

Carsharing is an alternative to car ownership. It bridges the gap between car ownership and public transportation.

What is Carsharing?

Carsharing is an organized membership to access a fleet of cars. Currently there are two main companies in the U.S.A.: Flexcar and Zipcar. They operate mainly on the east and west coasts, but carsharing will soon be in large cities throughout the U.S.

For more information about these companies, visit their websites at:

<http://www.flexcar.com/> - Feel trapped by your car? Tired of paying through the roof for gas? Frustrated by searching for parking? Free yourself from the cost and hassle of car ownership with Flexcar.

<http://www.zipcar.com/> - Zipcar is car sharing. You can drive cars by the hour or day. Includes gas, insurance, and parking. MINIs, VWs, BMWs, SUVs, pick-up trucks and more. Simply reserve online and drive away

The company takes the responsibility of buying, registering, insuring and fuelling the vehicle. You join by paying a monthly membership fee, once a member you simply pay a usage fee each time you use the vehicle (usually \$8-10/hour or \$50/day). The cars are parked throughout the city. You can book a car by phone or online, once booked you can go directly to the vehicle in your neighborhood and unlock it with a member-only swipe card. After usage you simply return the car back to the designated parking space.

Benefits:

- You can have access to a vehicle without the cost and responsibility of owning one.
- The company pays for buying, registering, gas, and maintenance.
- The company also keeps the fleet of cars up-to-date by replacing vehicles every 10 years or so.
- Carsharing reduces car ownership, which reduces pollution and increases parking space in the city. It is often viewed as a form of public transportation and is a cost-effective alternative to car rental.

Idea?

Many organizations can join a carshare under one membership and allow all employees access to a fleet of vehicles. This would be a great idea to suggest to a future employer if in a large city.

If you would like more information on carsharing contact Jill Hackman, who worked at a Carshare in Sydney last semester, at jill.hackman@wartburg.edu.