

# Joint Comprehensive CTR Plan for State Agencies

## Background

In 2009 the Legislature passed the [Commute Trip Reduction for State Agencies Act](#), which aims to increase the leadership role of state-government agencies in the state's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. The law requires state agencies located in Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater to create and administer a [joint comprehensive CTR plan](#) designed to reduce commute drive-alone trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to state-agency worksites.

## State agency leadership role

*The Legislature hereby recognizes the state's crucial leadership role in establishing and implementing effective commute trip reduction programs. Therefore, it is the policy of the state that the department of transportation and other state agencies, including institutions of higher education, shall aggressively develop substantive programs to reduce commute trips by state employees. Implementation of these programs will reduce energy consumption, congestion in urban areas, and air and water pollution associated with automobile travel.*

[RCW 70.94.547](#) – Transportation demand management–Intent–State leadership.

## Other benefits

The CTR program benefits employees and agencies in a number of ways. Here are just a few of many examples:

- Walking and biking contribute to employee health.
- Taking the bus, vanpooling, and carpooling not only reduce the number of cars on the road, they also reduce the demand for employee parking.
- Teleworking, compressed work hours, and flexible scheduling are tools for attracting, recruiting, and retaining employees, providing them with greater work/life balance.

## Joint comprehensive CTR plan purpose

This plan will guide state agencies in developing consistent programs and policies that meet the requirements of the law, which stipulates that an agency must:

1. Designate an employee transportation coordinator (ETC).
2. Implement measures to reduce drive-alone commutes.
3. Communicate options to employees.
4. Promote ride-matching opportunities and assistance.
5. Commit to making a good faith effort toward reaching CTR program goals.

6. Collaborate with nearby agencies.
7. Survey employees and submit program reports.
8. Attend networking and training sessions.
9. Report annually to management to keep them informed and engaged.

## 1. **Designate an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC)**

In Washington State, CTR law requires each worksite to appoint an ETC. Each agency must display the ETC's name, location and contact information prominently in an area readily accessible to employees.

Agencies with more than one worksite, or worksites located in multiple counties, must appoint a CTR coordinator to act as a program manager for that area or, if necessary, the entire agency. Agencies may also benefit from appointing a CTR committee to assist with various program-related tasks and decisions. Depending on the number of employees stationed at each worksite, the CTR coordinator is encouraged to designate ETCs at each one.

## 2. **Implement measures to reduce drive-alone commutes**

Information about commute options available to employees at your worksite must be included in your CTR plan. The modes you choose to highlight should complement your worksite and its amenities. Things to consider: Are there bus stops, bike cages, and/or bike lanes? Is your worksite pedestrian-friendly? How accessible is your worksite? Focus on the more attractive and effective options for your employees based on worksite accessibility and conveniences.

Compressed workweeks, flex scheduling, and telework are effective, low-cost alternatives to driving alone at most agencies. [Governor's Executive Order 16-07](#) directs agencies to promote a [mobile workforce](#) and increase the number of employees using these alternatives.

### **Supporting programs and strategies**

#### **STAR Pass**

The [State Agency Rider \(STAR\) Pass](#) allows fare-free rides to state employees on all services provided by Mason Transit Authority and Grays Harbor Transit. The STAR Pass is no longer needed on Intercity Transit buses, as all of their services are now fare-free for all riders.

#### **Emergency Ride Home**

The State Agency CTR program provides [Emergency Ride Home](#) programs in Thurston, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties at no cost to the agency. Emergency Ride Home, also known as Home Free Guarantee and State Agency Free (SAFE) Ride, is a program that ensures employees who did not drive alone to work have access to a ride in the event of an emergency

or unscheduled overtime. If the employee is not too ill or distraught to drive, they may use a state-owned vehicle (subject to agency approval), provided they are not also transporting a non-state employee. Agencies are encouraged to provide a state-owned vehicle for rides home due to unscheduled overtime for vanpool or ridesharing participants/employees.

### **Financial Subsidies**

State law [RCW 43.01.230](#) allows agencies to develop and implement a financial subsidy program to encourage the reduction of commute trips. Agencies may use budgeted funds or parking funds for CTR subsidies but they must comply with [employee subsidy tracking guidelines](#).

There are two types of allowable subsidies:

- Non-taxable transit subsidies for vanpool or transit.
- Taxable cash incentives for walking, biking, or carpooling. Regardless of the mode, cash incentives are always taxable.

For the most up-to-date tax information, please visit [IRS qualified transportation benefits](#).

### **Parking management**

State-agency worksites must review interagency parking guidelines and, where appropriate, implement a parking-management program as a key component of their CTR program. An abundance of free parking at a worksite often encourages more drive-alone trips. A carefully managed parking program that includes preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, a reduced number of spaces, and fees will promote ridesharing. Fees may also be applied toward agency CTR programs to provide incentives and subsidies.

For more information about any of these supporting programs and strategies, please visit the [CTR employers' guide](#).

## **3. Communicate options to employees**

CTR law and local CTR ordinances require that commuting information be distributed to employees on a regular basis. Each agency should regularly inform employees, especially new hires, about commute options available to them. Some communication methods are:

- Commuter bulletin board
- Emails
- Flyers/posters
- Intranet stories
- New employee orientation (required)
- Presentations to teams, offices, and workgroups

**4. Promote ride-matching opportunities and assistance**

Your agency has access to tools that provide employees with ways to find potential carpool and vanpool partners. [Rideshareonline.com](http://Rideshareonline.com) provides free ride-matching services; tools for ETCs that allow them to tailor your agency's online network to focus your promotions and messaging; and assistance for tracking subsidies and incentives.

**5. Make a good faith effort toward achieving goals**

Agencies must strive to make a "good faith effort" to meet established CTR goals for reducing drive-alone trips and VMT.

A good faith effort, as defined in law:

*"...an employer has met the minimum requirements identified in the law and its ordinance, and is working collaboratively with the city or county to continue its existing CTR program or is developing and implementing program modifications likely to result in improvements to its CTR program over an agreed upon length of time."*

**6. Collaborate with nearby state worksites**

Collaborating with state worksites in your immediate area is a requirement of this plan and local ordinance, particularly if more than one agency is located in the same building. This collaboration provides the opportunity to discuss and implement strategies that encourage non-drive-alone trips, interagency ridesharing, and greater program participation because they share similar land-use logistics and transportation options.

**7. Report and survey**

Measuring the effects of CTR programs provides important information to the employer, jurisdiction, and Legislature on the programs' progress and successes, and can be a valuable tool for determining where improvements are needed. Employers are required to survey employees on commute habits every two years. Employers must also submit an annual program report to the local CTR administrator.

For more information on surveying and reporting schedules, please contact [your local administrator](#).

**8. Attend networking meeting and trainings**

New ETCs must receive ETC training within six months of being appointed to their position, and attend a minimum of two networking sessions per year. Networking sessions are offered throughout the year and provide an opportunity to share ideas with other ETCs, your local transit agency, and local program administrators.

**9. Present the agency's CTR program annually to top management**

[RCW70.94.551\(5\)](#) requires agencies to report their CTR program performance, progress and recommendations to the agency director/leadership. This is a vital element of your CTR program. Keeping management informed builds support for the program. When communications come from management showing support, employees are more likely to take notice.

**Useful Links**

- [State Agency CTR Program](#)
- [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#)
- [Thurston Here to There](#)
- [Statewide CTR](#)
- [IRS qualified transportation benefits](#)
- [Parking on the Capitol Campus](#)