

**LIVE MORE, DRIVE LESS**

## **ORCA Business Programs**

### **What are ORCA Business Programs?**

ORCA Business programs make it easy for employers to offer transit passes as part of their benefits package. With two options to choose from — ORCA Passport and ORCA Choice — businesses of all sizes, industries, and budgets can find a program that meets their needs and the needs of their employees.



**Want to learn more? Contact Us!**

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July 17, 2023

## Businesses of all sizes are offering ORCA!

ORCA Business Programs, particularly ORCA Passport, are a great way for businesses to offer competitive benefits, meet sustainability goals, reduce the cost of transit for their employees, and improve the quality of life for their teams.

Many large businesses in our region have long had a culture of offering competitive commuter benefits.

More and more small businesses and front line industries see the value in offering a subsidized transit pass, and are able to do so thanks to historically low rates and programs like King County Metro's ORCA Business Incentive program.



**In 2022, 57.7% of new ORCA Passport programs started through Commute Seattle were from businesses with fewer than 20 employees.**



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## **Elliott Bay Book Company**

**Interview with Tracy Taylor, Co-Owner**

Elliott Bay Book Company is an independent bookstore located in the heart of Seattle's Capitol Hill Neighborhood. In 2016, at a time when many small businesses were not yet offering ORCA benefits, Elliott Bay began providing transit passes to their employees through ORCA Passport. The company continues to provide this benefit to all 32 of their staff.



Photo credit: Ben Lindbloom

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## The Motivation - Why ORCA?

In 2010, Elliott Bay Book Company moved to Capitol Hill from Pioneer Square. At the time, many of the staff lived in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, and were excited to work in the same neighborhood that they lived in.

Six years later, the cost of living in the neighborhood had increased dramatically.



Many staff had to move to more affordable areas, and were faced with a longer, more expensive commute.

Many employees were already commuting by bus, or the newly opened Capitol Hill Light Rail station, since parking around the store was limited. The company polled staff to gauge interest, and nearly everyone wanted to move forward with a transit benefit. In 2016, the company started an ORCA Passport program providing a mostly employer-subsidized transit pass to all employees.

**“The affordability factor for living in the neighborhood and working here have changed dramatically.”**

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# **Elliott Bay Book Company**

**Interview with Tracy Taylor, Co-Owner**

## **Employee Recruitment and Satisfaction**

ORCA Passport is a benefit that can help a business recruit and retain staff.

Elliott Bay talks about this benefit during the hiring and onboarding process for new staff, explaining that it can be used across the region and provides unlimited trips.

New employees are eager to receive their ORCA card on their first day and once they have it, they put it to use.



Photo credit: Ben Lindbloom

**Over the last year, 73% of Elliott Bay Book Company's staff have made use of their ORCA Card!**

**“Offering ORCA Passport is one of the better benefits that we’ve ever offered.”**

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## Key Takeaways

- Offering ORCA reduces the financial burden of taking transit for work, errands, and leisure. An individual monthly bus pass costs at least \$1,200 out of pocket. An employer-provided pass through ORCA Passport costs \$155 - \$388 per year, as of May 2023.
- Due to the high cost of living, many employees working at a small business in the city center can no longer afford to live in the neighborhood they work, making for longer, more expensive commutes.
- An employer-provided ORCA pass is cost-effective and helps recruit and retain staff.

**Want more information about ORCA Business Passport for your workplace? Contact us to learn more!**

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