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Los Angeles Community College District Receives \$1 Million Federal Grant Enabling All its Community College Students to Participate in L.A. Metro's GoPass Fareless Pass Program

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Dave Sotero September 21, 2022

Go Metro Back to School

LOS ANGELES (September 21, 2022) — United States Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today announced that LACCD has secured a \$1 million grant through the Congressional Directed Funding process to help extend Metro's GoPass Program through the 2022-2023 academic year for all 21 community colleges in Los Angeles County. The program provides free transit passes to students at participating K-14 schools.

Metro's GoPass program provides a Metro TAP Card to Los Angeles County community college students that they can use to ride all Metro buses and trains and thirteen additional transit agencies — completely free of charge. The federal funding makes it possible for more students to take free public transit to their community colleges countywide, an extremely valuable "Back to School" benefit for students this year.

With high gas prices, escalating car payment and insurance costs, driving to campus is simply not an option for many students. Before the launch of Metro's GoPass program, LACCD students were paying \$160 or more per semester for a Metro U-Pass, which was unaffordable to many community college students. The advent of truly free public transit has eliminated one of the major pain points faced by LACCD students and dramatically increased equity on campus and made it easier for students to return to in-person instruction this fall.

"Lack of transportation is one of the leading barriers for students seeking to complete their education, and that's particularly true in large metropolitan areas like Los Angeles," said Senator Feinstein. "That's why this program, which will enable up to 500,000 community college students across L.A. County to apply for the GoPass Program, is so important. I was pleased to support this funding and will continue advocating for funding that will allow students throughout California to advance their education."

The GoPass program is a game changer. Approximately one-quarter of students at LACCD reported regularly using public transit to attend class before COVID-19, with their top concern being price.

"As a longtime community college educator, I believe that students shouldn't have to make the tough choice between paying for transportation or buying breakfast," said Trustee Andra Hoffman. "I grew up in the San Fernando Valley and rode the bus all around Los Angeles to get to school and work. I am proud to be part of the solution with the GoPass program and look forward to continuing to make it easier for all students to be able to safely travel to school and work. Access to affordable and reliable transportation should be a right for all students."

With more than half of LACCD students living below the poverty line, saving money on bus or train fares every day can free up resources for other basic life necessities, supporting their success in school. Fareless transit also allows students to come to campus more often and take advantage of amenities and student services.

"I would like to personally thank U.S. Senator Feinstein for her help securing this critically important grant funding to extend LACCD's participation in Metro's GoPass Program," said Glendale City Council Member and Metro Board Chair Ara J. Najarian. "Now more community college students can enjoy free transit on Metro — not just to school, but to any other destination these students want or need to travel to in our county. It's a truly unlimited pass program that I know will improve students' lives and save them significant sums of money in transportation costs."

"We are pleased to have this program extended for another year," said LACCD Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. "Everything we do at LACCD is through an equity-first lens, and fareless transit directly enables more students to access higher education. As we return to more in-person classes and services on campus, this program will be a true lifeline for accelerating student success."

Remote learning was extremely challenging for many community college students, but one silver lining was that they spent much less money commuting. The return to campus is critical for a variety of reasons and allows students to access resources and services, but it was important for students not to have to worry about transportation costs.

LACCD serves a student body that is 68 percent low-income. Providing free transit for a year has a meaningful impact on family budgets and overall quality of life, making it more likely that students will thrive in their studies — and eliminating the worry of how they will pay bus fares to get to class.

“The costs of transportation should never stand between our students and opportunity,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Our community colleges are gateways to prosperity for Angelenos in every zip code – and thanks to this grant from Senator Feinstein, Metro can keep doing its part to make sure nothing keeps our students from chasing their dreams.”

Metro’s GoPass for K-14 students is increasingly popular since its official launch in 2021. Metro has already added 20 new school districts for Year 2 and is in the process of adding 10 more. Metro seeks to double participation in the program over the next year to help more students. Toward that goal, earlier this month Metro partnered with Glendale Community College to make the program available to its 15,000 community college students.

“We have set an aggressive goal to double the number of students participating in GoPass because we know it can make such a positive difference in their academic and economic success,” said Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro. “This grant helps ease a financial barrier for hundreds of thousands of students, and gives them more freedom to pursue jobs, opportunity and recreation. I encourage all LACCD students to take advantage of our free GoPass program today!”

For more information about Metro’s GoPass Fareless Pass Program, please visit www.metro.net/gopass (<http://metro.net/gopass>).

About the Los Angeles Community College District

We are the Colleges of Los Angeles! LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation’s largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California’s diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/LACCD>, @LACCD, and on Twitter, [@laccd](https://twitter.com/laccd) and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.

Editor’s Note: Metro Operators are crucial to keeping LA moving. Metro is currently hiring full-time and part-time bus operators. This is a great career opportunity. Metro offers competitive hourly rates starting at \$23/hr. with benefits that include health insurance, tuition reimbursements, paid training, retirement plan options and flexible working hours. Please encourage friends, family and community members to become a part of the Metro team that provides excellence in service and support and keeps our region moving. Apply at www.metro.net/driveLA (file:///C:/Users/soterod/Downloads/www.metro.net/driveLA).

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its [Vision 2028 Plan](https://www.metro.net/about/metro-vision-2028-plan/) (<https://www.metro.net/about/metro-vision-2028-plan/>). Metro is the lead transportation planning and funding agency for L.A. County and carries about 800,000 boardings daily on a fleet of 2,200 low-emission buses and six rail lines.

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