



Fare Policy

(GEN11)

POLICY STATEMENT

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is committed to providing high-quality public transportation services for the benefit of the individuals and communities that it serves. This mission is funded by fare revenues from riders across its service area. RTA manages all Fare Elements, including fare structure and pricing, fare marketing and access, fare technology, fare collection, and fare enforcement.

This Fare Policy references RTA's Title VI and Environmental Justice Policy Manual (last revised January 2023).

PURPOSE

This Fare Policy establishes transparent guidance for all Fare Elements and Fare-Related Decisions at RTA. The policy is technology- and solution-agnostic. It establishes RTA's goals, values, and commitments as they relate to fares.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and will be automatically reviewed and updated in the event of the following: (1) a change in the fare structure, (2) a Major Fare Technology Change, (3) any changes in State or Local Legislation related to Fare Elements, or (4) changes to any other RTA Policies that impact Fare Elements.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all RTA employees involved in Fare Elements or Fare-Related Decisions.

ADOPTED BY:

The RTA Board of Commissioners on [DATE], Resolution [XX-XXX].

APPROVED BY:

Lona Hankins
Chief Executive Officer

Effective Date: [DATE]

1.0 Fare Policy Objectives

To guide Fare-Related Decisions, RTA has developed the following Fare Policy Objectives. These objectives reflect the complexity of implementing and managing Fare Elements that (1) meet the needs of the RTA and its users, (2) address the social, environmental, and economic goals for public transportation, and (3) fulfil federal civil rights obligations.

All RTA Fare-Related Decisions are guided by the Fare Policy Objectives. Some possible strategies may achieve one objective at the expense of another. These objectives should be carefully weighed in relation to each other whenever changes to Fare Elements are proposed. RTA strives to meet all these objectives, while recognizing that competing objectives must be balanced.

Improve Service	Orient Fare-Related Decisions towards enhancing service reliability and increasing overall speed of service.
Maximize Ridership to Drive Revenue for Service Expansion	Set fare structure and fare pricing to maximize ridership and ensure consistent sales growth for investment into service enhancements.
Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Approach Fare Elements and Fare-Related Decisions with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and a commitment to equitable access and outcomes for riders.
Enhance Connectivity	Utilize Fare Elements to enhance regional connectivity and integration across all modes of transportation.
Increase Efficiency and Simplicity	Increase speed and efficiency of rider boarding and simplicity of Fare Elements for customers.
Prioritize Local, Regular Riders	Prioritize regular riders through all Fare Elements, while reducing barriers to entry for new riders.
Minimize Operator Involvement in Fare Collection	Minimize the role of operators in fare collection and fare disputes to allow them to focus on providing safe, reliable, and welcoming service.
Optimize Return on Investment	Optimize the value of capital and operating expenditures on Fare Elements.



2.0 Fare Structure Overview

Section 2.4 summarizes pricing for all RTA Fares. A full definition of each RTA fare product can be found below.

2.1 Single-Ride Fares (Bus and Streetcar)

Adult Single Fare: One trip on the bus or streetcar. Upon purchase or validation of a physical ticket at vehicle farebox, passengers may request a physical transfer ticket. Passengers may transfer to or ride any other RTA bus or streetcar within two hours of initial purchase upon presentation of a valid ticket.

Priority Rider Single Fare: One trip on the bus or streetcar. Upon purchase or validation of a physical ticket at vehicle farebox, passengers may request a physical transfer ticket. Passengers may transfer to or ride any other RTA bus or streetcar within two hours of initial purchase upon presentation of a valid ticket. The Priority Rider Single Fare is available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Priority Riders,' outlined in Section 6.1.

Youth Single Fare: One trip on the bus or streetcar. Upon purchase or validation of a physical ticket at vehicle farebox, passengers may request a physical transfer ticket. Passengers may transfer to or ride any other RTA bus or streetcar within two hours of initial purchase upon presentation of a valid ticket. The Youth Single Fare is available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Youth,' outlined in Section 6.1.

2.2 Single-Ride Fares (Ferries)

Adult Ferry Fare: One-way trip for a single rider on the ferry, including a vehicle weighing less than 10 tons.

Priority Rider Ferry Fare: One-way trip for a single rider on the ferry, including a vehicle weighing less than 10 tons. The Priority Rider Ferry Fare is available to riders who meet the eligibility of 'Priority Riders,' outlined in Section 6.1.

Youth Ferry Fare: One-way trip for a single rider on the ferry, including a vehicle weighing less than 10 tons. The Youth Ferry Fare is available to riders who meet the eligibility of 'Youth,' outlined in Section 6.1.

Trailer Ferry Fare: One-way trip for a single trailer pulled by a vehicle with ticketed driver, with a combined length no greater than 48 feet.

Vehicle Passenger Ferry Fare: One-way trip for a passenger within a vehicle.



2.3 Pass Products

1-Day Jazzy Pass: Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 24 hours after first activation.

1-Day Jazzy Pass (Priority Rider): Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 24 hours after first activation, available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Priority Riders,' outlined in Section 6.1.

1-Day Jazzy Pass (Youth): Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 24 hours after first activation, available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Youth', outlined in Section 6.1.

1-Day Regional Ride: Provides riders with unlimited rides on both RTA bus, streetcar, and ferries as well as JP Transit buses for 24 hours after first activation.

3-Day Jazzy Pass: Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 3 consecutive days after first activation.

7-Day Jazzy Pass: Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 7 consecutive days after first activation.

31-Day Jazzy Pass: Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 31 consecutive days after first activation.

31-Day Jazzy Pass (Priority Rider): Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 31 consecutive days after first activation, available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Priority Riders,' outlined in Section 6.1.

31-Day Jazzy Pass (Youth): Provides rider with use of the RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry for 31 consecutive days after first activation, available to passengers who meet the eligibility of 'Youth', outlined in Section 6.1.

2.4 Fare Table

Current RTA fares are listed in the table below.

Single-Ride Fares (Bus and Streetcar)	
Adult Single Fare	1.25
Priority Rider Single Fare	0.40
Youth Single Fare	0.50
Single-Ride Fares (Ferry)	
Adult Ferry Fare	2.00
Priority Rider Ferry Fare	1.00
Youth Ferry Fare	1.00
Trailer Ferry Fare	3.00
Vehicle Passenger Ferry Fare	1.00
1-Day Pass	
1-Day Jazzy Pass (Adult)	3.00
1-Day Jazzy Pass (Priority Rider)	0.80
1-Day Jazzy Pass (Youth)	1.00
1-Day Regional Ride	6.00
3-Day Pass	
3-Day Jazzy Pass	8.00
7-Day Pass	
7-Day Jazzy Pass	15.00
31-Day Pass	
31-Day Jazzy Pass (Adult)	45.00
31-Day Jazzy Pass (Priority Rider)	14.00
31-Day Jazzy Pass (Youth)	18.00

3.0 Change and Refunds

3.1 Change Policy

RTA does not provide change on the bus or streetcars. Passengers paying cash shall be provided with a “change card” usable on all RTA buses and streetcars in lieu of cash change. RTA does not provide change or change card on the ferries.

3.2 Refund Policy

Other than the cases established below, sales of fares and pass products (including Promotional Fares) are non-refundable. Riders shall be eligible for a replacement fare under the following circumstances:

- In the case of a major defect associated with any fare media.
- In the event that fare products are not delivered upon purchase for any reason.
- In the case of exceptional, unexpected service suspensions.

All fare refunds shall be processed through RTA’s customer service center (Rideline). All refunds shall be made at the discretion of RTA for passes purchased within 90 days.

4.0 Fare Reporting Requirements

4.1 Annual Fare Report

RTA is committed to providing its riders and other public stakeholders with accurate, timely information related to all Fare Elements. This information will serve to inform the Board of Commissioners and the public of RTA's performance relative to its Fare Policy Objectives. RTA will complete an Annual Fare Report with the following information:

Fare Revenue

- Total Fare Revenue (by Mode)
- Fare Revenue by Fare Media
- Fare Revenue by Sales Channel
- Fare Revenue / Rider (by Mode)

Fare Collection Costs

- Total Fare Collection Costs
- Fare Collection Costs by Mode
- Fare Collection Costs by Fare Media

Marketing / Access

- Summary of Retail Network and Fare Access Points
- Overview of Pass Sales Programs
- Reporting on special fare programs or fare pilots

The Annual Fare Report shall be provided to the Board of Commissioners in March of each Calendar Year. The Annual Fare Report will use the same reporting standards and methodology as the Federal Transit Administration's National Transit Database (NTD).

5.0 Fare Changes

RTA's mission is funded by fare revenues, and the provision of world-class service is dependent on the collection of fares as operating revenue. As such, it's critical that RTA consistently evaluate its fare structure to determine the extent to which existing pricing provides sufficient funding to meet the Agency's goals.

5.1 Fare Review Requirements

The RTA Finance Department will complete a Fare Structure Review every two years (the first of which was completed in January 2022), as well as at the occurrence of any of the following:

- Implementation of a Major Fare Technology Change
- Completion of a Temporary Fare Structure

The Fare Structure Review will include an analysis of all data reported in Section 4.1 "Annual Fare Report" in addition to the following components, when relevant to the fare elements under review:

- An analysis of the fare pricing and fare structure of peer agencies
- Focus groups with RTA staff (including operators) to determine the extent to which the current fare structure is meeting the Agency's broader objectives
- Surveys with ridership to determine the appropriateness of current fares

The Fare Structure Review will make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners as to whether changes to fare structure or fare pricing would help the RTA better achieve the goals laid out in Section 1.0 Fare Policy Objectives.

5.2 Fare Adjustment Requirements

Adjustments to fare structure or fare pricing (other than Promotional Fares as defined in Section 5.4) shall be approved by the Board of Commissioners.

All adjustments to fare structure or fare pricing (other than Promotional Fares as defined in Section 5.4) shall be approved by the New Orleans City Council as established in Section 12(b) of Article III of the Transit Agreement executed between the City of New Orleans and the RTA on June 28, 1983.

Implementing an adjustment in RTA's fare structure or fare pricing requires satisfying the Agency's Title VI Requirements, including the performance of a Fare Analysis and the development and implementation of a Public Participation Plan. All Title VI Requirements associated with implementing an adjustment in RTA's fare structure or fare pricing are established in the Title VI and Environmental Justice Policy Manual.

5.3 Temporary Fare Structure

RTA is authorized to implement a Temporary Fare Structure without satisfying its Title VI Requirements if the temporary fare reduction lasts less than six months. A Temporary Fare Structure must still be approved by the Board of Commissioners and the New Orleans City Council as defined in Section 5.2.

5.4 Promotional Fare Discounts

Promotional distribution of discounted fares is necessary for the promotion of RTA's transit system. The Chief Executive Officer of the RTA, or their designee, is therefore authorized to approve distribution of discounted or free tickets and passes for the following one-time purposes:

- To provide an individual with an incentive to take their first trip on RTA
- To retain existing riders
- To encourage existing riders to ride the transit system more often and for different trip purposes
- To encourage individuals to use new or different modes
- To shift patrons from over-utilized services and amenities to under-utilized services and amenities of the transit system
- To incentivize the use of new fare media

The justification for such promotional fares must be documented at the time of approval and included in the subsequent Annual Fare Report described in Section 4.1.

RTA retains the ability to offer Fare Free Days when no fare will be required to ride RTA services. Fare Free Days shall be announced at least one week in advance and must be approved by RTA's Executive Leadership Team. Eliminating fares for more than ten consecutive days constitutes either a Temporary Fare Structure (defined in Section 5.3) or a Suspension of Fares (established in Section 5.7).

Fare discounts to be implemented for more than one day, including free fares, will include a written justification and financial analysis when seeking the approval of the CEO or their designee. The justification and analysis will be documented and reported in the subsequent Annual Fare Report.

5.5 Election Days

City-wide elections certified by the Louisiana Secretary of State on which candidates for city-wide, statewide, or federal office appear are to be observed with fare-free transit, on all modes operated by the RTA, by resolution of the RTA Board of Commissioners, to help the riding public get to their designated polling places.



Additionally, the RTA will provide fare-free transit on all modes on any Saturday during early voting periods for election days defined above.

5.6 Rosa Parks Day and Claudette Colvin Day

Rosa Parks Day shall be observed each year on Rosa Parks' February 4 birthday. Claudette Colvin Day shall be observed each year on Claudette Colvin's September 5 birthday. To honor their courageous assertions of equal rights for African Americans and to commemorate their historic roles in America's Civil Rights movement, those days are to be observed with fare-free transit, on all modes operated by the RTA.

5.7 Suspension of Fares

The RTA provides emergency transportation to the public when called upon to assist by the City of New Orleans in accordance with the RTA's All Hazards Plan. The Chief Executive Officer has been authorized via a formal Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City of New Orleans to suspend fare collection for those resources providing emergency transportation as emergency protective measures.

Additionally, under the RTA's All Hazards Plan, the RTA may receive formal requests outside of a mandatory City-wide evacuation for emergency transportation. The CEO is also authorized to suspend the collection of fares for these specific requests.

The RTA Incident Management Team (if activated) or the RTA's Emergency Management Department will notify the CEO when fares will be suspended, for how long, and for what specific assets.

5.8 'Pay-as-you-go' / Fare Capping

RTA is authorized to implement a 'pay as you go' policy, fare capping, to simplify the choice of fare and eliminate cost barriers for frequent riders. Riders using account-based fare media will be able to purchase certain time-based passes in increments of single-ride fares.

6.0 Fare Categories

6.1 Fare Categories and Eligibility

RTA is committed to providing equitable transit access to all our riders via fares in three categories—Adult, Priority Riders, and Youth—where:

“Adult” riders are those aged 19 to 64 years of age, or who do not otherwise match one of the categories below.

“Priority Rider” is defined as any of the following:

- Any person 65 years of age and older.
- Any person who is a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces
- Any person who qualifies as disabled through the following: (1) any person registered legally blind by the Commission for the Blind; (2) any person registered disabled by the Social Security Administration; (3) any person certified 100% disabled by the Veterans Administration;; (4) any person receiving Medicare with a Medicare Card.

“Youth” is defined as (1) any person under 19 years of age; or (2) any person who is a Kindergarten through Grade 12 student.

The discounted fares offered to Priority Riders and Youth are defined within Table 1 Current RTA Fare Pricing in Section 2.4.

6.2 Free Fare Eligibility

The individuals and members of groups listed below are eligible to ride RTA for free:

- Children five years of age and younger when accompanied by an adult
- Uniformed and badged Law Enforcement Officers as defined by Louisiana Revised Statute 40:2402
- Uniformed and badged Fire Fighters as defined by Louisiana Revised Statute 39:1991(A)

Any person qualifying as Temporarily Disabled or Disabled through RTA’s Paratransit Service Eligibility Criteria and carrying an RTA Paratransit Card.

Per RTA Policy HC19, RTA also issues transportation passes to eligible individuals. Transportation passes are valid as fare media on all RTA transit services. Individuals travelling with a badged RTA employee, for the express purpose of agency business, may also board for free at the employee’s direction.

Full definitions of eligible parties and guidelines for transportation passes can be found in RTA Policy HC19.

7.0 Pass Sales Programs

7.1 Retail Sales

RTA partners with select retailers to provide additional cost-effective distribution outlets for RTA passes. By expanding RTA's sales network, RTA is helping drive local retail sales through small businesses. RTA discounts the fares sold to retailers as identified in the table below. By selling RTA passes, retailers agree to sell the passes at the prices listed in Section 2.4. If a retail outlet is found to be in violation of this policy, RTA reserves the right to limit or suspend retail sales to that establishment.

Pass Type	Discount 50 or more
1-Day	10%
1-Day Youth	10%
1-Day Priority	10%
3-Day	10%
7-Day	10%
31-Day Youth	10%
31-Day Priority	10%
31-Day	10%

**50 applies to total passes in one transaction, regardless of pass type*

7.2 Non-Retail Bulk Discount

Bulk Discounts are offered to any organizations looking to purchase 50 or more multi-day passes in a single transaction. Organizations may not re-sell Bulk Discount passes. If an organization is found to be in violation of this policy, RTA reserves the right to limit or suspend future bulk discounts to that organization.

Pass Type	50 or more	500 or more	1,500 or more	2,500 or more
3-Day	5%	10%	15%	20%
7-Day	5%	10%	15%	20%
31-Day	5%	10%	15%	20%



7.3 University Pass

Colleges and universities in the Greater New Orleans Region can offer their students discounted RTA fare media through the University Pass Program. RTA offers Colleges and Universities semester passes at a rate of \$85 per Academic Term per student. Academic Terms are defined as following:

- Fall
- Spring
- Summer

University Passes are only offered to students at colleges, universities, and post-secondary educational institutions who have opted into RTA's University Pass Program.

8.0 Fare Media and Accessibility Commitments

8.1 Fare Media Diversity

RTA is committed to offering fares across diverse media, giving riders the opportunity to purchase fares in the format that best suits their needs. Even as RTA enhances its fare technology, it is committed to meeting the needs of its riders who use physical passes and pay for fares with cash. Further, RTA is committed to providing equal fares regardless of point of sale.

RTA's Title VI Policy identifies the responsibility of the agency to avoid service and policy changes that will result in discriminatory or disparate impacts on the communities it serves. In this spirit, RTA recognizes that its fare offerings must meet the diverse needs of its ridership. As RTA implements new fare technology, it will ensure that equitable access and mobility are offered to all riders. No group of riders should bear an unfair or disproportionate burden of RTA Fare-Related Decisions.

8.2 Equal Access Commitments

RTA is committed to ensuring equitable geographic access to fare products throughout its service area. Distribution of RTA fare media points of purchase should support the Agency's Title VI objective to provide a level and quality of service sufficient to provide equal access and mobility for any person, regardless of race, color, national origin, English-language proficiency, or access to non-cash payments.

RTA will affirmatively improve access for minority and low-income riders to purchase fares in the media that best suit their needs. Riders across RTA's service area will enjoy similar access to fares in the media of their choosing. RTA commits to appropriately informing riders of upcoming changes in fares, fare media, and available fare products. RTA will effectively communicate changes to the communities in its service area.

RTA is committed to training riders on relevant fare technology as the Agency updates its technology but believes that training riders on the utilization of fare technology is not a substitute for equity-led fares media offerings and fare product accessibility.

As RTA expands eligibility criteria for its Priority Rider Program, RTA commits that all elements related to access for enrollment, sign-up, and utilization require specific review by the Board of Commissioners. RTA is committed to ensuring low barriers to entry to these programs.

9.0 Fare Validation

9.1 Fare Validation Requirements

Although RTA will not seek criminal punishments for fare evasion, passengers must purchase a fare (or confirm their eligibility for a free fare in accordance with Section 6.2) to board any RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry.

Prior to boarding an RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry, passengers must provide evidence of fare payment (or evidence of eligibility for a free fare in accordance with Section 6.2) to an Operator or Authorized Fare Validation Personnel.

Passengers must be able to provide evidence of fare payment (or evidence of eligibility for a free fare in accordance with Section 6.2) upon request from an Operator or Authorized Fare Validation Personnel at the following times:

- While on-board an RTA bus, streetcar, and ferry
- While in designated fare zones
- When exiting an RTA bus, streetcar, and ferry

Passengers who are using a Youth Fare or Priority Rider Fare must be able to provide evidence of eligibility upon request from an Operator or Authorized Fare Validation Personnel while on-board an RTA bus, streetcar, or ferry.

10.0 Glossary of Terms

Adult	A fare category for all riders aged 19 to 64 years of age, or who do not otherwise meet the eligibility for 'Priority Rider' or 'Youth'
Authorized Fare Validation Personnel	Any RTA employee or contractor with the authority to check the presence and validity of a passenger's fare
Boarding Time	The time a vehicle spends at a scheduled stop for the purpose of passenger boarding
Bulk Discounts / Bulk Discount Program	Price reductions on fares when sold in quantities of 50 or more as defined in Section 7.2
Dwell Time	The time a vehicle spends at a scheduled stop without moving
Fare-Related Decisions	Internal RTA decisions or decisions made by the RTA Board of Commissioners associated with Fare-Related Elements
Fare Access Points	All points, geographical or otherwise, where passengers can purchase fares
Fare Elements	All components of the fare process, including but not limited to policy, pricing, fare media, technology, and service
Fare Free Days	Days on which no fares will be collected for RTA service
Fare Media	The physical or electronic means by which a fare purchase is represented
Fare Policy	This Fare Policy establishes transparent guidance for all Fare Elements and Fare-Related Decisions at RTA. The policy is technology and solution agnostic. It establishes RTA's goals, values, and commitments as it relates to fares
Fare Revenue	Money collected in exchange for fares
Fare Structure	The overall set of fares and prices offered to riders

Fare Structure Review	Requirements associated with review of the Fare Structure as defined in Section 5.1
Major Fare Technology Change	Change in the technology associated with the sale, validation, or enforcement of fares whereby the total capital cost associated with the improvements exceeds \$10 million
National Transit Database (NTD)	Database of financial, operating, and asset conditions of public transit providers, maintained by the Federal Transit Authority
New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA)	Public transportation agency serving the New Orleans region
Operator	Employees and/or contractors responsible for the safe operation of RTA service vehicles
Priority Rider	A fare category for all riders who meet one of the following eligibility criteria: • (1) Any person 65 years of age and older. • (1) any person under 65 years of age registered legally blind by the Commission for the Blind; (2) any person under 65 years of age registered disabled by the Social Security Administration; (3) any person under 65 years of age certified 100% disabled by the Veterans Administration. • (1) any person who is a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces • (1) any person who shows a valid Medicare Card
Retail Network	The collective retail partners who sell RTA passes
RTA Board of Commissioners	The governing body of the Regional Transit Authority, consisting of publicly appointed representatives from the communities served by RTA
Temporary Fare Structure	A fare reduction implemented for less than six months

Time-Based Ticket	A fare that allows the holder to board multiple eligible RTA services within a given timeframe
Title VI and Environmental Justice Policy Manual	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation. The Title VI and Environmental Justice Policy Manual outlines RTA's commitments
Youth	A fare category for any rider who is under 19 years of age or who is a Kindergarten through Grade 12 student

11.0 POLICY HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Resolution No.	Comments
09/27/2022	Board Adoption	22-071	

12.0 REFERENCES

- Title VI and Environmental Justice Policy Manual (last revised January 2023)
- Transportation Policy (HC 19)
- 2024 Fare Annual Report

13.0 SPONSORING DEPARTMENT

- Finance

14.0 NEXT REVIEW DATE

- On or before November 2027