

How to Start a Carpool

It may not look like it, but every day our streets are filled with a tremendous mass transit opportunity. Look at any car commuting on I-81 into Roanoke, or check out the vehicle next to you while you're crawling onto 220 north in Clearbrook one morning, and you'll see it. In fact, there's a good chance all you have to do is look in your own rearview mirror and you're likely to see a way to move more people through the same number of lanes at twice the speed, all while cutting your commute costs by half or more: empty seats in every car.

Sure, commuting alone is unavoidable for many people, for many reasons. But for most folks, filling an empty seat is easy and has immediate financial benefits.

As employers, you play a major role in helping your employees connect to other commuters through carpooling. But how to get started?

RIDE Solutions has some easy recommendations to get you going.

- Start at Work: Ideal carpool partners are those who already work in the same building, so start there. Provide an employee message board in a common area like a lunch room or printer room where folks can both rideshare needs and offers. If your company uses an intranet, consider creating an online forum where employees can make requests.
- Implement Incentives: Incentives don't have to be complicated, or even cost you money. Something as simple as reserved parking spaces for carpoolers can be highly sought after, particularly at worksites where parking is limited, or employees are paying for parking. In addition, transportation fringe benefits through the IRS can help employees cover the cost of transit with pre-tax dollars, with the option of a full or partial employer subsidy.
- Register with RIDE Solutions: Our Workplace Partnership program makes it easy to start carpooling. Employees simply register online at www.ridesolutions.org and RIDE Solutions can do the rest. Employees have complete control with how their information is shared by choosing to match only with coworkers or the public, and RIDE Solutions never provides their information to a third party. Once their request is made, they'll receive a match list of other commuters matching their route and schedule, along with the contact information they've provided. And if they don't have a match, we keep searching with every new member until we find someone, and we'll let them know right away when they have a new match.

Carpooling is more than a way to save gas money – it can extend the life of your employees' vehicles and even cut their maintenance costs and insurance rates. Switching vehicles from week to week with other carpool members can cut the annual mileage on their vehicle. Fewer miles on the engine mean a longer life for the car, and many insurance companies offer discounted rates if a vehicle's annual mileage is 12,000 or lower.



For more information on getting started in a carpool, growing an existing carpool, or managing carpool partners, visit www.ridesolutions.org.