



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please note that this document is specific to vanpools leased through Enterprise Rideshare and is for commuters interested in applying for an ongoing RCTC vanpool subsidy, known as VanClub. RCTC also provides subsidies through the California Vanpool Authority (CalVans) and information on CalVans vanpools can be found at VanClub.net.

CONSIDERING VANPOOLING? READ ON.

A. What is vanpooling, and is vanpooling the right choice for me? Do you commute a long distance to work? Are your work days and work hours relatively consistent – or do they have the potential to be? If so, you may be an ideal candidate for vanpooling. A vanpool is a group of five to 15 people who commute together on a regular basis in a van. One person usually drives and maintains the van while passengers pay a monthly fare. Vanpools that qualify for the VanClub subsidy are leased through the Program’s qualified vanpool Enterprise Rideshare (Enterprise Rideshare) by either their employer or a vanpool passenger (referred to as the “Leaseholder”).

B. What are the benefits of vanpooling? Vanpooling saves you money on fuel and commuting costs. If your vanpool qualifies for the VanClub Vanpool Subsidy Program, your van will receive an ongoing subsidy of up to \$400 per month. By vanpooling you will also be able to reduce wear and tear on your car, save time by traveling in carpool lanes and thus reduce traffic and air pollution. Vanpool participants may also qualify for special perks at work, such as preferred parking, prize drawings, subsidies and more (perks/benefits will vary by Employer). Studies have shown that vanpool participants lower their commuting stress and vanpooling is an excellent way to meet new friends!

C. How much does it cost to vanpool? The cost will vary depending on the size of the van, van features, commute distance, number of passengers, additional fare/employer subsidies, etc. Many times, the vanpool group allows the vanpool’s Primary Driver to commute for free or at a reduced fare. After this is determined then the balance of the lease and expenses is most often distributed equally among the vanpool passengers. The monthly lease payment passengers reimburse Enterprise Rideshare will cover the van lease, insurance, maintenance and towing costs. It is recommended that you speak with Enterprise Rideshare to see if your Enterprise rideshare also accepts TransitChek and the Federal Mass Transportation Benefits Program (MTBP) vouchers.

D. Will a vanpool pick me up at home? To reduce the number of pick-ups and drop-offs, ensuring that everyone arrives to work and home quickly, most vanpoolers choose to meet at Park & Ride lots (<http://www.ie511.org/rideshare/park-and-ride>) or other agreed-upon locations along the way. A typical vanpool may make anywhere from one to three stops to and/or from their work site. The vanpool group will agree upon all pick up and drop off locations along the vanpool route.

E. What if I’m late or someone else keeps us waiting? To ensure an efficient and compatible vanpool, the Leaseholder, Primary Driver and passengers should cooperate to define the pickup schedule and waiting policies best suited to their vanpool route. It is up to each vanpool group to determine and set a standard waiting period; five to seven minutes is common for the van to wait for all its passengers to arrive.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

F. What if I'm sick or go on vacation - do I still have to pay for my seat? Your monthly fare reserves your seat whether you use it or not. If you intend to be gone for an extended period, most vanpool groups allow you to temporarily "sublet" your seat to another passenger. Remember, even if you miss a day here or there, vanpooling is still a bargain compared to driving alone.

G. If I become sick at work, how do I get home? Talk with your employer to see if they offer a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in the event of a personal emergency or any other unforeseen event should a rideshare/vanpool participant need a ride home from work. RCTC provides a GRH Program for participating employers in the County, offered through RCTC's rideshare program, IE Commuter. Call IE Commuter at 866-RIDESHARE (866.743.3742) and a representative will assist you and let you know if your employer is enrolled in IE Commuter's GRH program.

H. Are there vanpool group rules/guidelines? It is up to each individual vanpool group to establish rules/guidelines that cover such things as playing the radio (what the group listens to), tardiness, vanpool etiquette, internal conflicts, etc. The vanpool's Leaseholder may set some policies for their vanpool group, while other rules may be voted upon by all passengers. Serious conflicts that cannot be resolved within the vanpool group may be brought to the attention of your Employer Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or Enterprise rideshare.

I. I'm trying to start a vanpool and don't have quite enough passengers. What should I do? First, review the minimum occupancy requirements (refer to the VanClub Guidelines). If your vanpool does not meet the minimum occupancy requirements, contact VanClub and Enterprise Rideshare to see if they are aware of any "waiting list" commuters that would be a good fit for your vanpool. IE Commuter staff may also assist with finding other interested commuters, by calling 1-866-RIDESHARE (866.743.3742). If based on the size of your vehicle and the number of commuters, you still do not meet the minimum occupancy requirements, then you have several additional options as well: consider a smaller van size and/or speak with your Human Resources/Relations department or Employer Transportation Coordinator (ETC) who may know of potential vanpool passengers.

J. What if I already have a vanpool that is leased through Enterprise Rideshare - can I participate in the VanClub Subsidy Program? Yes, you can participate in the Program; however, you must still qualify and apply to the Program. Please follow the process identified in the VanClub Guidelines and as summarized in the Application and Reporting Requirements Section below. Should you have a lease with a leasing company other than Enterprise Rideshare, VanClub will NOT accept that lease agreement and you will NOT qualify for a VanClub subsidy. Also remember that you are only required to enter into a month-to-month lease with Enterprise Rideshare; however, a longer-term lease period is permitted which may reduce your lease costs (a lease term beyond month to month is at your discretion and not a Program requirement). Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at 844-VANCLUB (844.826.2582) or email us at info@vanclub.net. We encourage you to review Enterprise Rideshare leasing information at VanClub.net.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

K. Do I need to own a van to apply to the VanClub Vanpool Subsidy Program? No. In fact, VanClub vehicles must be leased by either a commuter or a commuter's Employer through Enterprise Rideshare. Enterprise Rideshare will provide commuter vans on a month-to-month lease basis. The monthly lease also includes insurance, maintenance and towing. Enterprise Rideshare also offers information and assistance for recruiting passengers and setting fares and policies. If you own your own vehicle and decide to start a vanpool, or, if you participate in a vanpool owned by your employer, you will not qualify for a VanClub subsidy.

L. Why can't I use the existing vehicle through a lease that I have with my car company?

Federal requirements govern RCTC's VanClub subsidy program. RCTC was required to conduct a formal procurement process to place under contract a Vanpool Enterprise rideshare. The procurement was conducted, was publicly advertised, and the Vendors who applied were required to follow many federal requirements. As a result, Enterprise Rideshare was selected and approved to provide leased vehicles for the program. A lease through any other leasing company (other than Enterprise Rideshare or CalVans) is not permitted for participation in VanClub. Visit VanClub.net for information on leasing a vanpool from Enterprise Rideshare.

M. If VanClub approves my vanpool application, am I or my vanpool passengers eligible for any other vanpool subsidies or incentives, either through another public agency or my employer?

Once VanClub approves a vanpools' participation in the Vanpool Subsidy Program, the participants in the vanpool (including the Leaseholder, the Primary Driver and all passengers) are no longer eligible to receive subsidies from a neighboring Vanpool Subsidy Program, such as Los Angeles Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, San Diego Association of Governments, SunLine Transit Agency (the SolVan program) or the Victor Valley Transit Authority. Vanpool participants are also not eligible to receive any further vanpool subsidies from IE Commuter - which is a staggered nine-month vanpool subsidy. Nor may the Leaseholder or any of the vanpool passengers receive the IE Commuter three-month \$2 a day subsidy for new ridesharing commuters. Accepting subsidies from any of the above-mentioned programs while receiving a VanClub subsidy simultaneously will immediately disqualify the vanpool and its passengers from participating in the VanClub subsidy program.

The types of incentives or subsidies that are permitted while receiving the VanClub Subsidy, are Employer Subsidies that may be provided directly by the employer to vanpool passengers. These types of subsidies may include the Federal Mass Transportation Benefits Program (MTBP) subsidy. If an Employer subsidy is funded by the types of incentives identified in the prior paragraph above, then those types of subsidies/incentives are not permitted if you are enrolled in VanClub.

In addition, IE Commuter also offers a reward program called Rideshare Plus for Riverside County and Western/Southern Riverside County residents that have been ridesharing for three or more months. Qualified vanpool Leaseholder and passengers are permitted to apply and participate in this reward program. For more information, call IE Commuter at 1-866-RIDESHARE (866.743.3742).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

N. Are there other employer-provided benefits for vanpooling? As an added bonus, both employers and employees can benefit by participating in “Commuter Benefits”, a program outlined in the federal tax code that offers employers tax breaks for subsidizing vanpools for employees. In addition, employees may benefit when they set aside pre-tax dollars for vanpool commuting expenses. For more information, talk to your Human Resources department or your employer’s ETC or go to the federal Commuter Benefits’ website at <http://commuterbenefits.com/>.

O. If I start a Vanpool, do I have to be the Primary Driver? No, you do not have to be the Primary Driver. Vanpool duties may include helping your vanpool get on the road by recruiting a Primary Driver or alternate driver(s), helping to find passengers, and researching leasing requirements. If you are not the vanpool’s Leaseholder, once the vanpool is up and running, you can simply pay your fare and be a passenger. Or you may offer to be an Alternate Vanpool Reporter and assist the Leaseholder with monthly reporting/logging responsibilities. Remember, if you are the Leaseholder and not the Primary Driver, in addition to complying with Enterprise Rideshare Primary Driver requirements, your vanpool’s Primary Driver must also submit a Participation Agreement (found at VanClub.net) so that you complete the VanClub application.

P. I want to join a vanpool, but I have been told I must qualify as a driver to join. I just want to be a passenger. Do I have to qualify as a driver? No, you do not have to qualify as a driver. One of the advantages to joining a vanpool is that you can simply be a passenger and enjoy a relaxed ride. In order for the vanpool to continue to receive an ongoing subsidy from RCTC, the Vanpool’s Leaseholder cannot discriminate against you if you are either unwilling or unable to drive. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact VanClub at 844-VANCLUB (844.826.2582).

Q. What are the advantages of being my Vanpool’s Primary Driver? Since every vanpool sets its own rules, the benefits of driving will vary based on how you choose to organize your vanpool. In exchange for driving and scheduling van maintenance appointments, Primary Drivers often ride at a discount or for free and may also have limited use of the van on evenings and weekends (please refer to the Program Participation Agreement, as non-commute, nights/weekend use of the leased van shall not exceed 20% of total monthly mileage and is subject to conditions contained in your Leaseholder’s lease with Enterprise Rideshare). Other vanpools split the driving duties between several people, giving each of them a discount. Or, your vanpool may prefer to run more like a “co-op” with everyone taking a turn at driving, collecting fares, handling maintenance responsibilities, etc.

R. Is the VanClub subsidy available to persons with disabilities? Yes – Enterprise Rideshare has accessible vehicles available for vanpool groups that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Particularly, if there is a vacancy in a vanpool and a person with a disability applies for a seat, the vanpool and Enterprise Rideshare must make accommodations for the individual to become a vanpool member. RCTC contractually requires Enterprise Rideshare to comply with this ADA requirement.

VANCLUB APPLICATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

S. I'm interested in starting a vanpool and taking advantage of the ongoing VanClub Subsidy - what do I need to do? There are a few steps you must take to qualify and be accepted into VanClub. VanClub only accepts applications online at VanClub.net. If you do not have access to a computer or to the internet, contact VanClub for assistance at info@vanclub.net, or call us at 844-VANCLUB (844.826.2582). ALL of the following criteria must be met to qualify (some of these criteria are explained further below):

1. Only the individual who holds the van lease (aka Leaseholder) may apply to VanClub to participate in the program. VanClub will not accept applications from other vanpool passengers or the Primary Driver, if they are NOT the Leaseholder;
2. The vanpool must be used for commuting purposes to and from work or a vocational/post-secondary education destination (AKA "worksite");
3. The vanpool driver must be a volunteer and a commuter in the program;
4. You must lease your van through Enterprise Rideshare;
5. Minimum occupancy at van start up and throughout the life of the Program, must be at 70% or higher;
6. Your round-trip travel to and from work must be at least 30 miles; and
7. Your commute must either begin or end within RVCTC service area: from Banning in the east to Corona to the west, and from Riverside in the north to Temecula to the south (all within Riverside County).

Log onto VanClub.net and go to the Enterprise Rideshare page, and select the "Apply Today" button. The first step is to complete a Qualification Form, which asks you a few simple questions to determine if you qualify for the Program. If you meet the minimum qualification requirements identified above, then you will receive an email from VanClub.net to let you know that you qualify, as well as next steps and instructions on how to fill out the full application. If you do not qualify, VanClub staff will contact you as to why, and you may try again (if you input an error for example) or discuss your qualification form further with VanClub for clarification.

You must still go through this process even if you have an existing vanpool lease from Enterprise Rideshare. If you have an existing vanpool lease from any other 3rd party leasing company, you are not qualified to participate in this subsidy program. Should you change your lease to Enterprise Rideshare, then you may proceed to qualify for the Program. After you qualify, you will be provided a username and password so that you may continue with the application process online.

VanClub recommends that if you do qualify for the Program, but do not have an existing lease, the next step is to contact Enterprise Rideshare to review lease rates and their terms and conditions. You are only required to enter into a month-to-month lease with Enterprise Rideshare.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Once your lease is executed or about to be executed, then you must finalize your route, recruit passengers, set fares, vanpool rules and policies, and so on. The selected Primary Driver must also fulfill any legal requirements for driving a vanpool as well as any Enterprise Rideshare requirements for driving their vehicles. Enterprise Rideshare is an invaluable ally in your efforts to pull together a vanpool and can assist in all of these areas.

If you already have a lease, or upon executing a lease with Enterprise Rideshare, then continue with the VanClub.net online application. You will need the following information as you complete this online application process:

1. **Contact Information:** Leaseholder's contact information and information about your employer (employer address and employer representative contact information).
2. **Vanpool Schedule:** Identify the days of the week the vanpool is typically in operation. Provide the time the vanpool usually leaves the home end and arrives at work, as well as when the vanpool leaves work at the end of the day and arrives back home. Also note if there are any variances to your schedule, such as a different schedule every other week (if a 9/80 work schedule) or other variances.
3. **Vanpool PickUp/DropOff Locations:** Provide physical addresses and/or landmarks of all locations the vanpool picks up passengers on the way to work, and all locations at the work end passengers are dropped off. Be aware the vanpool begins its route when the Primary Driver starts up the van each workday. That location can be at the Primary Driver's home, or at a Park & Ride lot, or another location. But this location where the Driver starts the vanpool is considered the first "pick up" location of the vanpool route. Then continue to identify all other location(s) the vanpool will be picking up vanpool passengers on your way to work, as well as the location(s) that you drop off passengers at work and where you park the vanpool during the work day. A major cross street, landmark or physical address of each location is required. Do not include drop off locations at the end of the day, as the System will assume these are the same as the pickup locations at the beginning of the work day.
4. **Passenger List/Vanpool Manifest:** Provide the names, email addresses, a contact phone and the employer name of each of the vanpool passengers, including the Primary Driver. You (the Leaseholder/Applicant) will also identify whether you are not the Primary Driver, and if not, which of the passengers listed is the Primary Driver. In addition, should you desire to have a vanpool passenger assist you with the monthly reporting requirements, then you will identify the passenger who will serve as the Alternate Vanpool Reporter.
5. **Participation Agreements:** Certain vanpool Participants are required to read, agree to and sign this online Agreement, including:
 - a. The vanpool's Leaseholder must sign the online Participation Agreement.
 - b. If the Leaseholder is NOT the vanpool's Primary Driver, then one of the passengers in the passenger list must be identified as the Primary Driver. When doing so, VanClub will send him/ her a request to visit the website and read, agree to and sign the online Participation Agreement. The Primary Driver executing an online Participation Agreement is a Program requirement.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- c. If, in your application, you select a passenger as an Alternate Vanpool Reporter to assist you in the monthly reporting/logging responsibilities, upon selection, VanClub will send him/her a request to read, agree to and sign the online Participation Agreement. VanClub encourages you to designate an Alternate Vanpool Reporter in the event you are away on vacation or unavailable to complete monthly reporting requirements. It should be someone you can depend on as the reporting and logging responsibilities are important. The Alternate Vanpool Reporter executing an online Participation Agreement is a Program requirement.
- d. Should in the future you have changes to your vanpool's Primary Driver or Alternate Vanpool Reporter, those persons will be required to submit an online Participation Agreement.
- 6. **Enterprise Rideshare:** VanClub will notify Enterprise Rideshare of your application, who will submit specific information about the leased vehicle, provide a copy of the lease and identify the date your lease is signed. VanClub will include this information in your application and you will be able to view this information, but not change it online. Should you have questions about this information, please contact VanClub.
- 7. **Complete Application:** After submitting the online Participation Agreement(s), and assuming there are no errors in your application (which the System will flag if there are errors or missing information), then you will be ready to submit the application for VanClub staff review. During the application process review, VanClub may contact you, your vanpool passengers or Enterprise Rideshare for additional information.
- 8. **Approval and Next Steps:** Upon approval, VanClub will notify you and provide your subsidy start date and the exact amount of your subsidy. Should your subsidy start mid-month, VanClub will prorate the subsidy; otherwise the subsidy may start on the 1st of the following month. VanClub will also provide you (and your Alternate Vanpool Reporter if one is identified) with information and procedures for monthly reporting. For steps on monthly reporting, go to VanClub.net and download the document "Steps/Instructions for Monthly Reporting".

T. Once enrolled, when does the VanClub subsidy begin? Completed applications (including all items identified in above) must be received and approved by VanClub to be considered for a subsidy. VanClub will coordinate with Enterprise Rideshare and the vanpool's Leaseholder as to when the VanClub vanpool will start operations and will do our best to start the subsidy shortly after you start your vanpool. If the subsidy begins during the month, VanClub will prorate the subsidy based on your anticipated commute days during the month. However, there are times that the subsidy may not begin until the 1st of the following month after approval. Should the online application not be submitted or is not complete, approval may be delayed - make sure everything is complete and accurate upon submittal. Upon approval, the VanClub subsidy will appear as a credit on the month's vanpool lease statement from Enterprise Rideshare.

U. What are the reporting/logging responsibilities? The Leaseholder (and/or designated Alternate Vanpool Reporter) are responsible to document all required information to be submitted into VanClub's reporting system through VanClub.net. Logging is simple and primarily involves keeping track of who commutes to and from work each day during a calendar month period, and any other

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

major variances to your commute (in miles or travel time). VanClub provides a mobile application where you can track your daily commute on your smart phone or tablet. If you do not have a mobile phone or tablet, or prefer to jot down your commute statistics, VanClub will provide an Intake Form referred to as a "Cheat Sheet", that you can print out and keep inside the van to track the information each day. This "Cheat Sheet" can be found on VanClub.net. The information you gather each day by either inputting directly into the mobile application or writing on a "Cheat Sheet" allows you to log your trip statistics onto the System at your convenience, either daily, weekly, or at the end of the month.

As you track your daily commute statistics, also keep an accounting of the vanpool's out-of-pocket costs and vehicle expenses for the month (fuel, fluids/oil, car washes and so on). Even if your employer reimburses you for some or all of these expenses, you must keep track and include those on the "Cheat Sheet" as the costs are incurred. It is important that the commute statistics and costs are tracked accurately, and a complete report is inputted and submitted by no later than the 7th of the month following the reporting period. For a detailed document outlining the reporting steps and process, go to VanClub.net and download the "Steps/Instructions for Monthly Reporting" document.