



Access Services
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Another Abilities Expo is in the books!

Access staffed a booth at the event, which was held at the LA Convention Center in late February, and had its eligibility contractor MTM on hand to mark and tether dozens of wheelchairs. Also, for the first time, staff assisted riders with the application process and Where's My Ride sign-ups. In total, Access provided 659 trips to or from the event, and contractor staff had road supervisors and call center personnel on-hand to provide face-to-face customer service to riders.

I would like to thank all of the Access and contractor staff who helped make our participation in this event go smoothly. A special thanks to Access staff members Stephen Wrenn and Mayra Perez-Calderon for leading Access' participation.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

ALTA Eligibility Training

Access Compliance Specialist Mayra Perez-Calderon and Eligibility Coordinator Torrance Johnson recently conducted an eligibility refresher training at the ALTA call center in Brea. Access eligibility center Director Karen Gilbert and her staff also participated.



The eligibility department took the opportunity to share information regarding revisions to our eligibility applications and the impact it may have on applicants requesting additional information. Agents were also briefed on updates relating to new processes that were implemented at the eligibility center in addition to providing updates on current procedures.

As part of Access Services' continuous training, staff provided ALTA with valuable tools that can help agents bridge the gap between eligibility and the customers they encounter.

The training included several varied scenarios and agents were allowed to answer as they would a live call. These exercises provided opportunities for eligibility staff to provide feedback on how current practices are changing. The goal for this training was to maximize efficiency when explaining eligibility during the initial call. In addition to the training, Access staff provided ALTA agents with a virtual tour of the facility and walked them through the customer experience.

We thank everyone for their attendance and participation during this training orientation.

Mayra Perez-Calderon
Compliance Specialist

Nader Raydan, Northern Region General Manager, puts on call taker headset to hear the voice of his customers

Northern Region General Manager Nader Raydan really wants to hear from his customers and he wants the message unfiltered. The nearly 27 year veteran of the paratransit industry takes time to put on the headset of a front line call taker so that he can take customer service calls. He uses an alias to put himself in the Customer Service Representative's shoes. Riders have no idea they are talking to the general manager.

"At times, I help answer the inquiry line in the call center to get a firsthand feel for the issues our customers face every day. I helped many callers with their trips and helped others rebook trips when they got delayed for medical appointments for example. I believe I did okay as many riders called later and asked [for his alias by name]," he explained.

Perhaps this speaks to the mindset of Nader, who with his even temperament and careful consideration truly seeks to understand the needs of his riders and his company's role in the world of Access.

"What is good for the service, is often good for business. When we truly listen to the community we serve, we can always find solutions that work for all stakeholders."

Nader got his start as a driver, in March 1992, when he worked for a dial-a-ride in Orange County. This was only two years after the adoption of the Americans with Disabilities Act and two years before the creation of Access. Nader got in on virtually the ground floor of the post-ADA world.

Nader works on a daily basis with his team at MV's facility near the Van Nuys airport to deliver quality

paratransit to our riders. MV's 2nd Quarter on-time performance (OTP) this fiscal year reflects these efforts, checking in at 91.6% while complaints are at a low 2.2 per 1,000 trips. January 2019, which marks the start of the 3rd quarter, saw OTP improve to 92.7% while complaints held at 2.2.



Nader Raydan

For those visiting his region in the San Fernando Valley, the Dodger fan recommends stopping by Brent's Deli in Northridge, which he says has the best pastrami west of the Mississippi (try the #13 on the menu), and for a breath of fresh air, Lake Balboa near Reseda is a great place for recreation, he added.

As for the future, Nader predicted, "Technology is playing an ever evolving and expanding role in our business. I expect the trend to continue to improve service reliability and safety, but we can never lose the human element our community is accustomed to." In other words, the customer service touch he brought as a driver all those years ago in Orange County and continues to this day by putting on the headset and answering the phone.

Alex Chrisman
Project Administrator

2019 Abilities EXPO

The 2019 Abilities Expo was held at the Los Angeles Convention Center on February 22-24. Access shared a booth with Metro and Access eligibility vendor MTM. The Expo once again was a wonderful success in highlighting state-of-the-art products, vital services, product demonstrations, and handmade crafts.

Access and MTM volunteers met with attendees of the Expo to distribute information, answer questions and mark and tether attendees wheelchairs. Staff spoke one-on-one with people who were not sure how to use Access, assisted with obtaining an Access ID number and helped complete their eligibility application.

MTM's Marking and Tethering team were busy as they completed 72 assessments during the Expo. Numerous Access members visited our table to share how happy they were with the "Where's My Ride" (WMR) cell phone app. The WMR app lets a customer obtain an estimated time of arrival for their trip. There are roughly 4,900 riders using the app who have requested over 1.2 million ETAs this fiscal year.

Access would like to thank staff members Eric Haack, Anthony Santiago, Veronica Guzman-Vanmarcke, Yvonne Siu, Vince Pena, Louis Burns, Josh Southwick, Peter Watkinson, and MTM staff members Karen Gilbert, Justin Rambaran, Martin Romero, Scotty Galvan, and Miguel Rodriguez, for their assistance at the Access kiosk. In addition, special recognition goes to Mayra Perez-Calderon for assisting with staff training, scheduling, and working all three days of the Abilities Expo.

Stephen Wrenn
Senior Mobility Management Counselor



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Rider Commendations

"I would like to file a commendation for my reservationist, Misty. From the beginning of the call she made me feel like a part of her family. Misty was personable, pleasant, and smiley. She was very nice and made me feel comfortable. My day wasn't going so well, but you couldn't help but have a better day after speaking with Misty."

Shirley Bowie
Rider since January 2003

"I would like to file a commendation for my driver. He was the classiest driver I have ever received. He stated that his goal today was for me to be happy and satisfied with my ride. His car was spotless, and everything was perfect. I'm sorry, but I didn't get his driver ID. I would appreciate if you could send me a confirmation of this commendation."

Sara Thompson
Rider since June 2002

FTA Triennial Review Workshop

On February 25 and 26, Alvina Narayan, Manager of Training and Compliance and I attended an FTA Triennial Review Workshop that was held at the administrative offices of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in downtown Los Angeles.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducts oversight workshops across the country for its grantees each year. The purpose is to help attendees broaden their understanding of the federal rules and regulations, as well as how to comply with FTA program requirements. The Triennial Review (TR) is one of the FTA's management tools for examining grantee performance and adherence to current FTA requirements and policies. Mandated by Congress in 1982, the Triennial Review examines how recipients of Urbanized Area Formula Program funds meet statutory and administrative requirements. In addition to helping evaluate grantees, the review gives FTA an opportunity to provide technical assistance on FTA requirements.

The TR workshop itself is designed to assist grantees in preparing for their Triennial Review by reviewing all statutory and program requirements; and providing training materials, procedural guides, and other supporting materials. Attendees included FTA Regional Office staff members, FTA TR contractors, and public transit agency staff.

Ray Tellis, newly appointed Region IX Administrator, opened the meeting with introductory remarks and by specifically thanking the grantees for their support and cooperation as he transitions into his new role. Charlene Lee-Lorenzo has been appointed Acting Director for the L.A. Metropolitan Office.

Matthew Avancena
Director, Planning and Coordination