

JUNE 2025

CASE STUDY:

Evergreen Goodwill

Empowering Employees



Evergreen Goodwill: Empowering Employees

Transportation Benefits are Part of Equitable Employment Initiatives

Evergreen Goodwill is committed to making sure everyone has access to good jobs, education, and financial stability. Many of their employees are starting their first job or have faced challenges in finding stable work. One of the biggest barriers? Transportation.

Goodwill recognizes that if employees can't get to work, they can't succeed. That's why they've put in place strong transportation programs to help their employees commute, no matter their situation. By offering transit benefits and education on non-driving options, Goodwill supports its workforce and serves as a model for other organizations looking to leverage transportation to improve access for every employee.

For many Goodwill employees, driving isn't an option. To make

commuting easier, Goodwill provides transportation education, subsidized transit passes, bike parking, and carpool support. This is particularly important in supporting employees who

Employees can't have life-changing jobs if they can't get there.

may already be experiencing challenges outside of the workplace. For example, for some people who have recently immigrated to the US, have disabilities, or are unable to afford a car, alternative transportation options are necessary to get to work.

Transportation benefits are an integral part of the total employee support system used by Goodwill. To accomplish a total employee support system, Goodwill integrates

transit benefits with other employee support programs like job matching, professional development, and financial assistance for essentials like rent and groceries. By treating transportation as an essential

benefit, Goodwill ensures employees can thrive both in and outside the workplace. Goodwill educates staff about its transportation benefits during onboarding, as a key part of job training and professional development, and provides frequently updated resources on its intranet. These educational elements ensure that employees know how to access their transportation benefits.



Organization-wide Transportation

Evergreen Goodwill operates in 23 locations across the Puget Sound region, with its central offices situated in Seattle's Little Saigon neighborhood. Although only the central office is subject to Washington's and City of Seattle's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law, the organization actively works to improve transportation access for employees at all locations.

Goodwill's Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) collaborates with Commute Seattle, the City of Seattle, and King County Metro to provide transportation resources and education to all employees, regardless of regulatory requirements. Many locations employ shift workers who often belong to communities that benefit the most from transportation assistance. By extending transportation programs to all locations, Evergreen Goodwill ensures that

commuting support reaches those who need it most while increasing the number of potential employees.

To further promote equitable transportation access, the organization has taken steps to include its non-CTR worksites in commuting surveys and planning efforts. One recommended strategy is for Evergreen Goodwill to designate all their worksites as voluntary CTR participants. Like CTR worksites, voluntary sites also receive the same level of coaching and support from Commute Seattle, can participate in surveys and program reports, and worksite staff get access to events and education. The difference? Voluntary sites are exempt from compliance requirements, making voluntary site status a low pressure way to participate in commute education and support for a worksite.



ORCA at Evergreen Goodwill

In August 2024, Evergreen Goodwill began offering a subsidized ORCA card to all employees. ORCA provides access to multiple transit systems, including Community Transit, Everett Transit, Kitsap Transit, King County Metro, Pierce Transit, Seattle Streetcar and Monorail, and Sound Transit. Given Goodwill’s widespread presence across the region, this program plays a crucial role in improving employee mobility regardless of destination.

The response to the ORCA card program has been overwhelmingly positive, with 25% of ORCA card holders already making use of their new benefit. While this program is quite new—the People & Culture team are still gathering feedback from store managers on the wider impact on staff attendance and job accessibility—employees have said they appreciate

the flexibility it provides. With an ORCA card in hand, employees can commute to work, run errands, and participate in social activities without relying on a personal vehicle. Quite a few employees have also said that they were already taking transit regularly because they did not have access to a car and that this has reduced the cost of their commutes significantly.

With a large employee population, Evergreen Goodwill’s ORCA contract is customized to fit the organization’s size and workforce needs. King County Metro collaborates with large employers (500+ employees), such as Goodwill, to create tailored contracts based on actual transit usage, ensuring cost-effectiveness. Through its partnerships with Commute Seattle and King County Metro, Evergreen Goodwill

has ensured that employees across all locations can benefit from accessible and affordable transportation.



**Contact us to learn
more about ORCA**

Lessons to Apply to Your Worksite

- **Provide transportation support and education at all locations, regardless of location requirements.** Worksites that are not required to comply with CTR laws can still benefit from transportation programs with the extra bonus that every location will appeal to future hires. Voluntary participation in transportation surveys and planning can ensure that all employees receive support.
- **Integrate transit benefits into employee compensation packages and onboarding.** Transportation assistance should be viewed as an essential benefit, alongside health and wellness programs, to improve overall employee well-being. Another benefit: transit passes are a tax-free employee benefit per IRS 132(f), keeping expenses low.
- **Prioritize transportation solutions for underserved communities to support existing employees and reach new ones.** Employees and potential hires facing financial challenges, recent immigration, or disabilities often have the greatest need for alternative commuting options. Providing transit benefits helps make employment more accessible for these groups and can expand your applicant pool for any job openings.

