



Alameda County  
Transportation Commission



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION



# Cocoa for Carpools Toolkit

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission ([alamedactc.org](http://alamedactc.org)) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.

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# What is this Event?

Cocoa for Carpools is an event organized and led by high school students that encourages students, parents, and other members of school staff to carpool to school or work. On the day of the event, each carpooler receives a “thank you” cup of hot cocoa when they arrive at school.

Cocoa for Carpools is typically held in the winter (November-February) approximately 30 minutes before school. Schools can hold the event for as many days as they want during this time.

## Event Goals

### Carpooling can help...

-  Reduce traffic congestion
-  Reduce air pollution by taking additional cars off the road.
-  Make streets near schools safer

### Within the school community, carpooling can...

-  Build a sense of community
-  Encourage sustainable transportation where options for walking, biking, or riding public transit may not be available

## What's inside this toolkit?

-  How to host an event
-  What's needed for your event
-  A planning timeline
-  Event tools



# How to Host an Event

## How do you get started or build on past years' events?

Whether you're new to Cocoa for Carpools or it's a tradition at your school, we have many tools available to help make your event a success! Depending on your resources and the amount of time you have to plan, you may choose to hold an event that is simple or one that is elaborate. Even a small event can inspire a successful year of walking and biking.

At a minimum, you'll want to promote your event to students and parents and coordinate with staff. We ask that you also keep track of and report back on how people arrive at school by carpool that day to help us measure this event's success and improve it in future years. Keep reading for details and helpful planning tips.

## How does it work?

During the event, volunteers hand out tickets to students, teachers, staff, and others who carpool to school or work. The carpoolers then redeem their tickets for a cup of hot cocoa at the welcome table, which is staffed by student volunteers.

The volunteers may hand out the tickets near the entrance of the school or work site or the parking lot, as long as it is in a safe location. The welcome table may also be at the entrance of the school or work site or in a more central location (such as a school quad).

## What will the event coordinator (or a volunteer) need to do?

### Before the event:

-  Set a date (with school administration approval)
-  Promote the event
-  Reach out to businesses to seek donations or equipment rental (such as hot water or cambros)
-  Organize volunteers to pass out tickets and prepare and distribute the hot cocoa
-  Coordinate supplies (see supply list on next page)



### During the event:

-  Set up a welcome table
-  Coordinate volunteers
-  Oversee the event

# Event Supplies

The following supplies should be provided or organized by event coordinator:

- » Promotional materials such as posters and flyers
  - » Hot Cocoa Supplies
  - » Hot cocoa packets
  - » Hot water
  - » Cambro/thermos to store and pour hot water
  - » Cups (or have students and staff bring their own!)
  - » Mixing sticks
- » **Welcome Table Materials**
    - » Table(s)
    - » Chair(s)
    - » Welcoming sign
    - » Napkins
    - » Decorations (optional)
    - » Music (optional)
    - » Lids (optional)
    - » Cup sleeves (optional)
- » **Additional Supplies**
    - » Tickets (e.g., raffle tickets)
    - » Box to hold tickets
    - » Tally Sheet (at end of toolkit)
    - » Photo waiver (at end of toolkit)\*
    - » Pens
    - » Camera

# Planning Timeline

\* A photo waiver is needed if a photo is taken of a student under the age of 18. A waiver can be found on Page 6.

Here's a suggested timeline to help you plan and promote your Cocoa for Carpools event. Adjust the timeline for your school's event, as needed.

## At least 4 weeks before event:

- » Schedule a meeting with your principal to ensure support for Cocoa for Carpools and to confirm the date(s). Ask for permission to send out information to parents and teachers. Discuss logistics for the event.
- » Share date(s) with Alameda County SR2S coordinators.
- » Start recruiting volunteers! Present at a staff meeting or to student groups on campus.
- » Design and finalize promotional posters and flyers. These can be handmade or printed. Optional: Contact printing companies for quotes if not printing in-house.
- » Optional: Contact local businesses for donations. For example, Starbucks has donated cambros (either 1- or 2-gallon sized) and hot water. A sample donation request letter can be found at the end of the toolkit.

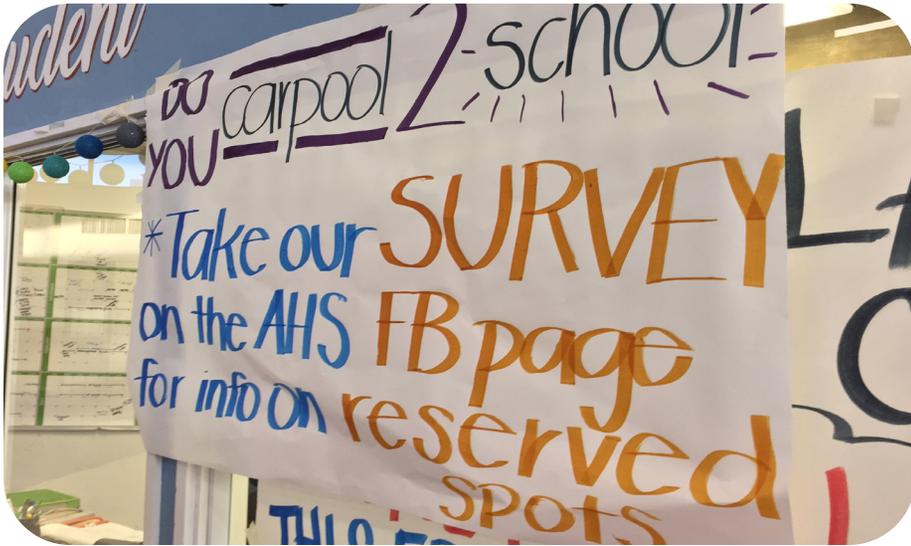


## 1 - 2 weeks before event:

- » Continue to promote your event through backpack mail, newsletter announcements, parent emails, etc. (See the resource section for sample promotional materials.)
- » Hang up promotional posters and flyers around your school.
- » Promote event via newsletter, parent letter, staff emails, morning announcements, etc.
- » Continue to recruit volunteers.
- » Check with the administrative and custodial staff for early access to the school building. Arrange for a greeting table (and chairs) to be set up and confirm its location. If applicable, double-check with businesses that may be donating or renting out supplies for the event to ensure that everything is in order.



# Get the Word Out!



- 🍷 Send flyers home
- 🍷 Make PA announcements
- 🍷 Make and hang up banners and posters
- 🍷 Place a blurb in the school newsletter
- 🍷 Post event on school marquee (if available)
- 🍷 Notify teachers via staff announcements
- 🍷 Use school email list (if there is one)

## 1 day before event:

- » Confirm with volunteers that will be handing out tickets and making cocoa at the welcome table.
- » Make sure that custodial staff will open the school early and confirm the earlier request for the welcome table and chairs.
- » If applicable, pick up your donated or rented supplies from businesses.



## Day of event:

- » Show up early to set up! You will need to arrive at least 45 minutes before school starts. Plan to have the welcome table set-up, hot cocoa made, and giveaways ready at least 25 minutes before the bell rings. Students and other carpoolers who show up early will want to be included in the festivities.
- » Create a festive environment with music, decorate the table, draw on the sidewalk with sidewalk chalk, etc.
- » Have boxes ready to store tickets as carpoolers arrive; use the tally sheet at the end of this toolkit to track participation after the event.
- » Take pictures, and consider sharing them on the Alameda County SR2S Facebook page ([facebook.com/saferoutestoschool](https://facebook.com/saferoutestoschool))!
- » **Have fun and celebrate your success!**



# Event Tools

## Tally Sheet - Cocoa for Carpools Participation

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reporting Instructions

- » Count the number of tickets collected from the Cocoa for Carpools event and write them in the tally box below.
- » Email your numbers (or a photo of this sheet) to your site coordinator at the end of your event.
- » Go to [alamedacountysr2s.org/about-safe-routes/our-team/](http://alamedacountysr2s.org/about-safe-routes/our-team/) to get your site coordinator's name and contact information.

### Number of Carpoolers

Based on number of tickets collected

TALLY

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# Sample Donation Request Letter

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**[Date]**

Dear **[Coffee Shop Name]**,

Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools in partnership with **[School Name]** will be holding our annual Cocoa for Carpools event on **[date]**, from **[start time]** to **[end time]**, at **[location]**. This award-winning winter event is a way to promote safe and shared transportation for students going to school and reduce traffic pollution. We are collaborating with student clubs around campus who will be making hot cocoa for students, school staff, and administrators that carpool to school.

However, a limited budget makes it difficult for our us to throw a successful event without help from supporters like you. We are asking your business to lend us two 5-gallon cambros filled with hot water. We understand your branch may only carry one of these, so we ask if you can coordinate with another nearby branch to procure an additional cambro. We will pick up the cambro(s) at 6:30am and drop them off at 11am on the same day. All other supplies will be taken care of by our team.

Please know that your contributions will allow our event to be a success for everyone involved at **[School Name]**. We are happy to share information about your sponsorship at the event if you would like, so please let us know what you prefer. I will follow up with you within the next week to coordinate any additional logistics. We are a 501(c)(3) and all gifts to us are tax-deductible. Our tax-ID number is **[Tax ID Number]**. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Darrell Davis  
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 High School Program Specialist  
 Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program  
 560 14th Street, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94612  
 (510) 740-9328  
 ddavis@alamedacountysr2s.org

**[Student Contact]**

**[School Name]**

**[School Address]**

**[Phone Number]**

**[Email Address]**





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