

Public Involvement Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-25 New Fare Media

BACKGROUND

On October 23, 2023, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors approved a contract with Innovations in Transportation, Inc. (INIT) to develop and implement a Rider Validation System (RVS) for OCTA's bus system. This system will enhance the fare payment experience by implementing new fare media and offer flexibility for new fare products.

Implementing the new fare media requires a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) as mandated by the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI (Title VI) requirements. To promote meaningful, equitable, and inclusive public participation, OCTA has created the PIP in alignment with the Board-approved "Strategies and Methods for Promoting Public Involvement," adopted on September 9, 2023. This plan is designed to encourage input from residents within the service area, with a particular focus on engaging low-income individuals, minority populations, and those with limited English proficiency.

The primary purpose of this PIP is to gather input and encourage public participation related to the upcoming new fare media. The ten-week campaign, starting on January 13, 2025, and concluding on March 24, 2025, with a public hearing, aims to fulfill the requirements of Title VI. This campaign is not intended to be the only comprehensive public and rider awareness/education communications effort that will follow the PIP. The subsequent campaign will provide broad education about the fare media's availability, use, and benefits before the system launches in summer 2025.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The PIP outlines a public engagement process to ensure the new fare media meets community needs. The plan emphasizes inclusivity, transparency, and equity through clear communication, active listening, flexibility, and technology. Key objectives include:

- **Widespread Community Outreach:** Use a wide range of traditional materials, channels, and technology to reach stakeholders across Orange County.
- **Engaging Current Bus Riders:** Focus on outreach to current and former bus riders most impacted by the new fare media.
- **Gathering Diverse Feedback:** Use a variety of methods, including partnerships and technology, to gather input from a broad range of community members.
- **Providing Direct Feedback Opportunities:** Offer in-person and virtual platforms for stakeholders to ask questions and share input.

Materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, with additional languages upon request. Meetings, both in-person and virtual, will include interpreters in these languages and others as needed. The process aims to ensure effective and equitable community participation.

TARGET MARKETS

- General public
- Existing and former riders
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Employers
- Senior and disabled riders
- Social service agencies

TACTICS

- Bus advertisements
- Print collateral (brochures and survey)
 - Onboard
 - OCTA Store
 - Outreach events
 - Transportation centers
- Print advertisements
 - OC Register
 - El Clasificado
 - Người Việt
 - Việt Báo
 - Viet Dong
- Digital information
 - Dedicated website including an online survey
 - Email blasts
 - Public information and advertisements on social media
 - Digital toolkit
 - OC Bus and Transit App notifications
 - Digital alerts at stop signs
- In-person rider outreach
 - Bus ride-alongs on high-demand service area routes
 - Pop-up events at transportation centers
 - Customer roundtable focus group
- Community and ethnic events and organizations
 - Community and cultural events
 - Pop-up events in diverse communities
 - Ethnic chambers of commerce
 - Community organizations
 - Social service agencies

- In-person community meetings (English with Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters)
 - Costa Mesa Community Center - February 11, 2025
 - Laguna Hills Community Center - February 12, 2025
 - Fullerton Community Center - February 13, 2025
- Virtual community meetings
 - English - February 4, 2025
 - Spanish - February 5, 2025
 - Vietnamese - February 5, 2025
- School communications
- Local jurisdiction communications (digital communications toolkit)
- Local/traditional media - press release
- OCTA advisory committees
 - Citizens Advisory Committee
 - Accessible Transit Advisory Committee
 - Diversity Community Leaders Group
 - Teen Council
- Public hearing - March 24, 2025

CONCLUSION

This PIP outlines OCTA's strategy for engaging the Orange County community in the implementation of the new RVS. Through a ten-week campaign, OCTA will employ multiple outreach channels, including digital platforms, in-person events, and multilingual communications to gather public input. This approach not only fulfills Title VI requirements but also establishes a foundation for the subsequent public education and awareness campaign launching at its conclusion. By prioritizing accessibility, inclusivity, and diverse community engagement, OCTA aims to ensure the new fare media effectively serves all transit users while maintaining transparency throughout the implementation process.