



Holly Poultry: A Commuter Benefits Partnership That Delivers



Pictured to the Right:
Holly Poultry employees
at their West Baltimore
facility (Source: The
Maryland Daily Record).

“Transit access
is one of the
benefits we
highlight
during
orientation.
Anything and
everything
helps, and
offering that
benefit is
meaningful
for our
employees.”

-Erin McGinnis

Human Resources
Director, Holly Poultry



Holly Poultry has been part of the Commuter Choice Maryland program for many years, and the partnership continues to grow. As a poultry processing and distribution company with a workforce of over 500 employees, Holly Poultry knows that getting people to work reliably is more than a nice-to-have. It is fundamental to running an effective food service operation. Most of their staff work hourly schedules on-site in the warehouse or on the production floor, and their ability to commute matters at every level: for attendance, retention, and the practical day-to-day operations of their busy campus.

What started as a paper transit ticket benefit at Holly Poultry has grown into a comprehensive, proactive commuter program that reaches employees across multiple locations. This Super Spotlight article reviews how they got there and what other employers could learn from their example.

STARTING WITH THE BASICS: FREE TRANSIT ACCESS FOR EVERYONE

Holly Poultry's Baltimore location sits right in the City of Baltimore, close to a bus stop. That proximity is only useful, though, if employees can afford the fare. The company recognized early on that the cost of a ride could prevent employees from making their shifts, and they acted on it.

For years, Holly Poultry provided bus passes to employees, including back in the days of paper tickets. When the Maryland Transit Administration launched CharmPass, a mobile ticketing platform, Holly Poultry made the switch to a fully digital process. Today, human resources director Erin McGinnis oversees a program that provides a monthly bus pass, free of charge, to eligible employees. The eligibility bar is intentionally low: two weeks of employment with good attendance. Enrollment information and a QR code to the sign-up form are available in the on-site HR office, and Erin makes sure the benefit stays visible and approachable long after employees are onboarded to the team.

“We’re located right in Baltimore, so it is very important to us that we’re bus-accessible,” Erin says.

That accessibility starts at orientation, where Erin introduces the CharmPass benefit in detail. Commuter Choice Maryland supports the effort by providing flyers and materials that Holly Poultry posts on communication boards in the break room. The goal is to make sure every employee knows what benefits are available to them at the company.

THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Holly Poultry distributes more than 100 CharmPasses per month, and that number has grown alongside their recent hiring expansion. The impacts are clear:

- **Attendance and reliability have improved.** When employees have a dependable, affordable way to get to work, they show up more consistently. And that reliability translates directly into operational stability.
- **Hiring and retention have gotten easier.** In a competitive labor market, benefits matter, especially for hourly workers weighing different job offers. A free monthly transit pass is a tangible, immediate perk that helps during recruitment and keeps people around once they are hired.
- **Parking pressure has been reduced.** Holly Poultry offers free parking, but with the company growing rapidly, available spots have become increasingly scarce. Every employee who rides the bus frees up space on a busy campus — the commuter benefit doubles as an operational tool.



"Holly Poultry has been a great partner to work with and is committed to making sure their employees are aware of and have access to the many commuting options and incentives available to Marylanders. It's clear they genuinely want to provide their staff with as many transportation choices as possible."

- Nikki Trasmonte

TDM Coordinator,
Commuter Choice
Maryland

Pictured to the Right: Erin McGinnis, HR Director at Holly Poultry.

MAKING IT EASY: THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE

Erin notes that one of the most consistent aspects about the program is how little friction it involves. Moving to CharmPass eliminated the logistics of paper tickets, and the CharmPass team's responsiveness has kept things running smoothly ever since.

"We send the list over to them every month and they upload the CharmPasses," Erin explains. "They're always super responsive if we need to get someone added. They're always extremely helpful."

Holly Poultry also takes advantage of the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, which offsets a portion of the transportation-related costs the company invests in. The process, Erin notes, has been equally smooth: "We have been utilizing the MD Commuter Tax Credit since before I started in 2020. It's been a smooth process overall. The credit has helped Holly Poultry by reducing transportation-related costs and supporting our efforts to provide commuting benefits to employees."

For an HR director managing a workforce of close to 500, this **low-lift, high-impact** program is exactly what is needed. Erin believes in the mission of Commuter Choice Maryland so much that she has even participated in recent webinars to share her story with other employers across the state of Maryland. Her perspective and commitment to making Holly Poultry employees' commutes easier have been valuable contributions to the program.

REAL CHALLENGES, REAL SOLUTIONS

Holly Poultry is candid about where the program runs into challenges. For employees working later shifts, bus schedules can be a challenge; the last bus of the night does not always line up with the end of a production run. Bad weather adds another layer of uncertainty.

That is why Erin is actively looking at the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program as a next step. GRH is a benefit that gives transit riders a free emergency ride home when they need to stay late, pick up a sick child, or face a schedule disruption. Promoting Guaranteed Ride Home to employees at their Baltimore location is a priority as they continue to grow the program.

This defines how Holly Poultry approaches commuter benefits: they identify a gap, they find a solution, and then they make it accessible.

GROWING THE PARTNERSHIP: A NEW LOCATION

In April 2026, Holly Poultry opened a second location: a retail campus in Hanover, Maryland (Anne Arundel County). The expansion is expected to add 400 new jobs in Anne Arundel County while contributing to economic growth in the wholesale distribution industry across the Mid-Atlantic region. With a new site comes a new set of commuting questions, and Holly Poultry did not wait to start looking for answers.

Working with Commuter Choice Maryland's Employer Partner program and local rideshare coordinator Kierra Randolph, Erin and her team explored solutions for employees' last-mile commuting needs at the Hanover location. CCM provided information on statewide commuter programs, incentives, and resources to support the new workforce. Erin has been particularly engaged in promoting Guaranteed Ride Home to employees commuting to the new office — recognizing that last-mile reliability is one of the biggest factors in whether employees feel comfortable leaving their car at home.

The collaboration around the Hanover opening reflects what makes this partnership work. Holly Poultry brings resources to employees proactively — the same approach that made CharmPass a success for their employees in Baltimore.





ADVICE FOR OTHER EMPLOYERS

When asked what she would tell other employers considering a program like this, Erin is direct: it is worth it, and it is easier than you think.

She also pushes back on a common assumption. Some employers dismiss transit benefits by saying most of their workforce drives. Erin's response: you might be surprised by how many potential employees you are missing out on. There are likely groups of people who rely on public transit and would work for your company if that option were available in the first place.

"I would definitely say it is something worth exploring," she says, "to offer that added benefit to employees to help not only with attendance, but recruiting efforts and retention."

The CharmPass team handles enrollment logistics. Commuter Choice Maryland provides outreach materials, expertise, and ongoing support. The Maryland Commuter Tax Credit helps make the financial case to leadership. And the return in attendance, retention, and recruitment shows up quickly.

Holly Poultry's story is a practical one. It is about identifying a real barrier in the cost of getting to work and removing it in a way that is sustainable, scalable, and supported at every step.