



# Going Above and Beyond with Tailored Commuter Assistance



Per Scholas is in the business of working with employers to train individuals for high demand jobs. They did not know they were also in the business of transportation.

Their learners reported a lack of mobility options and transit access as a barrier to getting to Per Scholas for training. Employees also shared many of the same barriers.

Read on to learn how Per Scholas, an organization providing no-cost tech training and job training in Baltimore, is breaking these transportation barriers by understanding the needs of their learners and employees, providing tailored transportation resources and amenities, and is already seeing overwhelmingly positive results.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

Camisha Beverly has been working with Per Scholas' Baltimore location for a little over a year as Managing Director. Her transition to the role came at an important time for the organization – as they work on understanding, formalizing, and expanding their support for transit needs.

Per Scholas had been supporting the transportation needs of their staff and learners informally for several years but began offering structured and consistent transportation benefits in 2021, in the form of transit card stipends for learners and pre-tax benefits for staff.

The stipends were implemented in response to feedback from learners who identified transportation as a major barrier to consistent attendance and engagement in class. As an organization "rooted in creating equitable pathways to economic mobility through no-cost training" they knew that this meant actively removing the barriers that prevent learners from participating and succeeding. As Camisha noted, without convenient access to their campuses and partner employers, even the best programs mean little.

For employees, many were already relying heavily on public transit, so to address their needs, Per Scholas implemented flexible scheduling and pre-tax benefits to help employees pay for their rides.

## PROVIDING TAILORED ASSISTANCE

How did Per Scholas identify and understand these barriers for learners? It is all built into their kick-off process. For multiple years, new learners have received a survey where they can report their needs and how Per Scholas can best support their education and economic mobility.

With transportation stated as a top concern, Per Scholas took action.

Camisha said the lack of familiarity with public transit prevented learners from utilizing the services available to them. So Per Scholas partnered with Commuter Choice Maryland to build a resource library of transit information that their learners and staff can utilize at any time, as well as to provide literature bags for kick-off events and educational presentations. Camisha reports that these resources are more than just up-to-date commuting information; they act as a customized benefit that helps provide streamlined access to learning and a clear signal of Per Scholas' unwavering support for their learners and employees.

Pictured to the Right: Camisha Beverly and Per Scholas Baltimore staff at Junior Achievement of Central Maryland

"I think streamlining the process definitely helped... we know exactly where to go for the information. We know exactly who to direct the person to."

-Camisha Beverly

Managing Director,  
Per Scholas Baltimore

## SOME UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

Early data from Per Scholas, who carefully tracks attendance, retention, and graduation rates, shows that learners who receive transit support have higher attendance rates and are more likely to complete their training. Feedback from campus staff has been similarly positive, with many reporting that their pre-tax benefits are a highly valued perk and that they feel more valued and engaged in their roles, leading to decreased turnover rates. However, as Camisha noted, this is just the beginning of the benefits that this partnership has brought. Learners have shared how these programs reduce their stress and financial strain, enabling them to focus on their career goals and aspirations, and bringing them closer to financial independence.

Camisha also emphasized a profound benefit of this program and a strong focus from the organization: maintaining the dignity of their learners. By providing a flexible benefit and creating a supportive culture around public transportation, they are actively working to remove the stigma around using transit.

Moving forward, Camisha and Per Scholas will continue to evaluate ways to enhance their employee experience and treat transportation as a matter of equity and access. By partnering with local transportation authorities and nonprofits, they hope to maximize their resources and visibility, with future plans to expand their ridesharing and bikesharing partnerships, as well as their wellness programs, professional development opportunities, and remote work support for employees.

To learn more about Per Scholas' inspiring work in Baltimore, visit [their website](#). To learn about how to implement programs like these for your business or community, contact [Commuter Choice Maryland](#) or your local [Rideshare Coordinator](#).

"For learners, the support can mean the difference between consistent attendance and missed days, so the response has been overwhelmingly positive. It's a part of how we show up as a mission-driven learner-first organization. And for our campus staff, pre-tax metro benefits are a highly valued perk that contributes to overall job satisfaction."

- Camisha Beverly  
Managing Director, Per Scholas Baltimore

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