



United We Work Free Transportation Program

United We Work is a program developed by United Way of Southeast Missouri in collaboration with the Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority (CTA), area employers, social service agencies, and banking partners.

In a recent community survey, a lack of reliable transportation was listed by job seekers, employers, and employees as a key obstacle to obtaining and maintaining steady employment. **United We Work** is being launched with considerable funding from Healthy Blue Missouri. The program is designed to help entry-level employees with low to moderate income overcome obstacles to employment and self-sufficiency. While improving overall quality of life that is supported by consistent employment, **United We Work** has three specific goals:

1. Provide transportation to new employees with low to moderate income who do not have a reliable means of getting to and from work. (Some exceptions might be made for employees who are not new to a job.)
2. Empower these employees with basic budgeting knowledge and the incentive to save a small portion of their earnings to provide for future transportation.
3. Create relationships between entry-level workers and banking partners to assist with financial matters, including credit repair, micro loans, and long-term financial needs.

Overview

- In partnership with the Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority (CTA), United Way of Southeast Missouri will provide transportation vouchers to new employees for the first month of employment.
- CTA currently offers two free bus routes (north/south and east/west) and on-demand service from point to point. These vouchers will be for employees who cannot utilize the bus service and require on-demand transportation.
- Human Resource Directors, supervisors, CTA, and United Way-funded social services will inform new employees who do not have reliable transportation about the United We Work transportation program and provide information and an application for the program. This application can be found at: <https://unitedwayofsemo.org/united-we-work/>
- The employee will complete the application, and the supervisor will sign and email it to support@unitedwayofsemo.org. We will upload all information into a spreadsheet shared with CTA and banking partners. (Participating banks and contact information can be found at: <https://unitedwayofsemo.org/united-we-work/>)
- The employee needs to contact CTA to schedule transportation beginning two days after the application is submitted. (We need to allow two days to get everything entered, shared, and scheduled.)
- **To participate in the program, the employee must:**
 - Contact CTA at 573-335-5533 to schedule their pickup two days from submitting the **United We Work** application.
 - Within two weeks visit one of the participating banking partners of their choice who will
 - 1) help them establish a savings account
 - 2) Create a budget and help the employee determine a portion of each paycheck to be held in a savings account to ensure they will have continued transportation.

- **United We Work** is structured to ease employees into bearing the full cost of transportation:
 - MONTH 1: Eligible employees will receive free round-trip transportation from their home to their place of employment. (Both pickup and place of employment must be in Cape Girardeau or Jackson.) **Employee must visit a banking partner to create budget and auto draft for future transportation savings.**
 - MONTH 2: Employee will contribute 50% of the round-trip cost.
 - MONTH 3: Employee uses savings to pay full cost of transportation.
 - An individual needing assistance longer would need approval from CTA and their HR director or supervisor. Records will be kept to ensure each individual participates in **United We Work** only once per 18-month period.

Expectations of HR Directors, Partners, CTA

- Workplaces will inform new hires struggling with transportation about **United We Work** and direct them to the webpage.
- All participating partners must do everything possible to encourage and support participants.
- Workplace partners must sign and submit employee application confirming employment.
- If 6 or more employees from one workplace need transportation, workplace will contact CTA to discuss option of sharing Ride-to-Work bus.
- Employers will participate in automatic deposit to enable autodraft for future transportation expenses.

Expectations of United We Work Participants

- Have limited transportation options to be eligible (employees who can use free bus routes are not eligible)
- Must have supervisor sign and submit completed application to:
support@unitedwayofsemo.org
- Provide own transportation for first two days
- Contact CTA to schedule pickup and delivery for 30 days
- Within first two weeks of employment, must visit participating financial institution to complete budget and establish savings account. If employee does not complete this step within two weeks of application being sent to UWSEMO, free transportation will end.

Expectations of UWSEMO

- Publicize program to the appropriate audiences
- Communicate with CTA and enter info submitted by employees into shared form
- Pay CTA for redeemed rides
- Communicate with hiring managers, provide necessary materials, and collect follow-up data
- Record and report results.