



Home (<https://www.metro.net/>) > About Metro (<https://www.metro.net/about/>) > **L.A. Metro Announces New "Access for All" Funding Opportunity to Increase Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle Services in L.A. County**

# L.A. Metro Announces New "Access for All" Funding Opportunity to Increase Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle Services in L.A. County

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Dave Sotero December 13, 2022

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has released a Solicitation for Proposals for up to \$7.9 million in funds through the State of California's Access for All Program to expand access to on-demand, wheelchair-accessible vehicle services in L.A. County.

The Access for All grant program was created to increase availability of on-demand wheelchair-accessible vehicles and improve services for people relying on mobility devices like wheelchairs and scooters. As Metro works to broaden its service offerings to an even more inclusive ridership, this funding is critical to serve those needing additional assistance.

"Deep in the DNA of Metro are the core values of diversity, equity and inclusion," said Metro Board Chair and City of Glendale Council Member Ara J. Najarian. "Our Access for All program lives up to those values by leveling the playing field for services and making wheelchair accessible vehicles more available where they're needed most."

Metro's Access for All grant program development process was supported through "Access" dollars from the FY 2021 and FY 2022 funding cycles. During this period, Metro performed outreach and collaborated with a working group comprised of internal and external stakeholders and established several key considerations, including identifying eligible access providers, defining eligible projects in accordance with the statute and establishing funding limits and equity.

"Metro gives hundreds of thousands of rides a month to customers in wheelchairs," said Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro. "Access for All funding will help our region increase the availability of on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicle services to help people who require them for their transportation needs. We look forward to working with the State to implement this vital program."

The Access for All program was established after the passage of California Senate Bill 1376, which requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as part of its regulation of Transportation Network Companies such as Uber and Lyft, to establish a program to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities, including wheelchair users who need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle to on-demand transportation services requested through online-enabled applications or platforms. Through this program, these companies pay a fee of \$0.10 to the CPUC for each passenger trip their providers complete. The collected fees are deposited into an "Access Fund," which is redistributed to local administrators to pay for services of competitively selected access providers to operate on-demand wheelchair-accessible vehicle service in their counties.

The CPUC also approved allowing local administrators to use up to 15 percent of the amount it allocates to each county each year to cover administrative expenses. In June 2021, the Metro Board of Directors authorized Metro to serve as the Los Angeles County administrator. As such, Metro is responsible for the planning, distribution, management and oversight of funds for each annual funding cycle.

Metro released funding applications in December 2022 with a submittal deadline in February 2023 to the public following Board approval. Government, non-profit and for-profit organizations will be eligible to apply if they provide direct wheelchair-access vehicle transportation service and otherwise meet the definition of an access provider. After evaluating its applications, Metro will make funding recommendations to the Board and provide ongoing oversight of chosen providers.

For additional information, please visit <https://www.metro.net/about/access-for-all/> (<https://www.metro.net/about/access-for-all/>) or email Metro at [accessforall@metro.net](mailto:accessforall@metro.net).

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