

## **Flat Rate Program - FAQ**

### **Payments**

- When will I receive my first payment?
  - The first payment will take time due to processing. Please allow for approximately **60 days** from the end of the initial month to receive payment.
- 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**).
- 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.
- During the 2022-23 school year I drove 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 periods and 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.
- For the 2022-23 school year I signed up for the AM-only portion of the program. However, my child never took the PM bus. Can I receive back-payments for the full amount?
  - **No**, if you registered for the AM-only portion those are the payments you will receive.
- 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 may result in a delay of payment.
  - Please ensure that the address entered on the monthly form is the same as the residence the school has on file within the transportation system has for your child. 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 [Parentrans@Philasd.org](mailto:Parentrans@Philasd.org) and it can be reissued. Please allow for up to 4 weeks to receive the reissued check.
- I feel my check may have been fraudulently cashed. What steps do I need to take to have this looked into?
  - Please email [Parentrans@Philasd.org](mailto:Parentrans@Philasd.org) with your inquiry.
  - You will be emailed a Policy Form and further details.
  - Once received, the form must be completed, notarized, and mailed to the address provided.

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- The investigation will then be turned over to the banking institutions and may take up to 90 days to be concluded.
- A replacement check cannot be issued until the banking institution concludes its investigation.
- A school official entered incorrect attendance causing me to be declined for the monthly payment. How can this be adjusted?
  - Please advise the school official to email [Parentrans@Philasd.org](mailto:Parentrans@Philasd.org) with the updated attendance information.

## **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
- I received a letter confirming my registration in the program. My child has since transferred. Will the student remain eligible?
  - If a student transfers, eligibility will again need to be determined, and it is possible the student may not be eligible at the new school.
- I received a letter confirming my registration in the program. My child has since moved to a new residence. Will the student remain eligible?
  - If a student moves during the school year, eligibility will again need to be determined, and it is possible the student may not be eligible from the new address.
- 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
- Are schools eligible if they 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**.

## **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 also made a public announcement of the program
- How do I apply for the Flat Rate Program for the 2023-24 school year?
  - To apply for the program please submit the **Enrollment Form** located on the Flat Rate Program Webpage during the application period below:
    - **June 1, 2023 through October 1, 2023**
- Do I need to complete an Enrollment Form to participate in the program?
  - **Yes, all families that wish to participate in the Flat Rate Program must submit an Enrollment Form, even families who participated in previous years.**
- 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 payments?
  - Students **must** be currently eligible to be assigned to a **District** bus, van, or cab.
    - Eligibility varies by school.
    - Some schools do not receive District-provided busing and are not eligible.
  - Parents **must** complete a **Monthly Payment Form** each month to qualify for payments. The form is submitted electronically through the District website, at the Flat Rate Webpage. **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. **Only days in which the student had to quarantine due to Covid-19 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](#).
- How will parents/guardians know if they've been approved for eligibility?
  - Parents/guardians **who have been approved** will receive a letter or an email of their enrollment status from the Department of Transportation Services.
  - They can email [Parentrans@Philasd.org](mailto:Parentrans@Philasd.org) to confirm their eligibility status

## **Enrollment Issues**

- I participated in the Flat Rate **Pilot** Program in the past 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 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).
  - Your child's school may be new to transportation services. Please submit, "Other," in this instance.
- 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 or email [Parenttrans@Philasd.org](mailto:Parenttrans@Philasd.org)**.
- I enrolled in the Flat Rate Program but received an email 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/or 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

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

## **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.
- 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 **PDF Version** forms to the Department of Transportation?
  - **PDF version 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.
- 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.

## **Address Discrepancies**

- My child was accepted into the program but we have since moved and have not received payments. What do we do when the student changes residences?
  - Please reach out to your school and ask them to update the address in the transportation system.
  - Enter the previous address on the Monthly Payment Form
  - Enter the updated address in the “Change of Address,” line on the Monthly Payment Form

## **Opting Out of the Program**

- I applied for the program for the 2023-24 school year. However, my child will need to be assigned a bus route for the conclusion of the school year. What is the process for receiving busing services?
  - Please contact your school.
  - A school official will need to submit a Transportation Action Request (TAR) requesting a bus route.
  - The official must submit the TAR with specific language: **“The family applied for Flat Rate but would like to return to busing.”**
  - The student should be returned to a busing assignment within 14 days from when the TAR was submitted, **if there is a route available**
- 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.**
- I opted out of the program and returned to a bus assignment in the middle of the month. Am I still eligible for that month’s payment?
  - **No**, in order to be eligible for the monthly payment you must complete the month in the program.

**For all questions concerning the Flat Rate Program please contact the Department of Transportation Services at [Parentrans@philasd.org](mailto:Parentrans@philasd.org)**