



## Board Report

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 18, 2021**

**SUBJECT: LIFE PROGRAM STRATEGIC DOUBLE ENROLLMENT PLAN**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the Low-Income is Easy Fare (LIFE) Program Strategic Double Enrollment Plan in response to Motion 40.

**ISSUE**

Increasing enrollment in the LIFE Program is an important interim step for an expansion of the Fareless System Initiative (FSI). Staff has developed the LIFE Program Strategic Double Enrollment Plan (Enrollment Plan) to serve as a framework for strategies, tactics and activities to double the number of LIFE Program enrollees by the end of 2022.

**BACKGROUND**

At its September 2021 meeting, the Board approved the FSI funding plan for Phase I (K-14) and Motion 40 by Directors Mitchell, Solis, Garcetti, Sandoval, Bonin, and Dupont-Walker, revamping the LIFE Program (Attachment A). Recognizing the expansion and enhancement of the LIFE Program will alleviate the impact of fares on low-income riders while Metro continues to seek funding to implement FSI Phase 2 (low-income adults), the Enrollment Plan outlines tactical and strategic actions that lead to increasing enrollments into the LIFE program and furthering access to public transit for low-income riders.

As directed in Motion 40, staff is to develop a plan to double the number of LIFE Program enrollees by the end of 2022. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro customers took more than 1 million daily trips on the bus and rail system. This includes 67,625 riders participating in the LIFE program. As of September 23, 2021, Metro customers took more than 700,000 daily trips on the bus and rail system, which included 91,739 participants in the LIFE program.

**DISCUSSION**

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The Enrollment Plan has been developed with a focus on increasing enrollments in the LIFE Program through transformative approaches such as:

- A streamlined LIFE application process that enables on-the-spot enrollment and allows applicants to self-certify;
- Online application enrollment;
- Allows low-income applicants to gain access to the program through direct enrollment and co-enrollment with existing County of Los Angeles and city social services programs;
- Deep discounts such as the three months of fareless transit to new enrollees once fare collection resumes; and
- Recognizing the goal to increase program enrollment during the ongoing challenges and complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic which has disproportionately impacted vulnerable people, households, and communities, the Enrollment Plan is centered with the core themes to inform, identify and enroll low-income people throughout Los Angeles County in a manner that meets people where they are in life.

#### **Double Enrollment Plan Core Strategies:**

- **Identify:** Employ wide-ranging efforts to identify qualifying program participants.
- **Inform:** Leverage Metro’s coordinated, proactive outreach and engagement plan to inform low-income riders, people and households about the enhanced LIFE program and discounted transit benefits to support program enrollment.
- **Enroll:** Mobilize LIFE Program community partners, public agencies and Metro staff to facilitate networked resources to create a seamless and streamlined process for people to apply, self-certify and enroll in the LIFE Program through either direct enrollment or co-enrollment.

Furthermore, the Enrollment Plan is being implemented through multi-pronged tactics to support Metro’s goal to double life enrollment to up to 183,478 enrollments by December 2022. The plan is focused on three tactical areas:

- Direct Enrollment
- Co-Enrollment and Agency Partnerships
- Marketing, Promotion and Referrals.

The multi-pronged tactics are summarized in a matrix in Attachment B.

#### **I. Direct Enrollment**

Direct Enrollment focuses on in-person outreach and “on the spot” enrollment in the LIFE program. The direct enrollment activities will be facilitated through personal engagement activities that will support direct outreach and “on the spot” enrollment for applicants through Metro hosted regional pop-up events, as well as through the contracted LIFE Program administrators, FAME Assistance Corporation (FAME) and the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA). Direct enrollment is also available to applicants at designated enrollment centers such as Metro Customer Care Centers and the Big Blue Bus Transit Store.

- **Regional Pop-up Events:** Metro hosted pop-up events will be staffed by Metro, FAME, IILA and their community-based organization (CBO) and service provider partners to allow for on-the-spot enrollment. Metro staff, in collaboration with CBO partners, has also developed a schedule of outreach events that will be held throughout the County and at various locations, including high traffic transit centers, walk-up food basket distributions, faith-based events, and other potential sites including County and Los Angeles City operated housing developments.

Furthermore, in effort to maximize outreach at transit corridors, Staff has identified the highest use transit centers in order to directly connect with current riders that will benefit the most from program benefits. Each site will be advertised up to 7 days in advance through a series of onsite flyer distributions, web-site announcements, blast emails, and other promotional activities.

Timeline: There are 20 pop-up and outreach events scheduled beginning November 2021 through December 2022. Events are currently being scheduled for early 2022. The event list will be updated monthly. The event locations will continue to be identified with consideration to equity focus communities (EFC) throughout Los Angeles County (Attachment C). The scheduled pop-up and outreach events are referenced in the Enrollment Pop-Up and Outreach Events Schedule (Attachment D).

- **LIFE Program Administrator Events** : The LIFE Program is administered by FAME and IILA which oversee a network of approximately 500 non-profit and CBOs including homeless centers, hospitals, senior centers, low-income housing agencies, educational institutions, food banks, faith-based organizations, including other non-profits, and referral agencies. Metro's LIFE program administrators will be conducting in-person outreach and on-the-spot enrollment at community events, support service centers, and other client focused locations throughout the region.

Timeline: Beginning November 2021 through December 2022

- **Designated Enrollment Centers:** LIFE applicants are able to submit the application for enrollment in the LIFE Program through designated enrollment centers such as Metro Customer Care Centers and the Big Blue Bus Transit Store. Although the designated enrollment centers do not support on-the-spot enrollment the centers provide applicants the opportunity to submit applications through the self-certify process, receive guided support and assistance from customer care staff, and easily gain access to the LIFE program during transit commutes at designated transit centers.

Timeline: Launched October 2021 through December 2022

- **Individual Direct Enrollments:** Due to the limits of on-site enrollments and pre-scheduled events, Metro has launched an online-application portal that supports unlimited enrollment

through an easy-to-use web-based portal. The online portal supports direct enrollment at any time and location, and at the ease and discretion of the applicant. The portal as well as the streamlined application process allow applicants to self-certify eligibility.

Completed: Launched November 1, 2021

## II. Co-Enrollment and Agency Partnership

Recognizing the possible constraints of direct enrollment and specifically on-site enrollment, Metro continues to collaborate with partner agencies to identify solutions to identify, inform, and co-enroll eligible low-income clients in the LIFE Program. Metro is collaborating with CBOs, including County and City of LA agencies to assist with mass enrollment. Leveraging existing public support systems and programs will serve as an opportunity to further streamline the LIFE eligibility and enrollment process, therefore Metro is pursuing high-touch opportunities to facilitate co-enrollment for low-income

clients of public agency service providers such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) which oversees and administers various relief programs through the County as well as the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), which serves as the administrator and operators of County owned and operated housing facilities and Section 8 rental subsidy programs.

- **Social Services Co-Enrollments:** The opportunity to co-enroll pre-qualified low-income clients of public agencies' social services programs will provide automatic access to the LIFE Program benefits for more than 1 million County residents. Therefore, through the LIFE Enrollment Plan, Staff will focus efforts on developing collaborations with designated public agency service providers to establish procedures and/or partnering agreements to allow clients to auto qualify and enroll in the LIFE Program. If automatic enrollment is not feasible due to technical or privacy considerations, Metro staff will collaborate with agency partners to distribute enrollment materials and information to participants in programs such as but not limited to:
  - Angeleno Card program
  - Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card program
  - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)
  - Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)
  - CalFresh
  - Basic Income Guaranteed: L.A. Economic Assistance Pilot.

Timeline: Efforts will be initiated in November 2021 through December 2022

- **Transit Operator Partnerships:** Recognizing the LIFE program is a regional program that offers discounts for low-income riders throughout Los Angeles County, Metro is collaborating with the participating transit operators in promoting the program with the riders, identifying pop

up locations and requesting transit stores to accept and/or screen LIFE applications. Currently, 13 transit operators, including Metro are participating:

- o Antelope Valley Transit
- o Big Blue Bus
- o Culver City Bus
- o Foothill Transit
- o Gardena Transit
- o Long Beach Transit
- o Los Angeles DOT
- o Montebello Transit
- o Norwalk Transit
- o Pasadena Transit
- o Santa Clarita Transit
- o Torrance Transit

### III. Public Engagement and Marketing Program:

To support the direct enrollment and co-enrollment activities, Staff is implementing a robust, multicultural, multi-channel public engagement and marketing program to inform, identify and support the enhanced LIFE Program. Through the following activities Metro will:

- Execute a multi-cultural marketing/advertising campaign that will inform and educate the residents of Los Angeles County on fare resumption, half off passes and the LIFE program, with a strong emphasis on driving sign-ups to the LIFE program. This campaign will utilize in-language local print media, radio and TV as well as social and digital media assets. It will also include Metro-owned assets, including digital, bus and rail cards, posters, Metro.net and Metro's Blog.
- Highlight promotional passes and other discount programs at point of sale (POS) locations, including TVMs, Metro Customer Care centers, and TAP website.
- Integrate fare resumption message into NextGen/December shake up materials where space is available
- Utilize point of level communication tactics to inform customers of the LIFE program, fare collection, including ambassadors, signage at bus stops, alert banner on Metro.net, push alerts to 70,000 Transit app users and all other digital assets
- Utilize seat drops on the Metro bus system to distribute LIFE Program information
- Utilize Metro's Street Teams on the bus and rail system to distribute materials and information directly to riders

- Drive enrollees to the online portal via earned and paid media channels that 30-Day, 7-Day and 1-Day passes are half price for a promotional limited time.
- Educate and inform current cash-paying customers of the LIFE program, including additional discounts available as part of the half-off passes promotion.
- Drive awareness to LIFE participants that their passes will be deeply discounted.
- Update the application to be “mobile first” moving away from using a PDF to complete the application; and conduct other tactical and strategic activities.

In effort to achieve the enrollment goal, Staff will pursue robust engagement, collaboration and partnering opportunities with civic organizations, CBOs and elected officials such as:

- Partnering with elected officials, civic organizations, and CBO's to:
  - Provide general information on Metro's discounted fare programs, with targeted communication on additional pass discounts to LIFE participants and current pass holders.
  - Encourage the inclusion of LIFE materials and links to the online portal through established email and newsletter distribution lists
- Partnering with community-based organizations to educate and identify potential LIFE participants on the bus and rail system.
- Partnering with community-based organizations to identify and conduct outreach and engagement at culturally appropriate community gathering places such as barber shops, salons, shopping centers, and community events.
- Engage Metro advisory bodies including Metro Service Councils, Community Advisory Committee, Public Safety Advisory Committee to promote and distribute information about the LIFE program
- Incorporate LIFE program messaging into blast emails and communications for Metro projects, programs, and initiatives in the planning and construction phase.

Timeline: Efforts will be initiated in November 2021 through December 2022

### LIFE Enrollment Projections

Preliminary LIFE enrollment projections have been established based on the current levels of enrollment from the online portal, pop-up events, FAME/IILA and partnering CBO agencies' enrollments, and the expected enrollment through partnerships with County agencies and public

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service providers. The current enrollment levels are expected to increase as a result of the expanded marketing campaigns which will increase program visibility, the 90-day free transit pass enrollment incentive, and easier sign-ups with the self-certify option. It is anticipated that enrollments will significantly increase upon fare collection resumption in January 2022. The projected enrollments as result of coordinated efforts initiated in October 2021 are summarized in the LIFE Monthly Enrollment Projections Chart (Attachment E).

Metro staff will continue to assess the effectiveness of the Enrollment Plan over the next fourteen months through December 2022, and staff will make needed adjustments based on enrollment results. Staff in collaboration with the contracted LIFE Program administrators, FAME and IILA, will monitor the projected enrollment targets, the actual enrollments, develop and program performance metrics that will be assessed monthly and reported quarterly.

Timeline: Efforts initiated beginning October 2021 through December 2022

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The LIFE Program Strategic Double Enrollment Plan is a multi-pronged plan centered on partnering with the LIFE program administrators, CBOs, and public agency service providers within Los Angeles County's diverse communities and specific geographic areas to build awareness of the LIFE Program and the benefits afforded through enrollment; including to identify qualifying low-income riders, people and households; and to help facilitate the enrollment or co-enrollment of vulnerable people in the LIFE Program. The Enrollment Plan will be supported by a communications and public engagement plan that commits to providing non-English translation and multilingual, culturally appropriate materials. Additionally, the plan seeks to meet community members where they are to reduce barriers to Metro updates and information. These efforts will target messaging and access to enrollment to economically vulnerable people in our communities and improve access to transit through discounted passes and the enhanced LIFE Program.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The Enrollment Plan supports strategic goal #3 “Enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity” by providing financial relief by reducing the cost of riding transit for all riders, especially the most economically vulnerable people in our communities.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Over the next two-weeks staff will continue to focus efforts in preparation for the formal 45-day LIFE Program enrollment period which commences November 26, 2021. Recognizing staff has initiated early actions to facilitate the “soft-launch” of the enhanced self-certify application process, over the next 30 days staff will continue to focus efforts on formalizing partnerships with community-based organizations and public agency service providers such as the DPSS, LACDA, and others in support of co-enrollment and/or mass distribution of LIFE Program information to existing clients and/or program applicants. Lastly, staff will return to the Board in January with an update.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Motion 40 - Fareless Systems Initiative (FSI)

Attachment B - LIFE Program Enrollment Activity Matrix

Attachment C - LIFE Outreach Events Equity Focus Communities Map

Attachment D - LIFE Program Enrollment Pop-Up and Outreach Events Schedule

Attachment E - LIFE Monthly Enrollment Projections Chart

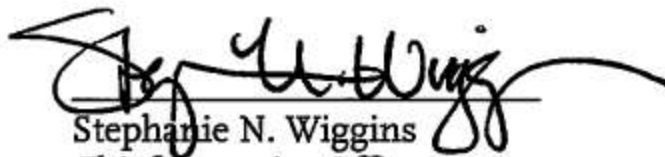
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