



REGIONAL VANPOOL PROGRAM POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes and allocates funding to support an annual Regional Vanpool Program to achieve NOACA workforce accessibility and mobility planning goals. The program will be focused in areas where public transportation is not adequate and a mismatch exists between potential employees and the workplace.

AUTHORITY

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Part 450, Subpart C
United States Code, Title 23, Section §134

HISTORY

Implemented by NOACA Board of Directors Resolution 2021-050
Revised by NOACA Board of Directors Resolution 2025-040

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to further minimize workforce accessibility and mobility challenges by providing increased transportation options to better connect residents to potential employers where existing public transportation is not adequate. The program will also reduce travel time, promote competitive transportation costs, and result in increased air quality.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Vanpool Program is aligned with, and seeks to implement, ongoing NOACA workforce accessibility and mobility planning. In 2019, NOACA completed a Workforce Accessibility and Mobility Report based on the premise that transportation access for workers to jobs is important to the economic vitality of a region.

NOACA staff has also developed a quantitative model for prioritizing the high-usage of vanpool origins and destinations in an attempt to assist in the planning of these services. Areas of Persistent Poverty, number of private cars available to workers, value of travel time, transit and auto travel time differences between origins and destinations, and estimated car sharing trips are inputs to the developed prioritization model. The output of the prioritization model provides a total dollar value for each of the 109 ZIP Codes in the NOACA region as the origin of Vanpool to any specific employment center as the destination. The higher estimated dollar value indicates the higher priority for the Vanpool program. This planning serves as the foundation for identifying and targeting eligible vanpools for the Regional Vanpool Program.

This program will emphasize connecting employees to their workplaces, particularly in locations which do not have sufficient fixed-route public transit connections, have relatively lower rates of

car ownership, and/or have interest in alternative commute options beyond single occupancy vehicles. This program also focuses on employers and job hubs which have interest in providing commute alternatives to workers while improving regional air quality. The goals of the program are to provide all residents the opportunity to participate in the economy, provide new travel options, reduce travel time, promote competitive transportation costs, and increased air quality.

NOACA will seek the services of a third party vendor to assist in the operation and management of the program. Those services include vanpool vehicle acquisition and leasing; fleet management; maintenance; driver requirements and support; invoicing and accounting; data collection and reporting; and assist NOACA with marketing and outreach activities.

The Regional Vanpool Program will provide a financial subsidy to each eligible vanpool, targeted at 50% or more per vehicle for eligible vanpools to incentivize and offset costs for participants, consistent with federal CMAQ and FTA Circular 9030.1D eligibility. The subsidy will consist of a base amount for each eligible vanpool and potential additional amounts based on criteria that promotes increased number of participants and accessibility for Areas of Persistent Poverty. In addition, NOACA will seek partnerships with member communities, regional transit agencies, and employers to generate additional subsidies and incentives to help attract and retain vanpool participation.

The Regional Vanpool Program will be organized and coordinated through Gohio Commute, a NOACA's multi-regional transportation demand management (TDM) platform. Gohio Commute, which launched in April 2017, serves as a one-stop-shop trip planner for the NOACA region, with connectivity throughout Ohio. NOACA will utilize Gohio Commute for vanpool applications, then conduct eligibility reviews and registration with the vanpool service provider.

FUNDING

The Regional Vanpool Program will be financed utilizing federal CMAQ funding allocated to NOACA by the ODOT. The funding allocation will be approved by the Board each year with the Overall Work Program, reflecting the current number of eligible vanpools adopted into the program. This budget will support annual staff activities to manage and market the program; and to support vanpool vehicle subsidies for up to three years worth of operating expenses per vanpool. Vanpool participants will share in the remaining vehicle leasing costs after subsidy, and for all costs associated with fuel, tolls, and parking.