

Behind the Scenes



Executive Director's Report

It's budget season again and Access staff have been working with the Access Board of Directors and our partners at Metro to develop the Agency's FY 23 budget.

The proposed FY2022/2023 budget is based on demand projections conducted by Access' service demand consultant HDR Engineering, Inc., available funding, existing programs and capital needs. Overall, the proposed budget is based on a funding level of \$251.9 million, comprised of \$218 million for paratransit and Agency operations and nearly \$34 million in capital – mainly for replacement accessible paratransit vehicles. The budget will provide for the delivery of 3.4 million passenger trips.

In order to address some of the difficulties our contractors are having hiring and retaining qualified employees, particularly drivers, staff is proposing additional funding to enhance contractor employee wages. Staff is also proposing assistance to help our contractors incentivize taxicab operators to perform Access trips. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 50% of Access trips were serviced by taxicabs, which enhanced both system performance and overall cost efficiency. Currently, 32% of Access trips are serviced by taxicabs.

The proposed budget was recently heard by Access' Planning and Development Committee and will be reviewed by the full Access Board of Directors on Monday, June 20th.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

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Spring CalACT Conference



Access staff recently attended the California Association of Coordinated Transportation (CalACT) Conference that was held in Newport Beach. For many, like myself, this was their first in-person conference since the last two conferences were virtual. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow transportation professionals from around the state.

The conference opened with a dynamic speaker, George Carroll, a former collegiate football player who was severely injured in his last season at the University of Northern Colorado. He shared his powerful story of dealing with hardship, depression, and suicidal thoughts. His most prominent message for the CalACT attendees was how change is an inevitable aspect of the transportation industry and agencies and professionals, to be successful, must be able to adapt when the industry experiences changes like the ones brought on by the COVID pandemic.

Some of the conference topics included: The ADA's Service Animal and Reasonable Modification Requirements; Community Engagement and Coalition Building; Improving Your Riders' Choice; Services Beyond the ADA; ADA Compliance Issues Agencies Struggle With; and Connecting Riders Through Mobility-On-Demand.

Among the many fascinating sessions, two stood out as having a wealth of information. First, a session on the ADA's Service Animal and Reasonable Modification Requirements introduced a number of topics and the audience learned about different types of service animals and how, in some situations, having an animal on a leash could prevent the animal from performing all of its trained tasks (for example if they are trained to get help in the event their owner

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collapses). Another session, "Seven ADA Compliance Issues Agencies Struggle With," where we learned about different services that various paratransit systems introduced during the COVID pandemic, and how agencies are reviewing which programs they may be able to keep and which they may have to discontinue.

The CalACT Conference enabled those in attendance to gain a wealth of knowledge about the paratransit industry. Being able to finally attend the conference in person only enhances the experience.

Dina Garcia
Assistant Administrative Analyst

Building Skills for Successful Transportation Program Delivery



The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) hosted a virtual series on Building Skills for Successful Transportation Delivery. The program consisted of four modules where we developed skills to create accessible documents and surveys for data collection. We learned directly from industry leaders who presented real world examples from the field.

In the first module we reviewed the guidelines for ensuring presentations are accessible to different audiences. This was

one of my favorite topics because I learned about resources to enhance Access' CTSA trainings in the future. In the other webinars, we discussed best practices for creating effective surveys that inform service delivery.

I plan on attending the fourth module later in the month where we will explore practical applications to increase community engagement. I look forward to completing the series!

Melissa Lucero
CTSA Analyst

Commendations

"I am filing a commendation for my driver Rosie Chavarra. I can't say enough good things. She was customer service-oriented, patient, pleasant, and a great driver. Overall, Rosie is amazing!"

Gloria Hymes
Rider since June 2020

"I am filing a smile for Kimberly at the Call Center. She was outstanding when booking my ride!"

Meguerditzh Markarian
Rider since June 2006