

Description of the 2010-2011 Vanpool Investment Program

The Washington State Department of Transportation is pleased to announce the Vanpool Investment Program (VIP) for 2010-2011. The guidance of this program comes from the language in the 2009-2011 Transportation Budget as well as consultation with transit agencies that operate vanpool programs. In addition to the grants management of the funds that are available this biennium, WSDOT pledges to continue to refine the program, clarify definitions, identify program goals and appropriate performance measurements for the future.

In the 2009-2011 Transportation Budget, the Public Transportation Division was provided \$7 million to support

“a vanpool grant program for: (a) Public transit agencies to add vanpools or replace vans; and (b) incentives for employers to increase employee vanpool use. The grant program for public transit agencies will cover capital costs only; operating costs for public transit agencies are not eligible for funding under this grant program. Additional employees may not be hired from the funds provided in this section for the vanpool grant program, and supplanting of transit funds currently funding vanpools is not allowed. The department shall encourage grant applicants and recipients to leverage funds other than state funds. At least \$1,600,000 of this amount must be used for vanpool grants in congested corridors.”

Final 2010-2011 program elements:

1. The program will commence on June 21, 2010 with the Notice of Funding Availability, and a request for information from eligible transit agencies, and conclude on June 30, 2011. Invoices for eligible activities must be submitted to WSDOT no later than July 16, 2011.
2. The VIP program for this period will primarily focus on capital grants to transit agencies that operate vanpool programs. The grants will
 - be available for both expansion and replacement vans
 - shall not supplant transit funds currently funding vanpools, and
 - will require a local cash match as a leverage to the state funds.
3. For 2010-2011 the cash match for both expansion and replacement vans will be 20%. Transit agencies will be directed through a grant contract to submit a copy of the vendor invoice to the WSDOT Public Transportation Division, and will be reimbursed 80% of the cost of a van (maximum total cost \$26,000); total reimbursement shall not exceed \$20,800 per van.
4. Transit agencies that have already entered into an agreement for expansion vans in 2010 may have an option of having their contract amended to include the 20% cash match or remain with the requirement for a 25% match over four years.
5. The Public Transportation Division will issue a call for projects on June 21, 2010 from transit agencies currently operating or planning to begin a vanpool program. There will not be an application form, but rather the transit executive director or general manager shall submit the request to WSDOT no later than July 6, 2010 either by email or letter.

For purposes of reporting to the Legislature, the transit agency will identify in the request the following:

1. the number of expansion vans
 2. the number of replacement vans
6. To assist transit agencies in the proper identification and number of vans requested, WSDOT has provided definition guidance for expansion van and replacement van. Transit agencies can expand on or modify this definition in order to provide WSDOT a clear understanding of the exact use and manner how WSDOT-funded vans will be used in vanpool operations.

For 2010-2011 VIP, WSDOT will define an expansion van:

- (a) A newly acquired/WSDOT-funded van that is placed into service with a new vanpool group
- (b) A newly acquired/WSDOT-funded van that is used for an existing group that has been using a leased/rented van.
- (c) A van that is used by an existing vanpool group that switches their existing van for a newly acquired/WSDOT-funded van. The switched out van will become an available van or loaner/spare van provided the transit agency has not exceeded their established spare ratio.

For 2010-2011 VIP, WSDOT defines a replacement van as a van that replaces an active fleet van (in service, loaner/spare) that is scheduled for disposal (sale, reassignment to a program or organization outside your commuter vanpool program, donation, etc) because it has met its useful life as determined by the transit agency. In the grant contract, the transit agency will be required to list the VIN of the vans to be replaced.

7. It is assumed that when vans arrive at the transit agency, all efforts will be made to get the vans available for service. The contract for the capital grants will include language that will allow up to nine (9) months for the vans to be placed into service or the active fleet.
8. If the total request for vans is more than funds available during this period, WSDOT may use a formula to distribute the funds. At this time, we do not have a specific formula, but will be working toward a simple methodology that is transparent.
9. After the capital grants have been awarded, the Public Transportation Division will identify the residual funds that could be made available for the employer incentives during 2010-2011. In July and August, WSDOT and the WSTA Vanpool Committee will work together to identify employer incentive programs that could be eligible. A decision on the types of activities and the level of funding will be made no later than August 31, 2010.