



Setting the Standard at USP



You may recognize the U.S. Pharmacopoeia (USP) seal when you're out shopping for vitamin supplements. That's because USP sets quality standards for medicines, food ingredients, and dietary supplements. When it comes to their employees who support this work, USP also sets the standard for employer-provided commuter benefits!

Like many organizations across the US and Maryland, many USP employees operate on a hybrid or remote work arrangement. For those who do need to visit the lab or the office, USP provides \$100 a month to employees who ride the bus or train to the company's Rockville, MD or Frederick, MD locations. Employees who bike to work can also claim up to \$20 a month in bike-related expenses to make their commutes double as a cardio workout!

To hear more about USP's commuter benefits, Commuter Choice Maryland sat down with Senior Benefits Administrator Nikki Black. Ms. Black says that transportation benefits are an integral part of USP's "Total Rewards" employee benefits program. In fact, the program existed even before she took over commuter benefits for the US office about five years ago.

BOOSTING AWARENESS AND EDUCATING EMPLOYEES

Ms. Black says USP prioritizes getting the word out about the company's SmartBenefits program to drive participation. "From the hiring process to new hire orientation to lunch and learns every quarter, we make sure our employees know how to take advantage of our transportation benefits," says Black.

She attests that once employees get the hang of the program and begin using their benefits, they're happy to ditch their cars and take the Metro and other public transit to get to work. Where before they had to deal with traffic congestion and watch the road, employees can now read a book, prepare for their day, or take it easy and leave the driving to their trained bus or train operator.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF COLLABORATION

Ms. Black has also enlisted the help of staff at the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD), who provide resources to Rockville-area employers so they can give similar benefits to their employees. She says Traci McPhail and Peggy Schwartz from the TMD are always ready to help make the program work as smoothly as possible and come up with creative ways to get employees "on board"—literally!

You can find your local rideshare coordinator at commuterchoicemaryland.org. Or, if your business is also in the North Bethesda area, visit nbtc.org to talk to Traci and Peggy today!

What's Ms. Black's advice to anyone considering giving employee commuter benefits to their staff? "You don't have to do it alone." She says WMATA's SmartBenefits help center has a staff member dedicated to answering USP's SmartBenefits questions. USP employees can reach out directly for support in getting started, help when they lose their card, and solve any other account problems that may arise. SmartBenefits staff are even happy to set up shop at USP periodically to provide in-person support and information.

If you, like USP, are looking for ways to support your staff without breaking the bank, remember that Maryland employers can receive up to \$100 per employee per month to subsidize half the cost of commuter benefits by taking advantage of the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit. As our partners at USP can attest, the benefits to your organization are real and the support is ready when you need it.

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-Nikki Black

Senior Benefits Administrator,
USP