



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 26-1269: TRANSIT ACCESS

Prime Sponsors:

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires certain transit agencies to establish an income-based fare discount program, and creates additional requirements for all transit agencies, except those operated by the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Minimal State Workload
- Local Government
- Statutory Public Entity

Appropriations. No appropriation is required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill creates new requirements for transit agencies, except for those operated by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). All actions have a deadline of June 30, 2027, unless otherwise noted.

Income-based Fare Discount Program

The bill requires large transit agencies—defined as transit agencies that have at least 10 million unlinked passenger trips per year—to establish an income-based fare discount program for individuals whose household income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level or who are actively enrolled in an income-based state public assistance program. This discount must be either a 50 percent reduction from the standard fare or at least 20 single rides at no fare per month, and the program must cover both fixed route and paratransit services.

Enrollment in a state public assistance program qualifies as proof of eligibility for participation in the program. Large transit agencies must develop a self-certification affidavit for those eligible for the discount program.

Partner Pass Program

The bill requires transit agencies to establish a partner pass program, in coordination with a public housing agency or related organization in the county in which the transit agency operates, to provide partner transit passes to individuals experiencing homelessness and individuals who are members of households that receive rental assistance administered by a public housing agency. The partner transit passes must allow for unlimited use of the covered transit agency's fixed-route transit services, excluding airport fare service, for a period of at least six months, at no cost to the transit rider. Eligible partners must cover any enrollment costs for the partner pass program.

Information for Transit Riders

The bill requires large transit agencies to ensure that clear, up-to-date transit system maps are displayed at all rail stations, bus stations, and bus rapid transit stops. All transit agencies must ensure that certain information on fare rates and eligibility requirements for fare discount programs is available online and displayed at transit stops. A Quick Response (QR) code satisfies the display requirement.

Language Access

All transit agencies must ensure key transit information is translated into each language spoken by at least 5 percent of the people in the county in which the transit agency operates. A QR code satisfies this requirement. A transit agency may use an existing language access plan to satisfy this requirement.

Restroom Access

Beginning on January 1, 2028, for all long-haul transit routes with an average scheduled end-to-end run time of at least three hours, all transit agencies must provide transit riders an alternate opportunity to access restroom facilities if an onboard restroom is out of service.

Reporting Requirements

All transit agencies are required to annually report certain information, including progress on the bill's requirements, to the Governor and the General Assembly beginning on or before January 31, 2028. Transit agencies must post their annual report on a publicly accessible website, and are only required to report information they already collect.

Background and Assumptions

Regional Transportation District

The [Regional Transportation District \(RTD\)](#)—which recorded 65.2 million rides in 2024—is the only transit agency in Colorado that qualifies as a “large transit agency” under the bill. The RTD currently serves 3.09 million people in 2,342 square miles of service area, including all or part of the following eight counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, and Weld. It is funded through sales and use taxes within its region, fare revenue, and bonds.

The RTD is a political subdivision, similar to a special district. However, the RTD is not a regional transportation authority. Current law gives the RTD's board wide authority to operate and maintain the transportation system within its district boundaries, including the power to enter into contracts; borrow and invest money; purchase and maintain property; and levy taxes. The legislature plays a limited role in the administration of the RTD; however, the RTD is required to provide copies of its annual budget to the Transportation Legislation Review Committee, and other information, data, testimony, or audits as requested by the committee.

Other Transit Agencies

According to the [Colorado Association of Transit Agencies](#), Colorado has over 50 transit agencies and transit-related entities. Transit is provided by 60 of the state's 64 counties. The second largest-transit agency in the state, after RTD, is the [Roaring Fork Transportation Authority](#), which reported an estimated 5.2 million rides in 2025. Because the bill defines a large transit agency as having at least 10 million unlinked passenger trips per year, the fiscal note assumes no transit agency other than the RTD is considered a large transit agency or will be considered one in the foreseeable future.

State Expenditures

Workload may increase for the Department of Human Services to provide guidance for county departments of human services which provide public assistance and are thus required to cover enrollment costs for the new passes. This additional workload is assumed to be minimal and no change in appropriations is required.

Local Government

Local Transit Agencies

All local governments that operate transit agencies will incur costs to coordinate with certain public housing agencies to establish a partner pass program by June 30, 2027, unless the transit agency already manages a qualifying program. Revenue will decrease for these local governments to subsidize qualified individuals. Costs will also increase for local governments to meet the bill's transparency, language access, and reporting requirements.

Public Housing Agencies

Workload may increase for local governments that operate public housing agencies providing services to individuals experiencing homelessness to collaborate with transit agencies on a partner pass program.

Statutory Public Entities—Regional Transportation District

The bill is anticipated to reduce revenue in the RTD by around \$4.7 million in FY 2026-27 and \$5.2 million in FY 2027-28 and ongoing years to subsidize participants in the income-based fare discount program and partner pass program.

The bill also increases expenditures in the RTD by about \$1.1 million in FY 2026-27 and \$740,000 in FY 2027-28 and future years. These expenditures include:

- staffing and technology costs of about \$660,000 in FY 2026-27 and about \$560,000 in ongoing years to implement and administer an income-based fare discount program that meets the bill's requirements;
- staffing and technology costs of about \$230,000 in FY 2026-27 and about \$180,000 in ongoing years to implement the partner pass program; and,
- a one-time cost of about \$195,000 to print and install QR codes to provide information to transit users.

The RTD is currently contracted with Denver Human Services for administration of RTD's [LiVE discount program](#), which may reduce the RTD expenditures identified in the fiscal note if the RTD is able to incorporate this program into the bill's requirements.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties	Regional Transportation District
Local Affairs	Transportation
Municipalities	