

Press Release



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Eligible Alameda County Middle and High School Students Invited to Apply for Free Transit Passes

More than 2 Million Free Bus Rides Taken in 2024-2025 School Year

ALAMEDA COUNTY, Calif. – The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) along with partner agencies the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (Wheels) and Union City Transit is excited to announce the 11th year of the Student Transit Pass Program (STPP), offering eligible 6th–12th grade students across Alameda County unlimited free bus rides and discounted Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) fares. Eligible students are invited to apply for the pass now. Once granted, students enjoy their transit benefits until graduating from high school.

"Every student deserves reliable transportation to get to school, jobs, and the opportunities that help them succeed," said David Haubert, Alameda County Supervisor, District 1, and Chair, Alameda CTC and LAVTA Wheels. "This partnership between Alameda CTC and local transit agencies is a great example of what we can accomplish when we work together, and it's made possible in large part by Measure BB, the voter-approved transportation sales tax that continues to expand access and opportunity for everyone in Alameda County."

Nearly 32,000 students at 160-plus schools across the county relied on the program during the 2024-25 school year, taking over 2.1 million STPP free bus rides.

Educators describe the Transit Pass as an investment in opportunity – making it easier for thousands of students to reach more than the classroom, but internships and career-building experiences as well, while helping families save on transit costs. "We had several families tell us that they had not sent the student to school because of a lack of bus fare. So having transit passes really impacts attendance and family resources," said Justin Hinojoza, an STPP site administrator at Frick Middle School.

In fact, students can use the STPP pass to ride to school, after school programs, sports activities, internships, jobs, and more. The pass provides independence and reliable transportation for thousands of Alameda County students and much-needed financial relief for many families and caregivers. Participating students receive a personalized Clipper card that can be used on all Bay Area transit agencies and can ride the three Alameda County bus transit agencies—AC Transit, Wheels, and Union City Transit—for free. They also receive 50% off BART rides and discounts on other regional transit.

AC Transit General Manager / CEO Salvador Llamas shared, "Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, AC Transit connects people to work, school, healthcare, and loved ones throughout Alameda County and across the Bay Area. Through our partnership with Alameda CTC, we help deliver millions of trips to and from school each year. It's just one more way that we're working with our communities to keep transit affordable, expand ridership, and, importantly, invest in a safer future for East Bay youth."

"Union City Transit is excited to partner with the Alameda County Transportation Commission to bring the Student Transit Pass Program to more middle and high school students during the 2026-2027 school year," noted Steve Adams, Union City Transit Manager. "STPP is a valuable transportation and educational opportunity for students and the community, providing young people with an experience using public transit that helps them become lifelong supporters and riders. With the school district now qualified for Free Universal eligibility, more students can receive the benefit of being able to access Union City Transit, AC Transit and other transit providers to get to

school and participate in extra-curricular activities. Expanded access also alleviates the need for parents to drive for every trip."

To Apply:

- Visit <https://www.alamedactc.org/programs-projects/studentpass/apply> and select your student's school to begin an application.
- Applications open as each school confirms readiness to process applications. If a school application is not yet available, students are encouraged to check the site or contact the school for more information.
- It takes approximately four to six weeks for new passes to be delivered to schools. Site administrators at each school have a supply of temporary passes to support students while the permanent passes are produced.
- If students apply with existing Youth Clipper cards, then passes are loaded onto their existing card within two to four weeks.
- Passes are distributed through school site administrators after applications are approved and passes are produced.

Program Benefits:

- Free trips on AC Transit, Union City Transit, or Wheels buses and 50% off BART fares.
- Once approved, students keep their transit benefits through high school graduation as long as they remain eligible.
- Students can use their passes to ride to school, work, extracurricular activities, and beyond!

Eligibility:

- Over 160 Alameda County middle and high schools participate in the program. Eligibility is based on school district:
 - **Universal Districts:** All students in grades 6–12 can get a pass. Districts include Alameda County Office of Education, Emery, Hayward, Livermore, New Haven, Oakland, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo Unified.
 - **Means-Based Districts:** Students in grades 6-12 whose families meet the California Department of Education's income guidelines for free or reduced-priced meals (cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/rs/scales2526.asp) are eligible for a pass. Districts include Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Dublin, Fremont, Pleasanton, Newark, and Piedmont Unified.

Replacement Passes: If a student misplaces their pass, the replacement process varies by transit provider. Students seeking a replacement pass should follow the instructions at alamedactc.org/programs-projects/studentpass/replace. AC Transit and Union City riders should **not** use the initial application for replacement requests. Wheels riders can use the initial application to make a replacement request.

Promotion & Resources: School staff, local agencies, community groups, and media are encouraged to help promote the program. To support enrollment, STPP and transit partner staff attend in-person school registration events, back-to-school open houses, and other school-focused district and community events. Flyers, posters, social media graphics, and web banners are available in multiple languages at <https://alamedactc.org/programs-projects/studentpass/admin#promotional-materials>.

For more information, students and families should visit <https://www.alamedactc.org/programs-projects/studentpass>.

About the Alameda County Transportation Commission: The mission of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) is to plan, fund and deliver transportation programs and projects that expand

access and improve mobility to foster a vibrant and livable Alameda County. Governed by a 22-member Commission, Alameda CTC manages the county's one-cent transportation sales tax and serves as the county's congestion management agency. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the agency carried out \$405 million in transportation improvements that create jobs, enhance mobility, and enrich communities.

About the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District: The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) is California's largest bus-only transit agency and third largest in the US, providing an average of nearly 135,000 daily passenger trips with 133 bus lines throughout the 364-square-mile service area. AC Transit provides safe, convenient, courteous, and reliable service in 13 cities and adjacent unincorporated areas in Alameda and Contra Costa counties as well as carrying almost 7,000 daily riders across the bay to San Francisco.

About the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority: The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) was created in 1985 by the cities of Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, and Alameda County. In addition to passenger fares, the agency is supported financially by federal, state and local agencies, including Alameda County Transportation Commission Measures B and BB. LAVTA supports sustainability by reducing vehicle trips, traffic congestion and improving air quality.

For more information on Wheels and its services, visit www.wheelsbus.com, follow @wheelsbus on social media, or contact customer service at 925. 455. 7500.

About Union City Transit: Union City Transit is the local, city-run bus system that serves the Union City community. For rider convenience, we coordinate routes with BART train arrivals and departures at the Union City BART Station. Union City Transit also provides connections with AC Transit and the Dumbarton Express for unified access to other transportation options across the Bay Area. Services are partially funded by the Measure BB sales tax of Alameda County.

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