

Commuter Options

Transportation for inner city workers during hard times

February 2010 Update

The Commuter Options program continues to move ahead providing service to Philadelphians who have a difficult or impossible commute to suburban employers. In times of economic crisis with jobs scarce, it is essential that Philadelphians have reliable and reasonable transportation to work. The recession has taken a toll on Commuter Options commuters as we have lost some van pools.

However, as of **February 2010 the Philadelphia Unemployment Project's Commuter Options Program has 26 van and car pools transporting 106 Philadelphia workers to their jobs each day.** This is down from a high of 32 pools in July of 2009, as the effects of the national recession impacted local companies.

Without Commuter Options the riders of these pools would have daily commutes of three to five hours, with long walks involved in many cases. Commuter Options makes their jobs possible in most instances.

Two van pools have begun this month to transport refugees from Nepal who were made homeless following ethnic cleansing from the nation of Bhutan where they had lived. They were part of international resettlement effort that brought a group of Nepalis to South Philadelphia. The refugees are expected to find work within eight months of arrival in the US and Commuter Options made it possible for eight of them to find work at Kaolin Mushroom Farms in Kennett Square, PA. [Click here: Nepalese refugees blaze a trail in Phila. | Philadelphia Inquirer | 01/04/2010](#)

Commuter Options was available for Philadelphia manufacturing workers when ESCO, a manufacturing firm in Penns Grove N.J., called back 20 people from lay off in January. We continue to provide transportation for people leaving the welfare rolls for work as we partner with local welfare-to-work EARN centers.

Commuter Options Van/Car Pools- February 2010

Engineered Arresting Systems Corporation (ESCO) – A manufacturer in Penns Grove, N.J. in Logan Township. The pay rate is between \$12.00 and \$17.00 per hour. We have 4 vans going on first shift from various parts of the city. These workers were recently recalled after a four month lay off.

1. A vanpool of 6 people from North Philadelphia goes to Logan Township, NJ.
2. A vanpool of 5 people from South/West Philadelphia goes to Logan Township, NJ.
3. A vanpool of 5 people from Mt. Airy and Chester travel to Logan Township, NJ
4. A vanpool of 4 people leaving Germantown area commute to Logan Township, NJ

Consolidated Services Group (CSG) - One vanpool of North Philadelphians goes to Cherry Hill, NJ for customer service jobs. This pool has been in effect for two years.

1. Six commuters who ride this van pool are former clients of the People for People EARN Center. Their starting pay rate is between \$9.00 and \$11.00 per hour.

NCO Financial – This collection company in Horsham has had a pool operating for over 3 years with Commuter Options.

One pool of 3 people travels from the Germantown to Horsham, PA.

Progressive Insurance Company - This Company has three vanpools of customer service and billing specialists. This group starts at between \$10 and \$12 per hour.

Van pool of 4 people goes from the Northeast to Eddystone, PA.

1. Vanpool of 4 people commutes from West Philadelphia to Eddystone, PA.
2. Vanpool of 4 people goes from North Philadelphia and Upper Darby to Eddystone, PA

Quest Diagnostics – Two separate locations of Quest Diagnostics are operating seven van and carpools. Quest has been working with PUPCO for three years. These jobs are paying between \$12.50 and \$17.00 per hour.

1. A car pool of 3 people goes from West Philly to Norristown on day shift.
2. A car pool of 4 people goes from North Philly to Norristown on day shift.
3. A van pool of 4 people commutes from Upper Darby/West Philadelphia to Norristown on day shift.
4. A van pool of 4 people goes from Mt. Airy to Norristown, PA on day shift.
5. A van pool of 5 people travels from the N.E. and Olney to Norristown on day shift.
6. A van pool of 4 people goes from Frankford to Horsham, PA on third shift.
7. A car pool of 3 people travels from West Philly to Horsham, PA on day shift.

St. Gabriel's Hall – This school for troubled youth have a number of youth care workers who needed transportation to their 100 acre campus in a remote part of Montgomery County. They currently have two pools in operation. These jobs start at about \$11.00 per hour.

1. A car pool of 3 from West Philadelphia working second shift travel to Audubon, PA.
2. A van pool of 5 people from N.E. and North Philadelphia commute to Audubon for the third shift.

Synthes – This manufacturer of medical prosthetics in West Goshen is also a long time partner of Commuter Options with 3 pools in operation. The rate of pay ranges from \$12.00 to over \$19.00 per hour.

1. A pool of 6 people travel from N.E. Philadelphia to West Goshen, PA on first shift.
2. A pool of 4 people travel from West Oak Lane and N.E. Philadelphia to West Goshen, PA on first shift.
3. A pool of 2 people on second shift currently is commuting from N.E. Philadelphia to West Goshen, PA.

United Seed - Production workers leave the North Philadelphia area to work in King of Prussia, PA. The rate of pay ranges from \$8.00 to \$16.00 per hour.

1. A pool of 3 people travel from North Philadelphia to King of Prussia, PA.

New Partnerships

Kaolin Mushroom Farms in Kennett Square, PA has partnered with Commuter Options and the Nationality Services Center to provide jobs to Nepali refugees. These jobs start out at \$7.39/ hour and with piece-work incentives that should allow them to earn as much as \$12.00 per hour within the first 6 weeks.

1. A pool of 4 people from South Philadelphia going to Kennett Square, PA.
2. A pool of 4 people from South Philadelphia to Kennett Square, PA.

Sony Inc. of Pittman, NJ has provided employment opportunities to a group of former welfare recipients from the Nueva Esperanza EARN Center doing warehouse work. They are currently earning between \$8.00 and \$9.00 per hour. This company is hiring and we are expecting to fill the vanpool with additional employees shortly.

1. A pool of two people traveling from Oxford Circle to Pittman, NJ.

Philadelphia Direct, a telemarketing firm working with the People for People EARN Center have partnered with us to provide employment and transportation to the clients of the EARN Center. They currently are earning \$8.00 per hour to start with performance incentives.

1. One pool of 6 people, combining commuters from North and West Philly on second shift are going to Hatboro, PA.

