

Flat Rate Program 2021-22 - FAQ's

Payments

- When will I receive my first payment?
 - The first payment will take time due to processing. Please allow for approximately 60 days from when the initial reimbursement form was submitted
- When will I receive payments as the school year moves along?
 - Please allow for 30 days from when all documents are confirmed to receive payments (**Post Initial Payment**). The earlier in the month that the Monthly Payment Form is submitted and also completed by the school, the sooner the payment will be mailed.
- Will I receive payment for driving my child in July and August?
 - **No**, payments for the Flat Rate Program do not begin until September, and conclude in June.
- I have driven my child to school since the beginning of the school year. Can I receive back-pay?
 - If you did not apply for the program during the enrollment period, and you did not request the program with your school, you will not be eligible to receive payment until the month you were placed in the program by your school official.
- I signed up for the AM-only portion of the program. However, my child has never taken the PM bus. Can I receive back payments for the full amount?
 - **No**, if you are registered for the AM-only portion those are the payments you will receive. If you choose to be removed from the bus in the afternoon please reach out to the school and ask them to submit a **TAR** requesting that you are placed in the full portion of the program. Once the **TAR** is submitted, you will be eligible for full payments, **effective for the following month**.
- Why have I not received a check, I submitted the [Monthly Payment Form](#) and my school has confirmed they verified attendance?
 - Please confirm that you have entered the correct **Compass Student ID** on the monthly form. An incorrect ID will result in a delay of payment.
 - Please ensure that the address entered on the monthly form is the same as the one the student has in the system. If you prefer a different mailing address please reach out to your school and have them confirm the address.
- I have not received my check, can it be reissued?
 - Please reach out to the Post Office to track the check. If the Post Office does not have a record of it being delivered, please contact the Department of

Transportation Services and the check can be reissued 6 weeks from the check date. Please allow for up to 8 weeks to receive the reissued check.

Enrollment

- How do parents get notified of the Flat Rate Program?
 - Parents of eligible students will be mailed a letter inviting them to apply for the program
 - The District made a public announcement of the program, but not all students will be eligible
- How do I apply for the Flat Rate Program?
 - There is an enrollment period through a Google Form from June 1 through July 1 **(Found on the SDP Website at the Flat Rate Webpage)**.
 - There is a second enrollment period through a Google Form from September 14 through October 1 **(Found on the SDP Website at the Flat Rate Webpage)**.
 - If you missed both enrollment periods you will need to reach out to your school and have them submit a Transportation Action Request (**TAR**) asking for you to be placed in the program. If eligible, you will be placed in the program effective when the TAR is submitted.
- Is there an **AM-only** option for the program?
 - Yes, parents/guardians will be paid \$150/month for driving their child to school each morning. The student will return home using transportation services under this option. **There is no PM-only option for the Flat Rate Program.**
- What is needed for families to be eligible for the program?
 - Students **must** be currently eligible to be assigned to a **District** bus, van, or cab.
 - Parents **must** complete a Monthly Payment Form each month to qualify for payments. The form is submitted electronically through the District website at the following link: [Monthly Payment Form](#). Forms will no longer be sent to the schools. **Paper forms will no longer be accepted.**
 - Students must attend **70%** of **in-person** school days for each month. Students that are fully virtual will be ineligible until in-person learning begins. **Quarantined days will be considered as an excused absence.**
 - Parents **must** submit a verified Vehicle Identification Number (**VIN**) for their registered automobile on the [Monthly Payment Form](#).
- When will parents/guardians know if they've been approved for eligibility?
 - Parents/guardians **who have been approved** will receive a letter of their enrollment status from the Department of Transportation Services.

Monthly Payment Form

- Why am I being asked to complete a **Monthly Payment Form**?
 - The [Monthly Payment Form](#) will be completed by the parent/guardian and submitted through the District website each month to confirm active students in the registered school. The school will then confirm attendance and submit their portion also on the District website.
- When and how do schools and parents complete the **Monthly Payment Form**?
 - The **Monthly Payment Form** is completed every month by both the parents and the schools on the District website at the following link: [Monthly Payment Form](#). Parents and schools will both submit their portions each month to confirm general information and monthly attendance. Parents and schools will both be redirected to their respective portions. In-person attendance days must be confirmed (**Fully virtual months do not apply**).
- Why am I being asked for a Transportation ID when completing my monthly form?
 - The Transportation ID will identify the parent and the student, which is needed for payment. The ID is sent to parents, via mail, on the top of their invitation letter. The ID is the same that is generated within the Transportation System.
- Schools will no longer email forms to the Department of Transportation?
 - **Forms will no longer be emailed.** All forms are submitted electronically on the School District website. A [Monthly Payment Form](#) will be completed by a school official directly through a form on the website. Schools do not need to submit all of their eligible students at one time, especially if the quantity of students is high.
- Are there two locations on the website for the monthly forms? One for parents/guardians, and one for school officials?
 - The monthly form for both parents/guardians and school officials will be at the same location on the Flat Rate Webpage. On the first page of the form there will be a question asking whether you are a parent/guardian or the school official. Please click on the accurate selection and you will be redirected to the applicable page. The form is located at the following link: [Monthly Payment Form](#)

Opting Out of the Program

- What are the expectations regarding when parents can opt-out of the Flat Rate Program?
 - Once registered for the Flat Rate Program you should expect to participate for the duration of the school year. If at any point you wish to return to a District bus, cab or van assignment it is based on availability and **it may take an extensive period of time to return.**

Enrollment Issues

- I participated in the 2020-21 Flat Rate **Pilot** Program but chose to not enroll for the upcoming school year. Will my child automatically be returned to a bus route?
 - No, please reach out to your school. The school must submit a Transportation Action Request (**TAR**) requesting the student is placed back on a bus route for the upcoming school year.
- I participated in the Pilot program last year. Do I need to enroll again?
 - **Yes**, all families must request to participate in the Flat Rate Program or they will automatically be removed from the program.
- Why is my child's school not listed in the drop-down list on the enrollment form?
 - The school may not be eligible for District transportation services.
 - The school may be named differently than what is familiar to the parent/guardian (i.e. MAST Community Charter - Byberry, is (3328) Math Science and Technology in the drop-down list).
- Where do I find my child's Student Transportation ID number?
 - Each student's Transportation ID number will be located in the upper right corner of the letter they received in the mail that invited them to enroll in the Flat Rate Program. Some students may be eligible for the first time, and may not yet have a student ID. For students that have not yet had a Transportation ID created for them, or for students who do not know their ID, **please contact your school**.
- I enrolled in the Flat Rate Program but received a letter stating that I was ineligible for the upcoming school year. Why?
 - There are multiple reasons you may not be eligible for the Flat Rate Program, including, but not limited to:
 - Your child's grade level does not qualify
 - Your child's school does not receive District transportation, and busing is provided by a third party
 - The distance from your provided residence to the school does not qualify
 - Your child is no longer registered at the school that was submitted on the Enrollment Form
 - Your school did not enter your child into the Transportation System
- I enrolled in the program but received a letter saying I was not eligible. However, my school is eligible and my child is eligible for transportation services. How can this be?
 - It is possible the school has not created a profile in the transportation system (Compass/SIS) and the student was not able to be confirmed as eligible.

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- Please contact your school and ask them to enter a profile for your child in the system.

Guidelines

- Do parents get paid for each child they drive to school?
 - **No**, parents will receive one monthly check **per household**.
- I have yet to receive payment for a specific month, why?
 - There are several reasons payments may not have been made, including but not limited to:
 - The school has yet to submit attendance
 - The parent/guardian has yet to submit a form for the month
 - The parent/guardian submitted the form with incorrect information
 - The student did not qualify based on being under the 70% attendance guideline for the month
 - The address submitted by the parent/guardian on the monthly form does not match the residence we have on file
 - The parent/guardian did not submit a VIN that could be verified
- My child is not driven to school, but takes SEPTA, a rideshare service, or other transportation, am I eligible for payment?
 - No, payments can only be issued if a verifiable Vehicle Information Number (VIN) is provided on the Monthly Payment Form
- My child's school has decided to go 100% virtual for a month, will I still receive payment?
 - **No**, the program is only for **in-person** days attended. **Payment will not be made for any month in which attendance was fully virtual**. The program will not begin again for that child until in-person learning begins.
- Are schools eligible, which provide their own private busing?
 - **No**, the program is only for schools that are provided busing, van, or cab services **by the School District of Philadelphia**.
- I received a letter inviting me to enroll in the program, but my child has changed schools since last school year. Am I still eligible?
 - Please contact your new school and let them know you would like to participate in the Flat Rate Program.
 - The new school will have to contact the Scheduling Analysts of Transportation Services to determine eligibility.
- Are summer months, July and August, eligible for payment?
 - **No**, the program is only eligible **September through June**.

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For all questions concerning the Flat Rate Program please contact the Department of Transportation Services at **Parentrans@philasd.org**