickback program reporting 26-35% of participants being frontline and essential employees.



Barriers to transportation access were identified through engagement efforts, with greatest success stemming from audience-specific communications, standardized training, and a shift to more digital marketing.

Future Recommendations for RTO

- 1. Continue to prioritize essential workers' travel needs** and adapt programming to meet non-traditional work schedules.
- 2. Focus on program expansion** in areas with a high density of employers and fewer existing programs.
- 3. Refine the coordination of data collection** to better understand impacts of the Commute Program and help identify future needs.
- 4. Expand transit and active transportation commute programming** in areas that have robust transit service and active transportation infrastructure.
- 5. Promote rideshare such as vanpool or employee shuttles** in areas where transit and active transportation options are limited, and there is the highest drive-alone rate.

Commute Program Impact



Over
40,000
program participants



42,493,927
vehicle miles
reduced



and
20,623 metric tons
of CO₂ avoided



Nearly
5,000,000
transit trips



and over
500,000 bike or
walk trips taken



Increased travel options
awareness with
960,000+
views or impressions
reported



21% lower
drive-alone rate
reported by TriMet
employer pass
program participants
when compared to
non-participants



Scan the QR code to view Metro's RTO program

Metro's RTO program funds and supports local programs that increase the use of travel options, reduce pollution, and improve mobility across greater Portland, OR. RTO funds work across three program areas—**Commute, Community** and **Safe Routes to School**. To learn more visit the [RTO program website: www.oregonmetro.gov/regionaltravelloptions](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/regionaltravelloptions)

Commute Program Area Spotlights



TriMet

TriMet's Employer Outreach Program markets and delivers commute benefit support to employers in the Portland Metro region to reduce drive-alone commute trips. In addition to accessing subsidized and non-subsidized transit passes, employers participating in TriMet's Program are eligible for staff support, access to transportation promotional materials, Emergency Ride Home programs, and assistance with an employee commute options survey conducted and summarized by TriMet.

In the 2019-2023 grant cycle, the Employer Outreach Program adapted to changing travel commute patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing several public health messaging campaigns combined with mask distribution events. As return-to-work and travel resumed, TriMet updated its program marketing materials and direct outreach to employers for program expansion. Expansion efforts include New Employee Kits with transportation information for hotels, manufacturing, warehouses, and retail employers, and New Resident Kits for new movers in the region. Additionally, TriMet reported that employer pass and engagement programs had a proven effect on reducing drive-alone trips.

Employers that conducted modal surveys of employees and participated in a TriMet employer program in the 2019-2023 grant cycle had a cumulative drive-alone rate of 48%, compared to a drive-alone rate of 69% for employers who conducted modal surveys but did not participate in a TriMet employer program.



TriMet staff distribute Get There materials and discuss trip planning at a resource fair

Westside Transportation Alliance

The Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA) helps employers in Washington County implement commute benefit programs and encourages residents and workers to use commute options. In the 2019-2023 cycle, WTA's Employer Outreach program partnered with Columbia Sportswear to provide a first and last mile bike share program to connect employees to the nearest MAX station. WTA also piloted a program for Nike and Intel employees to trial an e-bike for one month and purchase an e-bike at a discounted rate at the end of the trial.

During the pandemic, WTA shifted their engagement to focus on working with fewer employers, but deepening existing partnerships. Columbia Sportswear remained an engaged partner and commute leader in focusing commute efforts for employees in traditionally underserved job types, including employees at the Columbia employee store, call center, and warehouse and distribution center.

In May 2021, WTA introduced the Commuter Kickbacks program, an incentive program for people who live and work in Washington County to log non-drive alone commute trips using Get There Connect, which included additional incentives targeted for frontline and essential employees. **From 2021 to 2023, the percentage of Commuter Kickback participants that were frontline and essential employees ranged from 26-35%.**



WTA staff table and distribute trip planning materials at a public event in the park