



TBARTA Regional School Commute Program Implementation Guide

FOR SCHOOL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Welcome to the Regional School Commute Program Implementation Guide prepared by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA). This guide explains how to implement a School Commute Program at your school.

The School Commute Program is easy to implement, simple to maintain, and best of all, the services are **free**. The program provides free online matching for parents and students for school carpooling, walking school bus and bike train. The most successful programs focus on active parent participation and a commitment of support from school administrators and school districts. Staff time comprises the majority of associated costs; TBARTA Staff provides marketing and evaluation materials.

Please be assured that the School Commute Program can become an important tool to make the school commute easier for your parents, and to help reduce car drop-off and pickup lines around your school.

TBARTA is very pleased to have this very important opportunity to provide another transportation option for your school and your parents, and we are looking forward to working with you to make this a very solid and long-term program for your school.

Thank you for assuming the role of the School Program Coordinator (SPC) for your school.

How to Start a School Commute Program in your School

- Incorporate the TBARTA Regional School Commute Program information and link <http://www.tbarta.com/en/school-program/commuter/school-program> on the school website. Include TBARTA's Regional School Commute Program logo to make the program easily identifiable.
JPG and EPS of the School Program logo and PDFs of School Program brochure, flyer and Tips sheet for parents provided in file.

SAMPLE WEBSITE LANGUAGE

[School Name] is now participating in the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) Regional School Commute Program. This program provides free ride, walk, and bike matching assistance for families who are interested in sharing commutes to and from school. Families who complete the Regional School Commute Program registration will have immediate access to a list of names and phone numbers (Match List) of [school name] parents who live in your area and are also interested in sharing commutes to and from school.

Click on the image below to visit the TBARTA website and receive more information about the TBARTA Regional School Commute Program.

The TBARTA Regional School Commute Program matches parents of students at participating schools with parents from the same school, so they can arrange carpool, walking school bus or bike train.

[Register for the TBARTA Regional School Commute Program here.](#) Contact [SPC] for more information.

- Introduce school administration (principals, transportation directors, office staff, teachers, etc.) to the School Commute Program. Explain the program and provide them with guidance on how to help and/or where to direct parents with questions about the school program. It is beneficial to have a back-up contact at the school in case you are not available. Do not direct parents to contact TBARTA with questions; TBARTA staff is not allowed to interact with parents.

SAMPLE EMAIL LANGUAGE

Transportation often presents some difficulties for families at our school. To alleviate some of these difficulties, [School Name] is working with the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) Regional School Commute Program to provide free carpool, bike train and walking school bus matching assistance for families who are interested in sharing the commute to and from school. **We are introducing this program to [School Name] parents for the 2015-2016 school year.**

Interested families who complete the School Program registration will receive a list of names and phone numbers (match list) of families from the same school who live in the same area and are also interested in sharing commutes to and from school. Home address information is confidential and only the closest major intersections are included on the list. Families receiving a match list are not obligated to participate and can arrange to use as a backup.

- Review school policies regarding restricted parking in pick-up zones, bus passes and current transportation policies, liability issues, etc. Determine feasibility of the Fast Pass Program. In a Fast Pass Lane, parents who are registered for the program and carpool get a special hangtag and can use an expedited drop-off and pickup lane.



Contact your DLC for Fast Pass Hangtags.

- Establish enrollment period timeline. Primary enrollment period is usually in the spring prior to the next school year. Secondary enrollments can be at the beginning of school in the fall, and/or at mid-year (after winter break).

Contact your DLC for marketing materials.

- If possible, determine incentives for parents to register and participate in the School Commute Program. More registrants increase the chances of getting matches.
- Establish an on-site area for School Commute Program coordination and information, usually in school office.
- Send announcement to parents about the new program and encourage parent participation. Emphasize the support from the School District.

Contact your DLC for marketing materials.

SEE SAMPLE EMAIL LANGUAGE ON PAGE 2

The TBARTA Regional School Commute Program matches families at the same school where other parents have registered. The more families participating in the program, the better opportunity the program has to provide matches!

If you are interested in participating, please register online at <http://www.tbarta.com/en/school-program/commuter/school-program>. Please contact [SPC] with questions.

- Identify special events and extracurricular activities for promotion and communication, such as the school newsletter. Schedule a transportation meeting for interested parents (usually part of Back-to-School and orientation meetings).
- Before the end of the year, TBARTA staff will send an evaluation survey to either registered parents or the DLCs to distribute. The survey is the primary measurement tool to see how well the Program is working and what modifications could improve the program. Use incentives to encourage parents to participate.

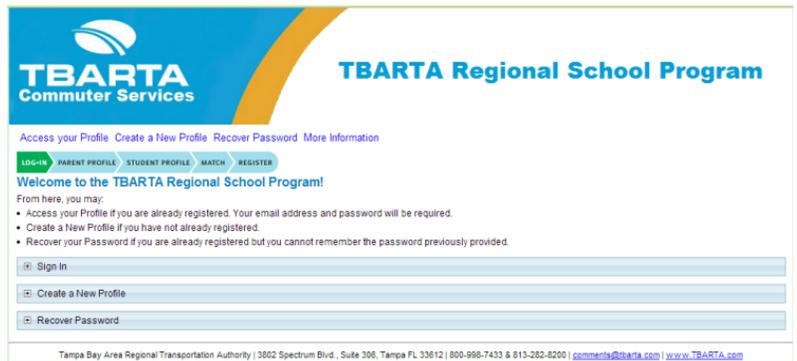
How Parents Register for the School Commute Program

- Parents register online at <http://www.tbarta.com/en/school-program/commuter/school-program>.
- Screen 1: Click *Sign up for the School Commute Program here*.



Screen 1

- Screen 2: “Create a New Profile”.



Screen 2

Note:

- Home address is never shown on match lists. System uses intersection to determine matches.
- If your school name is not in the School drop down menu in the “Create Student Profile” tab, the SPC should contact the District Level Coordinator.
- Everyone can participate, even if you are not a driver.
- Parents can also check boxes for interest in walking school bus and/or interest in bike train.

* Drive Preference: (select) ▼

(select)

- Interested in receiving rides
- Interested in sharing the driving
- Interested in providing the rides
- Interested only in emergencies
- Not interested in carpooling at this time

* Home search distance: 10 minutes

* School search distance: My times are flexible

* Group search distance: Interested in walking school bus

* Arrive as early as Interested in bike train

* Pick up as late as 26

* Max matches: This comment will be displayed on School Program matches and will be visible to all users.

- Parents can download a PDF of their match list and contact other parents to arrange carpooling, walking school bus or bike trains.

Things to Note about the Program

- Contact with parents about the School Commute Program should be only through each participating school or school assigned SPC, and not between TBARTA and the parent. Parents should not be directed to call TBARTA.
- When parents register online, all information is kept confidential. Information on the match list pertains only to parents from the same school who are registered in the program. No information is provided about students.
- Every family should register with the program. With more parents registered, there is a better chance for a match. Just because a parent's name is on a match list, does not mean they are obligated to participate.
- You will find that once most parents go through the registration process, the process becomes easier, and there are fewer questions/issues to address.
- This is not meant to be an immediate solution to parents who wait until the last minute to make transportation arrangements for their children. Ridesharing situations must be determined in advance so parents have met and are comfortable with each other's children.