

7. guaranteed ride home program

Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) programs can be the glue that makes many other Transportation Demand Management programs effective. This initiative recognizes that for workers to commute without their own vehicle, there will be times when they will need a viable travel alternative. Whether you bike, take transit, or join a vanpool – occasionally you will have to work late, make unplanned trips home to take care of sick family members, or get stuck in the weather. The Guaranteed Ride Home program allows for a taxi or other ride home under these circumstances, making the use of alternative travel arrangements on a daily basis more palatable.



Statistics on such programs indicate that although they tend to have relatively low employee utilization rates, they have very high satisfaction rates from participants providing a high benefit for a low cost to employers. A recent Nelson\Nygaard study evaluating the effectiveness of a regional GRH program in Alameda California found that 95% of program participants felt that the GRH program did encourage alternative mode use. Another study found that 15-25% of program enrollees would otherwise drive to work if the GRH program did not exist.

How it works

Guaranteed Ride Home programs can be organized by an individual employer, Transportation Management Association, or a governmental entity (Transit Agency, Municipality, Service Provider). The program operator develops contact information for employees to reach out to, and has a network of providers to offer the ride home. Programs can work with voluntary providers, through the use of taxi vouchers, or through a combination of resources. Employees (or the employer) are typically pre-registered and eligibility requirements include (general) use of alternative modes for commuting. In many cases, a limit is placed on the number of times an employee can use the program to prevent abuse, but these are rarely breached.

Best Practice

Transit Agency: TANK (Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky) offers a Guaranteed Ride Home program for monthly pass holders. Registered riders can use the service up to four times a year. Rides are typically offered in cases of unplanned overtime or a family emergency during the workday.

Transportation Management Association: The Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association (Montana) administers the Guaranteed Ride Home program for eligible employees including all those with transit passes, and employees of member companies. The program uses taxis to provide safe, reliable and free trips for those in emergency or unexpected situations. Trips are provided for up to a 50-mile radius.

Individual Organization: The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (NY) obtained federal funding to implement a Guaranteed Ride Home program as part of a larger transportation demand management grant to serve its 12,000 employees. Over \$35,000 through an FTA JARC grant is specifically allocated for this program, which supports other TDM initiatives.

Applicability to Mid-South

The Mid-South Region already has a Guaranteed Ride Home Program. This program needs more marketing, momentum and support to increase awareness and use. The program can be expanded to include MATA pass holders and included in the development of any new TDM program. Establishing the parameters, policies and provision of a program for ease of adoption by individual employers or a transportation management association could also be completed by the Greenprint Consortium, the Office of Sustainability, the County or other entities as appropriate.