



## Access Services

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# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

I am pleased to report that Access' online reservations platform launched in May 2019 to all Eastern, West Central and Southern region customers. Early results are encouraging.

To date, 856 customers have used the system. 78 percent of these customers have become repeat users. On average, 349 trips are booked per day online.

Feedback has been very positive and Access is looking to expand to our regions operating Trapeze software (San Fernando Valley and Santa Clarita) by the fall.

**Andre Colaiace**  
*Executive Director*

## Access to Work Program presentation

Access Services' Access to Work program has been a successful grant-funded pilot program designed to make it easier for Access customers to use paratransit to reach places of employment and job training. The program achieves this by designing a customer's Standing Order trips around the customer's work schedule. Access' providers schedule trips so customers arrive before their work start time and pick-ups happen at the end of their workday.

Since the program's launch in 2012, this program has helped hundreds of Access customers, over thousands of trips to reach places of employment or job training.

The Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL) office in Pasadena recently developed a partnership with Compton College for persons with disabilities to take job training courses in the specific fields of Child Development, Legal Training, and Business Administration. At the end of taking the specific courses, the participants have the skills necessary to seek employment in their field of study.

In order to assist students who would like to take these classes, Yilin Zhang, Planning Department intern, and I presented the elements of the Access to Work program to Rudy Contreras, CEO of the Pasadena SCRS-IL office and Maria Aroch, SCRS-IL staff member and Chair of Access' Community Advisory Committee.

Access is excited to be able to be a part of expanding the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and personally, I look forward to providing an update on the SCRS-IL/ Compton College program after its first academic year.

**Eric J. Haack**  
*Strategic Planner*

## Access customer Michael Jordan Griggs graduates from College

James Acurso from the Information Technologies department at Los Angeles Mission College contacted me to attend the graduation ceremony for Michael Jordan Griggs. Michael is an Access Customer and former Commissioner with the L.A. City Commission on Disability.

Michael was born with cerebral palsy. At an early age, his grandmother told him that God did not give him more than he could handle. Because of the challenges he faced there was always a reminder of what he was created to do. Michael has never allowed his disability to get in the way of his determination.



As a pre-teen, Michael was inspired by a very talented sports personality named Michael Jordan. On the day of Michael's adoption into the Griggs' family, the judge asked for his formal name change. Michael responded, "Michael Jordan Griggs". You can find his initials embroidered on the back of his wheelchair - this allows passers-by to get a glimpse of what drives him, MJG No.1.

Michael's accomplishments surpass many of those without disabilities, making him an inspiration to the academic community. He has been a valuable member of the student body and the associated student organization at Mission College. Michael was elected the ASO Health and Security Senator for 2011, and the ASO President for 2012-2013. He later went further to help the Los Angeles Community College District and was elected to the Board of Trustees as their Student Representative during the 2013-2014 academic year with the oversight of the District's Student Governance Process.

Michael hopes that his love and concern for others and his valued life experiences will someday afford him the opportunity to become a motivational speaker. He has a unique way of helping others see the brighter side of circumstances.

Michael and staff from L. A. Mission College want to thank Access for the assistance we provided in helping him along his path to graduation, and that we continue the active role Access has in the lives of the customers we serve.

**Louis Burns**  
**Community Liaison**

## Community Transportation Association of America EXPO



Last month, I attended my first Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) EXPO in Palm Springs, California.

Access Services through its Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) program hosts different classes for CTAA. One of the most popular trainings is the Vehicle Maintenance Management and Inspection (VMMI) training. Mr. Halsey King, a VMMI Master Trainer, provides unique insight on fleet management for managers and technicians who operate and maintain accessible mini vans, cutaways and buses, and vehicle components.

During the EXPO, I had the opportunity to attend different intensive training sessions, workshops, and conference luncheons. My very first intensive session I attended was the Transit Marketing and Communications for Community and Public Transportation training. Selena Barlow, a Transit Marketing founder and consultant was the trainer for this particular session. The session focused on how transit agencies in urban and rural areas differ in their approach to using marketing tools that are right for their particular transit system. Ms.

Barlow also talked about developing a marketing plan, community based marketing, target markets, transit advertising, technology utilization, and communication channels.

There were also opportunities for me to engage with transportation experts from different states as I attended an informative intensive session on Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), Beyond Medicaid. CTAA Executive Director Scott Bogren led the discussion on this topic, alongside other transportation and health care experts. The session discussed the emerging connections between mobility, transportation, and health care and how many transportation systems are creating successful partnerships and programs within this space. Managed care organizations and private sector health care providers dominate NEMT, and the rapid changes in technology will address the expectations for on-demand service.

CTAA's guest speaker during its opening luncheon was Acting FTA Administrator K. Jane Williams. Ms. Williams spoke about the agency's future goals and accomplishments, and her excitement about the future of transportation. By the end of the expo, CTAA's annual 'Big Night Out', a 70s themed-event with great music, food, and networking series brought everyone together for an enjoyable time. After networking with different transportation experts, I gained more knowledge on the importance of how to apply innovative approaches to mobility to solve challenges in our community.

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## Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for Sabrina, a reservationist for the southern region. She took all my information properly and precisely with no need to repeat myself. She is one of the most pleasant and professional reservationists I have ever received."

**Agnes Warmington**  
*Rider since October 2006*

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver Tammy Jackson from Diversified Transit. She is kind, courteous, sweet, patient, and helpful with all of the passengers. She has a hilarious personality that makes riding a trip with her a lot of fun. I want to make sure that Tammy is recognized for her exceptional service and let you know that Access is a better place for having hired her."

**Cheryl Mendelsohn**  
*Rider since October 2016*

## L.A. Metro's NextGen Bus Study - Equity Platform Meeting

L.A. Metro is in the process of carefully examining the service it provides throughout the County in an effort to improve its overall bus and rail transit and make the service appealing for new and existing transit riders. Metro's NextGen Bus Study is the name of this examination of Metro's service.

Since the launch of the NextGen Bus Study, Metro has held meetings with multiple stakeholders.

Metro recently hosted a special NextGen Bus Study meeting with a special focus on equity, which Randy Johnson, Manager of Government Affairs and I attended. Representatives from transit agencies, educational institutions, community and neighborhood organizations, and environmental interest groups met at the Holman United Methodist Church in the West Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles.

The meeting began with an update on the progress Metro has made in its examination of its service. Following that, a series of break-out sessions were held that allowed attendees to discuss steps Metro could take to (a) ensure that different communities throughout the County could be included in the discussion of potential service changes and (b) what improvements could be introduced to Metro's service that would encourage increased transit ridership.

Topics discussed ranged from infrastructure improvements such as bus-only lanes and improved bus stop amenities to working with community groups such as school children – and parents of those school children – to introduce them to the option of taking transit.

In July, Metro staff will provide an update to the Metro Board on this study's progress and in September, Metro will host its next NextGen Bus Study meeting to review some possible transit service changes. Access will continue to participate in these meetings as Metro works to transform its service to provide greater benefits to its customers.

**Eric J. Haack**  
*Strategic Planner*