



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Foothill Transit, the City of Pasadena and Access Services have been chosen to host the California Transit Association's Annual Fall Conference next November. This conference, now in its 57th year, attracts hundreds of transit professionals from around California and vendors from around the United States.

Director of Government Affairs and Outreach Randy Johnson will be leading Access' participation in planning for this event. I would like to thank Access Board Secretary and Foothill Transit Chief Executive Officer Doran Barnes, who serves on the CTA Executive Committee, for working to include Access and the paratransit perspective in this important conference.

To prepare for next year, Access staff looks forward to attending this year's Fall Conference & Expo, hosted by Omnitrans, which will be held November 16-18, 2022, in Ontario, CA. For more information on this event, please see <https://caltransit.org/events/fall-conference-expo/>.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

Access Services receives additional funding for Transfer Trips

Access' Enhanced Transfer Trip Program was implemented to help increase the mobility options for seniors and persons with disabilities in the North County areas of Lancaster-Palmdale and Santa Clarita. While the North County and the Los Angeles basin are served by commuter bus service and commuter rail service through Metrolink, there is no local fixed route service connecting the two regions.



When Access initially received funding from L.A. Metro three years ago, Access used the funds to expand the availability of transfers between the basin and North County from four to eight times on weekdays. In addition, fares were reduced from \$7 per trip to \$2.75 up to 19.9 miles and \$3.50 for over 20 miles.

During FY 20-21, Access provided 13,829 one-way trips to 16,121 passengers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significantly more trips and passengers, and Access anticipates the demand for trips will increase as the pandemic wanes.

At its April 28, 2022 meeting, the Metro Board of Directors approved an additional \$546,849 in funding for Access' Enhanced Transfer Trip project as part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The funding allocated to Access is comprised of the remaining balances of FY 2020 Section 5310 fund apportionments for the Lancaster-Palmdale Urbanized Area (UZA) and Santa Clarita UZA. These funds are awarded at 100% federal share and will not require a local match. They will be used to continue our Enhanced Transfer Trip program for the Lancaster-Palmdale and Santa Clarita regions to address the gaps in transit service between these regions and the Los Angeles basin. Access would like to thank our funding partners at Metro for this award!

Onnika Payne
Transportation Planner

The Struggle Redefined: A glance at the 15th Annual Developmental Disabilities Virtual Public Policy Conference



I just attended my second Developmental Disabilities Virtual Public Policy conference. Organizations for and by persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) met to wrestle with the dilemma of returning "Back to Our Future." In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and in a temporary area of increased federal and state funding, the political and policy challenges remain: How to sustain growth and continue to keep the gains recently won? There is not enough room here to describe all that went on over the three-day conference, but here is a quick overview of the highlights and points of interest:

Co-sponsored by the (ARC) of California, Easter Seals, and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), the conference featured persons from all aspects of the IDD community: parents, political officials, community-based organizations, coalitions, and political delegates living with IDD.

The conference was organized according to daily themes emphasizing aspects of empowerment and inclusion. On Day One, California Governor Gavin Newsom addressed the Past, Present and Future of Disability Rights in the state; and the day's conclusion held a discussion on the Future of the Disability Experience. On Day Two: "The Future and Beyond" placed emphasis on the current and future issues of pay inequities of workers in the disability field. "Beyond the Pandemic, The Future of Direct Support Professionals" raised the issue of increased and sustainable pay to stop the continuing loss of persons in this sector. Along with a session on the CalABLE Program in which beneficiaries of Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) can utilize aspects of the program to improve and build their financial status and net worth. Day Three: "Advocacy Day" featured workshops centering on the Power of Self-Advocacy; the Future of Disability Voting Access and Civic Engagement; Conservatorship and Supported Decision-Making; and a session on Legislative and Policy Priorities.

As with last year's conference, I was impressed with and fascinated by the integration of politics, community organization, and the grassroots efforts of so many to achieve and sustain so much. For over a hundred years now, some of these organizations have been at the forefront of the battle for disability rights, not only winning but also refusing to retreat. I look forward to bringing you news on what happens next in this field.

R. P. Martindale-Essington
ADA Coordinator for Customer Relations

Commendations

"Zayra, my Customer Service Representative deserves commendation. She maintained a polite demeanor and was very nice throughout the call."

Patricia Gafford
Rider since June 1999

"Brian is such a nice Customer Service Representative. I am filing a smile for Brian for being attentive to my needs and a good listener."

Margaret Estrada
Rider since March 2015