



Behind the Scenes

Executive Director's Report

Access continues to refine its proposed budget for fiscal year 2027. Once again, Direct Transportation, the payments that go directly to our six (6) service providers, is expected to exceed \$314 million. This is in large part due to the continued increase in service demand (trips) that is projected to rise almost eight percent (8%) year over year and far surpass pre-pandemic ridership levels.

The draft budget includes funding for partial replacement of the aging fleet, and the start of construction of the Antelope Valley facility as well as renovations to the Southern region facility – both of these projects are expected to break ground before the end of the calendar year.

The Access Board will receive the proposed budget for consideration at its regular June meeting.

Hector Rodriguez
Deputy Executive Director

The 2026 Abilities Expo brings record attendance to Long Beach Convention Center

The 2026 L.A. Abilities Expo was held at the Long Beach Convention Center for the first time, as the Los Angeles Convention Center undergoes construction in preparation for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The three-day, free-to-attend event showcased a wide range of exhibitors, expert-led workshops, and expanded programming, while continuing to emphasize accessibility and inclusive attendee experiences.



New this year, the expo introduced a dedicated sensory-friendly hour on Sunday, March 29, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Designed for individuals with sensory sensitivities, the early access period featured reduced noise levels and dimmed lighting, creating a calmer and more comfortable environment for visiting exhibitor booths.

Building on the success of previous years, Abilities Expo once again featured local and international exhibitors alongside a robust workshop schedule. Organizers reported record attendance of more than 10,942 adults—an increase of 1,256 attendees over the prior year. Saturday set a new single-day attendance record, rising from 4,437 to 4,495 adults.

Throughout the event, Access staff, together with contractor Medical Transportation Management (MTM), supported attendees at the Access booth by providing rider information and on-site assistance. MTM also offered complimentary Marking and Tethering (MAT) services, marking and tethering 62 mobility devices during the Expo to help ensure a safer and more convenient experience for attendees.

For more information about future Abilities Expo events and programming, attendees are encouraged to follow official Abilities Expo announcements and updates from participating organizations.

Steve Wrenn

Mobility Management Administrator

Advocating for Access: Federal meetings in Washington, D.C.

From March 3–6, Executive Director Andre Colaiace and I made our annual advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., accompanied by our federal advocate, Jen Covino. During the visit, we met with officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide updates on Access Services, discuss preparations for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and present Access' capital priorities related to Operations and Maintenance Facilities. We also expressed our appreciation to the Administration for Access Services' \$16.6 million Bus and Bus Facilities Program grant award.



The trip included a meeting with Congressman George Whitesides, Representative for California's 27th Congressional District, which is home to Access' Antelope Valley operations and maintenance facility.

In addition, we met with staff from the offices of Congresswoman Sydney KamlagerDove, Senator Alex Padilla, Congressman Gilbert Cisneros, and Congressman Ted Lieu. These meetings provided an opportunity to brief the California delegation on Access' service performance, seek continued support for facilities funding, and discuss policy priorities related to the upcoming Surface Transportation reauthorization bill.

Collectively, these meetings were an important opportunity for Access to strengthen relationships with the California congressional delegation, raise awareness of the agency's role and impact, and advocate for continued federal investment to support highquality ADA complementary paratransit service throughout Los Angeles County.

Randy Johnson

Director of Government Affairs and Outreach

Commendations

ALTA

"Customer service representative Andrea was extraordinarily patient and well-educated. She addressed all of my questions with grace."

Karen Sherman

Rider since August 2025

Antelope Valley

"I want to file a smile for driver Melissa. She did a great job."

Merla Johnson

Rider since January 2012