

LOW INCOME FARE is EASY (LIFE)

**Originally called Rider Relief Transportation Program (RRTP) and
Immediate Needs Transportation Program (INTP) was approved by the
Metro Board in 2017**

FY18 OPERATING GUIDELINES

EFFECTIVE

December 5, 2017

Administrative Guidelines

Table of Contents

Administrative Guidelines

Mission Statement	4
Background of the Program	4
List of Operators in the Program	4
Administrator Distribution Areas	5
Transportation Subsidy Media	8
Eligibility Criteria for Distributing Agencies	8
Procedures for Distributing Agencies	9
Eligibility Criteria for Individual Participants	11
Criteria to Identify Eligible Participants	11

Vendor/Redemption Guidelines

Procedures for Accepting the Coupons at the Outlets Managed by the Operators	15
Procedures for Accepting the Coupons at the TAP Vendor Outlets Managed by Metro	15

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide transportation assistance to the most economically vulnerable and transit dependent in Los Angeles County.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM

In 2007 the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors approved \$5 million for the Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE), to assist patrons with limited resources to utilize the transit system. The program started its operation in April 2008, and in February 2009, Metro's Board approved a Motion to include the riders of municipal operators who have, or are likely to raise their fares, into the program.

The Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) provides fare subsidy coupons to Metro and other participating operators' bus riders. The service is made available throughout Los Angeles County via a wide range of not-for-profit and government agencies that distribute subsidy coupons to the neediest segment of the population.

The Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) is built upon a cooperative partnership between the two lead agencies: FAME Assistance Corporation (FAC) and Human Services Association (HSA). Each operates under an agreement with the LACMTA, shares in major decision-making related to the program's direction, manages the program in its designated geographic area, and reports directly to the LACMTA.

LIST OF OPERATORS IN THE PROGRAM

LACMTA (Metro)	Montebello Bus Lines
Antelope Valley Transit Authority	Torrance Transit System
LADOT	Santa Monica - Big Blue Bus
Long Beach Transit	Santa Clarita Transit
Culver City Municipal Bus Lines	Foothill Transit
Norwalk Transit System	

ADMINISTRATOR DISTRIBUTION AREAS

The following are the cities or geographical area that each lead agency is responsible for in Los Angeles County.

FAME Assistance Corporation (FAC):

Contact Telephone: (323) 870-8567

LIFEinfo@famecorporations.org

Human Services Association (HSA):

Contact Telephone: (562) 806-0250

LIFEinfo@hsala.org

FAC works with distributing agencies in the following cities or areas:

Central Cities:

Atwater Village, Baldwin Hills, Boyle Heights, Central City, Central City East, Chinatown, City Terrace, Cypress Park, Eagle Rock, East Los Angeles, Echo Park, Florence-Graham, Glassell Park, Griffith Park/Los Feliz, Hancock Park, Highland Park, Hollywood, Koreatown, Ladera Heights, LaFayette Square, Lincoln Heights, Mid-City, Mid-City West, Mid-Wilshire, Montecito Heights, Mt. Washington, Pico Union, Silver Lake, Walnut Park, Westlake, Wilshire Center and Windsor Square.

San Fernando and North County Cities:

Agoura Hills, Acton, Arleta – Pacoima, Burbank, Calabasas, Canoga Park – Winnetka, Woodland Hills, West Hills, Chatsworth, Porter Ranch, Desert View Highlands, East La Tuna Canyon, Lakeview Terrace, Shadow Hills, Sunland, Tujunga, Encino, Tarzana, Glendale, Granada Hills – Knollwood, Hidden Hills, Lake Los Angeles, Lancaster, Little Rock, Mission Hills, Panorama City, North Hills, North Hollywood, Valley Village, Northridge, Palmdale, Quartz Hills, Reseda, West Van Nuys, San Fernando, Santa Clarita, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Toluca Lake, Cahuenga Pass, Sun Valley, La Tuna Canyon, Sylmar, Val Verde, Van Nuys and North Sherman Oaks.

South Bay Cities:

Alondra Park, Between Harbor City and Carson, Carson, Crenshaw, Del Aire, El Camino Village, El Segundo, Gardena, Harbor Gateway, Hermosa Beach, Hyde Park, Inglewood, Jefferson Park, Ladera Heights, Lawndale, Leimert Park, Lennox, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Mar Vista, Marina del Rey, Playa del Rey, Playa Vista, Redondo Beach, South Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, Torrance, Venice, View Park, Watts, West Adams, West Athens, West Carson, West Hills, Westchester, and Westmont.

Westside Cities:

Bel Air, Beverly Crest, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Culver City, Malibu, Marina del Rey, Pacific Palisades, Palms, Park La Brea, Santa Monica, Sawtelle, West Hollywood, West Los Angeles, and Westwood.

HSA works with distributing agencies in the following cities or areas:

Gateway Cities:

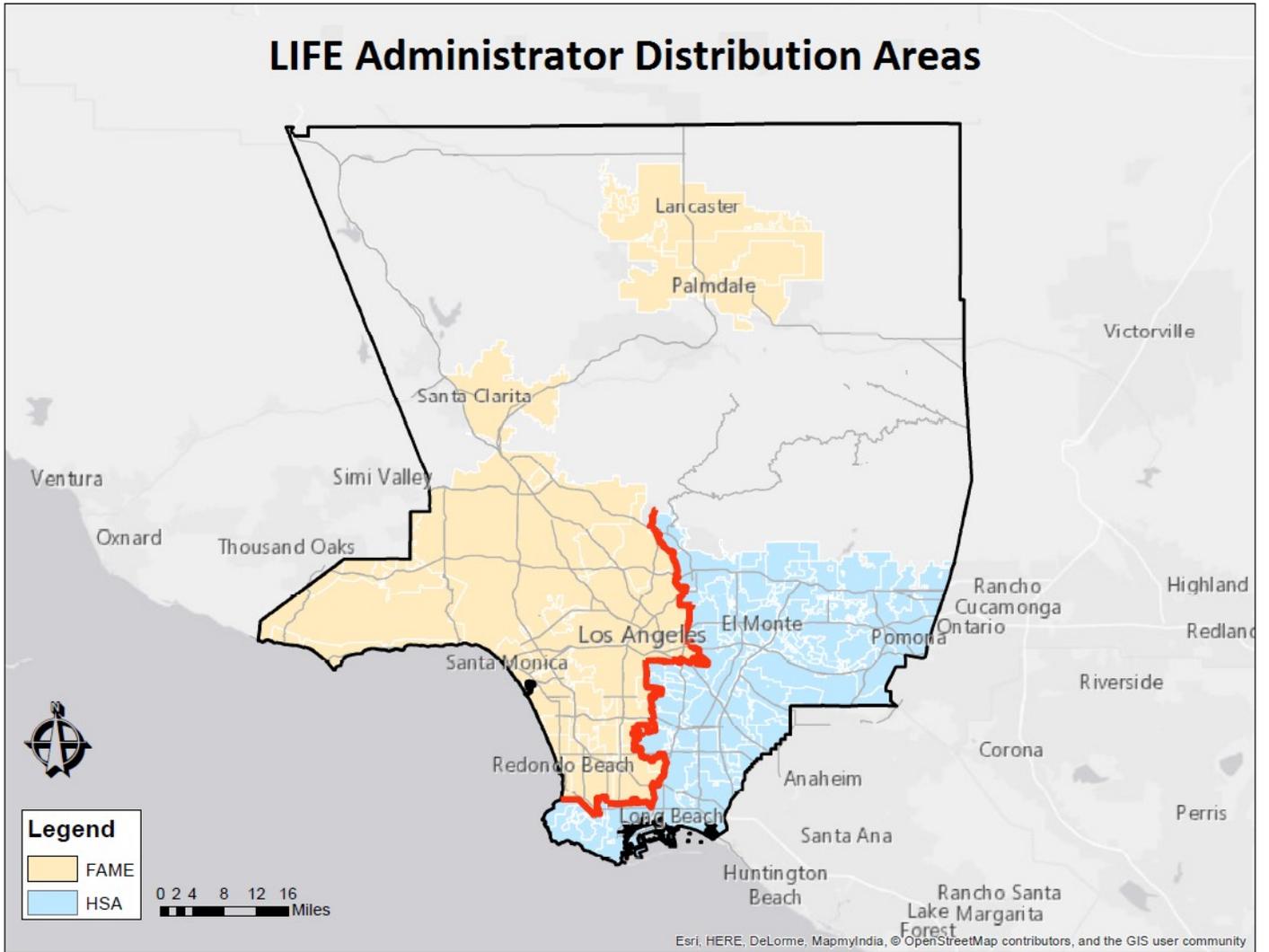
Artesia, Avalon (Catalina), Bell, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Cerritos, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Downey, East Compton, East La Mirada, Hawaiian Gardens, Harbor City, Huntington Park, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, El Monte, Lakewood, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Montebello, Norwalk, Paramount, Palos Verdes Estates, Pico Rivera, Rancho Dominguez, , Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Rosewood, Rowland Heights, Santa Fe Springs, San Pedro, Signal Hill, South El Monte, South Gate, South Whittier, Terminal Island, Vernon, West Compton, West Whittier – Los Nietos, Whittier, Willowbrook, and Wilmington.

San Gabriel Cities:

Alhambra, Arcadia, Avocado Heights, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, Charter Oaks, Citrus, Claremont, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, East Pasadena, East San Gabriel, El Monte, Glendora, Hacienda Heights, Industry, Irwindale, La Canada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Montrose, La Puente, La Verne, Mayflower Village, Monrovia, Monterey Park, North El Monte, Pasadena, Pomona, Rosemead, Rowland Heights, San Dimas, San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, South El Monte, South Pasadena, South San Gabriel, South San Jose, Temple City, Valinda, Vincent, Walnut, West Covina and West Puente Valley.

*Note that some of the cities and unincorporated areas listed above provide subsidies to their residents. Therefore, riders living in these cities are not eligible to participate in LIFE.

LIFE Administrator Distribution Areas



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TRANSPORTATION SUBSIDY MEDIA

This program offers subsidy coupons. There are several types of subsidy coupons in the LIFE; maximum subsidy per person per month is as follows:

\$24 subsidy coupon – Riders that purchase regular monthly or weekly passes, provided that their city or the county does not provide a subsidy

\$8 Subsidy coupon – Senior citizen riders of cities who do not offer any user side subsidy

\$13 Subsidy coupon – Kindergarten through 12th grade students of cities or schools that do not provide a subsidy

\$10 Subsidy coupon – College-vocational students provided that their city or the county or school does not provide a subsidy

Any individual receiving transportation subsidies from other sources is not eligible to receive LIFE coupons. Such sources include college/vocational school subsidies, city subsidies, Immediate Needs Transportation Program (INTP), ACCESS, City Ride and Los Angeles County Unincorporated subsidies.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DISTRIBUTING AGENCIES

FAC and HSA recognize the importance of careful screening of the agencies that distribute LIFE subsidy coupons. The following are the minimum eligibility requirements for distributing agencies. Additional criteria may be added.

The agency should at a minimum meet the following criteria:

- Be a not-for-profit 501 (c) organization or part of a local jurisdiction (city or county of Los Angeles).
- Be established in Los Angeles County for at least three years.
- Operate out of a fixed structure.
- Have more than 50 people participating in their program.
- Be able to meet Metro's new software and hardware requirements, including but not limited to necessary internet connection, up to date operating system, hardware to effectively run databases
- Be committed to following all program requirements.
- New and renewing agencies should be aware that continued participation in the program is contingent upon the agency's ability to access and utilize LACMTAs forthcoming client information database. This data system is currently in development; any software or additional program requirements will be communicated once information is received. Agencies will have up to 6 months from roll out date to complete all training and implementation.

Agencies interested to join LIFE must provide the following:

- Copy of 501 (c) designation.
- Proof of attendance at LIFE Orientation, or participate in training with the collaborating administrator.
- Copy of business license.

Once the agencies are deemed qualify to join LIFE, they must sign the Participating Agreement to be accepted into the program.

FAC and HSA recognize the diverse special needs addressed by Los Angeles County's social service organizations. It is important that agencies recognize that the goal of LIFE is to subsidize Metro and other participating operator fares, and that LIFE is not an entitlement program.

PROCEDURES FOR DISTRIBUTING AGENCIES

Agencies are to familiarize themselves with the “Participant Eligibility Requirements” with these Operating Guidelines.

Program Requirements

- Agreement – FAC and HSA will enter into an agreement only with organizations that are committed to serving the community and retaining the integrity of the program. A senior official who has authority to sign contracts on behalf of a participating organization must sign a written agreement with FAC or HSA and provide information needed to complete the *Distributing Agency Registry* form. Information on this form includes the name, title, and signature of those individuals authorized to receive subsidy coupons for the agency, and the name, title, and signature of those authorized to distribute them. Agency must have *Distributing Agency Registry* on file at all times. Each participating agency is to notify FAC and HSA immediately of any changes in this form concerning the signature of its senior official.

Each agency is to develop and provide to FAC and HSA a set of its eligibility criteria specifying how it will allocate the subsidy coupons and determine individual eligibility.

FAC and HSA retain the right to cancel its agreement with an agency for any action that jeopardizes the program or any reason FAC and HSA deems appropriate and necessary.

- Accountability – Every agency is responsible for accounting and keeping accurate records of the subsidy coupons it receives. Every subsidy coupon has a unique serial number on it that is traceable back to the distributing agency and enables the agency to track its handling of subsidy coupons. No subsidy coupon is to be

distributed without following the procedures in this document. From time to time, distributing agencies may be audited by FAC and HSA or asked to track the disposition of a single subsidy coupon. For any audit or coupon-tracking, full agency cooperation is required.

- Training – Each distributing agency is responsible for attending an initial program orientation/training session provided by FAC and HSA and any additional training as deemed necessary. Each agency is also responsible for training its own staff to properly execute the program, and for providing additional training on revisions to the program.
- Database – Each participating agency is responsible for attending an orientation / training session for use of the new LIFE integrated database, and is accountable for ensuring that their client list, client information and any related transactions is updated and managed through the database.

Receiving Subsidy Coupons

- Authorization to Accept Transportation Subsidies– Only authorized staff may accept delivery of and distribute subsidy coupons. Each agency is to authorize at least one person to sign for and accept delivery of subsidy coupons, and at least one person to disburse them and initial the *User Log*. Names, titles, and signatures are to be provided on the *Distributing Agency Register*. FAC and HSA are to be advised immediately of any changes in personnel authorizations.
- Transportation Subsidy Security – Agencies must keep subsidy coupons locked in a safe place and protect them as cash. Lost or stolen subsidy coupons are to be reported immediately to FAC and HSA.
- Subsidy Replenishment – Agencies are responsible for following the distribution schedule set forth by FAC and HSA.

Distributing Subsidy Coupons

- Agencies will not distribute coupons to riders that are eligible for transportation subsidies from other sources. Such sources include but are not limited to; college/vocational school subsidies, employer subsidies, city subsidies and Los Angeles County Unincorporated subsidies.
- Agencies are not to distribute subsidy coupons to agency employees and family. Program participants must be present to receive subsidy coupons, unless the distributing agency has authorized mail-distribution for eligible recipients and has forwarded to FAC and HSA its policy for distributing subsidy coupons to persons not receiving them in person.
- Agencies should reference *Southern California Colleges Pass Subsidy Data*

(Attachment D) and *Subsidies Offered-LA County and Cities* (Attachment B).

- Record Keeping – To control and track usage, each agency is required to record subsidy coupon disbursements in the *User Log* that accompanies every package of subsidy coupons. Recipient information is entered in the *User Log* next to each pre-printed subsidy coupon serial number. This information includes recipient's name, city and ZIP, name of college/university (for students- and ensure that their college is not providing subsidy) and valid identification (e.g., driver's license, social security number etc.). In order to track and account for every subsidy coupon, every line of the log is to be completed. "Void" is to be written when appropriate, and voided subsidy coupons are to be retained returned to FAC and HSA.
- The administrators and their respective agencies should invite each recipient to complete the Title VI questionnaire. The data should be collected and submitted to the administrators.
- The User Log is to be submitted when it is completed. Totals at the bottom of each page must be completed.
- Information for Recipients – Agencies are to review the eligibility guidelines with each recipient. Agencies should refer to Operating Guidelines when necessary.

Reporting Abuse

- It is the responsibility of distributing agencies and their staff to report any abuse, misuse, or attempt to illegally handle subsidy coupons associated with the Rider Relief Transportation Program immediately to FAC and HSA, who will in turn report it to the LACMTA project manager.
- Any participating agency or individual found attempting to abuse, misuse, and purchase, sell or illegally handle subsidy coupons will be permanently removed from the program.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

LIFE subsidy coupons are available to Los Angeles County residents whose household income levels are below the Federal HUD Poverty Guidelines for Los Angeles County, as follows:

Persons in Household					
1	2	3	4	5	6
\$31,550	\$36,050	\$40,550	\$45,050	\$48,700	\$52,300

Residents of the Cities/County and students of schools and colleges already being subsidized for Metro or participating operator fare media will not be eligible to receive the coupon subsidy.

CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Participants must present any or a combination of the following identification cards:

- Regular Riders
 - Medical – Low Income
 - Pay Stubs
 - Lifeline (water and power)
 - Tax returns
 - Any valid documentation showing proof of income
 - Any proof of receiving public benefits
 - Regular rider TAP card

- Seniors – In addition to the above listed identification senior passengers must be at least 62 and show proof of age with the following identification cards:
 - DMV senior card (or license)
 - Reduced fare senior TAP card

- Kindergarten – 12 grade students:
 - Parent qualification necessary and;
 - K-12 TAP Card
 - Student ID

- College/Vocational:
 - Regular rider criteria and;
 - College/Vocational TAP Card
 - Student ID

- Any individual receiving transportation subsidies from other sources is not eligible to receive LIFE coupons. Such sources include college/vocational school subsidies, city subsidies, Immediate Needs Transportation Program, ACCESS, City Ride and Los Angeles County Unincorporated subsidies.

* If necessary, eligibility criteria should be reviewed periodically.

The **FY 2017-2018 LIFE Operating Guidelines** are hereby accepted by _____, upon and subject to the terms and conditions herein above stated. Participating agency's signature below shall be deemed as an acceptance of the Operating Guidelines by Agency.

Agency Name

Dated: _____

(Please Print)

Dated: _____

Executive Director or Signatory

Vendor/Redemption Guidelines

PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTING SUBSIDY COUPONS AT THE OUTLETS MANAGED BY THE OPERATORS

The following is the proper procedure for vendors to accept coupons from LIFE participants:

- Only one valid pass can be purchased per coupon per month per customer
- The coupons are for one time use and must be submitted at the time of purchase
- The coupons are only to be accepted towards the purchase of Metro Regular 7-Day, or equivalent Operator fare media, Metro 30-Day, or Operator 31-Day or monthly pass, Senior, Student-College/Vocational, or Student-K-12 or EZ passes
- The coupon type must match the pass type purchased
- The month indicated on the coupon should correspond to the month that the pass is being purchased
- The coupon value is not a cash equivalent and is only to be accepted as discount against a pass noted above
- In cases where the coupon value exceeds the pass price, the customer is not to be reimbursed for the difference. Therefore, the operators' reimbursement request/invoice to Metro should be limited to the value of the fare that the coupon was applied to.
- The coupons cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer
- A reproduction or possession of reproduction of LIFE Coupon is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution
- Auto loads/cash loads are only allowed on Norwalk and Culver City and any operator that does not offer corresponding pass structure and will be joining the program in future.

PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTING SUBSIDY COUPONS AT THE TAP VENDOR OUTLETS MANAGED BY METRO

The following is the proper procedure for vendors to accept coupons from LIFE participants:

- Only one valid pass can be purchased per coupon per month per customer
- The coupons are for one time use and must be submitted at the time of purchase
- The coupons are only to be accepted towards the purchase of Regular 7-Day, 30-Day, EZ passes, Senior, Student-College/Vocational, or Student-K-12 passes
- The coupon type must match the pass type purchased
- The month indicated on the coupon should correspond to the month that the pass is being purchased
- The coupon value is not a cash equivalent and is only to be accepted as discount against a pass noted above

- In cases where the coupon value exceeds the pass price, the customer is not to be reimbursed for the difference
- The coupons cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer
- A reproduction or possession of reproduction of LIFE Coupon is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution
- No auto loads/cash loads are allowed