MBTA 5-Day Flex Pass and MIT subsidy
June 2023 update

The 5-Day Flex Pass for the commuter rail, first introduced by the MBTA during the COVID pandemic to accommodate evolving work schedules, is now a permanent option at the MBTA. It is available exclusively on the MBTA’s mTicket mobile app and provides five round-trip tickets (discounted 10%) for commuter rail travel, good at any time during the 30-day period following the purchase.

For benefits-eligible Cambridge-based employees, MIT subsidizes 50% of the 5-Day Flex Pass cost. This subsidy program ends in August 2023 (submit expenses for reimbursement before September 15; see below).

Participants who have an MIT-subsidized monthly MBTA pass will need to cancel the monthly pass before purchasing a Flex Pass in order to be eligible for Flex Pass reimbursement. Note that the monthly pass is a more cost-effective option for a participant who is likely to need more than two Flex Passes in a single month. See more information below.

Purchasing and using a 5-Day Flex Pass

Download the MBTA mTicket app, go to Buy Tickets, and select your origin and destination commuter rail stations. The 5-Day Flex Pass will appear in the list of ticket options. Note that the Flex Pass is the only ticket option on the mTicket app eligible for reimbursement through MIT.

- When you purchase a 5-Day Flex Pass on the app, five round-trip commuter rail tickets will be loaded into your Ticket Wallet on the app (note that all five tickets are for travel between the same origin and destination stations).
- The cost of a Flex Pass varies by zone (based on origin and destination stations).
- To use a round-trip Flex Pass ticket, open the Ticket Wallet, choose a ticket, and activate it; show the resulting QR code to the conductor. Show the code again for the return trip.
- Each Flex Pass ticket can be used for one round trip during any 24-hour period within 30 days of purchase.
- Each ticket expires 24 hours after activation; unused tickets expire at the end of the 30-day period.

Note that unlike the MIT-subsidized monthly MBTA pass, Flex Pass tickets are not valid for the subway or bus.

- Flex Pass participants can use the Access MIT Pass embedded in their MIT ID cards for subway and local bus travel.
- However, if you routinely purchase a monthly MBTA pass through MIT, the Access MIT chip in your card has been disabled, and you will need a new ID card to access the subway/bus benefit; see more information below.
How to obtain MIT’s 50% Flex Pass subsidy via reimbursement

MIT subsidizes (through reimbursement) 50% of the 5-Day Flex Pass cost. To obtain this reimbursement:

- Save/download the Flex Pass purchase receipt on your computer or device.
- Visit the Transit/Parking Reimbursement page on the Atlas website; go to About Me/Commuting Benefits, scroll down to the Transit/Parking Reimbursement section, and click on Submit an Expense (or Manage Account/Add Expense, if you’ve submitted expenses in the past).
- On the Transit/Parking Reimbursement page, use the Transit Expenses section and enter “5-Day Flex Pass” as the Transit Company Name.
- Enter the cost of your Flex Pass (this varies by zone), and Atlas will calculate the 50% discount and display the result, which is the amount of your reimbursement.
- Browse the files on your computer or device to locate and upload your receipt to the Attach Receipt(s) section. Save and exit or – if you have added all of your receipts for the month – click the submit button. (Upload August receipts before September 15, 2023, as the program is ending.)

Reimbursement cap

- Note that participants in any MIT-subsidized MBTA monthly pass program, including the Flex Pass program, are not eligible to seek reimbursement for private transit travel. However, reimbursements for Flex Pass participants are processed through the Transit/Parking form on the Atlas website.
- Note also that all reimbursements through the Transit/Parking form on Atlas are capped at $255/month, including the Flex Pass reimbursement. For participants who also use the Access MIT Pass for bus and/or subway travel, the cap is set at $165/month to reflect the value of this benefit ($90/month).

Instructions for MBTA monthly pass holders

If you have an MIT-subsidized monthly MBTA pass, and you want to participate in the reimbursement program for a 5-Day Flex Pass:

- Remember that the monthly pass is a more cost-effective option for a participant who is likely to need more than two Flex Passes in a single month.
- Before purchasing a Flex Pass, access your account on the Atlas website and cancel your monthly pass.
- Important note: The Flex Pass tickets, unlike the monthly T-pass, are valid for commuter rail only. If you want to use the Access MIT chip in your ID card for subway and/or local bus travel in conjunction with a Flex Pass, you will need a new MIT ID card (because the chip in your card is disabled if you have been participating in MIT’s monthly T-pass program).
- Confirm your mailing address on Atlas and provide your mailing address to atlascenter@mit.edu if the new ID should be mailed to you. You can also pick up the new ID at the Atlas Service Center (40 Ames Street, E17 106).
- If you seek reimbursement for a Flex Pass but have not canceled your monthly MIT-subsidized MBTA pass, the Parking & Transportation Office will notify you that you are not eligible for Flex Pass reimbursement.
- If you want to return to using an MIT-subsidized monthly MBTA pass instead of the Flex Pass, you can sign up again for the monthly pass through Atlas. Note that the Parking & Transportation Office will disable the Access MIT chip in your MIT ID card at that point, since subway and bus travel are included in the monthly MBTA pass.