

The image shows two armchairs and a small round table. The chair on the left has a vibrant orange and red pattern with white circular motifs. The chair on the right has a teal and blue pattern with yellow and green geometric shapes. The table is a simple, round wooden top on a white metal tripod base.

Benefits Corner

April 2020

While this season of sheltering-in-place has brought an unexpected opportunity to spend time at home, many of us are missing our work communities and the solace of routine. In this month's Benefits Corner, we're looking forward to our return to our workspaces and some normality by highlighting our transit benefit. Moody provides the opportunity for any full-time employee utilizing Chicago-area public transportation services to set aside funds for use towards transportation expenses. Up to \$270 of payroll deductions for this purpose will be considered pre-tax each month in 2020. Any monthly amount over \$270 will be deducted on a post-tax basis.

WHAT TRANSPORTATION COSTS ARE COVERED?

This benefit can be utilized for Illinois and Indiana riders using any of the following transportation:

- **Metra**

If you ride the Metra, you can enroll in our RTA Mastercard program. You can choose a monthly amount that matches the typical cost of the train from your zone, and your funds will be sent on the 20th of each month to an RTA Mastercard issued to you. You can then use this card to purchase a monthly pass, a ten-ride, or other tickets for Metra, South Shore, CTA, and Pace buses. If you do not use the full amount, the funds stay on your Mastercard and can be used to purchase further rides.

- **Ventra**

If you have a Ventra account and corresponding Ventra card with the CTA, you can choose to have funds or a 30-day pass added to your account on the 26th of each month. You can sign up for a Ventra account on www.ventrachicago.com – you will receive a Ventra card and a separate Transit ID, which is required by Moody to enroll in this benefit. If you do not use the full amounts each month, the funds will stay on your Ventra card for later use. The Ventra pass will expire exactly 30-days after the first day of use.

- **Pace Vanpool**

There are several existing vanpools that utilize Pace services to commute to Moody's campus. You can choose a monthly amount to be sent to your Pace account. When Pace bills your monthly rider charges, they will pull funds from your Pace account. If you have more funds in the Pace account than the monthly bill, the funds will roll over into the following month. If you do not have enough funds in your Pace account, Pace will send you a bill for the remaining unpaid amount. You must have a Pace account and corresponding 4-5 digit account number.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE TRANSIT BENEFIT?

Employees may begin using this benefit at any time, and existing commuters may update or suspend this benefit throughout the year.

All transit benefit changes must be communicated by completing the [transit benefit election form](#) and submitting it to Rae Paul (rachel.paul@moody.edu), or dropping the form off in Human Resources on Crowell 1. All transit changes must be communicated by the 5th of each month—so if you need to start, suspend, or update the benefit amount scheduled for the end of the month, you must complete a transit benefit election form by the 5th of that same month. After the 5th, adjustments are made to payroll deductions, and orders are placed with each transportation service and cannot be adjusted.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I don't always use public transportation; sometimes I work remotely or drive. Is this benefit still useful?

A: Yes! For both Metra and Ventra, if you choose a specific funding amount, it can be used at your discretion and will not expire. For Metra, you might consider purchasing a 10-ride pass if you won't fully utilize a monthly pass. For Ventra, you can simply carry a balance on your card and pay for the train or bus as needed. Pace Vanpool costs are based on the number of riders, so these work best for consistent commutes.

Q: I will not need my normal transit amount. Can I stop or change it this month?

A: Yes! To make changes to the amount scheduled at the end of a month, just submit the [transit benefit election form](#) by the 5th of that month. If you suspend the benefit, the payroll deduction will be paused and the funds/pass will not be sent to your account or mastercard at the end of the month.

Q: I suspended my transit benefit for this month. Will it automatically resume next month?

A: No. If you wish to restart or begin a transit election, you must submit the transit benefit election form by the 5th of the month in which you need the funds to be sent.

Q: The [transit benefit election form](#) doesn't list the exact amount I need for my typical Ventra/Metra/Pace costs. Can I list a different amount?

A: The election form lists the most common transit deduction amounts, based on the cost of typical Metra zones, the size of a typical vanpool, etc. Please reach out to Rae Paul if you need an alternate amount. Not all special amounts may be available as a payroll deduction, and you may need to choose a slightly larger or smaller deduction if your exact amount is not available.

Q: I need to purchase a ticket that costs more than my transit election or fund balance. Can I add funds during the month?

A: For Ventra riders, you can add personal funds to your Ventra card/account at any time. Please note: your Ventra account will always utilize any available passes before paying for a ride through account funds.

A: For Metra riders, you cannot add personal funds to the RTA Mastercard. If you need to purchase a ticket greater than your Mastercard balance, you will need to supply this through your own funds by using a different payment method.

A: For Pace Vanpool riders, if your monthly bill is greater than the transit amount you have elected, you will be billed for the difference and must pay that from personal funds.



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Q: How do I view my transit funds balance?

A: For Ventra riders, you can view your current funds, passes, and commuting history by logging into your Ventra app or account at www.ventrachicago.com.

A: For Metra riders, you can call RTA using the number on your Mastercard, or you can log into mytransitbenefit.com to view your balance and commuting history.

A: For Pace riders, you can view your account via the monthly statement provided by Pace.

Q: Do my transit funds ever expire?

A: Unused funds in your Ventra account, RTA Mastercard, or Pace Vanpool account never expire. 30-day passes do expire and will have an expiration date listed. Check your Ventra app or RTA account to see if you've purchased a pass with an expiration date.

When our worlds tilt back to normal and our regular commutes resume, we hope this benefit will be useful both in easing your tax burden and your commutes this year. May each of you stay healthy and safe until we enjoy in-person fellowship again!