



JOB LINKS

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
FOR THE WORKPLACE

Employment Transportation Resources

Partnering with the One-Stop Career System to Promote Transportation to Work

Pace Suburban Transit and the workNet system in the Chicago area have worked together for the past several years to promote the use of public transit to access work. Pace is the suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority of Eastern Illinois, providing bus, carpool and vanpool services, as well as paratransit services throughout a six-county region in the Chicago suburbs. As one of the largest bus services in North America, Pace serves tens of thousands of riders daily on 240 fixed routes that cover a 3,500 square mile area which is home to a large number of employers. workNet is Illinois' system of U.S. Department of Labor-funded One-Stop Career Centers; workNet staff assists individuals with job search and placement and helps employers meet their human resource requirements.

Since the early 2000's, Pace has routinely promoted the use of public transit for commuters at workNet-sponsored job fairs in the Chicago area. In 2004, Pace initiated a more active partnership with workNet agencies, which resulted in the following steps:

- As each job fair is organized, workNet staff share contact information for the participating businesses with Pace. Pace uses this information to prepare a customized marketing packet describing the transportation options for each employer that is located on or near an existing Pace bus route.
- Employers located along fixed routes served by Pace receive copies of bus schedules for routes that serve their work site(s). Employers can then distribute this transportation information to job candidates so they know how to reach prospective jobs using reliable transportation.
- To further announce the employment sites' accessibility by public transit, each qualified employer also receives a tent card that states "*This Employer is Served by Pace.*"
- Employers receive recruitment packets containing a free one-day ticket (valid only on Pace) which allows applicants to travel to and from an interview using the bus system. Also included in the packets is a brochure that offers the newly hired employee a 30-day bus pass at a 50 percent discount.

- Once an applicant is hired, the employer/supervisor signs the application for the discounted pass and the employee submits that along with his or her 50 percent share of the cost to receive the pass. As an incentive to continue commuting using Pace, employees receive a \$5 discount for enrolling in Pace's Ticket-By-Mail-Program. A number of employers, such as Six Flags, have recognized the benefits of this program and incorporated the option into their hiring and orientation practices.

Other Pace Transportation Options

Employers whose sites are not easily accessible via public transit can also participate in the Pace program. Their recruitment packets include information about carpool and vanpool options available to commuters and about the Pace Ride Program, which matches commuters who travel on similar routes to work, assists with the establishment of a carpool, and provides the van for groups of five or more who wish to form a vanpool. The vans are owned and maintained by Pace and driven by one of the vanpool participants. This vanpool program is also offered in partnership with workforce boards and enables potential participants to join via the Pace website.

Transportation: The Link to Employment

Pace's two-pronged marketing approach, targeting both employers and applicants, is based on a simple philosophy: if an applicant learns about their transportation options, she or he may continue to commute via public transit once employed. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the program has indeed contributed to an increase in ridership, creating a successful link to jobs using Pace transportation services.

The UPS-Pace Partnership

Pace has also worked with UPS to create public transit links between a number of local communities and the UPS consolidation hub. Service started with two fixed routes and has grown to nine routes carrying more than 2,500 commuters on a daily basis to the hub. UPS covers 75 percent of the cost of the service, and Pace assumes 25 percent of the cost. In return for their funding, UPS receives bus tickets and passes, with the total value of the passes received not to exceed 80 percent of their contract cost. UPS then sells these tickets and passes to employees at a discount. UPS is allowed to retain revenue from the sales for a return on investment (ROI) towards their contract costs. The same ROI practice for route funding is available and used by many other employers in the region.

For additional information about Pace Suburban Transit, visit its website at www.pacebus.com or contact Barbara Ladner, Manager for Business Development at barbara.ladner@pacebus.com.

The Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative is a partnership of the Community Transportation Association, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration. Joblinks assists communities in addressing challenges associated with accessing affordable and reliable transportation to work and related destinations. For more information, visit www.ctaa.org/joblinks.

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