



Create an RTD Youth Pass and RTD Low-Income Pass

To the RTD Board of Directors, RTD Staff, and the RTD Pass Program Working Group:

I'm signing this letter in support of the efforts of RTD Pass Program Working Group members, community groups, and individuals who are advocating for the creation of a RTD Youth Pass and a RTD Low-Income Pass.

Specifically, I want RTD to create a Youth Pass that is free for youth riders 12 and under, and provides fares and passes at a 70% discount for youth 13-19 years old, or if they are still enrolled in a public school. I also want RTD to create a Low-Income Pass that offers 50% reduced price fares and passes for those that make 185% of the federal poverty level or less.

A Youth Pass should be created with those parameters because consultants hired by RTD showed that the revenue generated by charging youth 12 years old and younger was insignificant. However, the pass would absolutely be significant for transit-dependent families that utilize RTD's buses and light rail every day. Also, if a student is enrolled in a public school, but older than 19-years-old, the student should be eligible for a Youth Pass because the Colorado Constitution guarantees a free public education between six and twenty-one years old (Colo Const. Article 9, Section 2).

A discounted youth pass would provide youth in eight counties attending more than 14 different school districts better mobility to get to school, their jobs, and extracurricular activities. Even with a 70% discount, youth would still pay a significant amount for their mobility. Buying a monthly pass for an entire year would cost a youth more than \$410 annually for a local pass and more than \$680 for a regional pass.

The proposed low-income program, lowering the cost of transit by 50%, helps families break the cycle of poverty and increase economic mobility because transit is second highest cost, after housing, in a household budget. A world-class public transit system gets people where they need to go — to work, to school, to play — so all our families and communities benefit. Other significant benefits include less congestion on our roads with resulting improvements in air quality and greater economic productivity and efficiency.

Citizens of Colorado have invested significantly in RTD over the years, and now it's time for RTD to invest in its riders with a low-income reduced rate for fares and passes. The majority of RTD riders, 54%, make \$35,000 or less annually. These riders are RTD's customers. And this public agency's mission is to provide reliable, accessible, cost-effective service to its constituents. This program will help RTD achieve its mission.

Thank you for your continued work to improve transit opportunities in the Denver metro areas.

Signed by 3,592 Colorado residents.