



August 3rd, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Due to Overwhelming Demand, the Opportunity Pass Pilot Program Will Close New Enrollments on August 14th, 2026. Current Opportunity Pass holders will continue receiving free transit as usual through the remainder of the program.

NEW ORLEANS — Ride New Orleans (RIDE), in partnership with the City of New Orleans, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), the New Orleans Public Library and the New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board, announced today that due to the program's popularity and overwhelming demand, **new enrollments for the Opportunity Pass pilot will close on Friday, August 14th, 2026.**

Since its launch in 2024, the Opportunity Pass pilot has connected more than 10,500 Orleans Parish youth to free, unlimited rides on Regional Transit Authority (RTA) buses, streetcars, and ferries, expanding access to school, work, health care, community resources, and joy.

The discontinuation of new enrollments will not affect current Opportunity Pass participants. If you've already signed up for the pilot program, your pass will continue to work like normal while supplies last. RIDE, RTA, and the City are working together to determine the program's future and will update users and the public as soon as they know more.

Current participants can keep using the program exactly as they have been:

- Enrolled digital pass users can continue to download and activate new daily passes through the RTA Le Pass app as needed.
- Enrolled paper pass users can continue to visit any New Orleans Public Library location each month to receive their new monthly paper pass (Note: After 8/14, Ride New Orleans will no longer offer monthly renewed paper passes during on-site outreach. Enrolled users must go to a library location for renewed monthly passes)

What's Next? As the program nears conclusion, RIDE, along with our partners, is committed to collaborating with city leaders and potential funders to explore opportunities to sustain youth access to transit beyond the pilot.

*"We are incredibly grateful for the enthusiastic response to the Opportunity Pass Pilot Program," said **Courtney Jackson, Executive Director of Ride New Orleans.** "The success of this initiative demonstrates just how transformative free transit is for young people and how essential transportation is to expanding access, fostering independence, and connecting youth to all of the opportunities our city has to offer. We must now prioritize using the stories, data, and lessons from this program to champion sustainable investment and ensure New Orleans' youth continue to have access to the opportunities they deserve."*

*"To me, transportation supports dreams. Whether a young person wants to get to school, a job, an internship, a training program, or even just explore new opportunities, they need a way to get there," said **Sierra, a Youth Transit Ambassador and Opportunity Pass user.** "The Opportunity Pass gives youth freedom, independence, and access to experiences that can change the course of their lives."*



"Integral to the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority's mission is our commitment to connecting people to opportunity and serving every community throughout our region. The Opportunity Pass Pilot Program is an incredible example of what can be achieved when public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community partners come together to remove transportation barriers for young people," said **Kelder Summers, Chief of External Affairs for the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority**. "While this pilot is nearing its conclusion, its impact will extend beyond the program itself. We hope it has helped establish lifelong transit habits and demonstrated that public transportation can be a safe, reliable, and affordable way to access education, employment, healthcare, and other opportunities. RTA remains committed to supporting young people and expanding access to mobility through the services and partnerships we provide."

*"The Library has been proud to serve as a hub for this program since day one. We've seen firsthand how something as simple as a free ride can open doors," said **Emily Painton, Executive Director and City Librarian at the New Orleans Public Library**. "This collaboration has helped connect young people throughout our community to essential resources, opportunities, and new experiences through free transit access, exemplifying our shared commitment to meeting people where they are and working together to break down barriers to opportunity."*

"The Opportunity Pass is more than a successful pilot—it is proof that free, youth-friendly public transportation works. Affordable transit was identified by young people as a priority solution in the Youth Master Plan because transportation is essential to accessing education, employment, programs, healthcare, and the places where young people feel safe and connected," said **Morgan Shannon, Executive Director of the New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board**. "CYPB is committed to working alongside youth, systems leaders, and policymakers to secure long-term funding and make free public transit not a temporary pilot, but a permanent reality for every young person in New Orleans."

RIDE encourages eligible youth who have not yet enrolled to sign up by Friday, August 14th, 2026, so they can access free transit through the end of the program. Stay tuned for future updates as we work to secure youth access to transit in New Orleans.

About the Opportunity Pass Program

The Opportunity Pass Program provides eligible Orleans Parish residents ages 16–24 with free, unlimited rides on Regional Transit Authority buses, streetcars, and ferries while supplies last. The pilot was made possible by one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and the City of New Orleans. This youth-led initiative was developed through a partnership between Ride New Orleans, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, the New Orleans Public Library, and the New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board to remove transportation barriers and expand access to education, jobs, healthcare, opportunities, and joy for New Orleans youth.

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