



Human Resources
Administration
Department of
Homeless Services

Department of
Social Services

Testimony of Rebecca Chew, Chief Program Officer
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Before the New York City Council, Committee on General Welfare and Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
Fair Fares Hearing
May 6, 2026

Good morning.

My name is Rebecca Chew and I serve as Chief Program Officer of the Human Resources Administration (HRA) within the Department of Social Services (DSS). I would like to thank Chair Hudson, Chair Abreu, the members of the Committee on General Welfare, and the members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for convening today's hearing on Fair Fares. I am joined today by Monica Ealey, Deputy Commissioner for Fair Fares, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), and IDNYC and by Christopher Gonzalez, DSS Chief Strategy Officer.

HRA's mission is fighting poverty and income inequality by providing New Yorkers in need with essential benefits. We understand the importance of transit access and affordability. We share the view that public transportation is an integral part of our City. Reducing transportation costs for low-income households means access to family and friends, healthcare and education, and the ability to more fully participate in the life of our shared communities. Transportation is a daily necessity that impacts the geography of opportunity low-income New Yorkers face; access to transportation is transformative and we want New Yorkers to be able to benefit from our outstanding transit system.

Fair Fares serves as a crucial component of driving those values forward. Since Fair Fares' inception, City Hall, Council, and DSS have worked tirelessly to expand its reach. Over the last six years, income eligibility has grown from 100% of the Federal Poverty level to 150%. The eligible population has expanded from those receiving CA and SNAP to open enrollment to all eligible NYC residents through an online application portal.

Fair Fares links low-income households with a 50% discount on subway and eligible bus fares, or 50% off Access-A-Ride Paratransit trips. For more information about this program, we encourage New Yorkers to visit NYC.gov/FairFares, call 311, or visit one of the five Fair Fares NYC

locations. New York City residents may be eligible for Fair Fares if they are: between the ages of 18 and 64; are in a household that meets the income guidelines for the program; are not receiving funds to pay for the full cost of a subway or bus ride from the Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration (DSS/HRA) or any other NYC agency; and if choosing the subway and bus discount, they are not currently participating in or eligible to participate in any other transportation discount program. For instance, if an individual is eligible or already participating in the MTA Reduced-Fare program, they are not eligible for the Fair Fares subway and bus discount; note also that Access-A-Ride customers may request the Fair Fares discount be applied to their Access-A-Ride fare.

People should visit the MTA's website (MTA.info) for more full information about their Reduced-Fare Program and how to apply; briefly, the MTA highlights their Reduced-Fare Program is available to any person aged 65 or over, or any person with a qualifying disability: receiving Medicare benefits for any reason other than age; serious mental illness and receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI); blindness; deafness or hearing loss; ambulatory disability; cognitive disability; or other physical disability.

At present, Fair Fares has approximately 380,000 participants. Community-minded partners have served as an invaluable resource in pursuing our Fair Fares outreach strategy. In government for instance, DSS and MTA's longstanding partnership includes participating in Transit Talk events in subway stations to promote Fair Fares and help people apply, DSS provision of outreach and enrollment assistance at Transit Talks, and the MTA partnering to promote Fair Fares online. Also in government, DSS has partnered with the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Department of Education (DOE), CUNY, Department of Probation, Small Business Services (SBS), NYC Health and Hospitals, the Public Engagement Unit, community boards, and elected officials. We have engaged community-based organizations in promoting Fair Fares, including VNS Health Community Center and the Street Vendor Project. Whether through training partners' staff, community events, or pop ups, outreach remains an in-community endeavor for us, consistently meeting New Yorkers where they are.

In addition to engaging with partners, we have engaged in advertising campaigns to raise the public's awareness about Fair Fares. In 2025, the City invested more than \$2 million in targeted advertising. In 2026 we have an ongoing advertising campaign that began in March and runs through various channels through June; that campaign includes ethnic and community newspapers, TV, and radio spots in multiple languages (e.g. English, Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Bengali, Russian), social media, search engine keyword marketing, outdoor advertising, Link NYC kiosks, bus shelters, subways, ferries, and ferry terminals.

We continually look for ways to expand our outreach and educate the public about Fair Fares, raising the program's visibility and connecting people to this important resource.

I will now turn to the legislation on agenda for today's hearing.

Introduction 248 proposes that the Commissioner of Social Services create a system to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefit programs, like Fair Fares NYC.

As the administrator of major benefits programs, DSS understands that public benefits do not exist in isolation; an individual who may be eligible for public benefit "X" may also qualify for public benefit "Y." To the extent possible, DSS seeks to connect clients with benefits they are eligible for. For instance, when an individual is determined eligible for Cash Assistance (CA) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), they are automatically evaluated for eligibility for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and, where eligible, placed on an auto-enrollment file ("auto-pay") for the annual HEAP grant. Another example, during the course of case management for households in shelter, the client will be informed about options to pursue public benefits for which they may be eligible, like CA, SNAP, or rental assistance. With respect to Fair Fares, DSS currently employs a fast-track enrollment process whereby AccessHRA CA and SNAP clients can click a button to agree to the terms and conditions of the program, acknowledge the program's rules, and enroll. The process is quick and easy, taking only a few minutes at most. As of March 2026, roughly two thirds of Fair Fares clients are fast track, when counting as a share of overall enrollment volume (67.3% fast track, 32.7% open enrollment). Altogether, DSS understands the importance of outreach to potentially eligible applicants and efforts to reduce the administrative burden on applicants during the course of the benefits application process..

That said, informed consent and client privacy remain critically important components of the benefits application process. Benefits applications require access to personal information and clients authorizing review of their confidential information; such information is a requirement to proceed with most, if not all, benefits applications. An eligibility assessment for a benefit may interact with an array of protected information like residential history, household composition, income, documentation status, veteran status, pregnancy status, HIV diagnosis, or status as a survivor of intimate partner violence. DSS must be conscious of the fact that such sensitive information is subject to numerous privacy regulations and laws. Furthermore, were DSS to create a single repository for such information for the purposes of auto-enrollment, that database could pose risks to prospective automatic enrollees in benefits programs.

I would also want to highlight concerns around the feasibility of this legislation as currently written. For prospective auto-enrollees DSS does have an existing relationship with, it is important to note that other agencies and levels of government have restrictions on how we can use their data; the outcomes of discussion with those other stewards of government data are not a foregone conclusion. For prospective auto-enrollees DSS does not already have a relationship with,

alongside consent to obtain and use their data for the purposes of auto-enrollment, it is unclear how DSS would obtain, independently and without permission or prior authorization, sufficient information to enroll them; as highlighted before, City benefits may include assessing income information, housing information, medical information, or status as a survivor of domestic violence.

To be clear, we want to connect New Yorkers to the public benefits they are eligible for. We would want to have further conversations with the sponsor around what is possible in this domain to include consideration of respecting clients' agency and privacy, obtaining requisite assurances on the current accuracy of the information, and efforts to connect clients to the public benefits that best meet their needs.

Turning to the second introduction on the agenda today, Introduction 825, sponsored by Council Member Marte, would require HRA to issue duplicate transit benefit cards under the Fair Fares program where a participant's card was damaged, destroyed, stolen, or lost; HRA would be required to provide one replacement card free of charge, and would charge \$15 for subsequent replacement cards.

We want the Fair Fares program to be client-centered and user-friendly. We understand that the unexpected happens and that a mode of payment could be lost, damaged, or stolen. That is precisely why we offer a free first replacement card via Access HRA. We would want to have further discussions with the sponsor about this proposal and why our policy is that after replacing one enrollment card each enrollment year, program participants can buy their own OMNY Card or add the discount to a credit or debit card. That operational consideration allows program participants some flexibility here; again, Fair Fares program participants can use their Fair Fare discount via one of the following: a debit card, credit card, cell phone, or OMNY card. Thus, there are alternatives if their current mode of payment is lost, damaged, or stolen. In limited cases, because our understanding is the MTA has a limited number of OMNY cards, we are able to take extenuating circumstances into consideration.

I would like to close by expressing our gratitude for the partnerships that make Fair Fares work, including our partners in government, like elected officials, policymakers, our sister agencies, and the MTA, and partners in our communities, like our transit advocates, our on-the-ground community based organizations, and engaged community partners committed to outreach, awareness raising, and enrollment. We take the responsibility of guiding the Fair Fares program into the future seriously and appreciate your thoughtful contributions to this ongoing dialogue.

With that, I welcome your questions.

JOHN MCCARTHY

Thank you for the invitation to appear. I'm John McCarthy, Chief of Policy and External Relations at the MTA. I'm joined by Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara and Policy Director Dara Goldberg. Glad to be here to talk about Fair Fares.

Mass transit is one of the things that makes New York City affordable. Thanks to our vast network, New Yorkers pay less for transportation than almost anywhere else in the country. No need to spend thousands of dollars buying, insuring, and maintaining a car. A single tap is all you need to get around New York City.

But we know many people still need help paying the fare, and that's where Fair Fares comes in. At \$1.50 a ride, participants are paying about 45% less per trip today than they did a decade ago before Fair Fares started – that's a rare cost in this city that has gotten cheaper over time.

Since the program started, we've learned a lot about how participants use this benefit. We actually published a Policy Brief with our findings this week, available on the MTA website. Let me run through a few headlines:

- First, enrollment has steadily grown over the life of the program and ticks up each time the City raises the eligibility threshold. But recently, enrollment growth has slowed as those increases have been more modest.

- Next, we found that Fair Fares riders are frequent subway and bus riders. Over one-third of customers ride 5 days or more per week. And they're twice as likely than non-Fair Fares riders to hit their weekly fare cap of \$17.50.
- Third, many rely on the subway, and they're more likely to transfer between the subway and bus compared to non-Fair Fares riders.
- And finally, over 30% of Fair Fares riders first tap of the day is in Brooklyn, but Manhattan has the highest Fair Fares usage throughout the day.

We believe more can be done. We know that many low-incomes New Yorkers earn too much to qualify for Fair Fares. Even with a minimum wage job, you're maxed out. That's why we support raising the income threshold so that more people can get this benefit.

As decision-makers weigh next steps, there are tradeoffs between making the cost of transit lower for the existing eligible population, and expanding eligibility to make transit affordable for even more New Yorkers. Broadening access would ensure Fair Fares reaches more people who need it most.

We know that Fair Fares can change lives, and we look forward to working closely with you on this important initiative. Before we take questions, I'll turn it over to Shanifah Rieara for an update on our marketing and outreach efforts.

SHANIFAH RIEARA

Thanks, John. No question there are hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who qualify for Fair Fares but haven't signed up. We have been working to close that gap. For a few years now, we have mobilized the MTA's own marketing and outreach resources across the five boroughs to spread the word and support the City to enroll more customers.

Here's just a sampling of our efforts:

- Self-service iPad kiosks are available 24/7 at our 30 Customer Service Centers in subway stations, the mobile sales van out at 58 locations monthly in all five boroughs, 3 Stone Street in Lower Manhattan, and the Transit Adjudication Bureau Office in Downtown Brooklyn. Here, customers can check their eligibility and start an application.
- Every month, we host four Fair Fares outreach events at our station's Customer Service Centers with HRA at Coney Island, Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Avenue, 125th Street at Lexington Avenue, and 161 St-Yankee Stadium.
- Monthly, we hold Transit Talks and Bus Talks, where MTA staff share information about Fair Fares and enroll customers onsite. So far, we have completed 40 events.
- And as of yesterday, we launched a refreshed Fair Fares marketing campaign that directs customers to check their eligibility and start an application. You'll see these ads

across 10,000 digital screens in subway stations and on buses. Customer service reps will have handouts available for distribution. We'll also give your offices toolkits so you can inform your constituents.

We believe there's still room for improvement when it comes to outreach and advertising. As John said, we know that many working New Yorkers would stand to benefit from Fair Fares. Addressing their needs is a worthy goal and we stand ready to support the City in raising awareness and keeping New Yorkers informed.

We're happy to take any questions.



Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

The Policy Brief

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How Fair Fares NYC riders use the subway and bus network

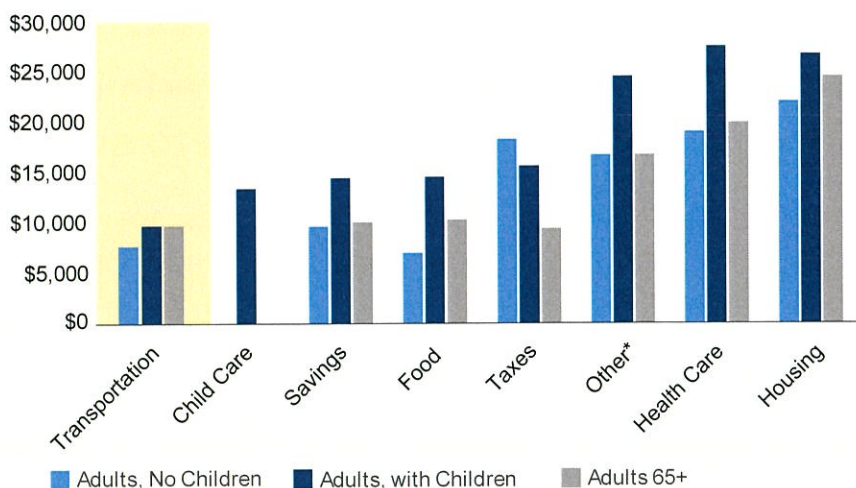
May 4, 2026

This Wednesday, May 6, the New York City Council is holding an oversight hearing on Fair Fares NYC, the City of New York’s flagship transit affordability program providing half-priced travel for low-income New Yorkers. As lawmakers and policy experts consider the future of Fair Fares NYC, this Policy Brief outlines how the program works and how Fair Fares NYC riders use the transit system today.

Mass transit keeps New York City affordable

Because of the MTA’s vast transit network – operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – New Yorkers spend less on transportation than most other everyday essentials. A report issued last month by the NYC Mayor’s Office of Racial Equity and Justice on the True Cost of Living found transportation costs are among the lowest share of New Yorkers’ household spending.¹ Housing

Median Costs by Family Type, New York City 2022



*Other includes clothing, household supplies, and other items
 Source: NYC Mayor’s Office of Equity & Racial Justice, NYC True Cost of Living Measure, March 2026.

and healthcare costs were the highest expenses, more than 2.5 times greater than transportation costs. That’s because NYC residents can walk, bike, or rely on subways and buses to get around and are less likely to own a car, which the New York State Comptroller estimates is four times more expensive than transit.²

Fair Fares NYC riders pay 45% less per ride today than they did before the program started

Fair Fares NYC, the City of New York’s flagship transit affordability program, provides half-priced subway and bus fares for low-income New Yorkers. NYC residents enrolled in the program pay \$1.50 a ride – half the regular fare – and no more than \$17.50 per week. That means Fair Fares NYC riders are paying about 45% less per ride today in today’s dollars than they were in 2018 when the base fare was \$2.75, before Fair Fares NYC started. Plus, the last time a rider paid \$1.50 for the subway or bus was in 1995. When adjusting for

inflation, the cost per ride for a Fair Fares NYC rider today is comparable to a subway or bus fare from 1953 to 1966, when it cost 15 cents a ride.

Furthermore, with City and State support, the MTA has made transit affordable for even more New Yorkers. Through existing programs like MTA Reduced Fare and Student OMNY, over 2 million seniors, people with disabilities, and students get discounted or no-cost subway and bus fares. Plus, all riders can get discounts like fare capping on subways and buses, and CityTicket for a flat fare on LIRR and Metro-North trips within New York City.

The City of New York funds and administers Fair Fares NYC, and works with the NYC Council to set program eligibility limits

Each year through the City's budgeting process, the Mayor and New York City Council determine the program's funding level and set the income eligibility threshold. The City pays for the fares covered by the program, reimbursing the MTA every month based on how many trips Fair Fares NYC customers take.

The New York City Department of Social Services is responsible for administering the Fair Fares NYC program, which includes:

- Verifying applicant eligibility, including age, residency, and income documentation
- Processing new enrollee applications and annual renewals
- Distributing Fair Fares OMNY cards
- Marketing the program and conducting public engagement
- Reimbursing the MTA for rider usage every month



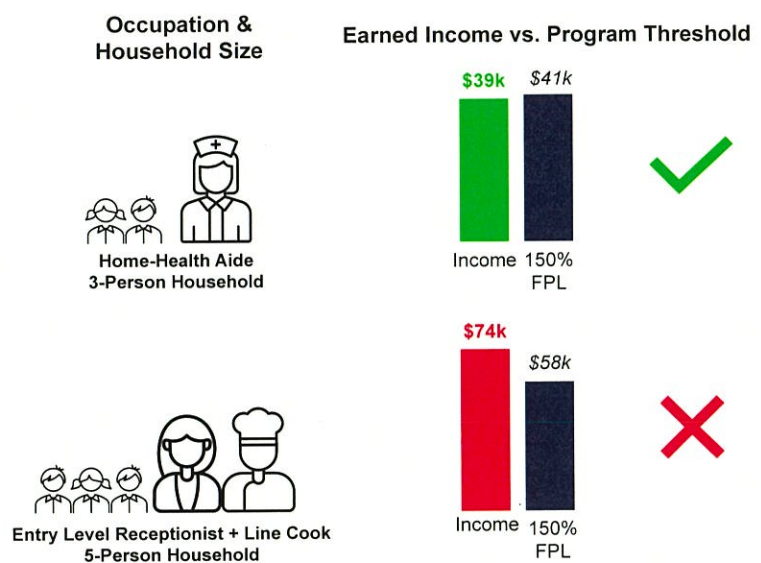
A NYC Department of Social Services employee enrolls a rider in Fair Fares NYC at the Atlantic Av-Barclays Center station.

Many low-income New Yorkers earn too much to qualify for Fair Fares NYC

To qualify for Fair Fares NYC, applicants must be aged 18 to 64 and have an annual household income at or below 150% the federal poverty level (FPL) – a national guideline set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services based on household size and income. That threshold represents approximately 1.2 million New Yorkers today.³

These federal income limits set a national standard – they are not adjusted for regional costs of living, and the income threshold can be too high to include many low-wage NYC workers, particularly those earning the minimum wage. For a New Yorker earning the minimum wage and working 40 hours a week, they take home approximately \$35,000 annually before taxes, exceeding the Fair Fares income threshold if they live alone or with a child. The same can be true for a two-parent household where both adults are earning the minimum wage.

Fair Fares NYC Eligibility Status by Household Income and Household Size

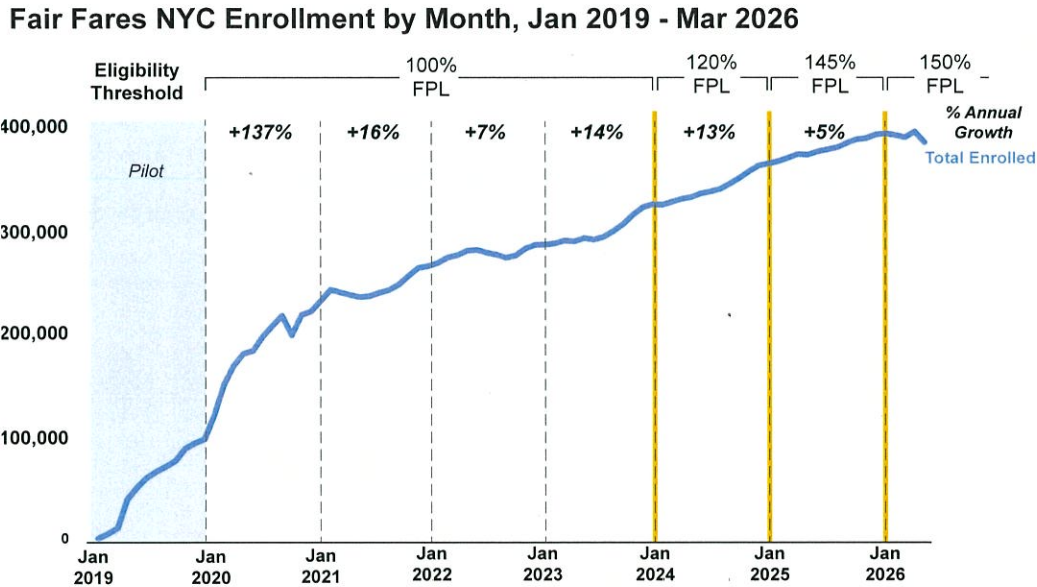


*Represents median wage unless otherwise noted. Illustrative only.
Source: NYS Department of Labor. Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2025.*

Fair Fares NYC enrollment has slowed, but it ticks up each time the City raises the eligibility threshold

Following a limited pilot program in 2019, Fair Fares NYC opened to public enrollment for eligible NYC residents earning up to 100% FPL in January 2020. Enrollment grew dramatically in the year following initial launch, jumping 137% from around 96,000 pilot participants in December 2019 to 228,000 by December 2020. Yet as the threshold stayed at 100% FPL, enrollment slowed, growing by 16% from December 2021 to December 2022, and 7% from December 2022 to December 2023.

Annual increases to the income threshold in 2024 and 2025 added nearly 400,000 New Yorkers to the eligible population, and the rate of enrollment increased each year at varying rates. However, there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible NYC residents who are not enrolled in the program, which illustrates the need for continued marketing and engagement to supplement increases to the income threshold.



Source: NYC HRA, NYC Open Data Portal, April 2026

The MTA helps with Fair Fares NYC enrollment through its own customer outreach and marketing campaign

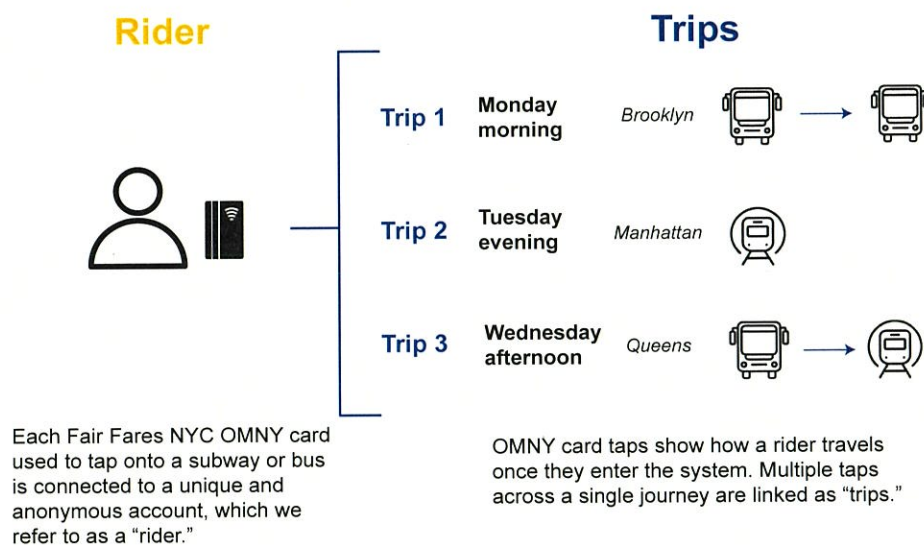
While the City is wholly responsible for shaping, funding, and administering Fair Fares NYC, the MTA recognizes the importance of deepening transit affordability and access for New Yorkers most in need. That’s why we have voluntarily supplemented the City’s efforts over the last few years with our own funding and staff resources, notably as program enrollment has slowed, by:

- Enabling program enrollment at 30 Customer Service Centers (open 24/7), mobile sales vans in all five boroughs, and at 3 Stone Street in lower Manhattan
- Helping customers add funds to Fair Fares NYC OMNY Cards and providing general tap and ride technical support
- Partnering with the City on advertising campaigns and bi-monthly in-station enrollment events, among other promotional activities

Evaluating rider travel behavior can help policymakers better understand and improve Fair Fares NYC

While the MTA does not have direct access to the City’s enrollment data, we can analyze Fair Fares NYC transactions on subways and buses to help decisionmakers understand how program participants use transit. Each Fair Fares NYC OMNY Card is associated with a unique and anonymous account, which we refer to as a “rider.” Once a rider taps into the system, they begin a “trip.” Here’s what that can look like:

In this brief, we explore Fair Fares NYC riders travel patterns relative to non-Fair Fares NYC rider populations, also referred to as “non-Fair Fares NYC riders”, which includes full fare and other riders.⁴



Fair Fares NYC riders are frequent transit riders and predominantly use the subway

While transaction data cannot tell us who our riders are, it can tell us how much and how often they ride, the modes they choose, and where they enter the system. Here are a few key findings from our analysis:

1. Fair Fares NYC trips represented 4% of all trips on subways and buses in 2025.

In 2025, there were 58.9 million trips taken on subway and bus using Fair Fares NYC, compared to the 1.5 billion trips taken across the system. Fair Fares NYC trips grew by 10% over 2024, slightly outpacing the total system growth of 7% year-on-year. And compared to other subsidy programs, Reduced Fares and Student OMNY transactions each

represented 7% of system trips in 2025, both of which have higher total enrollment than Fair Fares NYC.

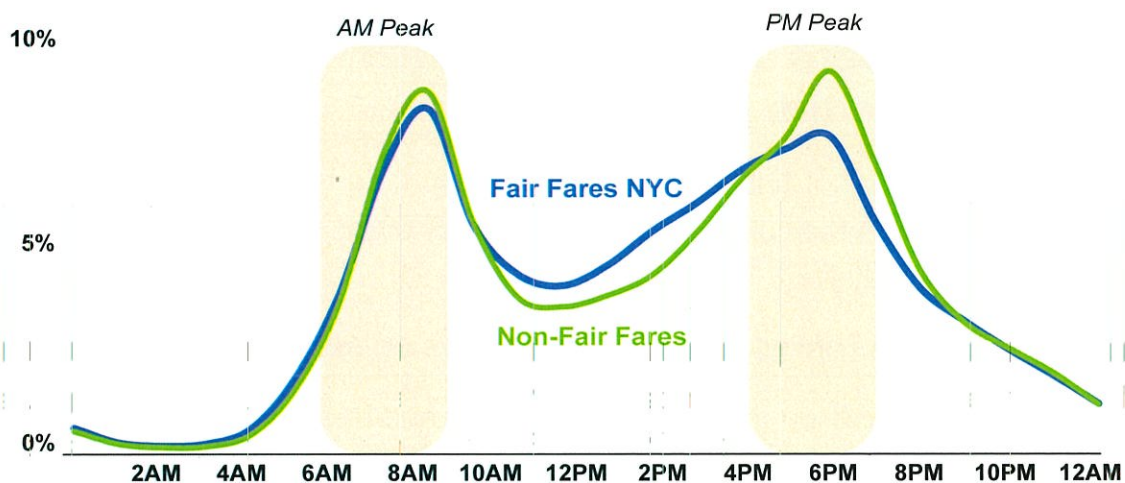
2. As NYC residents, Fair Fares NYC riders travel frequently, with slightly more off-peak trips.

Fair Fares NYC customers are active transit riders. In an average month, slightly more than one-third of Fair Fares NYC customers ride five days or more per week and they take 7 trips throughout an average week. Fair Fares NYC riders are also taking advantage of the weekly fare cap. In an average week, 12% of Fair Fares NYC riders reach the fare cap, double the amount of non-Fair Fares NYC riders.⁵



On a given weekday, Fair Fares NYC trips reflect typical commuting patterns with slightly higher off-peak travel. 43% of Fair Fares NYC customers ride during peak AM and PM hours, slightly below non-Fair Fares NYC riders at 47% of trips during the peak. That means a slightly higher share of Fair Fares NYC customers ride during the middle of the day off-peak on weekdays versus non-Fair Fares NYC riders.

Average Weekday Trips by Time of Day, Q1 2026



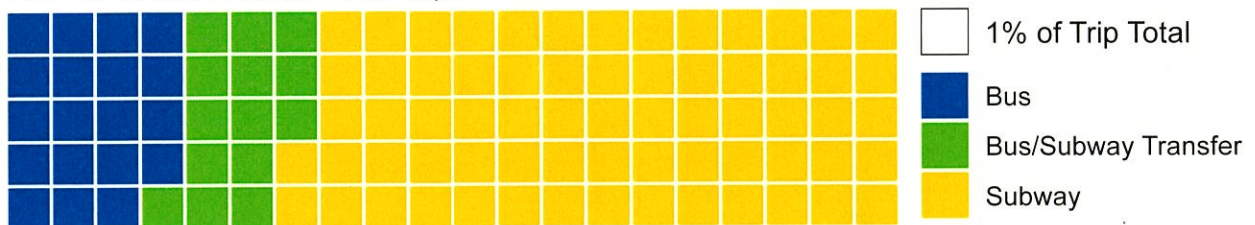
Source: MTA; represents percent of total paid trips by rider type only.

3. Fair Fares NYC riders mostly use the subway, and they also use the bus more than other riders.

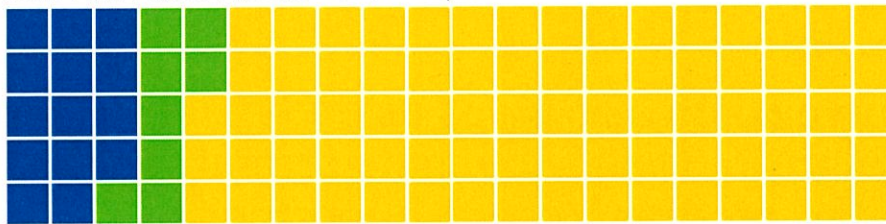
In an average month during the first quarter of 2026, 67% of Fair Fares NYC were taken exclusively on the subway, compared to 78% of non-Fair Fares NYC riders. Fair Fares NYC riders took more bus trips and trips that included a transfer between subway and bus as a percentage of all monthly trips compared to non-Fair Fares riders.

Share of Total Trips by Mode, Q1 2026

Fair Fares NYC Riders - 16M Trips



Non-Fair Fares Riders - 340M Trips



Graph represents share of total trips by rider type and is not total scaled to represent total trips taken by each rider type. Bus includes bus/bus transfers.

Source: MTA

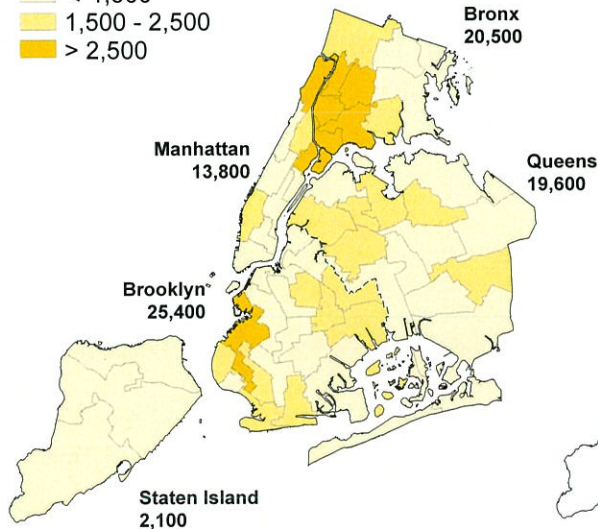
4. Most Fair Fares NYC riders enter the system for the first time each day in Brooklyn, but Manhattan has the highest total Fair Fares NYC usage.

For over 30% of Fair Fares NYC riders – representing over 25,000 riders – their first tap of the day is at a Brooklyn subway station or bus stop, followed by the Bronx (25%), Queens (24%), Manhattan (17%), and Staten Island (3%).⁶ When looking at the geographic distribution of those trips throughout a given day, most take place in Manhattan (34%) where a significant share of jobs, education, and healthcare institutions are concentrated.

Fair Fares NYC Riders' First Daily Tap Location 4AM-9AM, Q1 2026

Riders by NYC Council District

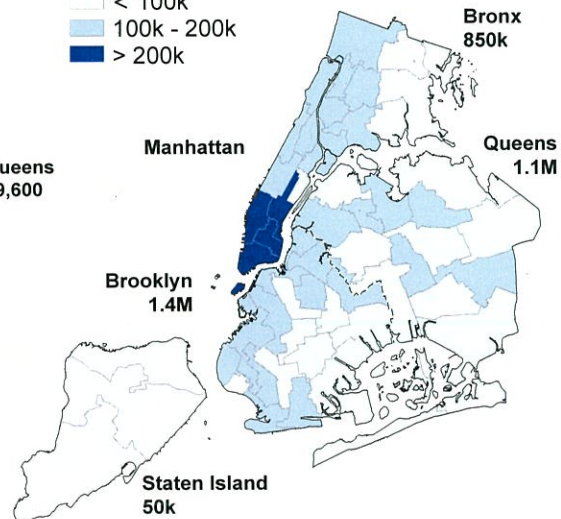
- < 1,500
- 1,500 - 2,500
- > 2,500



Total Monthly Fair Fares NYC Trips Q1 2026 Average

Trips by NYC Council District

- < 100k
- 100k - 200k
- > 200k



First daily tap represents where riders predominantly entered the system during the 4AM to 9AM window over the course of Q1 2026.
Source: MTA

MTA's customer survey data also helps us understand travel behavior of riders who are eligible but not currently enrolled in Fair Fares NYC – a key program growth opportunity

As the MTA Policy Brief has previously covered, MTA's customer surveys are an important tool for supplementing what we can learn solely from transaction data.⁷ When we conduct our bi-annual Customers Count survey, we ask respondents demographic questions that allow us to determine eligibility for Fair Fares NYC, including their household income, household size, age, and residency.

Findings from the MTA's Fall 2025 Customers Count survey show that many riders who self-report that they qualify for Fair Fares NYC have not enrolled in the program, despite being frequent transit users. And, like our findings from Fair Fares NYC riders above, eligible but not enrolled riders are high-frequency transit customers: 66% of people surveyed who ride the bus and 62% of those that ride the subway reported they travel in the system five or more days per week.

Eligible but not enrolled riders continue to be the largest near-term opportunity to expand the program and provide more New Yorkers with access to greater economic mobility.

New York City must continue to invest in transit affordability

As we explored in this Brief, Fair Fares NYC enrollees ride frequently and rely on the half-priced fare to use both the subway and bus. The program is critical for connecting New Yorkers to a city of opportunity, enabling low-income residents to more affordably reach their families, better paying jobs, educational opportunities, top healthcare, community services, and iconic cultural institutions.

Today, nearly 380,000 New Yorkers are enrolled in the program, but over one million are eligible. The MTA has advocated prior mayoral administrations and city councils to raise the income eligibility threshold and fund a more robust marketing and outreach program. While the MTA has invested our own resources and staff time to market the program and direct targeted community engagement, more must be done. With a higher income threshold and more resources for marketing, we could reach hundreds of thousands more New Yorkers who are eligible for, but not enrolled in, Fair Fares NYC.

In the coming weeks, the Mamdani administration and City Council will consider how to invest in this critical affordability program. **They can make the cost of transit even lower for the residents already eligible for the program or increase the program's eligibility threshold to make transit affordable for even more New Yorkers.** Our data shows that reaching more people currently eligible to enroll and expanding eligibility is a tremendous opportunity. It would extend savings to more riders, provide relief with every tap, and maximize the impact of a program that already helps keep New York City affordable for some of the City's more active riders. We encourage the City stakeholders to make a data-driven decision that will have the greatest impact on New Yorkers who need it most.

Endnotes

- 1 NYC Mayor's Office of Equity & Racial Justice. *True Cost of Living*. April 2026. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/equity/updates/true-cost-of-living-report.page>
- 2 Office of the New York State Comptroller. *The Cost of Living in New York City: Transportation*. October 2024. <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/report-16-2025.pdf>
- 3 This population includes people with disabilities, who are already eligible to participate in MTA Reduced-Fare. U.S. Census Bureau, "Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level," 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024.
- 4 Non-Fair Fares riders include riders who pay the full fare, other subsidized riders (like those enrolled in MTA Reduced-Fare and Student OMNY), and people who pay with coins on the bus. Non-Fair Fares riders represent most transit trip transactions and are mostly full-fare riders. Their travel patterns therefore reflect that of both NYC residents and non-residents (e.g., out-of-state commuters, visitors, tourists).
- 5 Fair Fares NYC riders' higher trip frequency likely reflects the general travel patterns of NYC residents, who are more frequent users of the system than non-residents. A large share of non-Fair Fares riders are non-NYC residents and visitors to the city, including suburban commuters and tourists, who travel less frequently than residents and tend to rely more on the subway than the bus. In an average month during Q1 2026, 31% of non-Fair Fares riders took just one or two trips. Though the infrequent riders represent nearly one-third of total unique riders, they are only responsible for 3.5% of total trips. Because transactions represent riders in this analysis, additional infrequency may be due to riders using multiple unique fare payment methods (e.g., a physical credit card or smartphone wallet) when tapping into the system.
- 6 MTA does not know where Fair Fares NYC riders live. We use the predominant location where riders tap into the system during 4AM to 9AM each day over Q1 2026, by City Council district, to approximate a "home" location. This method may also capture overnight or non-traditional-hour workers who are tapping in as they leave work.
- 7 MTA. *The Policy Brief: How customer feedback informs the MTA's decision-making*. <https://www.mta.info/article/policy-brief-how-customer-feedback-informs-mtas-decision-making>



About the MTA Policy Brief

The MTA Policy Brief highlights key policy developments shaping New York's transportation system. Designed for decision-makers, journalists, advocates, and riders, we explain the most pressing transportation challenges of today and tomorrow, from budget complexities to legislative actions to infrastructure investments.

Read more of the Policy Brief at mta.info/policybrief



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and bus
fares**

You may qualify
based on your income,
age, or if you have a
qualifying disability.





Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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May 6, 2026

Testimony of Claire Salant, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst
and Emily Pramik, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst
On behalf of New York City Independent Budget Office
To the New York City Council General Welfare Committee
And the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Good morning, Chair Hudson and Chair and Majority Leader Abreu, and members of the General Welfare Committee and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. My name is Claire Salant, Lead Budget and Policy Analyst at the Independent Budget Office (IBO) focusing on social services, and I am joined by Emily Pramik, IBO's Lead Budget and Policy Analyst focusing on transportation. IBO is a government agency whose mission is to enhance understanding of New York City's budget, public policy, and economy through independent analysis. We appreciate the opportunity to testify at today's hearing on the City's Fair Fares program, including the Council's proposed changes in Intro 248 and Reso 52. Fair Fares is the City's transit subsidy program for low-income residents, providing 50% discounts on subway, local bus, and paratransit trips for all eligible adults.

Key points from IBO's testimony include:

- Almost 940,000 New Yorkers are eligible for Fair Fares, but just 41 percent (about 385,000) had enrolled as of December last year. As the Council considers expanding the program, it will be important to address this relatively low enrollment rate.
- Fair Fares costs are driven in large part by program enrollment and transit use, and both have been low to date. Changes like auto-enrollment (Intro 248) and expanded eligibility (Reso 52) are likely to increase program costs. Over the past two fiscal years, Fair Fares expenditures have only accounted for 82% and 72% of their budget, due in part to this low utilization of the program.
- If Council members consider a deeper discount for Fair Fares, they might also consider changing rules that exclude adults age 65 and older and those with disabilities from the program, as these New Yorkers are currently only eligible for a 50% discount through the MTA.

- Since Fair Fares is a wholly City-designed and funded program, the City has the ability to unilaterally change how the program works instead of seeking State approval, unlike many other social services programs.

Background: Current Program Structure

As the Council considers multiple potential changes to the program, we want to provide context for how the program is currently operating and who is using it. We will also discuss why **enrollment**—the number of eligible people signed up for Fair Fares—and **transit use**—the number of rides taken by enrolled people—remain so low. Notably, this is not a matter of funding alone: the City has increased the budget for Fair Fares in the last two Adopted budgets in anticipation of increased participation that has yet to be realized.¹ The program spent just 72% of its \$116 million budget in 2025 and 82% of the \$95 million budget in 2024 (see Figure 1, all years refer to City fiscal years). While the budget increased 22% from 2024 to 2025, expenditures only increased by 7%.

Figure 1. Budget vs. Spending for Fair Fares.

	2023	2024	2025
Adopted Budget	\$75 million	\$95 million	\$116 million
Actual Spending	\$71.6 million	\$78 million	\$83.6 million

Source: Financial Management System (FMS) data.

Fair Fares is administered by the Human Resources Administration (HRA) within the City’s Department of Social Services (DSS). To qualify for Fare Fares, New Yorkers must be between the ages of 18 and 64 with a household income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) depending on household size (\$23,940 for a single adult or \$49,500 for a family of four in 2026, for example). The program excludes adults eligible to participate in other reduced transit programs, including the MTA’s Reduced-Fare program that covers older adults over 64 and those with qualifying disabilities. This means that older adults and many disabled New Yorkers are not eligible for Fair Fares. Access-A-Ride users can use the program, since the MTA discount does not cover paratransit, but they lose eligibility once they turn 65—like with all other older New Yorkers.



Since Fair Fares is a wholly City-designed and funded program, the City can change these eligibility requirements, which it has done several times since the program began. When the initial pilot launched in January 2019, it covered adults with household income at 100% FPL (or \$12,490 for a single adult that year). Since then, the eligible income threshold has increased several times, to 120% FPL in December 2023, 145% FPL in January 2025, and 150% FPL in November 2025.

These changes have increased the number of eligible New Yorkers from about 615,000 in 2023 before the first eligibility increase to about 940,00 after the most recent change in November. Yet just 41% of eligible residents had enrolled by the end of December last year (about 385,000). And despite repeated increases in eligibility, monthly growth in new enrollment has not changed for the past three years. To understand why take-up of this program remains so low, we have to consider the structure and setup of the program as well as the commuting needs of low-income residents.

Program Enrollment and Transit Use Remain Low

Individuals enroll in the program on one of two tracks, depending on how they are connected to City systems. Individuals who receive Temporary Assistance through the City and have ACCESS HRA accounts, the digital hub for many City-administered benefits, go through the Fast Track process. Fast Track is the City's automated enrollment process that functions as an opt-in system for individuals whose identity and income has already been verified for benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Cash Assistance. ACCESS HRA automatically identifies qualifying individuals and sends them notifications about Fair Fares, with email reminders every quarter. According to HRA, a client can opt in to Fair Fares by simply clicking the prompts and agree to program participation rules, and they will receive their OMNY card in the mail in two to three weeks.

Since the start of 2023, about two-thirds of all new Fair Fares enrollment has been through Fast Track. This may change as the City rolls out [federally-mandated SNAP work requirements](#) over the next six months, which is expected to reduce enrollment in SNAP and thus the number of individuals eligible for Fast Track. Changes in public benefits have impacted Fair Fares enrollment in the past: during the shutdown last year, new SNAP applications

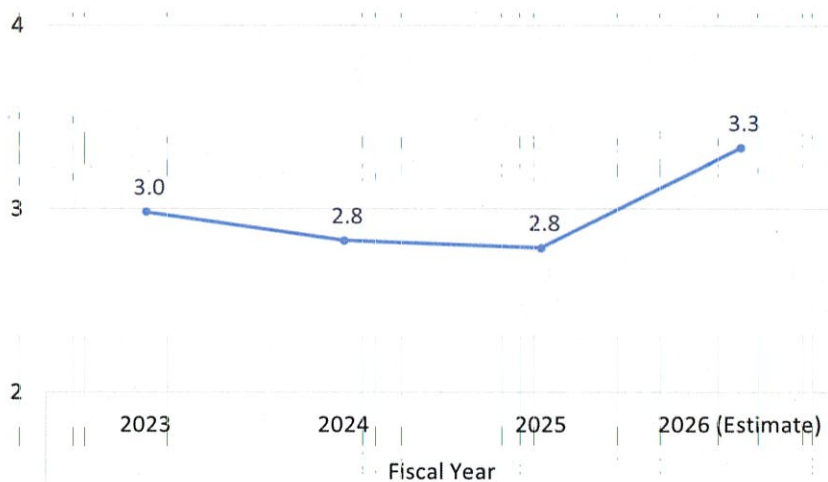


declined and Fast Track enrollment fell 16% in November 2025 from the previous month.

For those who are not already connected to ACCESS HRA, the enrollment process is more complicated. First, individuals have to know the program exists. These individuals then go through Open Enrollment: they have to make an ACCESS HRA account; verify their identity, residence, and income; and submit documentation such as tax returns.² All documentation must be received within 10 days of application submission and HRA then determines eligibility. Since this process is more involved, households do not always finish their application or documentation submission. Even if a household eventually qualifies, during the application process individuals must still pay the full cost of their transportation. It is possible that HRA and the Department of Finance could work to facilitate data-sharing of tax returns to both avoid households needing to submit that information and expedite eligibility determination.

Even when individuals successfully sign up for Fair Fares, IBO finds that current program recipients do not utilize the program very often. IBO estimated the total number of weekly trips per participant based on expenditures and program enrollment. On average, Fair Fares users took just 2.8 trips per week in 2025 and an estimated 3.3 trips so far in 2026.

Figure 2. Estimated Fair Fares Participants' Average Weekly Trips



Source: IBO analysis of FMS and HRA data.



Why Are So Few People Using Fair Fares?

Multiple factors may be contributing to low participation in Fair Fares. First, qualifying individuals may not know about the program or understand how it works. To raise awareness, HRA coordinates with the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement on direct neighborhood outreach and spends about \$2 million per year on advertising, the largest advertising budget for a specific program within HRA. Eligible New Yorkers may also learn about Fair Fares through MTA advertising and outreach at stations.

Low enrollment and transit use may also be driven by underlying employment and transit trends. The currently eligible population works, and commutes to work via transit, much less than even slightly higher income thresholds.³ According to 2024 U.S. Census Bureau data, 39% of the currently eligible population in New York City is working compared with 68% of those with household income between 150% and 200% FPL. And just 19% of those working in the current income band use transit to commute to work, compared with 35% of those between 150% and 200% FPL.

This is not to say that those currently eligible for Fair Fares do not need or want to use transit—the program's 50% discount may not be enough to support transit use for them, especially given their low incomes. A recent randomized control trial of subsidized transit for SNAP recipients in Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, found that half-price discounts had no effect on how much individuals used transit, while a full discount raised transit use by 43%.⁴ Not only does a half-price discount still cost money, but, as the authors of that study noted, half-price discounts create “mental transaction costs” and still require individuals to sign up and regularly refill cards, which may be altogether too burdensome when combined with the financial cost.

The challenges for the currently eligible group—information gaps, fewer commuting workers, and relatively high cost—may be why other major cities set higher income thresholds for discounted transit programs. Boston and Washington D.C. set the income eligibility threshold at 200% FPL, Denver at 250% FPL, and Los Angeles at 300% FPL.⁵

Conclusion



Even after multiple increases to the budget, participation in Fair Fares remains low, suggesting that current challenges are related to the program structure rather than a lack of funding. The City has multiple options to increase participation in the program, including increasing the income eligibility thresholds, increasing the amount of the subsidy, and/or automatic enrollment.

As Council debates these different changes, it is important to consider who qualifies, their transit needs, and their experience of the current program. Higher-income populations have higher rates of commuting by transit, which may mean increased program costs if they join the Fair Fares program. Additionally, if automated enrollment leads many more people to participate in Fair Fares, program costs should also be expected to increase.⁶

Finally, any changes Council makes must also be understood in the context of other reduced fare programs: if the City makes transit free for those who currently qualify but makes no other changes, it will leave out older adults and those with disabilities, who will still need to pay half-priced fare through MTA programs. Changes to program eligibility, the sign-up process, or to the program's discount level, should be expected to raise the cost of the program, possibly substantially.

IBO is closely tracking these proposals and this policy conversation. We are working on an analysis of changes to eligibility and the subsidy amount based on recent policy discussions and look forward to sharing them soon. We thank you for the opportunity to testify and are happy to answer any questions you may have.



SCAN ME

To see more of IBO's work and to follow IBO on socials scan here:

¹ The City [baselined](#) the Fair Fares program in the 2022 Preliminary Budget at \$75 million, which was later increased to \$95 million in June 2023 at the 2024 Adopted Budget. The following year in June 2024, the 2025 Adopted Budget increased funding in 2025 to \$116 million but not any future years in anticipation of increased utilization due to increased eligibility. In April 2025 at the Executive Budget, the City increased funding for 2026 to



\$116 million as well, and then again to \$121 million in June 2025 in the 2026 Adopted Budget. However, actual spending was just \$72 million in 2023, \$78 million in 2024, and \$84 million in 2025.

² Fair Fares allows individuals to submit other documentation in lieu of tax returns, including unemployment benefits, paystubs, New York State disability benefits, SSI or SSA benefits, and pension or retirement benefits. For a complete list of options, see [here](#).

³ IBO does not have access to data on transit utilization among non-working adults. The American Community Survey only collects population data on commuting trends for working adults.

⁴ Chizeck, Seth & Oluchi Mbonu. (2025, May). [The Role of the Fare in Welfare: Public Transportation Subsidies and their Effects on Low-Income Households](#).

⁵ [Boston](#) offers half-price fare on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to income-eligible residents ages 18-64 who are at or below 200% FPL and receive public assistance through the state. The program covers the express bus, commuter rail, and the ferry. The [Metro Lift](#) discount program provides a half-price discount for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for SNAP recipients who are residents of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Denver's [Low-Income Verified Equity Program](#) (LiVE) provides a half-price discount to residents at 250% FPL for riders 20 and older on local and regional buses, light rail, and commuter rail. (Residents 19 and younger qualify for a 100% discount through the Zero Fare for Youth program.) Residents apply through the state benefits website, PEAK, with a similar fast track for individuals who receive SNAP, Medicaid, or Colorado Works (local cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF). Denver allows residents who do not receive these benefits to submit a [variety of documentation](#) types to verify residence and income, including previous pay stubs, letters from employers, and unemployment benefits. Los Angeles's [LIFE](#) program is for residents of LA county that make less than 300% FPL and qualify for a long list of benefits programs, including TANF, SNAP, and Social Security. LA also allows residents to [self-certify](#) that their income is below 300% FPL, with the acknowledgment that proof of income may be required at a later date. Unlike the other half-priced discount programs listed, LIFE allows users to ride for free for 90 days, followed by 20 free rides per month and discounted rides on different transit systems in the area, with the exact discount dependent on the transit authority.

⁶ Philadelphia started a pilot for a free transit benefit with automated enrollment in 2023. According to the [Urban Institute](#), about 63% of eligible residents were participating in the program as of 2025, though this rate may be artificially high due to the small size of the initial pilot population. Though about 300,000 people are income-eligible across Philadelphia, the pilot has only enrolled about 34,000 people as of August 2025. Enrollment is similar to Fair Fares, except that participants do not need to opt-in; they are only notified and then mailed a card directly. For more, see [here](#).





JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON
GENERAL WELFARE AND TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
MAY 6, 2026**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I want to thank Chair Abreu and Chair Hudson and the members of the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and General Welfare for holding this hearing today.

Launched in 2019, Fair Fares is a critical city program that helps New Yorkers reduce their transportation costs. Since its launch, the program has brought relief to over 300,000 New Yorkers between the ages of 18 to 64 with expansions in 2023 and 2024 raising the eligibility thresholds.¹ Currently, eligibility for Fair Fares is calculated at 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, which means for a family of four the cut-off for annual household income would be \$49,500.² Transit fares at half-price allows our lowest-income New Yorkers the means to access employment, education, recreation and more. Yet, despite efforts to increase awareness and participation in the program, uptake by eligible residents remains at approximately 40%, according to March data from the city's social services agency.³ [Int. 248](#) sponsored by Council Member Hudson, would ensure that people are automatically enrolled in city-created benefit programs like Fair Fares.

In the national context, we know there is room for an expansion of Fair Fares. A report from the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee (PCAC) to the MTA found that in the top ten most populous cities in the U.S. with income-based fare discount programs, NYC had both the highest poverty rate and the lowest income threshold at 145% of the Federal Poverty Level, the rate at the time of the report's publication. Denver's discount program had the next lowest threshold at

¹ <https://pcac.org/report/fairfares25/>

² <https://www.nyc.gov/site/fairfares/index.page>

³ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/05/05/fair-fares-reduced-subway-bus-cost/>



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

185% of the Federal Poverty Level and with the exception of Los Angeles, which had the highest eligibility threshold at 300% of the FPL, all other cities pegged their threshold at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.⁴ [Resolution 52](#), proposed by Council Member Brooks-Powers, uplifts legislation at the state level (S.3887A/A.7316A) to raise this threshold in NYC.

Increasing eligibility to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level would expand the program to 415,000 New Yorkers with 42 of 51 Council districts seeing at least 1,500 more commuters eligible for Fair Futures.⁵ With families and individuals moving away from the city, citing a deepening affordability crisis, providing relief where possible is a sensible and necessary policy decision. This is a critical next step in building a future where we can eliminate bus fares and bring free and half-priced transit to over 2 million working-class New Yorkers.

I look forward to working with this administration in making this expansion a reality. Thank you.

⁴ <https://pcac.org/report/fairfares25/>

⁵ Ibid.



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NYC Council Committee Transportation and Infrastructure and General Welfare Testimony on Oversight of the Fair Fares Program

Good Morning Members of the City Council,

On behalf of 1199SEIU’s 300,000 New York members, we would first like to thank the City Council Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and General Welfare for convening this hearing on the oversight of the Fair Fares program.

Fair Fares NYC has been a very useful tool for many low-income New Yorkers in getting around the city without worrying about the increasing cost of transportation. Since its creation, the initiative has been used by nearly 400,000 people in this city. However, 1 in 5 New Yorkers are still unable to afford the fare, as it has increased four times over the last ten years (two of the increases have happened since 2023). **As a union representing many of the city’s healthcare workers in various facilities, our members know very well how it feels to get up every day to go to work and care for others, while being underpaid and overworked. Utilizing public transportation to get to the nursing home or hospital they work in or using public transportation to get between cases to ensure they are meeting the required hours to get their homecare worker benefits.**

The cost of food, healthcare, gas and many other daily necessities have continued to rise, while wages are stagnant and there are no universal benefits for working people. In addition to this, hundreds of thousands of people are ticketed and arrested for fare evasion each year. Almost all the riders arrested for subway fare evasion are people of color from areas like Brooklyn and the Bronx. Making transit affordable reduces punitive interactions and creates safety through access.

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Assisting eligible people with transportation costs is a step in the right direction for the city in addressing the affordability crisis and providing economic relief while reducing the criminalization of poor New Yorkers. Half-price transit fares mean greater access to opportunity, such as further employment and educational options.

The Council's preliminary budget includes funding towards free transportation fares for New Yorkers with incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level and automatic enrollment for eligible. This is a great start in the necessary investment needed to expand Fair Fares, however the city can do more. Most New Yorkers rely on public transportation to get around the city and with the recent implementation of congestion pricing, public transportation is being used at higher rates (higher than the rates pre-COVID). We need to expand the Fair Fares initiative eligibility up to 300% of the federal poverty level (those making \$49,500 or less annually, or a family of 4 making less than \$99,000).

We are urging the Council to fully fund the expansion of Fair Fares and include a \$300 million investment (\$150 million for free fares for eligibility below 150% of the poverty line and another \$150 million for half-fare for eligibility between 150% and 300% of the poverty line).

Contact:
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Fair Fares Hearing Testimony
Karen Hamilton, NYCTRC Member
May 6, 2026

Hello. I am Karen Hamilton a transit advocate, member of the NYC Transit Riders Council, SE Queens resident, and life-long user of the NYCT & LIRR systems.

I appreciate the Council championing free bus and subway fares and automatic enrollment for qualifying riders.

The next step is the expansion of Fair Fares to 300% of the poverty level. Riders making up to \$47,880 (for one person), to \$64,920 for two people, and to \$99,000 for a family of would be eligible if the program threshold is increased.

I remember calling in sick when I started working when I did not have enough money for train the subway. I was fortunate to have paid leave. Being out sick for many NYers means missed wages. Fair Fare expansion would reduce the number of riders having to decide whether to pay rent, food, or transit.

The current geopolitical landscape and resulting economic instability are squeezing NYers paychecks and savings. Cost of Living Adjustments are not keeping up with increased cost of housing, food, fossil fuels, healthcare, and other goods.

Life is hard enough, let's not make transit a hardship.

Thank you



**Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Testimony at the New York City Council Transportation & Infrastructure
Committee and Jointly with the General Welfare Committee
Council Member Shaun Abreu, Chair
Council Member Crystal Hudson, Chair
May 6th, 2026**

Thank you Chair Abreu, Chair Hudson, and members of the City Council for holding this hearing today and continuing to prioritize expanding the Fair Fares program, improving equitable access to affordable transit for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities.

With the rising cost of living, it is becoming increasingly difficult for many New Yorkers to afford basic necessities, including transportation. Expanding the Fair Fares program is a critical step toward addressing transit affordability and ensuring that more residents can access the opportunities they need to thrive.

According to a [recent analysis](#) by the Community Service Society, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), and the Riders Alliance, expanding eligibility for Fair Fares to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level would make more than 2 million New Yorkers, approximately 30 percent of the city's population, eligible for half-price or fully free transit. Raising the threshold from the current 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level would newly qualify more than 1 million additional residents, including many who work full-time but still struggle to make ends meet in an increasingly expensive city.

The impact of this expansion would be felt across all five boroughs. Twenty-four of the city's 51 Council districts would have more than 50,000 residents eligible for Fair Fares, and 37 districts would see more than a quarter of their populations qualify. Council districts in the South and Central Bronx would have the highest share of eligible residents, and 19 districts would gain more than 15,000 newly eligible individuals under a 300 percent threshold. For the communities we serve, affordable transit is essential not only for getting to work, but also for accessing healthcare, attending school, and staying connected to vital services.

At the same time, the current program is underutilized. While more than 1 million New Yorkers currently qualify at 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, only about 375,000 (roughly 35 percent) are enrolled. This gap represents a significant missed opportunity. Implementing

automatic enrollment, as seen in other [cities like Philadelphia](#), could dramatically increase participation and ensure that eligible New Yorkers receive the benefits they need.

We are encouraged by the Council's support for making transit fully free for current enrollees, which could save individuals up to \$910 annually. However, it is equally important to invest in expanding eligibility to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level so that working New Yorkers who are currently excluded can finally access relief.

Fair Fares has the potential to be transformative. It can expand access to jobs, education, and essential services that organizations like ours provide, reduce financial strain, and help address fare evasion as a symptom of economic hardship rather than criminality. In a city where affordability challenges remain front and center, this program is one of the most effective tools available to make transit more accessible.

[Done well](#), Fair Fares can deliver more affordable transit and faster, more reliable commutes to millions of riders across subways, buses, and paratransit, with the potential to expand even further. We urge the Council to prioritize funding for the 300 percent expansion and to continue advancing policies that reduce barriers to enrollment and access.

If there are any questions or concerns, please reach out to Ashley Chen, Policy & Research Manager at achen9@cpc-nyc.org.



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CBC Recommends Expanding Fair Fares NYC Program

Submitted to the New York City Council Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and General Welfare

May 6, 2026

Good morning. I am Adam Schmidt, Senior Research Associate for Transportation at the Citizens Budget Commission, a nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank and watchdog that advocates for the smart fiscal, operational, and policy choices that will deliver a better future for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Fair Fares NYC program.

Today, CBC released [More Aboard](#), which recommends raising the Fair Fares income eligibility threshold from 150 percent to 250 percent of the federal poverty level. This would make life more affordable and increase economic opportunities for low-income New Yorkers.

This expansion would cost \$146 million, bringing the program's total annual cost to \$232 million. Yes, the Citizens Budget Commission is recommending the City spend more money on this.

At about one-sixth the cost of fare-free buses, this expansion would be a far more impactful and cost-effective use of precious City resources during a time of budget stress.

With this Fair Fares expansion, an additional 722,000 New Yorkers would be eligible, bringing the total eligible population to nearly 2 million. The program would reach one in every four working adults and cover households earning 20 percent more than full-time minimum wage employment.

It also would increase the program's effectiveness. Fair Fares suffers from low enrollment and utilization—we believe expanding the program would have a significant impact on its usage. Only 31 percent of those eligible are currently enrolled; each enrollee averages only three rides per week. This is partly because only 50 percent of eligible individuals are employed, so commute less.

Transportation affordability poses the greatest challenge to working commuters with travel needs but limited financial resources. Currently, full-time minimum wage workers are not eligible, leaving them to pay full fare. This expansion would rectify that.

In addition to costing less while providing greater access to low-income commuters, expanding Fair Fares has other advantages over free buses. It allows riders *choice*— that is, to use either the subway or bus, and still get the benefits.

Three-quarters of current Fair Fares trips are on the subway. Twelve percent of bus riders transfer to the subway, so would have to pay when they transfer.

Fare-free buses are also unlikely to increase speeds. Evidence from New York and elsewhere shows the opposite is more likely—higher bus ridership could increase crowding, *slowing* speeds. Increased bus service would drive up costs to the City. Raising the Fair Fares eligibility threshold to include more working low-income New Yorkers for whom transit poses a significant expense is a smart choice that reduces the cost of living without subsidizing those who can afford transit.

While it expands eligibility, the City should also improve education and outreach, and simplify enrollment to increase utilization. To improve bus speeds, it should implement infrastructure improvements and operational changes in collaboration with the MTA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify; I am happy to answer any questions.



Testimony before the NYC Council Committee on General Welfare
Rachel Swaner
May 6, 2026

Thank you to Speaker Menin, General Welfare Chair Hudson, and Transportation Chair Abreu and to all the Committee members for this opportunity. My name is Rachel Swaner, and I am the Vice President of Policy, Research, and Advocacy at the Community Service Society of New York (CSS), an organization dedicated to helping everyday New Yorkers achieve economic security and well-being, leading to a stronger and more equitable New York.

Fair Fares is one of the City's most important tools for making New York more affordable. For hundreds of thousands of low-income New Yorkers, it reduces the cost of getting to work, school, medical appointments, and other essential activities.

But our latest [research](#) shows that while the program is making a meaningful difference, it is still not reaching everyone who needs it—and for many who are enrolled, the discount is not enough.

In January and February of this year, we surveyed 1,653 New Yorkers receiving SNAP, Cash Assistance, or CityFHEPS—populations that closely overlap with those eligible for Fair Fares. We asked whether they were enrolled in Fair Fares and how the program affects their daily lives.

First, on access: more than one in three respondents did not have Fair Fares.

These are New Yorkers who are already connected to public benefits and interacting with City systems. If the program is not reaching a third of people in this group, it is unlikely to reach the many eligible residents who are not connected to services—at least not without changes to how the program is administered.

Second, on impact: for those who do have Fair Fares, the program is clearly helping.

Nearly all respondents said the discount makes it easier to get around, and more than four in five said it helps them cover other essential expenses like housing, food, and utilities. These are meaningful improvements to people's ability to manage daily life.

But the data also make clear that the current 50 percent discount is not sufficient.

Sixty-four percent of Fair Fares users told us that *even with the discount*, it is still hard to afford public transportation when they need it. In other words, even at half price, transit remains out of reach for many of the city's lowest-income residents.

Respondents reinforced this in their own words. Many called for deeper discounts or for the program to be free entirely. As one Queens rider put it, "Even with half off, it's 3 bucks a day for a round trip. That's a lot." And in the Bronx, one respondent stated it should be "100% free for people receiving any benefits from HRA."

We also heard about barriers in the application and renewal process. Respondents described the process as lengthy, complicated, and slow, and some reported delays that caused their benefits to lapse.

Taken together, these findings point to two clear priorities.

First, the City should automatically enroll eligible residents in Fair Fares. Eligibility closely overlaps with programs like SNAP and Cash Assistance, which are administered by the same City agency. New Yorkers should not have to apply separately for benefits they are already known to qualify for. For that reason, we support Intro 0248, which would create a system to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefit programs. We applaud Chair Hudson for championing this issue.

Second, the City should make transit free for the lowest-income New Yorkers. Our data show that even a 50 percent discount is not enough for many households struggling to meet basic needs. Expanding Fair Fares to fully cover the cost of transit for those under 150 percent of the federal poverty level would ensure that the program truly meets the needs of the people it is designed to serve.

Fair Fares has already proven its value. The next step is to ensure that it reaches everyone who needs it and that the cost of getting around the city is no longer a barrier to stability and opportunity.

Thank you again for your time, and please reach out to me at rswaner@cssny.org if you have any questions.



HOMELESS SERVICES UNITED

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**Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare Jointly with the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
May 6th, 2026**

My name is Victoria Leahy, and I am the Director of Policy & Planning at Homeless Services United. Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition representing over 55 mission-driven, homeless service providers in New York City. HSU advocates for the expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. Homeless Services United promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City.

Int. 248

We are in support of Intro 248 as it reduces bureaucracy and simplifies the process of accessing benefits. As it currently stands, the process of determining eligibility can be a major hurdle in obtaining much-needed benefits, and in many cases, City agencies may already have access to the documentation needed to make this determination. We have heard from many of our member organizations that they spend too much of their time filling out benefits and procuring documentation. Putting the responsibility for enrollment on the city, rather than the individual or provider, guarantees that everyone who qualifies for these benefits will be able to utilize them without delay.

HSU will continue to support legislation like Int. 248 that leverages the information already in the hands of the city to make New Yorkers' lives simpler. Bills like this do not just benefit the citizens of our city but also reduce workload for our city employees and contracted providers to allow them to focus on other responsibilities that cannot yet be automated. It is our hope that the council will continue to propose and pass legislation that takes processing work off of providers and clients and allows for more focus on prevention and treatment.

We look forward to working with the City Council to help more New Yorkers get connected to the benefits and resources they deserve. I can be reached via email at vleahy@hsunited.org.



2026 Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Jointly with the Committee on General Welfare

May 6, 2026

Testimony of Beth Williams, New York State Policy Director at Hunger Free America

Thank you for holding this vital hearing today. My name is Beth Williams, and I am the New York State Policy Director at Hunger Free America, a national direct service and advocacy nonprofit group headquartered in Manhattan, with a field office in the Bronx.

I am honored to submit this testimony today on behalf of the estimated 1.2 to 1.4 million city residents who now struggle against hunger, living in food insecure homes.

Our message is simple: New Yorkers face massive hunger and affordability crises citywide, made worse by the recent passage of H.R.1, which aims to systematically remove federal nutrition program participants. We need a massive response from the City, that addresses all areas of costs of living for low-income New Yorkers. **Every dollar that struggling New Yorkers can save on transportation is one more dollar they can spend on food.**

We are here today specifically to support Intro 0248, Intro 0825, Resolution 0052, and Resolution 0143.

Intro 0248 which would require the Commissioner of Social Services to create a system to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefit programs, like Fair Fares NYC. The Commissioner would be required to use recent records, like tax and social services assistance rolls, to identify individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for these programs for automatic enrollment.

While it is true that it's easier to apply for multiple benefits in New York City than in much of the rest of the state, it is still an onerous process to obtain those benefits. Rather than being able

to apply for multiple benefits at one time, low-income New Yorkers are forced to spend countless hours travelling to, and waiting at, social service offices – or spending long times on calls waiting to be served – taking time away from work and/raising their children; if their employer pays by the hour, they often lose wages to do so.

Economists often apply the term “opportunity costs” to high and middle-income people, meaning that the time they spend on one task is time not available to perform other, potentially more valuable tasks. But social scientists and program administrators rarely apply the concept of opportunity costs to low-income people, acting as if their time is essentially worthless. The reality is, applying for benefits in New York City is usually a time-consuming, humiliating, and costly process.

Hunger Free America has long championed the idea of a single portal for all City services and benefits. In 2021, then candidate Eric Adams promised to implement the MyCity portal, to make that a reality. When the website finally launched in 2023, it only offered eligibility screenings and applications for childcare benefits. Even now, New Yorkers who need to apply for SNAP, Cash Assistance and Medicaid renewal are directed to the separate Access HRA website. Additionally, automatically enrolling individuals in City-created benefit programs, like Fair Fares NYC would save individuals further time not having to fill out superfluous forms when the city already knows that the individual is eligible for these benefits.

We are not technology experts, but every day our dedicated benefits access team works with struggling families to help them apply for, and receive, the benefits they desperately need. We see difficulties they face, and the pain and frustration they suffer because of this laborious process.

We realize that in addition to technology challenges, there may also be issues related to labor relations, program integration, management, and intergovernmental affairs, as well as potential legal challenges. But we believe that the potential upsides for the city once this portal is fully implemented will be enormous. It will save countless time and money for struggling New Yorkers, decrease the burden on city workers, and improve the local economy, since the people who receive these benefits will almost certainly use them in local New York City businesses.

Once again, we fully support INT 0248-2026, and we hope you will work expeditiously to get this work started.

Additionally, we also support Intro 0825 sponsored by Council Member Christopher Marte which would require the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) to issue duplicate transit benefit cards under the Fair Fares NYC program where a participant’s card was damaged, destroyed, stolen, or lost. HRA would be required to provide one replacement card free of charge, but would charge a fee of \$15 for any subsequent replacement cards. The bill would prohibit HRA from limiting the number of requests of a duplicate card a participant could make,

provided they pay the \$15 fee. It is essential that those eligible for Fair Fares have access to these cards.

Hunger Free America also supports Resolution 0052, sponsored by Council Member Selvena N. Brooks-Powers, which would require that any individual who is eligible for the Fair Fares NYC program and any person whose income is 200 percent of the federal poverty level receive a 50 percent discount on trips. Again, at a time when individuals are losing essential federal benefits including for food access and health insurance, it is essential that the city and state do as much as possible to improve cost of living for low-income individuals which includes transit costs.

Lastly, we would also like to support Resolution 0143, sponsored by Council Member Kevin C. Riley which would create unlimited transfers within the two-hour period of paying the Metropolitan Transportation Authority subway or bus fare for pay-per-ride users. Once again, this measure would greatly help cut unnecessary costs for low-income New Yorkers, often on their way to work.

Background on The Current State of Hunger in New York City

According to raw USDA data analyzed by Hunger Free America:

Across New York City, 15.4% of the population, or 1.2 million people, lived in food insecure households between 2022 and 2024. The Bronx is New York City's hungriest borough in terms of prevalence and number of hungry people, with 24.5% of residents (330,329 people) living in food insecure households.

One out of every five children (20%) in New York City experiences food insecurity, while almost half (46.1%) of children in the Bronx are food insecure. Food insecurity in Manhattan and Queens among employed adults increased when comparing 2022-2024 to 2019-2021 levels. The number of food insecure older New York City residents increased to 258,991 between 2022 and 2024.

We believe that, currently, the number of city residents living in food insecure households may be 1.4 million or even higher.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of City residents eligible for federally funded benefits do not receive them. The best under-participation estimates that we have for SNAP that are official are old (for 2018, pre-pandemic). For technical reasons we would be glad to discuss, we believe USDA's estimates, even in 2018, undercounted those who are eligible but did not then receive SNAP. But even if USDA's numbers were correct, that still meant that 1 in 10 people overall, 25 percent of working people, and 30 percent of older New York State residents who

were eligible for SNAP did not get it. The percentages are likely even higher for the City than the State as a whole.

As for federally funded WIC benefits (for pregnant women and children under five), as of 2021, USDA estimated that whopping 45 percent of the pregnant women and children under five that are eligible for WIC statewide did not get it. Unlike SNAP, WIC has no immigration restrictions in the program and has slightly higher income eligibility than SNAP, so this under-participation in WIC is especially harmful. The percentages are likely even higher for the City than the State as a whole.

If the City were truly serious about reducing hunger statewide, it would:

1. Ensure that the State significantly raises the minimum wage, including for tipped workers, and increase the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
2. Increase the City EITC.
3. Dramatically reduce the costs for quality housing.
4. Significantly increase free childcare.
5. Make buses free.
6. Authorize, fund, and implement a government-wide “Assets Empowerment/Middle-Class Wealth Generation Agenda” across multiple City agencies. This will dramatically increase economic opportunity and mobility by enabling more families to transition from owing and paying interest on non-productive debts to owning assets such as first homes, small businesses, and savings accounts that can earn interest, increase in value, and/or provide profits. Stop the penalization of hard work – enact initiatives to eliminate, or at least reduce, “benefits cliffs” in which workers who get raises or work more hours are punished by having their governmental benefits cut or stopped entirely just when they start doing a little better.

Beyond those broad steps to reduce poverty and expand economic opportunity, the most cost-effective thing the City can do, by far, is to increase participation in and otherwise strengthen federally funded nutrition assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, school breakfasts, and Summer EBT. Specifically, by:

- Increase funding to nonprofit groups (including Hunger Free America) that increase access to government food benefits through the NYC Benefits program and direct City Council funding. We are requesting the City Council provide our local division Hunger Free NYC, \$200,000 in FY27 funding (\$75,000 more than FY26) to support SNAP and emergency food assistance benefits education, outreach, and training; SNAP eligibility screening, application, and recertification assistance; and technical assistance provided to low-income individuals. We are also requesting \$75,000 in FY27 for funding for Hunger Free NYC (\$25,000 more than FY26) to support increased participation in SNAP, other nutrition assistance benefits and to assist low-income households citywide who remain

eligible to retain benefits and also to provide technical assistance to food pantries and soup kitchens.

- Increase the Civic Impact Fund to fund nonprofit organizations to host SNAP recipients as volunteers to meet their work reporting requirements.
- DSS should implement a comprehensive plan to work with – and fund nonprofits – to address the new work reporting requirements for SNAP and Medicaid. The agency should better pre-screen clients for disabilities and increase their ability to meet Medicaid and SNAP work requirements through paid employment, job training, and/or unpaid community volunteering. This could include utilizing a better digital ABAWD pre-screening and referral system. DHS staff needs to be carefully trained on the new work reporting requirements. HRA should work with NYS OTDA and nonprofit groups to better draw down federal SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) funds.
- Create a comprehensive, rapid effort to create one digital portal where New Yorkers can simultaneously learn about, apply for, recertify for, and access and utilize the full range of benefits and services they need, not only including services provided directly by city agencies, but also nonprofit services funded by the City, as well as key other programs (such as WIC) not directly funded by the City. Mayor Adams promised, but failed to create such a portal, but it is imperative that the Council and the Mamdani Administration work together to get this done rapidly and effectively.
- We are aware that this Committee doesn't oversee DOE, but we think it's imperative that the entire Council be aware of how imperative it is for DOE to ensure that all classes in all New York City public schools provide school breakfasts either in-classroom or as grab and go breakfast in their hallways. At least 310,205 New York City children live in food insecure homes and more than 154,000 New York City public school students—nearly one in every seven—experienced homelessness during the 2024–25 school year. Yet DOE is failing to adequately utilize one of the most impactful, cost-effective ways to ensure that such vulnerable students have the food and nutrition necessary to succeed at school: school breakfasts. In fact, NYC DOE has one of the lowest school breakfast participation rates of any large urban school district in the U.S. (and is much lower than Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston.) In October 2023 (the last month for which we data), only 39.6% of DOE students who received school lunches also received school breakfasts, one of the lowest school breakfast participation rates out of any big city school district in the nation. This means that more than 60% of students failed to obtain breakfasts, forcing many students to skip breakfast entirely or eat less healthy food they picked up at a bodega on the way to school. If DOE increased the ratio of breakfast to lunch consumption from 39.6% to 100%, that would feed another 345,540 kids per day,

equaling about 62 million more breakfasts over the course of a year, which would be paid for entirely (or almost entirely by federal and state funds). Even if the ratio were brought to only 80%, that would feed an additional 235,205 students per day, or about 42 million more breakfasts over the course of a year. To fix this, New York City Public Schools must make sure that all classes in all schools offer students the ability to eat breakfast in their first period classrooms and as grab and go breakfast in the hallways before the first period.

- Move beyond a reliance on means-tested programs aimed at mostly the impoverished to also focus more broadly on helping a wide array of New Yorkers obtain—and maintain—a full stake in the American dream with both universal programs (such free child care, buses, and school meals for all) and comprehensive policies to specifically help struggling New Yorkers develop assets in order to move from owing to owning.
- Make healthier food more accessible, affordable, and convenient in all neighborhoods, while utilizing food as an engine of community-based economic development. We hope that the City dramatically expands free food voucher programs, which are likely to be more economically efficient, equitable, and practical than creating a few City-owned grocery stores.
- Create formalized systems to empower New Yorkers with lived experience with poverty and food insecurity to advise the mayoral administration.

To increase participation in and otherwise strengthen federally funded nutrition assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, school breakfasts, and Summer EBT, we are also asking that the City Council ask Governor Hochul and the State Legislature to ensure that the final 2026 State budget deal includes the following:

- \$8.5 million to increase SNAP participation through the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP), New York’s network of SNAP navigators. They will play a critical role in helping New Yorkers access and maintain SNAP benefits amid federal policy changes, but without additional state investment to backfill federal cuts, many communities will lose SNAP navigators when they are needed most. (This is in both the Assembly and Senate bills).
- \$30M in supplemental WIC funding to ensure local agencies can serve all eligible families seeking services and reach more of the approximately 200,000 eligible but unenrolled New Yorkers. (Significant new WIC money is in the Senate bill.)

- \$10 million to go to a new fund to enable OTDA, NYC/counties, and nonprofit groups to better help households meet the new SNAP reporting requirements. We need to implement a comprehensive plan to help SNAP recipients meet expanded new work reporting requirements, including funding nonprofits to help SNAP ABAWDs meet these new requirements through disability screenings, work placements, job trainings, and volunteer activities. (This is a new proposal.)
- \$50 million to expand access to civil legal services, increasing capacity for legal service providers and community-based organizations across the State to assist New Yorkers with enrollment in public benefits. (This is in the Senate bill.)

We hope you can take these actions rapidly. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LES GROUP 5 TENANTS ASSOCIATION

We the tenants of L.E.S 5 have had several meetings and have decided we do not want to have our building sold or managed by the Outside sources. We have spoken with all the tents and have agreed we would like to stay with NYCHA.

We feel like it would be in our best interest and we have all agreed in our development its what we want .

Sincerely

T.A President

Linda Austin



Testimony of

Sergio De La Pava

Legal Director

New York County Defender Services

Before the

City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Oversight - Fair Fares

May 7, 2026

Thank you, Chair Abreu, for holding this oversight hearing on Fair Fares. My name is Sergio De La Pava and I am the Legal Director of New York County Defender Services (NYCDS).

NYCDS is a public defense office that every year represents indigent New Yorkers in thousands of cases in Manhattan's Criminal Court, Supreme Court, and Family Courts. Since opening our doors in 1997, we have represented more than half a million clients in their criminal matters and witnessed firsthand the myriad ways the criminal legal system abuses and harms our clients.

We regularly see the ways transportation insecurity destabilizes individuals and families, and contributes to deeper involvement with the criminal legal system. For our clients, reliable access to public transportation is critical in maintaining employment, attending court appearances, accessing healthcare and treatment, meeting with counsel, and successfully navigating reentry after a period of incarceration.

I. Background:

For many of our clients, transportation costs present a substantial and recurring hardship. Our clients routinely describe having to ration MetroCard swipes or having to ask family or friends for money to afford transportation to court. Clients may have to walk long distances to get to appointments, or simply may miss them when they cannot afford to pay a transit fare.

Reentry frequently requires navigating numerous appointments across multiple boroughs within short periods of time, including meetings with parole or probation officers, benefits offices, housing providers, treatment courts, or attorneys. The total cost of transportation can quickly become prohibitive for individuals already facing serious economic hardship.

Transportation insecurity can also increase exposure to law enforcement. Low-income New Yorkers who cannot afford to pay their transit fares routinely face summonses, arrests, or other enforcement actions stemming from fare evasion.¹ Even limited police interactions can carry significant consequences for individuals already navigating court involvement, house instability, immigration concerns, or supervision requirements.

Fare evasion enforcement in New York City has also historically disproportionately impacted low-income Black and Latino communities. NYPD enforcement data found that fare evasion enforcement was significantly higher and more punitive in lower-income neighborhoods where people of color live, when compared to similarly situated white neighborhoods.² Police were also more likely to arrest individuals from minority neighborhoods rather than issuing a summons.³ Enforcement relative to ridership was more than 60% higher at stations in high-poverty minority neighborhoods than in high-poverty white neighborhoods.⁴

That is why it is critical to expand access to affordable public transportation. It reduces barriers to employment, healthcare, education, and court compliance while helping prevent unnecessary contact with enforcement systems driven by economic hardships.

II. Proposed Legislation

- A. [Int. 0248-2026 \(Hudson\)](#): A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to automatic enrollment of eligible individuals in city-created benefit programs.

¹Ayashah Anwar, *Why NYC's Poor Funding Allocation Leads to Fare Evasions*, Journal of Gender, Social Policy & The Law (Jan. 27, 2025) at <https://jgspl.org/why-nycs-poor-funding-allocation-leads-to-fare-evasions/>.

² *Attorney General James Launches Investigation into the NYPD for Alleged Targeting of Communities of Color on NYC Subway* (Jan. 13, 2020) at <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2020/attorney-general-james-launches-investigation-nypd-alleged-targeting-communities>.

³ *Racial and Neighborhood Disparities in New York City Criminal Summons Practices*, DCJ <https://datacollaborativeforjustice.org/work/policing/racial-disparities-in-new-york-city-criminal-summonses-2019-2022/>.

⁴ *Id.*

NYCDS supports this legislation. The proposed legislation would help streamline enrollment into the Fair Fares program for individuals already determined to be eligible by other means-tested public benefits programs. Our clients face significant barriers in navigating complex and duplicative administrative processes in order to access essential benefits. Automatic enrollment would reduce unnecessary administrative barriers and increase participation among eligible New Yorkers. This would help ensure that our clients are able to more consistently access transportation necessary to attend court appearances, medical appointments, treatment programs, work, and other essential obligations.

- B. [Int. 0825-2026 \(Marte\)](#): A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the Department of Social Services issuing replacement transit benefit cards

NYCDS supports this legislation. Many low-income and justice-involved New Yorkers experience frequent property loss due to housing instability, shelter transfers, hospitalizations, or displacement. The loss of a Fair Fares card can immediately disrupt a person's ability to travel to work, meet with counsel, access healthcare and treatment, or maintain employment. The process of replacing a card and the associated fees can serve as a barrier to transportation for individuals with little to no disposable income. Ensuring an accessible and affordable replacement process is critical to maintaining continuity of transportation access for vulnerable New Yorkers, including our clients.

IV. Conclusion

We urge the Council to pass [Int. 0248-2026 \(Hudson\)](#) and [Int. 0825-2026 \(Marte\)](#).

If you have any questions about my testimony, please email policy@nycds.org.



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Testimony
to
The New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare
From
Eman Rimawi-Doster
Senior Community Organizer
Disability Justice Program
at
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
May 6, 2026

My name is Eman Rimawi-Doster, and I'm the Senior Community Organizer for the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony today.

Public transportation is a lifeline for New Yorkers with disabilities. Many disabled New Yorkers are on fixed incomes, making this lifeline difficult to afford, which is why Fair Fares is vitally important.

People may think that \$3 isn't a lot of money, but if they only receive about \$900 a month and have a ton of other expenses and no support, \$3 can be a lot. I remember being on a fixed income and how there were not only times I had to scrape together pennies to take Access-A-Ride paratransit (AAR) back when it was \$2.25, but I also had to skip vital appointments and meetings because I didn't always have those pennies.

When the City initially introduced Fair Fares, it was not available to AAR users. NYLPI advocated for, and secured the extension of, the discount program to AAR. But the benefit that Fair Fares provides to AAR is still too limited, as it only covers low-income individuals under the age of 65. Accordingly, we call for the City to remove its age cap from the Fair Fares program so that AAR users over the age of 65 can qualify.

Further, not only should this hearing have captions available for this but also, according to what I heard at a couple of town halls that included disabled New Yorkers, they still don't know what Fair Fares is. I also appreciate council members bringing up how nasty some of the staff at HRA are, but there was no response from them, so please follow up with them on that.

Additionally, Fair Fares cannot be used on the City's express buses, which cost \$7. Express buses are particularly important to the disability community because they provide inter-borough service. This is of particular importance to this community because riders with disabilities can't

The Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA finds that an increase to 300% would cover an individual earning \$46,950 and a four-person household earning \$96,450 of the FPL. Expanding Fair Fares to 300% of the FPL would make over 1 million more New Yorkers eligible for half-priced transit fares, finally including New Yorkers who make at or slightly more than minimum wage for the first time. Additionally, the Regional Plan Association found that Fair Fares' current eligibility threshold is lower than all but five similar programs across the U.S., despite our city's high cost of living and high poverty rates.

Not only do we need greater investment in the Fair Fares program to expand eligibility, we also need more investment for outreach and education to make sure residents who qualify are using the program, as well as expansion of the program so that other forms of public transportation discounts such as for Citi-Bike, Metro North, and Long Island Railroad, are included. With the cost of living only increasing, it is critical that we ensure affordable transportation for everyone.

Expanding Fair Fares is also a climate solution. Dismantling barriers to public transportation by making it more affordable encourages the shift towards a more sustainable future. When transit is more accessible, New Yorkers are more likely to choose buses and subways over fossil-fuel based vehicles, which lowers emissions citywide and improves air quality.

Equitable transit is a big step as we fight for environmental justice in NYC. Lower income communities are disproportionately reliant on public transportation and deserve the ability to ride without breaking the bank. Fair Fares represents an opportunity for city leadership to ensure that the City is fully committed to investing in low-income residents and public transit, and fighting against climate change.

Int 248 of 2026

NYLCV supports Intro 248 of 2026, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, which would require the Commissioner of Social Services to create a system to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefit programs, like Fair Fares NYC. The Commissioner would be required to use recent records, like tax and social services assistance rolls, to identify individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for these programs for automatic enrollment. This bill would ensure that New Yorkers who qualify are actually reaping the benefits of programs that were made to help them. New York's robust social programs are deeply helpful, but are not being maximized since many populations do not know these initiatives even exist.

Automatically enrolling individuals into programs like Fair Fares ensures the policies New York puts out are reaching and offering help to every person that needs it. This bill is a common sense initiative that boosts participation and awareness of the Fair Fares program.

If we want to make our City more equitable, affordable, sustainable, as well as prepare for climate change threats, we must invest in the people who use our public transportation system most often. This is why we support the expansion of the Fair Fares NYC program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Jointly with the Committee on General Welfare
Oversight Hearing on Fair Fares Program
May 6, 2026**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chairs Abreu and Hudson, and members of the Transportation and General Welfare Committees for holding this hearing today and continuing to prioritize expanding this program, improving equitable access to affordable transit for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

NYLCV believes that everyone should have access to reliable, affordable, and clean transportation. Our public transportation system is critical for New Yorkers, yet, it is most often low income and communities of color that are most underserved by public transportation and who have trouble affording it. The Fair Fares program helps New Yorkers making less than 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL) reduce their subway and bus fares by 50%, which offers immense relief when it comes to managing transportation costs. Over 1 million New Yorkers (aged 18-64) currently qualify for Fair Fares at 150% of the FPL. However, far too few people qualify under the currently too-low eligibility threshold: if you make minimum wage, you almost certainly make too much. Only just under 375,000 are enrolled, around 35% of those eligible. We need automatic enrollment to reduce barriers to getting more New Yorkers the benefits they deserve.

This year, [NYLCV stands with advocates](#) calling for increased eligibility to 300% of the FPL, fully free for households under 150% of the FPL, expand Fair Fares with half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses and CityTickets on the LIRR and Metro-North railroads within New York City, and automatic enrollment of qualified households so Fair Fares is easily accessible. Speaker Menin and the City Council [have prioritized](#) making Fair Fares fully free for the 1.3 million New Yorkers who need it most, saving them up to \$910 per year.

[We appreciate](#) that the City Council's Preliminary Budget Response called for expanding the Fair Fares program to make subways and buses fully free for households under at least 150% of the federal poverty line, so that the lowest-income New Yorkers can count on accessing public transportation without economic strain. As this city faces an affordability crisis, this program needs to serve many more low-income residents.

The Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA [finds](#) that an increase to 300% would cover an individual earning \$46,950 and a four-person household earning \$96,450 of the FPL. Expanding Fair Fares to 300% of the FPL would make over 1 million more New Yorkers eligible for half-priced transit fares, finally including New Yorkers who make at or slightly more than minimum wage for the first time. Additionally, [the Regional Plan Association found](#) that Fair Fares' current eligibility threshold is lower than all but five similar programs across the U.S., despite our city's high cost of living and high poverty rates.

Not only do we need greater investment in the Fair Fares program to expand eligibility, we also need more investment for outreach and education in many languages to make sure residents who qualify are using the program, as well as expansion of the program so that other forms of public transportation discounts such as for Citi-Bike, Metro North, and Long Island Railroad, are included. With the cost of living only increasing, it is critical that we ensure affordable transportation for everyone.

Expanding Fair Fares is also a climate solution. Dismantling barriers to public transportation by making it more affordable encourages the shift towards a more sustainable future. When transit is more accessible, New Yorkers are more likely to choose buses and subways over fossil-fuel based vehicles, which lowers emissions citywide and improves air quality.

Equitable transit is a big step as we fight for environmental justice in NYC. Lower income communities are disproportionately reliant on public transportation and deserve the ability to ride without breaking the bank. Fair Fares represents an opportunity to invest in low-income residents and public transit, and fight against climate change.

Int 248 of 2026

NYLCV supports Intro 248 of 2026, sponsored by Council Member Hudson, which would require the Commissioner of Social Services to create a system to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefit programs, like Fair Fares NYC. The Commissioner would be required to use recent records, like tax and social services assistance rolls, to identify individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for these programs for automatic enrollment. This bill would ensure that New Yorkers who qualify are actually reaping the benefits of programs that were made to help them. New York's robust social programs are deeply helpful, but are not being maximized since many populations do not know these initiatives even exist.

Automatically enrolling individuals into programs like Fair Fares ensures the policies New York puts out are reaching and offering help to every person that needs it. This bill is a common sense initiative that boosts participation and awareness of the Fair Fares program.

If we want to make our City more equitable, affordable, sustainable, as well as prepare for climate change threats, we must invest in the people who use our public transportation system most often. This is why we support the expansion of the Fair Fares NYC program.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Testimony by the New York Legal Assistance Group on
Oversight - Oversight - Fair Fares, Int. 0248-2026, Int. 0825-2026, Res. 0052-2026, and Res.
0143-2026

Before the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare

May 6, 2026

Chair Hudson, Council Members, and staff, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony to the New York City Council on the oversight of Fair Fares, Int. 0248-2026, Int. 0825-2026, Res. 0052-2026, and Res. 0143-2026. My name is Abby Biberman, and I am the Associate Director of the Public Benefits Unit at the New York Legal Assistance Group (“NYLAG”).

NYLAG uses the power of the law to help New Yorkers experiencing poverty or in crisis combat economic, racial, and social injustices. We address emerging and urgent needs with comprehensive, free civil legal services, financial empowerment, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community partnerships. We aim to disrupt systemic racism by serving clients, whose legal and financial crises are often rooted in racial inequality.

The Shelter and Economic Stability Project in our Public Benefits Unit at NYLAG provides free legal services and advocacy to low-income people in and trying to access public shelter in New York City, and those having trouble accessing or maintaining Public Assistance and SNAP (food stamp) benefits. We work to ensure that every New Yorker has a safe place to sleep by offering legal advice and representation throughout each step of the shelter application process, assist and advocate for clients who are already in shelter as they navigate the transfer process, and seek adequate facility conditions and resources for their needs. We also represent clients at Administrative Fair Hearings, conduct advocacy

with the Department of Social Services (“DSS”), Benefits Access Centers and SNAP centers, and bring impact litigation to ensure that our clients are obtaining and maintaining an adequate level of shelter and benefits. Fair fares are a vital part of those benefits.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer the following comments.

I- Fair Fares

Many New Yorkers struggle to make ends meet.¹ Although transportation costs in the New York City metropolitan area have grown more slowly than in other major metro areas, transportation remains a significant expense for many households.² In fact, transportation is the second-largest cost for New Yorkers, after housing, accounting for 14 percent of household spending.³

The Fair Fares program, which allows low-income New Yorkers to ride public transit at half price, plays a critical role in easing this burden. Fair Fares is an essential tool for NYLAG’s clients, enabling them to commute to work, search for jobs, obtain housing, and otherwise navigate New York City. NYLAG enthusiastically supports all proposed expansions of the program.

1. Int. 0825-2026

NYLAG strongly supports Int. 0825-2026, which would require the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) to issue duplicate Fair Fares benefit cards when a

¹ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/09/draft-dinapoli-nyc-metro-transportation-costs-grew-slower-other-major-cities-still-rose-29-percent>.

² <https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/09/draft-dinapoli-nyc-metro-transportation-costs-grew-slower-other-major-cities-still-rose-29-percent>

³ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/09/draft-dinapoli-nyc-metro-transportation-costs-grew-slower-other-major-cities-still-rose-29-percent>

participant's card is damaged, destroyed, stolen, or lost. Many of NYLAG's clients are entirely dependent on the Fair Fares discount to access any form of transportation.

We also represent many clients who are experiencing homelessness. Clients living in shelters consistently report that their belongings are stolen by staff or other residents, while clients experiencing street homelessness are often robbed while sleeping. As a result, these clients, who are among the most vulnerable in our society, are extremely likely to lose their Fair Fares cards. This legislation is vital to ensuring that these clients can continue to access transportation, and NYLAG strongly supports its passage.

2. Res. 0052-2026

NYLAG also supports Res. 0052-2026, which calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.3887A/A.7316A. This legislation would require that any person with income under 200% of the federal poverty level receive a 50% discount on trips using the Long Island Rail Road, paratransit services, New York City Transit subways and buses, and the Metro-North Railroad. This is a much-needed expansion of the Fair Fares program and is vital to ensuring that low-income New Yorkers can access transportation.

Living in New York City with income under 200% of the federal poverty level is extremely challenging. Nearly five million New York City residents (approximately three in five) are living below this threshold, placing them precariously close to poverty.⁴ Reducing the cost of transportation needed to commute to work, access medical care, and search for housing is essential to stabilizing these families. Moreover, extending this benefit to the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad would give low-income families greater

⁴ <https://robinhood.org/news/2026-annual-poverty-tracker-report-release/>

freedom to access a wider range of schools, employment opportunities, and medical services. NYLAG fully supports these critical expansions.

3. Res. 0143-2026

NYLAG also supports Res. 0143-2026, which calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation creating unlimited transfers within the two-hour period after a Metropolitan Transportation Authority subway or bus fare is paid for pay-per-ride users. This proposal would benefit not only low-income New Yorkers, but all New Yorkers who rely on public transit.

Many New Yorkers have commutes that exceed two hours and may be forced to pay multiple fares simply to get to work. Allowing unlimited transfers within the fare window would create a fairer transit system and would be especially beneficial for lower-income riders with long and complex commutes.

4. Int. 0248-2026

NYLAG applauds the intent of automatic enrollment of eligible individuals in city-created benefit programs, however, we are concerned about collateral consequences of involuntary enrollment. While this bill does contemplate an "opt out" provision, it is very likely that many people will never know that they have been enrolled or how to opt out. In the current political climate, people have many valid reasons why they may not want to access public benefits they are eligible for. Moreover, the bill is silent on people who don't meet the requirements for the benefits they are accidentally enrolled in and/or what type of repayment for benefits wrongly issued would be mandated. In sum, at this time, NYLAG does not support automatic enrollment of people in public benefits, and thinks that all benefits should require an "opt in" not an "opt out". However, in keeping with the spirit of

the bill, NYLAG would support an automatic screening with a simplified opt-in mechanism, so individuals are able to more easily access city created benefit programs for which they are eligible.

We thank the Committee on General Welfare for the work you have done to facilitate services for vulnerable New Yorkers, and for taking this opportunity to continue to improve the conditions for our clients. We hope we can continue to be a resource for you going forward.

Respectfully submitted,

New York Legal Assistance Group

**TESTIMONY
OF THE
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
BEFORE THE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE AND GENERAL WELFARE
May 6th, 2026
New York, N.Y.**

Good morning. My name is Natasha Elder, and I am the Regional Director for NYPIRG, the New York Public Interest Research Group. NYPIRG is a non-partisan, not-for-profit research and advocacy organization. Since 1979, the Straphangers Campaign has advocated on behalf of the millions of riders who rely on New York City’s public transit system every day.

Thank you to Chair Abreu, Chair Hudson, and members of both Committees for holding today’s hearing on Fair Fares.

New York City’s transit system is the backbone of our economy, but for many riders, the cost of using it has become a growing barrier to opportunity. With the base fare now at \$3.00 following the most recent increase, even routine trips—getting to work, class, or a medical appointment—can add up quickly over the course of a week. This is happening at the same time that the cost of living in New York continues to rise across nearly every category, from rent to food to utilities. For low-income New Yorkers, transit is not discretionary spending—it is a prerequisite to participating in daily life.

Recent data underscores the scale of the problem. According to the Community Service Society’s Unheard Third survey, nearly one in five New Yorkers reported struggling to afford subway and bus fares, and that number rises to roughly 30 percent among households living in or near poverty.¹ These are not occasional riders—these are people who depend on transit and are being forced to make tradeoffs between transportation and other basic needs.

Fair Fares Works — But It Leaves Too Many Out

Fair Fares has proven that targeted intervention can make a meaningful difference. Since its launch in 2019, the program has provided reduced fares to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, with enrollment now exceeding 360,000 participants.² At the same time, the gap between those who are

¹ Community Service Society of New York, *When You Can’t Afford the Fare: How Expanding Fair Fares Can Help Working New Yorkers*, Unheard Third Transit Brief (2024).

²New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), *Fair Fares NYC Program Data and Enrollment Figures*, accessed May 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/fairfares/index.page>

eligible and those who are actually enrolled remains significant. Census data indicates that roughly 900,000 New Yorkers are living below the federal poverty line, while estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers eligible for Fair Fares remain unenrolled.

One of the central limitations is the current income cap, which restricts eligibility to individuals earning up to 145 percent of the federal poverty level—approximately \$23,940 annually for a single adult.³ In a city where basic costs far exceed national averages, that threshold does not reflect the reality of what it takes to get by. As a result, many working New Yorkers who are struggling to afford transit are excluded from the program.

The burden is especially visible among students. While New York City provides free transit to K–12 students, CUNY students—many of whom are low-income, working, or supporting families—must cover their own commuting costs. A report from the Center for an Urban Future found that transportation is one of the most commonly cited financial barriers to completing a degree.⁴ When the cost of getting to class becomes a deciding factor, it directly undermines the City’s broader investments in higher education and workforce development.

The City Has a Clear Path Forward

The Council has already recognized many of these challenges, and today’s hearing reflects a growing consensus that Fair Fares is a great program that must be strengthened. The question is no longer whether the program works—it does—but whether it is reaching enough people.

Expanding Fair Fares would be one of the most immediate and effective ways to address transit affordability.

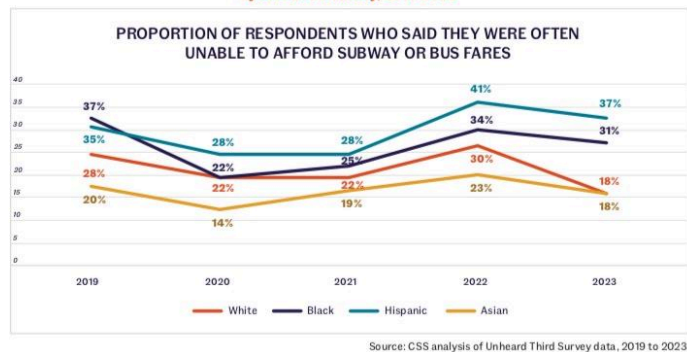
We call on the City Council to support a Fair Fares program expansion that:

- Increase eligibility to 300 percent of the federal poverty level to better reflect the City’s cost of living.
- Make transit fares fully free for those under 150 percent of the poverty level to ensure that the lowest-income riders are not priced out of the system entirely.

³ NYC Fair Fares eligibility guidelines, based on Federal Poverty Level thresholds (2025).

⁴ Center for an Urban Future, *Opportunity Costs* (2023).

Figure 4: Transit affordability hardship rates among low-income New Yorkers, by race and ethnicity, 2019-2023



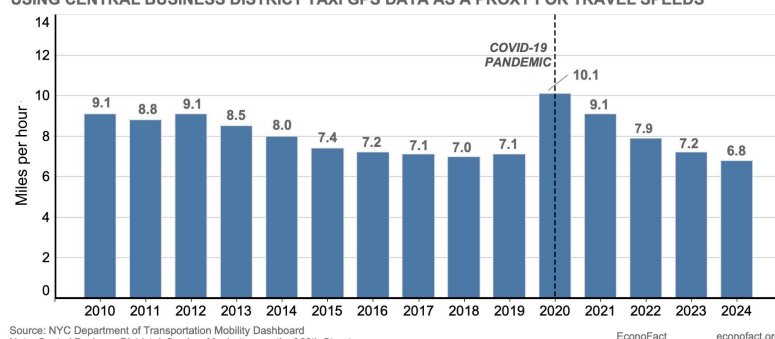
- Extend free fare eligibility to CUNY students to align transit policy with the City’s education goals.
- Expand coverage to include express buses and commuter rail through CityTicket to make the program more usable for riders in transit deserts.

At the same time, improving access to the program is just as important as expanding eligibility. Automatic enrollment, particularly for New Yorkers already participating in other income-qualified benefits, would reduce administrative barriers and help close the gap between eligibility and participation.

Affordability Must Be Paired With Service

Finally, while today’s focus is affordability, it is important to recognize that cost cannot be separated from service quality. For many New Yorkers, especially those in the outer boroughs, buses are not a secondary option—they are the primary way to get around. Yet service remains slow and unreliable. According to the New York City Independent Budget Office, average bus speeds in New York City hover at just over 8 miles per hour. Some routes perform even worse. The Straphangers Campaign’s 2025 “Pokey Award” identified the M42 as the slowest bus route in the city, moving at an average speed of just 5.25 miles per hour.⁵ That reality has persisted despite years of plans and commitments to improve service.

AVERAGE TRAFFIC SPEED IN NEW YORK CITY USING CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TAXI GPS DATA AS A PROXY FOR TRAVEL SPEEDS



The consequences of slow service are not abstract. When buses crawl through routes, riders experience longer commutes, less reliable arrival times, and increased stress navigating daily travel. These burdens fall disproportionately on low-income riders, who are more likely to rely on buses and have fewer alternatives. In effect, riders are being asked to pay more—through fare increases—while still receiving a level of service that fails to meet their needs.

At the same time, the City has struggled to meet its own commitments to improve bus performance. Data from the New York City Department of Transportation shows that bus lane installation has repeatedly fallen short of the targets set under the Streets Master Plan,⁶ limiting one of the most effective tools available to speed up service. Without consistent expansion and enforcement of bus lanes, buses remain stuck in the same congestion as private vehicles, undermining reliability gains that riders depend on.

⁵ “New York City Independent Budget Office, *Speeding Up Slowly: A Review of Initiatives to Improve Bus Speeds in New York City* (2025); NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, *2025 Pokey Awards*.

⁶ New York City Department of Transportation, Mayor’s Management Report FY2024–FY2025.

This is why affordability and service must be addressed together. Expanding Fair Fares without improving service risks leaving riders with a system that is cheaper, but still inefficient and unreliable. At the same time, improving service without addressing affordability leaves many riders unable to benefit from those improvements in the first place. Investments in bus priority infrastructure—such as dedicated lanes, transit signal priority, and Bus Rapid Transit corridors—have been shown to improve travel times and reliability, with some corridors seeing travel time reductions of 10 to 20 percent when properly implemented.⁷

New Yorkers deserve a system that is both affordable and functional. Ensuring that riders can pay for transit is critical—but ensuring that transit works is just as essential.

Conclusion

New York City has an opportunity in this budget cycle to build on a program that is already making a difference and expand it to meet the scale of the need. Fair Fares is not just a transportation policy—it is an economic, educational, and equity policy. Expanding it would help ensure that more New Yorkers can access the opportunities this city has to offer.

⁷ TransitCenter, Bus Priority & BRT performance research (various reports).



**Testimony on 5/6/2026 Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure + Committee on General Welfare**

Open Plans writes to testify in support of expanding the Fair Fares eligibility to 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Most people in New York City rely on public transit to get around, but simply having access doesn't make it fast or affordable. At Open Plans, not only is our work rooted in safer streets and public space access, but we also believe that these alternative modes of transportation should be affordable for all New Yorkers. That's why programs like Fair Fares are vital in making public transportation truly affordable.

For riders, the standard fare can add up quickly, especially for low-income families and essential workers who are already facing high costs of living. When transit becomes expensive, people are pushed toward harder choices, making full participation in city life difficult. Expanding the Fair Fares eligibility to 300% of the federal poverty level would [allow an estimated 2.1 million more New Yorkers to enroll in the program](#). At a time when [citywide vehicle miles traveled \(VMT\) continue to increase](#), bringing with it a myriad of problems, including higher levels of air and noise pollution and traffic crashes, we must ensure we are investing in our public transit system, and that includes investing in Fair Fares.

Respectfully,

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MTA Board Meeting, Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Good morning. My name is David Kupferberg, Member, Passengers United.

On Friday April 10th, over 100 seniors, local residents, and elected officials attended a rally, not sponsored by Passengers United, in Sunnyside, Queens to oppose the relocation of the bus stop, as part of the Queens Bus Network Redesign, on Queens Blvd at 39th Place. It is currently used by the Q32 and Q60, and would be relocated one block west to 39th St. This stop would have a boarding island in front of a car dealership. Plus people, especially seniors, would have to cross a dangerous bike lane in order to access the new stop. It would also be in front of a fire hydrant.

On Wednesday, April 15th, despite no advanced notice by the media, over 200 seniors and local residents, but no elected officials, attended a rally, sponsored by Passengers United, at the same bus stop to oppose its relocation. And we have the footage to prove that this is the truth.

Despite overwhelming community opposition, the work order to relocate the bus stop from 39th Place to 39th Street was signed in late March. Hence, these rallies took place too late to prevent the bus stop's relocation.

These rallies show that Bus Stop Balancing is opposed by the public, elected officials, and the MTA's customers.

Shame on the NYCDOT. And shame on the MTA.

David Kupferberg
Member, Passengers United
E-mail: dkupf@yahoo.com



PCAC

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KARA GURL PLANNING & ADVOCACY MANAGER
JESSICA SPEZIO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Fair Fares Has the Power to Transform New York Transportation

New York City Council Joint General Welfare and Transportation Hearing on Fair Fares Tuesday, May 6th, 2026

Good afternoon, I'm Brian Fritsch, Associate Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. For nearly 50 years, PCAC has served as the official voice of riders on the MTA system. A huge thank you to Speaker Menin, General Welfare Chair Hudson, and Majority Leader and Transportation Chair Abreu for holding this hearing today and continuing to prioritize expanding this program, improving equitable access to affordable transit for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

At no point since the Great Depression has affordability been so vital to so many New York City residents. As the [MTA recently noted](#), transit plays a huge role in that complicated equation, and one of the very few ways New York City is more affordable than other parts of the country. Yet we can do so much more.

First launched in 2019, Fair Fares offers half-fare subway, bus, and paratransit rides to low-income New Yorkers ages 18-64, and is a crucial lifeline of affordability for over 360,000 currently enrolled individuals. The program began in 2019 with an income limit of 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and was expanded incrementally to 120% in 2023, 145% in 2024, and 150% in 2025, following staunch advocacy from our organizations and partnership with the city and MTA. The city currently allocates just over \$96 million in baseline funding to the Fair Fares program.

The Fair Fares program can literally change people's lives. It offers an unparalleled opportunity to expand access to opportunity, jobs, education, and more, but far too few people qualify under the currently too-low eligibility threshold: if you make minimum wage, you almost certainly make too much. Too few of the people who do qualify are enrolled, and that's a lost opportunity: New Yorkers who could be saving up to \$910 per year in transit costs are instead getting nothing at all.

As we discussed in more detail in our report from December of last year, [Universal Affordable Transit for New York](#), no other city program has the power to improve transportation equity – and lives – while simultaneously addressing our city's affordability crisis. Even if our buses and paratransit become free, millions of struggling New Yorkers will still need to use the subway. Last year, over 65% of taps from Fair Fares users were on the subway. Fair Fares also helps riders avoid fare evasion by ensuring fewer riders are

unable to pay, and comes as the MTA is about to begin testing new fare gates that will make it much harder to avoid paying.

For these reasons, we believe it's time to unlock the full potential of the Fair Fares program with the five program changes:

1. **Expand Fair Fares to 300%** of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (individual- \$46,950, four-person household- \$96,450). This would allow an estimated 2.1 million New Yorkers to participate in the program at 300% of the FPL, including minimum wage workers, for the first time.

Additional Cost beyond the FY26 baseline: ~\$125 - \$155 million

2. **Fully free for households under 150%** of the FPL (individual- \$23,475, four-person household- \$48,225). This would allow for an estimated 1.3 million New Yorkers to have unlimited access to subway, bus, and paratransit service. Deepening affordability is essential to the riders who need it most.

Additional Cost beyond the FY26 baseline: ~\$150 - \$175 million

3. **Expand Fair Fares with half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses and CityTickets** on the LIRR and Metro-North railroads within New York City, drastically reducing commute times for tens of thousands of New Yorkers in subway deserts.

4. **Automatic Enrollment** of qualified households to improve the current enrollment rate. Currently, only around a third of eligible households are enrolled, a dismal amount. According to a [new survey from the Community Service Society of New York](#), automatic enrollment could boost program uptake by 50% to around 570,000 enrollees, immediately unlocking benefits for nearly 200,000 New Yorkers who already qualify for another Human Resources Administration (HRA)-administered program.

5. **Close program loopholes**, such as on Access-a-Ride for qualifying seniors, who currently pay half fare as program participants until age 64 and then pay full fare at age 65.

The Fair Fares Program is that tool, but it's been underutilized and consistently overlooked. Currently, only an estimated 35-40% of the over 1 million eligible New Yorkers are enrolled in the program, and as a result, it is chronically underfunded.

HRA needs to step up and develop a plan to reduce the hurdles low-income New Yorkers face in getting enrolled. We believe now is the time to pursue automatic enrollment in this program, which could double enrollment and give New Yorkers a much more affordable way to get to jobs, education, appointments, and more.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, prioritizing the Fair Fares program in the council's budget, and for the opportunity to testify today. With the Council's help, we believe we can, in this year's budget, turn the Fair Fares program from a good idea into one that will transform how New Yorkers get around their city.



**Testimony for Oversight Hearing on Fair Fares,
New York City Council Committees on Transportation and General Welfare**

*Re: Expanding Fair Fares is Cost-Effective Way to Increase Opportunity
for NYers Who Need it the Most*

May 6, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the City's Fair Fares program. We appreciate the City Council championing this important affordability program for transit riders, which we believe is a cost-effective way to increase access to jobs and services for New Yorkers who need it most.

Reinvent Albany joined colleagues on a [February 11, 2026 letter](#) calling on Mayor Mamdani to support expansion of the NYC funded Fair Fares program including the following:

1. **Increasing eligibility to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)** (individual - \$46,950, four-person household - \$96,450) for half-priced fares.
2. **Making the program fully City-supported for households under 150% of the FPL** (individual - \$23,475, four-person household - \$48,225).
3. **Half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses, CityTickets on the LIRR, and Metro-North railroads within New York City**, drastically reducing commute times for tens of thousands of New Yorkers.
4. **Automatic enrollment of qualified households to improve the current enrollment rate.**
5. **Closing program loopholes, such as on Access-a-Ride for qualifying seniors**, who now pay half fare until age 64, and then pay full fare at age 65.

We are glad to see the [City Council's Preliminary Budget Response for FY 2027](#) supports full city funding for transit passes for those under 150% of the FPL. We urge the Council to go further and increase the threshold for half-priced fares to 300% of the FPL.

We also appreciate that [Intro 248 \(Hudson\)](#) makes enrollment automatic for Fair Fares and other city programs, using existing records and social services assistance rolls to identify eligible individuals. This would be a game-changer, as 60% of New Yorkers who are eligible for Fair Fares have still not enrolled, and strenuous application processes have been identified as a key impediment to enrollment (see the Regional Plan Association's December 2025 report, [Reduced Fares: Lessons from Across the Country](#)).

Reinvent Albany believes that these proposals together – fully NYC-funded fares or reduced-price fares with automatic enrollment – are a sensible and effective path forward to make transit more affordable for New Yorkers who need help the most. Thank you for your consideration.

RWDSU

Stuart Appelbaum, *President*
Joseph Dorismond, *Secretary-Treasurer*
Maria Buonaugurio, *Recorder*
Randy Hadley, *Executive Vice President*

Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union

Good morning, General Welfare Chair Hudson and Transportation Chair Abreu, and other esteemed members of the New York City Council (“Council”). I am Deborah Wright, National Political Director for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (“RWDSU”). I am here today to speak in favor of the Council’s proposal to expand the *Fair Fares NYC* program.

The RWDSU represents over 100,000 workers nationally, working in industries such as retail, the retail supply chain that includes warehouses, apparel retail, grocery stores, food processing, food distribution, agriculture, cannabis, building services, nursing homes, carwashes, and more. Simply put, our members help keep our economy moving every single day.

Our retail members work in a challenging industry that is demanding physically and mentally. They open stores early in the morning and close them late at night. They spend hours on their feet, assisting customers, stocking shelves, and maintaining stores, with little rest. During weekends, major sales, and holidays, the pace becomes frenetic and exhausting.

Our members do all of this while constantly interacting with the public, managing frustration, de-escalating conflict, and maintaining professionalism no matter what they face. Increasingly, they also face real threats to their physical safety on the job.

Yet despite strong union contracts, many of our retail members are struggling to make ends meet. The cost of transportation is not a small inconvenience; it is a daily burden that forces impossible choices. Our members rely exclusively on public transit to get to and from work in a timely and safe manner. They are not asking for luxury, they are asking for fairness. At the program’s current income threshold of 150% of the Federal Poverty Line, many of our members are excluded. In a city where rent, groceries, healthcare, childcare, and transit costs are among the highest in the country, the current threshold is disconnected from how people live.

Expanding *Fair Fares NYC* would include more low-wage workers, which in turn would mean more stable employment and a stronger workforce for the city. It would mean dignity for our members and countless workers across the city by knowing that getting to work will not push them further into financial stress. Expanding the income eligibility threshold would finally reflect the reality of New York City’s affordability crisis, by shifting the program from serving only those living in deep poverty to also include the working class who are still cost-burdened.

This is what the affordability crisis looks like: people who are doing everything right, working, budgeting, contributing to the city, but still cannot afford the basics which include getting to work.

We urge the Council to act with urgency and invest in working by people by expanding the *Fair Fare NYC* program so that workers, like our members, who keep this city running can afford to stay here. Thank you.



**Volunteers
of America®**
GREATER NEW YORK

TESTIMONY TO THE NYC COUNCIL GENERAL WELFARE AND TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEES' OVERSIGHT HEARING: FAIR FAIRS ON MAY 6TH, 2026

Introduction and Thanks

My name is Eric Lee, Director of Public Policy for Volunteers of America-Greater New York (VOA-GNY). We are the local affiliate of the national organization, Volunteers of America, Inc. (VOA). I would like to thank Chair Hudson and Members of the General Welfare and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees for the opportunity to submit testimony.

About Us

VOA-GNY is an anti-poverty organization that aims to end homelessness in Greater New York through housing, health and wealth building services. We are one of the region's oldest and largest human service providers, founded 130 years ago and serving more than 12,000 adults and children annually through 70+ programs in New York City, Northern New Jersey, and Westchester and thousands more via our Operation Backpack® initiative. We are also an active nonprofit developer of supportive and affordable housing, with a robust portfolio of permanent supportive housing, affordable and senior housing properties—with more in the pipeline. VOA-GNY is a member of Homeless Services United (HSU), The Supportive Housing Network of New York, the Human Services Council (HSC), and the Family Homelessness Coalition (FHC).

Background:

VOA-GNY has been providing shelter services to homeless families since 1991 when DHS first began contracting with nonprofits to do so. We operate five DHS transitional housing programs for families in the New York metropolitan area which serve 456 families, three DHS “emergency” shelters serving an additional 244 families, seven HRA Domestic Violence programs serving families and individuals fleeing domestic violence, two DHS adult women’s shelters, one DHS adult men’s shelter, a DHS safe haven for unsheltered individuals, and a DHS Street to Home Pilot program which utilizes a Housing First approach to place individuals

experiencing unsheltered street homelessness directly into supportive housing within 1 to 2 weeks of first meeting them.

Thank you, Speaker Menin, Chair Hudson and Chair Abreu and Members of the General Welfare Committee and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, for your steadfast commitment to protecting and expanding access to public benefits and services for New Yorkers in need.

VOA-GNY supports the Council's goal of strengthening access to public transit for low-income New Yorkers through improvements to the Fair Fares program. Low-income New Yorkers rely on public transit to go to work, go to appointments with their healthcare providers, bring their children to school, and access public benefits and community-based services. New York can do more to ease access and improve the efficacy of this critical program so that more low-income households can more easily reach their destinations every day, while trying to make ends meet.

Legislation Considered

Int 248-2026: VOA-GNY supports the creation of a system to enable DSS/HRA to automatically enroll individuals in City-created benefits programs, like Fair Fares, to maximize the number of eligible households receiving this beneficial program, given a fraction of currently eligible households are enrolled, years after its inception.

Int 825-2026: VOA-GNY supports requiring the City to reissue replacement transit benefit cards for Fair Fares NYC participants when their current card is lost, stolen, or damaged, as is practice for other reduced-fare transit cards. Reduced-fare cards help New Yorkers with limited incomes to make ends meet and keep them connected to their jobs, healthcare providers, and children's schools, and support networks. Without a timely way to replace Fair Fare cards, participants would be forced to jump through hoops reapplying for a brand-new card, lengthening the amount of time without a card and potentially unable to make important to make it to important appointments and responsibilities.

Res52-2025: VOA-GNY supports this resolution calling on the NYS Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign S.3887A/A7316A to increase eligibility for Fair Fares up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), automatically offer it to eligible individuals, and expand Fair Fares to also include discounted rides for Metro-North Railroad, the Long Island Rail Road and Access-A-Ride.

Bringing Fair Fares income limits up to 200% of FPL would help to remove confusion about eligibility by conforming with common income standards for various other assistance programs, while helping more low-income New Yorkers access reduced fare rides. Expanding Fair Fares to include other forms of mass transit will better suit the needs of low-income New

Yorkers who may have jobs or community resources just outside the five boroughs.

Res 143-2026: VOA-GNY supports this resolution calling on the NYS Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation creating unlimited free transfers for subways and buses within the two-hour period of paying-per-ride for an MTA bus or subway. As New Yorkers are displaced through gentrification, rising rents, and increased cost of living, they find themselves chasing affordability in the outer boroughs further away from their jobs, schools, and support networks. With these longer commutes, one free transfer is not always sufficient to reach one's destination. Families in shelter face hours long commutes from the Bronx to Brooklyn, for their children's school or work, and every dollar matters. Enabling unlimited transfer for low-income riders keep more money in their pockets.

In Conclusion:

Thank you Speaker Menin, Chair Hudson, and Chair Abreu and Members of the Council for your unwavering support of low-income New Yorkers. By expanding eligibility, easing access, and increasing the transit lines covered by Fair Fares, more New Yorkers will be able to more affordably take advantage of our robust mass transit system to go to work, bring their children to school, and maintain their health and connections to their communities. Through your leadership, New York City can continue to be an affordable place to call home.

Testimony respectfully submitted on behalf of Volunteers of America- Greater New York by Eric Lee. If you have any questions, please contact me at elee@voa-gny.org.

To: Committee on General Welfare Jointly with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Date: May 6, 2026

Subject: Oversight - Fair Fares. [Res 0143-2026](#); [Res 0052-2026](#); [Int 0825-2026](#), [Int 0248-2026](#)

I strongly support the automatic enrollment in and expansion of Fair Fares, and the adoption of unlimited transfers.

Fair Fares is a lifeline and equalizer for New Yorkers. This program makes it possible for me to engage the city fully. Without it I would not have access to medical, social and cultural activities. It would also limit my civic participation. I attend events at NYCHA developments facing privatization, something that is allowed under public housing rights. Each meeting I meet tenants that have heard about the harms caused by the privatization of public housing.

NYCHA hides from tenants the statistics on eviction and displacement; increases in rent. Tenants aren't told how our federally protected rights and benefits are lost under PACT. Tenants are instead promised new appliances and flooring. But those of us fighting to save public housing know better. And we show up under the umbrellas of organizations like mine, Save Section 9.

SS9 is unpaid work. But this mayor wants to allocate \$662 Million to privatization, and is supporting the demolition of 19 buildings in Chelsea. Tenants are fighting for each other, their homes and against Zohran's budget. Depending on transit to do so. I urge the council to shift all funding away from privatization and towards Section 9 comprehensive modernization. We urge you to automatically enroll folks in Fair Fares and expand the program.

Ramona Ferreyra

Tenant- Mitchel Houses

Founder- Save Section 9

Beneficiary- Fair Fares



Written Testimony for the New York City Council Committee in Support of Free & Expanded Fair Fares, and Automatic Enrollment

May 6, 2026

To Speaker Menin, General Welfare Chair Hudson, Transportation Chair Abreu, and Members of the New York City Council:

My name is Jasmine Budnella, and I am the Director of Drug Policy at VOCAL-NY. VOCAL-NY is a statewide grassroots membership organization that builds power among low-income people affected by HIV/AIDS, the drug war, mass incarceration, and homelessness in order to create healthy and just communities. We also provide direct services to people who actively use drugs through our Syringe Service Program in downtown Brooklyn.

We want to thank the Speaker and Council for including free fares for New Yorkers living at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in [their](#) budget, and urge them to expand Fair Fares eligibility to 300% of the FPL, and implement automatic enrollment – all in this year's final budget.

For VOCAL-NY members, affordable transit is what gets someone to their methadone clinic in the morning, to a court date they can't miss, to a doctor's appointment, to the food bank, a housing placement, mental health services, or a job interview. When transit is unaffordable, people don't just stay home – they go into withdrawal, they miss treatments, they lose housing, they lose connections to their community, and they risk losing lifesaving services. According to a [new report](#) from the Community Service Society, almost two in three Fair Fares enrollees still find it difficult to afford transit even with the half-price discount. Unaffordable transit is a public health crisis, and this Council has the power to address it right now.

FARE ENFORCEMENT CAN BE DEADLY. FREE AND EXPANDED FAIR FARES SAVES LIVES.

[Hector Sierra](#) was stopped for alleged fare evasion, taken to Brooklyn Central booking, went into substance use withdrawal, and passed away. He is the fifth person to die in NYPD custody this year. Our member, Little Flores, [responded](#) with words this Council should carry into every budget negotiation: "Punishing someone for not having money for fare shouldn't condemn them to death – but that's the reality many are facing. Hector should be alive today."

Many of our members know this reality, including Little. Last month, he was detained for seven hours simply for walking through an open door at a subway station. "If I had been held any longer," he said, "I would have gone into withdrawal from not having access to my methadone, and would have needed my asthma medication." This is what fare enforcement looks like for people managing

chronic illness and a history with substance use. It is cruel, it is dangerous, and it is entirely preventable.

ENFORCEMENT IS NOT A TRANSIT SAFETY SOLUTION. HOUSING, SERVICES, AND CARE ARE.

Some will argue that the answer to crimes of poverty, and the intersection of unmet mental health needs, homelessness, and substance use in the transit system is more policing. However, this has proven to be an ineffective, harmful, and costly approach that has produced grave racial disparities, worsening conditions particularly for low-income Black, brown, and immigrant communities. The Police Reform Organizing Project reported that so far in 2026, 92% of arraignments they surveyed involved people of color. Just last week, Gothamist reported on a surge in NYPD arrests of people for lying down or sleeping on the subway. Chair Hudson herself called it "[problematic](#)," noting that if people had a safe, stable bed to sleep in, they wouldn't be sleeping on the train. She is right.

The [consequences](#) of what are traditionally described as "low-level" arrests are nevertheless severe. These arrests can limit a person's access to jobs, housing, healthcare and education. A simple arrest can reduce a person's lifelong earnings by 16%, according to the [Brennan Center for Justice](#). Because of targeted enforcement by the NYPD, people of color and immigrants experience the brunt of this harm.

In addition to not improving public safety – low-level arrests are often described as "criminogenic," meaning they make a person more likely to be rearrested in the future, not less, due to the disruptions to earnings, housing, healthcare, and education – these arrests are a significant burden on city resources. A single misdemeanor arrest costs the City and State between \$2,190 and \$5,896 in arrest and court costs alone, money that could otherwise be invested in long-term solutions.

The City needs more investments into safe havens, stabilization beds, expanded bathroom access, and transit ambassadors. As our civil rights campaign director, Nick Encalada-Malinowski, said, "No one wants New Yorkers left homeless and sleeping on trains. But we need to use actual, proven solutions to achieve that, not arresting people who have nowhere to go."

Between January and March of this year alone, the NYPD arrested 643 people whose only initial charge was stretching out on the subway – [up 3,000%](#) compared to the same period in 2025. These are people without housing, without options, without anywhere else to go. Ticketing and arresting them does not make the subway safer – it makes their lives more precarious and more dangerous. The answer is not handcuffs. It is housing, mental health care, substance use services, and yes – affordable transit so people can access those services in the first place.

Free and expanded Fair Fares would eliminate fare evasion infractions before they ever happen. It would let our members get to their appointments, their jobs – without fear.

FAIR FARES PROGRAM WORKS – BUT FAR TOO FEW PEOPLE ARE ENROLLED IN IT.

Fair Fares has been a lifeline since 2019, and today serves nearly 380,000 enrolled New Yorkers. But citywide enrollment sits at just 40% of eligible New Yorkers – and a third of eligible people surveyed by the Community Service Society are not enrolled at all. That gap falls hardest on people like our members, who face the greatest barriers to navigating a bureaucratic enrollment process that respondents themselves described as "complicated and slow." People in substance use services, people experiencing homelessness, people with untreated mental health needs, and people coming home from prison or jail are exactly the people forced to apply separately for Fair Fares – even though they have already reported the same income information for programs like SNAP or cash assistance. *And once enrolled, they must renew every single year by resubmitting proof of income.* This is an unnecessary burden on the people least able to absorb it. We need automatic enrollment, and we commend Chair Hudson for championing this through her legislation.

[Research](#) from the Urban Institute found that Philadelphia's use of automatic enrollment in its income-based fare discount program drove participation to 63% – more than three times the national average. A similar approach here would likely double Fair Fares participation in our city.

THE ELIGIBILITY FOR FAIR FARES THRESHOLD IS STILL TOO LOW.

An RPA [study](#) found that Fair Fares' current eligibility threshold is lower than all but five similar programs across the United States – despite New York City having the highest transit ridership in the nation and a notoriously high cost of living. If someone earns minimum wage in our city, they make too much to qualify for this program – that doesn't make sense. Expanding eligibility to 300% of the FPL would make over 1 million additional New Yorkers eligible for half-priced fares for the first time, finally creating transit relief for those who have been left out and have had to weigh the consequences of maintaining employment and appointments against the risk of tickets and arrests for fare evasion.

FREE FARES AND FAIR FARES ARE COMPLEMENTARY – AND BOTH ARE NEEDED.

Speaker Menin and the City Council have prioritized making Fair Fares fully free for the 1.3 million New Yorkers who need it most, saving them up to \$910 per year. This complements Mayor Mamdani's push for free bus service – and matters even more because in 2025, over 65% of Fair Fares taps and swipes were on the subway, double the rate of bus usage. Free and expanded Fair Fares can deliver truly affordable transit to millions of riders – right now, in this budget cycle.

Alongside the Riders for Affordable Transit Coalition, VOCAL-NY urges the Council to include in the final budget: free fares for New Yorkers at or below 150% FPL, Fair Fares expansion to 300% FPL, and automatic enrollment for all eligible New Yorkers. The subway should be a place people can get where they're going – not a place where poverty is met with tickets and arrests. Our members – and all New Yorkers – deserve to get where they're going safely, affordably, and without fear. Your leadership can make that happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,

Jasmine Budnella

jasmine@vocal-ny.org

Director of Drug Policy, VOCAL-NY

Hello, my name is Abby Dziura and I am a daily rider of the subway, bus, and Metro North here with Riders Alliance. I live in Harlem and work in the Bronx as an after school teacher.

I am here today to testify on behalf of my students and their families. Many of them struggle with day-to-day expenses, transit fare being one of them. They need transit to get to and from work, school, and appointments every single day. The expansion and automatic enrollment of the Fair Fares system would greatly benefit them. Increasing the threshold for qualification to free fares for those making up to 150% of the federal poverty level and half-priced fares for those making up to 300% of the federal poverty level would mean more of my students and their families would have access to better transit and a better quality of life. I have known people who have had to choose between a MetroCard and a meal--no one should ever be put in that position. Money saved on transit could go towards other expenses like fresh groceries and school supplies, which, as we know, are desperately needed.

But fares are just part of the problem. The Committee must understand that there is a General Welfare crisis here in the city, and our communities are struggling. We need the City Council to protect our general welfare by treating transportation, housing, and food as rights rather than privileges. Saving money on transit through Fair Fares is only one step towards addressing the affordability crisis.

I want the best for my students and their families, and as New Yorkers, they deserve a city that works for them. As riders, we will continue to fight for our community until we get the programs, like the expansion of Fair Fares, that we deserve. Thank you.

Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare
May 8, 2026

Good Afternoon,

Committee Chair Crystal Hudson and members of the Committee (Alexa Avilés, Darlene Mealy, Frank Morano, Sandy Nurse, Althea V. Stevens and Sandra Ung) on General Welfare and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

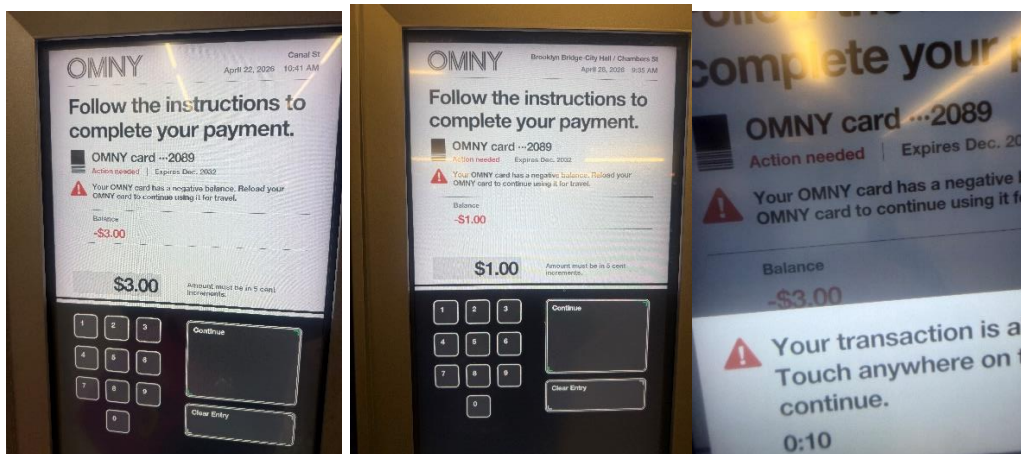
I am Alexis Smallwood-Foote, and I am writing to support **Res 0143-2026**, **Int 0248-2026**, and **Res 0052-2026** amending the following laws to support families and the most vulnerable population.

I am the Founder of the ReAL (Residents Acquiring Land) Edgemere CLT, community activists, mommy of three and a survivor of domestic abuse at the hands of my husband. My estranged husband weaponizes the NYPD, MTA, and his age to have me arrested. My estranged husband and I are in a horrible family court case battle for my two youngest children.

My oldest child Alexander Jones-Baker and I are living in a DHS shelter that is getting paid \$5128 for Alexander, Osiris, Darel and me. My family and I cannot afford the transportation in New York City due to the New Pre-paid OMNY Card system. I have spent over 100 a week traveling because the OMNY cards no longer provide unlimited rides for the week. My children and I love visiting different landmarks and parks across the five boroughs, now that all must come to an end due to our limited OMNY cards.

Here are 4 different receipts that show where my card was in the negative balance: due to the card being limited. Here is the proof that the OMNY Cards is acting as a transit debt card. These are three different dates.

My children and I are being mistreated by the government that's suppose to prove it's tax paying citizens.





My son and I have been in the shelter system for over 2 years now, the system isn't working in our best interests. My family and I support **Res 0143-2026**,

Int 0248-2026, and **Res 0052-2026** which would me transportation more affordable for New York City's most vulnerable population (single adults, young adults, and families) who are living below the poverty line. I am very disappointed with the following agencies: Human Resources Administration, Department of Homelessness Services, Department of Social Services, and Administration for Children Services. These agencies work with outdated computers and software.

The equipment and software (CARES) at the HRA (Human Resource and Administration) need to be updated to provide service to the clients properly and make life easy for the employees. Families like mine are being locked off the transportation system because we can't afford to purchase \$ 100-dollar OMNY cards, especially when your paycheck is only \$ 400 dollars after taxes, and you have other bills to pay. My oldest needs to be able to travel back and forth from both his jobs in Brooklyn. I am constantly praying of Alexander Marcus -Uriel Jones-Baker to make it safety home because the MTA isn't safe for young men of color.

Once again, my family and I support Res 0143-2026, Int 0248-2026, and Res 0052-2026 which would make Fare Fairs more accessible to families like me, who love exploring the city with my children. transportation more affordable for New York City's most vulnerable population (single adults, young adults, and families) who are living below the poverty line.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

RIDERS ALLIANCE

Hola, mi nombre es Antelma y vivo en Sunset Park-Brooklyn. Yo tomo el subway y bus todos los días.

Estoy aquí el día de hoy para abogar por un servicio de transporte más accesible y la expansión de las tarifas justas. Nadie debería ser criminalizado por no tener suficiente dinero para poder pagar el pasaje.

Mi historia es que yo tengo la tarjeta de tarifas justas, que me ha servido en varias ocasiones porque tengo la tarifa reducida. Pero incluso con esta ayuda, muchos de mis vecinos y de mi comunidad, ha sido rechazada para acceder a este servicio que todos merecemos y aún están excluidos. Necesitamos expandir este programa para que no pueda tener el alivio financiero que yo tengo.

El dinero que yo ahorraría en el pasaje es dinero para sobrevivir. Si puedo tener \$167.00 dólares extra cada mes, al final del año pueden ser \$2.004 dólares al año, con los cuales yo podría surtir mi canasta básica para mi y mi familia, pagar bills de gas y electricidad y pagar la renta que cada año sube mas y mas.

El consejo debe entender que el costo del transporte es solo una parte de la lucha. Aun con la ayuda para los pasajes nuestra comunidad está pasando por una crisis de bienestar social. Seguimos luchando contra los precios altos de renta.

Gracias por escuchar a los pasajeros y a nuestras experiencias. Nosotros mantenemos esta ciudad en movimiento. Yo soy un miembro de Riders Alliance y continuaremos luchando por un Nueva York donde todos buscamos vivir y prosperar de forma unida y equitativa. Gracias!

Testimony of Danna Dennis
Senior Organizer, Riders Alliance
NYC Council Committee on General Welfare & Transportation Hearing
May 6, 2026

Good morning Chairs and members of the Council. Thank you so much for hosting this hearing today, and thank you to Speaker Julie Menin and City Council for prioritizing Fair Fares in the city's budget this year.

My name is Danna Dennis, and I'm a Senior Organizer with Riders Alliance. I want to start with something personal.

There was a time in my life when I was offered a promotion and instead of feeling excited, I felt afraid. Because I knew that small increase in income would push me over the eligibility line for support, but not actually give me enough to afford my life in New York City.

I had to ask myself: is moving forward actually going to set me back? That is the reality for thousands of New Yorkers right now.

Fair Fares is capped at 150% of the federal poverty level, which means individuals earning \$23,940 a year. But the truth is, people making more than that are still struggling every single day.

These are home health aides, store clerks, Amazon stockists, restaurant workers. These are the working poor people who are working, raising families, doing everything right and still can't afford rent, childcare, groceries, and transportation.

They are the ones putting items back at the register. The ones choosing between getting to work and covering basic needs. And right now, we are telling them they make too much to qualify for help.

That is why we are **so urgently** calling on the Council to expand Fair Fares to 300% of the federal poverty level. This would make over 2 million New Yorkers eligible finally including people who are clearly struggling but currently get nothing. And this is especially urgent in working-class communities like the Bronx, where entire neighborhoods would benefit from this expansion.

Transit is not optional in New York City. It is a necessity. And when it becomes unaffordable, people fall behind missing work, missing appointments, and losing out on opportunities, and losing stability.

We cannot keep asking working people to carry the weight of this city's affordability crisis. So the question is simple: are we going to keep penalizing people for trying to move forward, or are we going to meet the reality of what it costs to live here?

Expand Fair Fares to 300%. Thank you.

"Good Morning Council:

My name's Eduardo Rodriguez. Justice Advocate with Freedom Agenda and the Campaign To Close Rikers Island. Thank you for holding this hearing, and for the opportunity to be heard.

As a Justice Impacted individual I recall my inability to afford public transportation leaving me feeling entrapped, prejudiced, targeted, and conditioned for criminalization. I recently collaborated with Riders Alliance in the push for improved access to public transportation for all New Yorkers through a host of efforts because it never made sense to me that a warrant would be issued for my arrest because I couldn't afford to travel to a legal appointment (court, probation, parole, community service, jury duty, etc.); or being presented with the dilemma of having to choose between the most important meal of the day (coffee and bagel), hopping the turnstile at the risk of being ticketed because I was being targeted for an arrest, or paying my fare.

I remember having to hop the turnstile to get to an interview for employment that only required that I turn in documents. I never made it to the interview. Instead, I wound up in cuffs. My eager plea to be released so I could make it to the interview, led the officer to believe I was evading the law. He held me in hopes that a warrant would pop-up in the system.

Some things never change. About 2 weeks ago, as I was leaving a Riders Alliance meeting that prepared me for this hearing, I entered the Fulton Street train station. I tap my OMNY card (courtesy of Riders Alliance). It wasn't until I turned the corner onto the platform that I noticed an officer peering around the corner waiting on someone to beat fare.

Most New Yorkers struggle with the burden of hardship associated with the cost of public transportation. Denying New Yorkers access to public transportation limits our citizens' right to liberty and interest in pursuit of happiness.

No one should face arrest, miss opportunities, or be pushed deeper into hardship simply because they cannot afford to swipe into a subway system that this city depends on. I urge this Council to act now and make Fair Fares truly fair—for the millions of New Yorkers who keep this city moving every day.

Thank you.

Hello I was hoping to testify in person but timing and health don't permit. I am asking for expansion of funding for Fair Fares.

I am a member of Riders Alliance, and I have had long covid since 2020. While I was once a healthy able person who could walk long distances (became a yoga teacher at 50, long time dancer, hiker and more) now I need to ride a bus frequently, sometimes even a few blocks to save from crashing my health.

Since I got long covid, I had to change my work and now have a cat sitting business, where the max I can charge for a drop in is \$30. So with a round trip at \$3 each way, I lose 20% often more esp if covering cats in multiple neighborhoods. So I used to have to say no to any clients not in walking distance (and see above regarding who limited those limits can be). I finally got an OMNY card this past year and it has been a life (and business) saver . I may lose my card next year due to a ONE TIME payout in 2025 that pushed me just over the very low limits). Ideally we should be increasing free ridership for all, but at least we should be funding those of us who need to ride for disability and low paid work.

Thank you for considering this.

Ellen Mendlow

In support of Fair Fares expansion

A significant Fair Fares expansion is so important.

I've heard the MTA supports it and its not surprising. People will travel more. Crime will go down. Fare beating will go down.

Making the existing Fair Fares program applicable to more income categories is game changing as is tying it to SNAP. Making it easier to apply means it will reach more people. Mayor Mamdani wanted to make the bus free so that it would be accessible to more people. This expansion achieves that.

As a senior I've qualified for Fair Fares for years and for me traveling on the buses and subways feels almost free.

Sincerely,


Ira Gershonhorn



New York, NY 10025

Council District 7

From: [Jennifer Baratta](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fair Fares
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026 8:37:17 PM



Subject: Advocating for Fare Fairs for People with Disabilities in NYC Dear City Council Members, I am Jennifer Baratta, a person with visual and hearing disabilities. I am reaching out to express the importance of Fare Fairs for individuals like myself who rely on public transportation to attend appointments, work, socialize, meet with career coaches, and attend interviews. Providing Fare Fairs would alleviate financial burdens and improve accessibility for people with disabilities. I kindly urge you to support initiatives that promote inclusivity and accessibility in New York City. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Warm regards, Jennifer Baratta

"Hello, good morning everyone. My name is Juan, I live in Bushwick, and I am a regular rider of the L train and B60 bus. I am here today to advocate for affordable transit and expansion of Fair Fares. No one should be stranded or criminalized because they cannot afford a swipe.

I have a Fair Fares card, and it is living proof that affordable transit works. But even with this, many of my close friends & family members are still locked out, like one of my relatives. They are a college student who is now working part-time to support themselves, and they now no longer qualify for the program. We need to expand this program so everyone has the relief I do.

I was excited to learn that the City Council proposed making the program free, but that does not address the need of the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who struggle everyday to afford the fare, but do have access to any benefits. We need the program to be expanded to provide relief for more working class New Yorkers, the very people who run this city, but are not treated with the dignity they deserve.

The money I save on transit is survival money. By having an extra \$100 each month, I am able to: afford fresh groceries, go to job interviews, and attend classes/workshops. My savings help me reinvest the money back into our city's economy.

But the Council must understand that transit is only one part of the struggle. Even with help on fares, our community is facing a General Welfare crisis. We are still struggling with: rising rents, unstable housing, food insecurity, higher costs for goods and services, such as childcare and utilities.

What I'm able to save now helps a little, but the money saved on transit is immediately swallowed up by these other costs. We need the City Council to protect our general welfare by treating transportation, housing, and food as rights, not privileges.

Thank you for hearing from the riders with lived experience who keep this city running. I am a proud member of the Riders Alliance, and we will continue to fight for a New York where everyone can afford to move, live, and thrive.

Riders United! Thank you."

Hello. My name is Judy Wang, and I am a daily rider of the Q46 and Q64 buses, and the E and F trains. I am here today to share my story.

I am a first-year PhD student in molecular and cellular biology. Every day, I take the bus and the subway to conduct highly specialized research — engineering bacterial strains and studying how viruses interact with their hosts — work that contributes to our understanding of human disease and takes years of training to do. And yet, I am financially constrained in a way that most people would find surprising.

PhD students in my program are paid a stipend of around \$36,000 a year. We are expected to live off this, in a city where a one-bedroom apartment can cost upwards of \$4,000 a month. I work part-time jobs on top of my research, including serving as a home health aide for my elderly parents. And still, it is not enough.

Under the current Fair Fares program, a single-person household can earn no more than around \$24,000 to qualify. By that measure, I make too much. But \$36,000 in New York City is not enough. The proposed expansion we are calling for would raise that threshold to about \$48,000, and for the first time, I would qualify for a half-fare card.

That would change how I move through this city. Right now, I think twice about every swipe. I track how many trips I've taken, whether I can afford to take the bus to work or perhaps I should walk instead, whether it's worth it to make an extra trip. With a half-fare card, I wouldn't have to do that math anymore. I could just ride.

We are not asking for charity. We are asking for a city that recognizes the value of the people who live and work and study here — who do essential, skilled, complex work — and makes it possible for them to actually stay.

I am a proud member of Riders Alliance, and I urge the City Council to expand Fair Fares. Let the people who keep this city running afford to actually live here. Thank you.

Testimony:

I am but one voice in a chorus of millions named Niccolas Pearson, a man caught in the teeth of a system that demands my labor but denies my passage. New Yorkers ride this system and work through this system. I depend on this system with my very breath and yet I am weary, I am bone-tired because I have done everything the world asked of me, I have labored and I have contributed and I have showed up and still the math does not balance. And when the math fails the people do not simply evaporate into the ether, no, they adjust and they adapt and they endure and they do what the holy law of survival demands so if you are going to brand that a crime then you better look at these streets and realize you are calling a whole city of God's children criminals.

You see it at the turnstile, you see the mothers and the sons watching and timing and slipping through not out of a spirit of rebellion but out of a spirit of necessity because when you price a man out of his own city you aren't correcting his path you are forcing his hand. I declare that transit is not some luxury or some Sunday afternoon bonus, it is the very vessel of our liberation.

I journey from Fordham to Staten Island, a pilgrimage of subways and ferries and buses that takes six dollars out of my pocket before I can even say good morning at work and six more to get back to my bed, twelve dollars a day just to be a man of responsibility. And you might think twelve dollars is a small thing but twelve dollars is a mountain when it sits on top of the rent and the groceries and the heat and the kinfolk who need you, it stacks and it weighs until the back begins to break. I work and I strive yet they tell me I'm too "rich" for Fair Fares but too poor to live with dignity, stuck in that hollow valley between a helping hand and a hard place where so many New Yorkers are currently gasping for air.

We are talking about movement as survival and when you put a price on movement you are manufacturing conflict and we know exactly where that hammer falls, it falls on the Black and the Hispanic, it falls on the Bronx and it falls on Brooklyn, the same shoulders that have always carried the heaviest load. I remember when a MetroCard felt like a key to the kingdom but now the kingdom is gated and the toll is tears. This is the hour of decision, not tomorrow but right now, expand the mercy of these fares and make it automatic so a man doesn't have to beg for what should be his right. If you love the working family then stop blocking the road they have to walk because a city that runs on the sweat of its people cannot afford to lock them out of the journey. It is not balanced, it is not righteous, and it is not fair.

Good morning Chair and members of the Committee,

My name is Tenaiya Ortiz-Long, and I'm a lifelong New Yorker. I've lived in Brooklyn, Queens, and now the Bronx. I'm here today to advocate for affordable transit and the expansion of Fair Fares.

In my lifetime, I've watched the fare go from \$2.25 to \$3.00. That 75-cent increase may sound small, but it adds up—and it's pricing people out.

Right now, I qualify for Fair Fares. But the moment I get a full-time minimum wage job at \$17 an hour, I will lose that support. After taxes, that's about \$28,000 a year—just over the current eligibility cutoff of around \$23,000. Somehow, that's considered “too much” to qualify, even though it's nowhere near enough to survive in this city.

Let's be real about math. Rent for a studio can be \$1,800 a month. A phone bill is around \$120. Wi-Fi is \$75. Groceries can range from \$200 to \$600. Utilities add another \$150 to \$300—and costs keep rising. After paying for basic needs, there's nothing left. In fact, I'd be in the negative before even paying for transit.

At 21, I hopped a turnstile after work because I had no money left and was waiting to get paid. Instead of getting home safely, I was given a \$100 ticket and threatened with arrest. I was forced to choose between being stranded or being criminalized. That's not a real choice.

Fair Fares shouldn't disappear the moment someone starts earning slightly more. I'm asking you to expand it so working people aren't punished for trying to get ahead.

Thank you for listening to a New Yorker who just wants to afford to stay in the city she calls home.

From: [Wilder Kingsley](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] written testimony for Fair Fares
Date: Sunday, May 3, 2026 5:46:56 PM

[REDACTED]

Hello. My name is Wilder Kingsley and I live in Brooklyn. I am a daily rider of the 2/3/Q and B41 B65. I am emailing today to advocate for affordable transit and expansion of fair fares. No one should be stranded or criminalized because they cannot afford a swipe.

I have a Fair Fares card, and it is living proof that affordable transit works. But even with this, many of my neighbors are still locked out. We need to expand this program so everyone has the relief I do.

The money I save on transit is survival money to get to my job and pay my rent. By having an extra \$90 each month, I am able to afford my meds I need to take daily.

But the Council must understand that transit is only one part of the struggle. Even with help on fares, our community is facing a General Welfare crisis. We are still struggling with Rising rent prices and housing instability and I am clueless how I will be able to afford childcare for my new baby.

The money saved on transit is immediately swallowed up by these other costs. We need the City Council to protect our general welfare by treating transportation, housing, and food as rights, not privileges.

Thank you for hearing from the riders with lived experience who keep this city running. I am a proud member of the Riders Alliance, and we will continue to fight for a New York where everyone can afford to move, live, and thrive. Thank you.

Wilder Kingsley

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John McCarthy

Address: _____

I represent: MTA

Address: 2 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dara Goldberg

Address: _____

I represent: MTA

Address: 2 Broadway

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DARA GOLDBERG

Address: 2 BROADWAY New York NY

I represent: MTA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brian Fritsch

Address: _____ Brooklyn

I represent: PCAC

Address: 2 Broadway, 16th Fl NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TAMIA CRAWFORD

Address: _____

I represent: TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Address: 231 W 29th ST

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DEBRAH WRIGHT

Address: 370 7th Ave NY NY

I represent: RWDSU

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

MIXTECA/RIDERS Date: 05/06/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Javier Chavez

Address: 23rd Street

I represent: Mixteca

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/16/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Debra Greif

Address: BKlyn NY

I represent: myself a disabled AAR Senior Citizen

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

Name: Beth Williams (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [redacted] Brooklyn

I represent: Hunger Free America

Address: 50 Broad St. New York

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Khalia Hayslett (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [redacted] ST BKYN NY 11249

I represent: NY TRANSIT Riders Council

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

Name: Ruldolph Bonnyon (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [redacted] Grand Concourse [redacted]

I represent: Fair Faves Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Adam Schmidt (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 240 W 35th St.

I represent: Citizens Budget Commission

Address: 240 W 35th St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5-6-26

Name: Rachel Swaner (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11231

I represent: Community Service Society of New York

Address: 633 Third Avenue NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Cecilia Moreno (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [Redacted], BK, NY

I represent: Nixteca

Address: 245 23rd street, BK, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ashley Chen

Address: _____

I represent: Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Judith Prabh (PLEASE PRINT)
LA COLMENA - RIDERS ALLIANCE

Address: [REDACTED] 51 NY 10304

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Christopher D Greif (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: fair fare

I represent: me

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

Name: Alia Soomro (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NY League of Conservation Voters

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Rebecca Chew (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: HRA

Address: Chief Program Officer

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ^{Fair Fares} 249, 825 Res. No. 143, 52
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Bishop Mitchell Taylor (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 12-11 40th Ave, LIC, NY 11101

I represent: Urban upbound

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adrian Cacho

Address: [Redacted] Bronx, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Clare Salant

Address: _____

I represent: Independent Budget Office

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Angel Rosas

Address: [Redacted] University Ave, Bronx

I represent: BCC - UYPIG

Address: 181st University Ave, Bronx, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Norm Miller

Address: [redacted] 117th Avenue

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rodney Jenkins

Address: _____

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: [redacted] 82nd Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tenaiya Ortiz-Long

Address: _____

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hildalyn Colon
Address: 7219 Roosevelt Ave, 4th FL
I represent: NICE / Riders Alliance
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susie Kamara
Address: _____
I represent: Riders Alliance
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rodney De Deus
Address: _____
I represent: Riders Alliance
Address: Riders Alliance

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

DANNA in favor in opposition

150 BROADWAY NY NY 10038 Date: _____

Name: ~~Renee A. Long - Riders Alliance~~

Address: Riders Alliance

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rodney Dedus

Address: Riders Alliance

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susie Kammara

Address: Riders Alliance

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juan S. ...

Address: _____

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: _____

**RIDERS ALLIANCE THE COUNCIL
ALLIANCE THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicolas Pearson

Address: [Redacted] Decatur

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4-6-2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EDUARDO RODRIGUEZ (RIDERS ALLIANCE)

Address: [Redacted] Far Rockaway, NY 11691

I represent: RIDERS ALLIANCE & FREEDOM AGENDA

Address: 40 Rector St. NYC.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/20

Name: Rebecca An (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____ Flushing, NY 11355

I represent: Minkwon Center / Riders Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Marie Nadine Pierre (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____ Woodside, NY 11377

I represent: Riders Alliance / Fair Fares

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Allison King (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____ 25th

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DANNA DENNIS

Address: 150 BROADWAY NY, NY 10038

I represent: RIDERS ALLIANCE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judy Wang

Address: [REDACTED] Fresh Meadows NY 11566

I represent: Riders Alliance

Address: 150 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Frank

Address: _____

I represent: Independent Budget Office

Address: 110 William Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Monica Ealey (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: HRA

Address: Deputy Commissioner for Fair Fares, HEAR, and IDNYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Christopher Gonzalez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: DSS

Address: Chief Strategy Officer

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Stanley Bieary (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: MTA

Address: 2 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/6/06

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: SEIU

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Norm Miller (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms