

# Joint Comprehensive CTR Plan for State Agencies

## Background

In 2009 the Legislature passed the [Commuter Trip Reduction for State Agencies law](#), which aims to increase the leadership role of state-government agencies in the state's Commuter 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 commuter 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 commuter 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 [70A.15.4090](#) – Transportation demand management–Intent–State leadership.

## Joint comprehensive CTR plan purpose

This plan guides state agencies to develop effective CTR programs and policies and to 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)

Washington's, CTR law requires each worksite to appoint and maintain 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 in Thurston County must appoint a CTR coordinator. Agencies may also benefit from appointing a CTR committee to assist with various program-related tasks and decisions. The CTR coordinator is encouraged to designate an ETC at each worksite, depending upon the number of employees stationed at each one.

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

State agencies will develop and implement a CTR plan.

Information about available commute options for employees at your worksite must be included in your CTR plan. The options you choose to highlight should consider your worksite and its amenities, the business needs of your agency, and employee preferences. Things to consider:

- **Worksite and its amenities:** Are there bus stops, bike cages, and/or bike lanes? Is your worksite pedestrian-friendly? How accessible is your worksite? Is parking limited or ample and free?
- **Business needs of your agency:** How much flexibility in work hours can be allowed given customer needs? To what extent can agency services be provided by staff working from home? To what extent does your agency provide technology and training to support collaboration in a hybrid work environment?
- **Appeal to employees:** Are you offering options that appeal to employees in different stages of life or with different job requirements, income levels, and/or family status?

Compressed work weeks, flexible scheduling, and telework are effective 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. In addition, [RCW 43.01.250](#) authorizes the purchase of power (at the state's expense) to recharge privately and publicly owned plug-in electric vehicles at state-office locations where the vehicles are used for state business, are commute vehicles, or are parked at state-office locations for the purpose of conducting business with the state.

### Supporting programs and strategies

#### Transit (Bus)

Intercity Transit and Mason Transit Authority provide fare-free service for all riders. [The State Agency Rider \(STAR\) Pass](#) allows fare-free rides to state employees on all services provided by Grays Harbor Transit.

#### Emergency Ride Home

The State Agency CTR program provides [Guaranteed 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**

Financial subsidies should be offered with the intent to achieve agency CTR goals.

In accordance with [RCW 42.01.230](#), state agencies may, under the [internal revenue code rules](#), use public funds to financially assist agency-approved incentives for alternative commute modes—including but not limited to carpools, vanpools, purchase of transit and ferry passes, and guaranteed ride home programs—if the financial assistance is an element of the agency's commute trip reduction program as required under RCW [70A.15.4000](#) through [70A.15.4100](#). This section does not permit any payment for the use of state-owned vehicles for commuter ride sharing.

Visit WSDOT's incentives guidance for use of state funds to promote non-single occupancy modes of travel: [Transportation Demand Management Implementation Agreement Guidebook \(wa.gov\)](#)

There are two types of allowable subsidies:

- Non-taxable transit subsidies for vanpool or transit.
- Taxable cash incentives for walking, biking, carpooling, or teleworking.

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**

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. More information can be found within the [Parking Program Guidelines for State Agencies](#).

### **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:

- New employee orientation (required)
- Policies and the forms and documents that support them (e.g., telework agreement)
- Emails
- Flyers/posters
- Intranet stories
- Commuter bulletin board
- Presentations to team, 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](https://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.

State agencies must adopt goals and work toward achieving them. State agencies can adopt WSDOT's statewide drive-alone rate performance goal for the 2023-2027 state CTR plan. The plan's requirements begin July 1, 2023, and extend until June 30, 2027. There is a transition in data collection tools in the 2023-2027 plan cycle, and the target may be updated by the Transportation Demand Management Technical Committee.

The performance goal is a drive-alone rate of 60%. A state agency may develop a unique drive-alone rate goal. If pursuing a unique drive-alone rate goal, the Interagency CTR Board must review and approve the goal and methodology by which it was chosen.

In accordance with [RCW 41.04.390](#), agencies should utilize flexible-time work schedules to the maximum extent possible.

Telework and hybrid work policies can also help agencies meet goals. Office of Financial Management provides telework and hybrid work resources: [Statewide telework and hybrid work resources | Office of Financial Management \(wa.gov\)](#)

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.”*

In accordance with [RCW 70A.15.4050](#), if an employer fails to make a good-faith effort and fails to meet the applicable CTR goals, the jurisdiction shall work collaboratively with the employer to propose modifications to the program and shall direct the employer to revise its program within 30 days to incorporate those modifications or modifications which the jurisdiction determines to be equivalent.

## **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 ride sharing, and greater program participation because they share similar land-use logistics and transportation options.

## **7. Survey employees and submit program reports**

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 either survey their employees or submit a program report on employee commute habits to the local CTR administrator every year. Agency CTR policies must be submitted with the program report.

For more information on surveying and reporting schedules, please contact [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#).

## **8. Attend networking and training sessions**

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. Report on the agency's CTR program annually to top management**

According to [RCW 70A.15.4100](#), agencies are required to report their CTR program performance, progress, and recommendations annually to the agency director/leadership. Active management support is vital to a successful CTR program. Keeping management informed builds support for the program. When communications come from management showing support, employees are more likely to take notice.

At a minimum, this requirement can be achieved through completing the ETC program

report, administering the CTR survey, and presenting results to management.

### **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.

### **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](#)