

Agricultural Worker Vanpools Pilot Project XL Hybrid Vehicles

The California Vanpool Authority (CalVans) helps keep our roadways safe and agribusiness productive by providing agricultural workers living in low-income and disadvantaged communities statewide with safe, affordable and reliable vans for use in driving themselves and others to job sites. CalVans' program meets all state and federal requirements for farm labor transportation for H2A projects. The project uses clean technology hybrid vans, resulting in a 25 percent reduction in harmful tailpipe emissions compared to gasoline counterparts, in addition to reducing emissions through the use of shared mobility. Riders pay a modest fee to ride in a CalVans vanpool; cost varies, but most riders pay a little over \$2.00 per ride. This fee covers CalVans' cost of maintaining and insuring the vans, and cost of replacement when vans wear out. Drivers receive no pay; they volunteer to operate a vanpool and manage ridership.



The Ag Worker Vanpool Pilot Project is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Dates: June 1, 2018 – Spring 2021
Grantee: California Vanpool Authority
CalVans

Grant Amount:
CARB Contribution: \$4,700,000
Matching Funds: \$1,175,000
Project Total: \$5,875,000



Vehicles/Equipment Funded

The project launched in the spring of 2019 with deployment of 154 General Motors, 15-passenger hybrid vans upfitted with XL hybrid conversion kits. CalVans received additional funding under a \$4.7 million expansion grant to support upcoming deployment of 111 hybrid vans in the spring of 2020 (for a total of 265 hybrid vans). Approximately 70 percent of the project fleet is deployed are in the San Joaquin Valley, with remaining deployments in the Coachella Valley, Salinas Valley, Santa Maria and South Coast.

Lessons Learned

- Effective outreach incorporates several methods, such as community events conducted in Spanish, broadcast media (local radio), and digital media (social media ads and videos, 'Pay Per Click' ads on web search engines, geo targeted ads across mobile devices, and 'Live Chat' on CalVans website).
- Ridership surveys, vehicle telematics, and other participant feedback is critical to assess project effectiveness, quantify emission benefits, and adaptively manage the project. The cloud-based "Silent Passenger" system provides real-time information on vanpool vehicles, providing the ability to schedule maintenance, track engine trouble codes, monitor speeds and track vehicle miles traveled.
- Problems within the manufacturing supply chain and shipping delays at the factory postponed van deliveries resulting in a later launch than desired; vans should be ordered as far in advance as possible to when they are needed.
- Vehicle manufacturers should integrate clean technology equipment into their dealership and sales structure for simplicity and service support to the customer.

Project Highlights

- The hybrid vans funded under this project comprise 16% of CalVans overall vanpool fleet and 25% of its agricultural worker vanpool fleet.
- In the first season following project launch, grant-funded vanpools served an average of 15,000 agricultural workers.
- CalVans is the only recognized agricultural worker transportation program in the nation and the only public transit agency in the United States certified by the U.S. Department of Labor to provide agricultural worker transportation under the H-2A guest worker program.