

## **NOACA VANPOOL PROGRAM FAQs**

January 2024

### **1. What is NOACA?**

- a. The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a transportation and environmental planning agency serving Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. To learn more, visit our website! [FAQs | Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency \(noaca.org\)](https://www.noaca.org)

### **2. What is NOACA's Vanpool Program?**

- a. NOACA created this regional Vanpool Program with a mission to offer accessible transportation to employees where public transportation is inadequate or does not exist. NOACA's program aims to better connect residents to employers, promote competitive transportation costs, increase social equity and economic vitality, reduce travel time, and improve air quality.

### **3. Is this Enterprise's vanpool program?**

- a. No. This is a NOACA program. NOACA has contracted with Commute with Enterprise (Enterprise) to provide vehicles and vehicle services.
- b. Enterprise does have a vanpool program separate from NOACA that does not include NOACA subsidies.

### **4. How many people do I need to start a vanpool?**

- a. Most of the vehicles provided through NOACA's contracted vendor, Enterprise, seat 7 or 15 riders. Our program requires at least half the vehicle to be occupied by riders, making the minimum ridership to start a vanpool 4 or 8 riders, respectively.

### **5. What are the responsibilities of a vanpool driver?**

- a. The driver will be responsible for leaving their home location on time in order to pick up other vanpool riders on time to get to the desired destination on time. Drivers are also responsible for items listed with Enterprise's Driver Agreement.
- b. All drivers will be required to submit an application and be approved in writing by Enterprise prior to operating the vehicle. Once the signed agreement is received, Enterprise's system automatically runs a full Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check and compares it against the underwriting criteria listed below. Only drivers that have been approved in writing are authorized to drive vanpool vehicles.
- c. To meet Enterprise underwriting requirements, Vanpool Drivers must:
  - i. Possess a valid U.S. driver's license for at least five years.
  - ii. Be 25 years of age or older.

- iii. Have no more than two moving violations and/or at-fault accidents in the previous three years and no more than four moving violations and/or at-fault accidents in the previous five years.
- iv. Have no major automobile-related convictions in the past five years (e.g., driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, failure to stop and report an accident, driving while license is suspended or revoked, reckless driving, etc.).
- v. Meet and comply with any laws and criteria required by the state where the vanpool is operated (e.g., medical requirements, drug screen, etc.).

**6. Do I need a special license to be a vanpool driver?**

- a. No. You must have a valid driver's license and any necessary medical certificate to operate the vehicle for its intended use per Enterprise's Driver Agreement.

**7. As a driver, am I permitted personal use of the vehicle?**

- a. Enterprise offers drivers a potential 200 personal-use miles per month as part of their standard offering. Please speak with our Enterprise representative Tim McNulty ([Timothy.P.McNulty@ehi.com](mailto:Timothy.P.McNulty@ehi.com)) to see if your vanpool qualifies.

**8. How will driving affect my insurance rates?**

- a. Since the vehicle is covered through Enterprise, it will not affect your insurance rate.

**9. Can our group have more than one driver?**

- a. Yes. Your group will elect an alternate driver in case the primary driver is off, not available, etc. This will be confirmed through Enterprise's Driver Agreement.

**10. How do I find riders?**

- a. If you'd like to start a vanpool but need riders, start by coordinating with your workplace to see if other employees would like to join and be along your vanpool route. Additionally, each vanpool that signs up with the NOACA Vanpool Program is registered on Gohio Commute where riders can be matched with a vanpool near them. This is another way to increase ridership.

**11. What is Gohio Commute, and do I have to use it?**

- a. Gohio Commute helps commuters in Ohio explore commute options & it's the foundation of NOACA's Vanpool Program! It allows us to measure Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) savings to support better air quality and qualifies the program for funding through federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.
- b. Gohio Commute is an online platform that can assist in finding a convenient ride near you to your desired destination or can help you track your commuter savings and air quality contributions.

- c. By registering on the Gohio Commute site, not only can you measure the impact you make on the environment, but you can participate in local commuter challenges and be eligible to win prizes! Saving money, promoting health and clean air can be even more rewarding through registering on Gohio Commute.
- d. As part of a vanpool group in NOACA's Vanpool Program, individuals are not required to register on Gohio Commute. However, in order for NOACA's program to be eligible for federal funds (CMAQ), it is a requirement that the vanpool is open to the public, therefore each vanpool group as a whole is input into the site, as well as for air quality tracking purposes.

**12. How long do I have to wait for a rider at their pick-up location?**

- a. We recommend a courtesy of five (5) minutes unless the rider has otherwise notified your vanpool group. You and your vanpool group can decide what suits your vanpool group best when it comes to waiting for fellow riders.

**13. Where will I be picked up?**

- a. This can be determined among you and your fellow vanpool riders. You may all decide to meet at a convenient pick-up location (i.e., Grocery store parking lot), or be picked up at your residence, or a corner nearby. Pick what works best for you and your group.

**14. Who and how do I pay for a ride?**

- a. NOACA pays Enterprise the subsidy amount that your vanpool group is eligible for (e.g., 50%, 65%, or 80%). You and your vanpool group will pay the remaining monthly cost. This payment may be coordinated with your employer as there may be an option to have the monthly cost deducted from your paycheck and your employer will pay Enterprise.

**15. What if I have to leave work early?**

- a. NOACA offers Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) through the Gohio Commute platform for vanpool riders who are signed up on the platform. GRH can assist with a ride home if you need to leave work early, get sick at work, need to stay late at work, etc. NOACA will reimburse the rider up to 80% of a bus ticket, Uber, Lyft, or taxi fare, up to a maximum of four trips per year and \$60/trip.

**16. Who owns the vans?**

- a. NOACA has contracted with a third-party vendor, Commute with Enterprise, who supplies vehicles through their fleet.

**17. What happens if the van breaks down?**

- a. By contracting with Enterprise, NOACA's vanpool program is covered by Enterprise's 24/7 breakdown assistance. Call 800-VAN-4-WORK and ask for roadside assistance.

**18. What about insurance?**

- a. Insurance for the vanpool vehicle is provided through Commute with Enterprise.

**19. What happens when a driver is sick or goes on vacation?**

- a. This will be coordinated between the driver and the alternate driver (see #9).

**20. What happens if I'm sick or on vacation?**

- a. Depending on how your vanpool group and employer have determined to pay for vanpool, let them know you'll be out and for how long and coordinate how that would be reflected in your vanpool payment.

**21. What if I want to stop vanpooling?**

- a. You can opt out of the vanpool group and program at any time. Your monthly cost will be pro-rated. Please notify your vanpool coordinator if you plan on no longer participating.

**22. What if a vanpool needs to disband?**

- a. If a vanpool needs to disband have your vanpool coordinator reach out to our Enterprise representative Tim McNulty ([Timothy.P.McNulty@ehi.com](mailto:Timothy.P.McNulty@ehi.com)) to notify him of vanpool group termination.

**23. Can vanpools use the bus lanes?**

- a. Only public transportation vehicles can use marked "bus-only" lanes (this does not include vanpools).

**24. What fuel will my van use?**

- a. Please use the fuel designated for the vehicle you chose through Enterprise. Enterprise will provide you/your vanpool coordinator with this information upon signing up for the program.

**25. Who funds the vanpool program?**

- a. NOACA's Vanpool Program is funded through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Funds provided through the Federal Highway Administration.

**26. What are the environmental and economic benefits of vanpooling?**

- a. NOACA's Vanpool Program offsets carbon emissions by reducing the amount of single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) on the road.
- b. By commuting via vanpool, the average commuter saves \$0.55 per mile. This cost savings considers maintenance, wear and tear, and the market value of a vehicle.

**27. After 3 years can they sign up for the program again or they must be on their own?**

- a. If vanpools decide to remain active after three years, they may coordinate with Enterprise to continue without NOACA subsidy. Due to federal regulations, vanpools will lose their CMAQ subsidy after three years.

**28. Can anyone from the public who matches with the vanpool join? Do they have to pay if it's not a regular ride?**

- a. Vanpools may have varying flexibility depending on their pay structure. This should be coordinated through the employer's vanpool coordinator or Commute with Enterprise.

**29. Are there awards if you track trips on Gohio?**

- a. Several times a year, NOACA's Gohio Commute program will provide prizes and incentives which may be tied to tracking trips in the system.

**30. Can employer/vanpool group choose not to accommodate the random matched person?**

- a. See the response to #28 above.

**31. Does a vanpool show up on the Gohio Commute platform if it's full capacity?**

- a. Yes, it will show up but as full.

**32. Can a vanpool subsidy be used for an agency/organization to transport clients such as a health/wellness agency that serves a population that could be low income, adult non-drivers, or driving restricted?**

- a. Typically, no. Vehicles can only be used in alignment with Enterprise's vanpool agreement.

**33. Can a vanpool subsidy be set up with multiple businesses that want to transportation employees that are non-drivers (those with mental/physical disabilities attached to an MRDD facility, for example)?**

- a. Yes. Vanpools can be set up with varying parties in a similar geographic area seeking ways to get to and from work. Contact NOACA (or Enterprise) to discuss how/if this may work for your potential vanpool.

**34. Do riders have to share their home addresses with each other?**

- a. No. They may choose to meet at a designated meet-up spot (such as a local grocery store) rather than being picked up from their homes. A rider may also elect to be picked up/dropped off at a corner/nearby spot rather than their home.

**35. Who would manage the program on the employer side? How much time would that take?**

- a. Managing vanpool groups through NOACA's Vanpool Program can be easy. There are flexible ways of setting up and managing a vanpool depending on the employer. Contact NOACA at [vanpool@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:vanpool@mpo.noaca.org) to discuss further.

**36. Can multiple small businesses do a vanpool together?**

- a. Yes. Vanpools can be set up with varying parties in a similar geographic area seeking ways to get to and from work. Contact NOACA (or Enterprise) to discuss how/if this may work for your potential vanpool.