



EMPLOYER PROFILE

EASIER COMMUTES MAKE SENSE: OFFICENSE

Pictured Above: Members of the OFFICENSE core HQ team in Baltimore

Located in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, [OFFICENSE](#) provides flexible workspace solutions and administrative services to a range of large and small companies. OFFICENSE depends on its detail-oriented, problem-solving staff to provide clients with top-tier service. With employees' daily commutes plagued by rush hour traffic in and around the Inner Harbor, OFFICENSE knew something had to be done to improve the quality of life of its employees. To support employee wellbeing, OFFICENSE reached out to Commuter Choice Maryland, a program of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), to understand how to improve their employees' commutes.

The company met with Commuter Choice Maryland and received assistance with developing and administering a travel survey for employees. The findings were used to develop a benefits program that encourages non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commutes. The Director of Sales and Marketing, Noah Shumway, explains how recognizing the benefits of an alternative commute was a no-brainer: "Assisting our staff by providing alternate, less stressful, and more economical forms of transportation to and from the office was a natural fit for our company's philosophy."

After consulting with Commuter Choice Maryland and engaging with company employees, OFFICENSE developed a monthly commuter benefit program. Employees that opt-in to the program receive \$74 per month in additional compensation, equivalent to the cost of an MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) Monthly Bus Pass, which they can use to subsidize costs associated with non-SOV commutes. The policy also recognizes and accommodates how employees are commuting. Shumway notes that the company "understands some employees may take transit less than 20 days a month or use a hybrid model of commuting," so OFFICENSE is leaving the procurement of passes up to their employees. In crafting the policy, OFFICENSE, "wanted to provide options that would be fair to all employees and that would consider alternate modes. We did not want to exclude any non-SOV modes and found that our team used a variety of modes, not just bus or rail," according to Shumway. OFFICENSE's policy specifically mentions public transit, ridesharing, biking, and walking.

The policy has been a success. According to Shumway:

"[OFFICENSE] discussed in detail with the staff prior to implementing to gauge how many employees would benefit. We are a team of six and several were driving alone prior to this program. While two employees were already using transit or walking, they would still benefit from reimbursement for transit costs. Other employees were driving some days and taking transit only about half the time. The result of the program has been that all of the team is now using transit nearly every day of the work week. Of [our] six employees, all are [currently] using either light rail, bus, bike, walk, or circulator..."

Surveys of staff have reported the many positive benefits transit commuters enjoy: "[Employees] have found their travel to be much more pleasant now that they are able to read, listen to a podcast, or plan out their day during their morning {commute}, instead of actively engaging with traffic," says Shumway.

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-Noah Shumway

Director - Sales and Marketing at OFFICENSE

"The Commuter Benefits program has allowed us to provide another benefit that makes us more competitive recruiters. It has also greatly helped our existing team and improved their work experience and health."

-Noah Shumway

Director - Sales and Marketing at OFFICENSE

OFFICENSE's Shumway is enthusiastic about the benefits to staff and company culture afforded by its commuter incentive. Keeping the program flexible and centering the needs of the company's staff to perform at their highest potential for OFFICENSE's clients were key to OFFICENSE's continued success. In terms of establishing and administering the program, Shumway explains that, "the support from the Commuter Choice Maryland team providing sample materials and answering questions [made] the process very easy." Shumway said that he would, "recommend that any business owner reach out to [Commuter Choice Maryland] directly and set up a call to discuss the program."

Pictured Below: MDOT MTA CityLink RED bus in Baltimore's Inner Harbor
(Credit: MDOT MTA)

