

**20
21** EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
AWARDS

LEADING THE PACK



Charles Allen
Councilmember
District of Columbia



The National Capital Region was faced with a health pandemic for the last 1.5 years, which gravely impacted our region and the entire world. The region's essential workforce and front-line workers in various fields helped get us through the toughest of times. The pandemic also thrust the practice of telework into the forefront and Commuter Connections and its jurisdictional network partners were poised to assist employers with maintaining business continuity to ride the pandemic out. Companies with formal telework programs and processes already in place transitioned more easily, while other employers moved to formalize their telework policies. Shifting to a mostly or fully remote workforce was a monumental adjustment for many employers.

As area workers continue to transition back to the workplace, the Commuter Connections Employer Services team is providing guidance to employers and encouragement to commuters to revert back to the abundance of multi-modal travel methods available within the region.

The employers we are honoring today have implemented innovative and successful commuter and telework programs. We hope that through their example, other organizations will embrace similar initiatives, creating more opportunities to help maximize the efficiencies of shared commutes.

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, I wish to congratulate the winners of the 2021 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards and extend thanks for their continued commitment to reducing traffic congestion and improving the region's air quality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles Allen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charles Allen
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

For nearly 25 years, Commuter Connections has been recognizing select companies in the Washington, DC metropolitan region through its Employer Recognition Awards program. These award-winning employers offer robust commuter programs to encourage ridesharing, bicycling, walking, public transit, and teleworking to help boost employee morale, lower stress, and provide financial assistance. These programs also aid the region through better mobility and cleaner air quality.

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation professionals dedicated to assisting employers set up, improve, and expand comprehensive commuter benefits and telework programs. These initiatives provide for a greener environment and help employers attract and retain the best and brightest workforce.

In 2020 and 2021, the health pandemic changed the commuting landscape. Commuter Connections and its jurisdictional partners supported essential workers and helped employers transition to a remote workforce. In most respects, these changes are temporary in nature, but for some employers, changes to the level of teleworking may see more lasting impacts.

Please join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2021 Employer Recognition Awards, who continuously strive to meet and improve the commuting challenges of their employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marina Budimir". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marina Budimir
Chair, Commuter Connections Subcommittee



Marina Budimir
Transportation Planner
District Department of Transportation

The 2021 Employer Recognition Awards

The Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards annual program acknowledges employers who offer outstanding commuter benefits, amenities, and tools to facilitate the use of alternative commuting methods such as ridesharing, transit, teleworking, bicycling, and walking. By reducing vehicle trips and miles traveled, these methods help to improve mobility and reduce harmful vehicle emissions.

Qualified applicants within the Washington, DC region were evaluated by a Selection Committee made up of industry experts and professionals from throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan area and moderated by a third party. Winners were chosen for their ability to offer measurable commuter benefits that reduce automobile fuel consumption and emissions, through fewer vehicle trips, and miles traveled. In addition, winners were selected for implementing policies that have improved the lives of their employees and those within the National Capital Region.

Incentives

Offering a host of commuter benefits and incentives to encourage and reward employees for using alternative means of transportation to and from work. Incentives and commuter benefits can come in many forms, including, but not limited to, transit benefits and subsidies; preferred or discounted parking for carpools and vanpools; facilities and equipment, such as showers and lockers for bicyclists and walkers; and work schedule alternatives and teleworking.

Marketing

Educating about and championing for the use of alternative transportation options by frequently promoting available commuter programs to employees in creative ways. Companies who actively promote alternative commuting options enjoy higher employee participation rates. With knowledge of the available choices, employees are empowered to make well-informed decisions about better ways of commuting, besides driving alone.

Teleworking

Providing a policy framework and technology to allow employees to seamlessly work from home, or at a local telework or co-working center, one or more days per week. Offering such opportunities allows employees to dramatically reduce or eliminate the time and money spent commuting to-and-from work. For employers, savings may come in the form of reduced overhead such as office space costs and parking. In addition, teleworking results in better work-life balance, lower absenteeism, higher morale and productivity, and helps businesses attract and retain qualified employees.



Incentives Award
**National Institute of Allergy and
Infectious Diseases, NIH**
Rockville, MD

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is a scientific organization within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that advances research used to improve the health of millions of people around the world. Started over 130 years ago in Staten Island, NY, NIAID research led to increased knowledge of addressing public health crises caused by infectious disease outbreaks.

NIAID features an array of commuter amenities such as reserved carpool and vanpool parking, a bus shelter, electric vehicle charging stations, display monitors showing public transit information, secure bike parking, showers and lockers, and an eight-foot-wide bike trail connected to the area bike network.

Of NIAID's 4,500 employees in the Washington, DC metropolitan region, 40% (1,800) telework up to eight days monthly. Employees using transit have a short half mile walk from the Metrorail Station, and 37% receive a subsidy up to the federal limit. There is also a shuttle between NIAID and the main NIH campus in Bethesda.

NIAID also supports flexible scheduling. These schedules stagger arrival and departure times and are strongly encouraged. Approximately 40% of NIAID employees participate in alternative work schedules, helping ease commuting and improving work/life balance.

NIAID also offers employees classes on topics such as health and wellness, nutrition, and mental health balance. Employees are encouraged to use the on-site fitness areas, and many enjoy daily walks around the campus. An onsite cafeteria and coffee shop as well as two outdoor eating areas provide a reason not to drive off campus for lunch hour.

As a result of its various commuter benefits and amenities offered, NIAID has saved an average of 11.7 million employee vehicle miles and an estimated 534,000 gallons of gasoline annually.

One of the fastest-growing auto insurers in the U.S., GEICO employs more than 3,100 in the Washington metropolitan area, holds more than 18 million auto policies nationwide, and covers more than 28 million vehicles. Ever committed to providing outstanding community and customer service, GEICO also views environmental responsibility as a top value.

Since last winning an award from Commuter Connections in 2000, GEICO has significantly expanded its facilities to encourage more bike commuting, installing 20 bike racks, adding 60 lockers, and 10 showers. GEICO also has a telework policy, which had employees working from home 1-2 days per week prior to the pandemic.

GEICO is conveniently located within a short walking distance to the Friendship Heights Metrorail station and matches employee contributions to SmartBenefits, up to \$110 per month. This amount demonstrates its increased commitment to commuter incentives; in 2000, GEICO provided employees with just \$28 per month. In addition, priority parking is given to carpools and electric vehicle cars.

GEICO promotes its commuter benefits to new hires and existing employees; and partners with Montgomery County Commuter Services to promote participation in events such as the Walk and Ride Challenge and Bike to Work Day. GEICO distributes commuter-related digital eblasts and has commuter brochures within its cafeteria and break rooms, keeping employees up to date. The company promotes the use of bike paths and walking trails around the office and bike education classes have also been offered to employees.

The marketing of GEICO's commuter programs to its employees have helped reduce employee vehicle miles by 1,384,000 and save an estimated 62,910 gallons of gasoline annually.





Marketing Award
GEICO
Chevy Chase, MD



Telework Award
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Rockville, MD

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is a national professional, scientific, and credentialing organization for 218,000 members and affiliates who are speech and hearing professionals. Its membership includes speech-language pathologists, audiologists, speech, hearing, and language scientists, and students. ASHA is committed to making effective communication accessible to everyone.

A previous Commuter Connections award winner in 2004, ASHA has since grown its program from 1 of every 6 employees, to 1 of every 2 employees teleworking. Prior to the pandemic, slightly more than half (51%) of ASHA's 292 staff members in the Washington, DC region teleworked, up to 66 percent of their total workdays. The organization also has a flextime program that provides staff a lot of control over when they work and offers compressed workweeks during the summer months.

During the pandemic, the organization moved to an entirely remote workforce. To help employees cope, ASHA added two weeks of emergency sick leave and accommodated various scheduling challenges posed by the pandemic. To ensure that employees had all needed equipment at home, ASHA provided laptops to employees and allowed them to take monitors and desk chairs home. ASHA's "Wellbeing Navigator" provided ergonomic sessions so employees can remain comfortable within a home/office setting. At the end of 2020, ASHA gave each employee \$500 to offset the costs of outfitting their home offices.

Employees commuting by transit are provided with a monthly subsidy of \$130, carpools are given preferred parking, and those who bike to work may use lockers, showers, and bike racks. Points are awarded to carpoolers, bicyclists, and walkers for round trip commutes, which are redeemable for gift cards.

ASHA's telework and work schedule alternatives programs help to reduce employee vehicle miles by 700,650 and save an estimated 31,848 gallons of gasoline annually.



ASHA
American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

The Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award is given to the Commuter Connections Employer Services sales team that has most successfully met its goal of partnering with employers to develop and expand commute benefit offerings. There are a total of 10 Employer Services sales teams, and 31 representatives in the Washington, DC metropolitan region that cultivate and support employer-based transportation programs. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) Commuter Connections program is pleased to honor the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) with the 2021 Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award.

During the past year with three full-time sales representatives, more than 3,200 contacts were made with employers in the District of Columbia, and 88 webinars and virtual meetings were held by its goDCgo staff. Selection of the 2021 Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award recipient was based on information provided by the sales teams as part of their required monthly reporting to COG/TPB, and through on-going database verifications. DDOT's goDCgo program is proudly supported by Foursquare ITP, Steer, and Clark Concepts.





Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award
District Department of Transportation



Employer Services Organization Achievement Award
Fairfax County Department of Transportation

The Metrorail system in the National Capital Region has 45 outdoor rail stations with concrete platforms. Over the years, these platforms that were built over four decades ago began showing signs of deterioration through normal wear and tear, and stress caused by the elements and de-icing agents. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) identified 20 stations in need of platform reconstruction, which during the rebuilding process would necessitate station closures for months at a time, displacing riders. A significant portion of the affected stations were located within Fairfax County along the Blue, Yellow, Orange, and Silver Lines. In the summer of 2019, Fairfax County successfully responded to the impacts of the complete shutdown of Van Dorn, Huntington, and Franconia-Springfield Metrorail stations, and as this unprecedented multi-year project reached its halfway mark in September 2020, the County had also responded to the complete shutdowns of the Vienna/Fairfax-GMU, Dunn Loring-Merrifield, and West Falls Church Metrorail stations.

To help mitigate the Platform Reconstruction Project impacts, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) coordinated with local, regional, state, and federal partners to provide seamless support to employers and commuters traveling to and from Fairfax County. FCDOT worked closely with WMATA to provide shuttle bus and enhanced Fairfax Connector service to partially replace lost capacity. FCDOT's mitigation efforts focused heavily on working with employers to set plans and prepare the workforce to rethink their commutes to minimize impacts of the station shutdowns. More than 1,400 Fairfax County employers were engaged through a customized planning effort to support each employer's specific needs, and more than 1 million commuters were reached through a multi-channel communication campaign including geo-targeted messaging via multiple platforms such as text and email notifications, social media ads, and radio and outdoor advertising. Moreover, to support essential workers and the most vulnerable transit users, FCDOT piloted an incentive program to assist and encourage commuters to stay on transit or try ridesharing instead of resorting to driving alone. Nearly 500 commuters participated in this pilot program providing valuable insights to travel patterns and commuting needs. FCDOT also continued to work with employers to establish new commuter benefits programs by providing an incentive for every new employee enrolled. These various mitigation efforts undertaken by FCDOT during WMATA's Platform Reconstruction Project not only played a key role in reducing the impacts across the National Capital Region but also paved the way for County employers and commuters to be better prepared for the unexpected but necessary shifts in commuting behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic.



2021 Honorable Mention

Commuter Connections would like to acknowledge the following employers with honorable mention:

Ameritel Communications Corp - Rockville, MD
Assedo Consulting - Columbia, MD
Charles County Government - La Plata, MD
DLH Corporation - Silver Spring, MD
George Mason University - Fairfax, VA
GTM Architects - Bethesda, MD
Intelligent Automation, Inc. - Rockville, MD
ITegrity, Inc. - Silver Spring, MD
Navanti Group - Arlington, VA
Smoothstack, Inc. - Fairfax, VA
Telos Corporation - Ashburn, VA
Verizon - Ashburn, VA
Yes& - Alexandria, VA

2021 Awards Selection Committee

Fatemeh Allahdoust, Virginia Department of Transportation
Jamie Carrington, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Lisa Garrett, United Therapeutics Corporation
John Hillegass, Greater Washington Partnership
Cindy King, Virginia Railway Express
Pamela Sebesky, City of Manassas Vice Mayor*
Kim Stama, Abt Associates

*Selection Committee Chairperson

2021 Employer Recognition Awards Workgroup

Michelle Golden, Montgomery County Commuter Services
Anna McLaughlin, District Department of Transportation
Holly Morello, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission

The Commuter Connections 2021 Employer Recognition Awards Selection Committee process was moderated and tabulated by Arch Street Communications.



About the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington, DC metropolitan region. Working with local, state, regional, and federal partners, the TPB coordinates future plans; provides data and analysis to decision makers; and coordinates regional programs to advance safety, commuting, land-use, and more. The TPB is housed at and staffed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

About Commuter Connections

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated through the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections offers free commuter services to employers in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. Services and programs include ridematching for carpools and vanpools; administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program (Washington and Baltimore); coordination of regional events (Bike to Work Day and Car Free Day); and a host of offered incentive programs. Through its Employer Outreach Representatives, Commuter Connections assists employers with commuter benefit programs, including telework and alternative work schedules. Commuter Connections is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

777 N. Capitol St, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4290
www.commuterconnections.org
800.745.RIDE

How to Get Involved

Does your company provide commuter benefits for transit, ridesharing, telework, bicycling, and/or walking? Please apply for the 2022 Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards.

For more information about services and assistance available through Commuter Connections, please visit www.commuterconnections.org, or call 800.745.7433, (TDD) 202.962.3213.

About the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

COG is the hub for regional partnership where every month more than 1,500 officials and experts convene to make connections, share information, and develop solutions to the region's major challenges. Together, they help advance COG's Region Forward vision for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, equitable, and sustainable future.

Founded in 1957, COG is an independent, nonprofit association with a membership of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress. COG is supported by financial contributions from its member governments, federal and state grants and contracts, and donations from foundations and the private sector.

The Board of Directors is COG's governing body and is responsible for its overall policies. In addition, a wide network of policy, technical, and advisory committees, partnerships, and programs advance COG's regional work. Elected leaders, transportation planners, environmental experts, police chiefs, housing directors, and more find tremendous value in working together at COG. A staff of more than 130 subject matter experts and technical professionals support COG and its members.

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