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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

The Access Services Board of Directors met on June 17, 2019

The Board approved the Consent Calendar, which included items to approve an extension of term for the Executive Director's employment contract, a change in scope of work for the Santa Clarita service provider contract, and awarded an eligibility appeals contract.

The Board took action and approved Access' proposed budget for fiscal year 2019/2020. The Board also approved an extension of term and increase in funds for website services.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## Access Services hosts its first Community Connection Symposium

Last month, Access hosted its inaugural Community Connection Symposium. As the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Los Angeles County, Access continues its efforts to engage, inform and coordinate with other transit agencies including social service professionals.



The vision and goal of the Community Connection Symposium was to share and exchange information with transit professionals including social service professionals. Attendees had an opportunity to meet with front-line Access staff and learn more about the various departments that comprise the agency: operations, mobility management, eligibility services, and customer service to name a few.



With the help of Access staff, including department interns, the event was a success. Attendees shared positive feedback and comments about the event, including how much they learned from Access staff, including about the various elements about the agency. Our mission is to continue to expand and connect with transit professionals and social service representatives to make this event great every year.

If you are interested in attending the next event, please contact me at [payne@accessla.org](mailto:payne@accessla.org)

**Onnika Payne**  
*CTSA Analyst*

## Community Meetings provide an opportunity for staff to meet with riders



Access is always eager to receive feedback from the rider community and to present important information along the way. In keeping with this goal, Access recently hosted a series of regional community meetings.

This was an excellent opportunity to connect with riders and share the upcoming projects Access is working on to improve service quality. During this round of community meetings, Access staff provided riders with an overview of current information technology projects including the Where's My Ride App upgrade and Online Reservations capability, along with presenting Superior Service Award videos. Information regarding the Transfer Trip Expansion that takes effect July 1, 2019 was addressed along with information on how to obtain an "estimated

time of arrival" on the day of the trip. Contractor staff spoke regarding peak call volume at the call centers and suggested the best times to call and book reservations in order to avoid longer wait times.

Approximately 90 people attended the community meetings. Attendees heard from Access staff and each contractor's General Manager. Riders expressed excitement regarding the Where's My Ride application and the new technology tools being available as options. The riders also provided feedback on areas that are being performed beyond their expectation as well as opportunities for Access to improve its service. All comments and concerns that needed investigation were documented to ensure effective follow up with riders.

**Fayma Ishaq**  
Project Administrator

## Project Management for Transit Professionals

Project Management for Transit Professionals is a training course that focuses on providing transit professionals with the proper tools to manage, analyze, and understand the basic components of each phase of a well-defined project.

The two-day training from the National Transit Institute (NTI) featured Robert S. Jaffe, Ph. D, who is an experienced professional who has developed the U.S. National ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) Architecture for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Dr. Jaffe and his team have also worked on other several projects that developed solutions for real-time transit system operations for over 70 regional ITS architectures in the U.S. and internationally.



The course offered a variety of topics, which consisted of eight different modules. Dr. Jaffe broke up the class into six different teams as each module had several interactive learning activities. The key concepts of project management, the project life cycle, and how large projects should be broken into phases, became the topics of conversation amongst my team members. With our respective team members, we identified and worked on project activities such as the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), skills inventory matrix, network analysis and duration, and Gantt chart.

**Onnika Payne**  
CTSA Analyst

**Access Services  
Consolidated Transportation  
Services Agency**  
PO Box 5728  
El Monte, CA 91734

Tel: 213.270.6000  
Fax: 213.270.6055  
Email: [info@accessla.org](mailto:info@accessla.org)  
[accessla.org](http://accessla.org)

## Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver, Guadalupe Rodriguez. I was running late, and she waited a couple of extra minutes for me to arrive at my pickup location. I was worried that I would get left, but she was able to reassure me that everything would be fine. She was calm and professional in executing her duties as a driver. Guadalupe is an excellent driver that handles stressful situations with a level head."

**Anna Swett**  
*Rider since July 2001*

"I would like to file a commendation for my reservationist from the West Central Region Lorena. She had excellent customer service skills, is extremely knowledgeable and honest. Lorena is a pro at her job. The reason for this call is to make sure that Access is aware of this precious employee."

**Beverly Shahid**  
*Rider since July 2015*

## Spreading the good word: Access Services and the Long Beach Disability & Senior Collaborative

As the saying goes: "Knowledge is Power!" and even more so when social service agencies get together to spread the word to educate one another about unique and interesting services and programs. Last month, Louis Burns, Community Liaison, Susanna Cadenas, Administrator for Customer Relations, and I attended the Long Beach Disability & Senior Collaborative.

In the first presentation of the morning, Louis, Susanna and I presented a comprehensive overview of the services and programs offered by Access and explained the ins and outs of ADA paratransit in Los Angeles County. A description of services included: eligibility, tethering mobility devices, complaints resolution, and the "Where's My Ride" app. Programs mentioned were: CTSA coordination, mobility management, and Free Fare. All three emphasized the importance of using various available resources to travel throughout the County.

In the morning's second presentation, Martha Torres, a Specialist with the Fair Housing Foundation, addressed the ongoing work of the Fair Housing Foundation's role in providing arbitration and education services between tenants and landlords. In my past employment as a public benefits counselor, we talked a lot about the big three components making up the fabric of the social safety net for persons with disabilities: transportation, housing, and medical. And so I and others in the audience were surprised to learn from Ms. Torres that the basis for the largest amount of the foundation's caseload was not racial, sexual orientation or gender discrimination, but instead, disability discrimination.

At the conclusion of the meeting, we were able to mingle with other participants and were happy to answer additional questions from participants.

**Rycharde P. Martindale-Essington**  
*ADA Coordinator for Customer Relations*