ANSWERING *your* QUESTIONS

COTA RESOURCES FOR COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOL STUDENTS

At COTA, we are excited to support Columbus City School students by partnering to provide mobility solutions that get students to class, practice, work and everything in between. Here are answers to some of our most frequently asked questions about this new program for CSS.

Q: WHY IS CCS PARTNERING WITH COTA?

A: The district is resuming in-classroom blended instruction for all students. As such, CSS now faces the challenge of maintaining safe social distancing practices when transporting students to and from school.

While students will still have access to school buses, COTA will provide additional capacity to supplement the district's transportation services. It is a vital step to help the community move forward during the pandemic by providing new mobility options for students. Plus, this will help teach students a valuable lifelong skill: how to use public transportation.

Q: HOW WILL COTA HANDLE THE ADDITIONAL RIDERSHIP?

A: About 50 percent of students will attend school on Monday and Tuesday, and the other 50 percent will attend Thursday and Friday. We will closely monitor our areas of service so we can meet additional transportation needs of students, and we can increase service in areas where overloading may be an issue. We've done this throughout the pandemic for our high-ridership lines.

Q: WILL STUDENTS BE TAKEN TO THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE LIKE A REGULAR SCHOOL BUS?

A: No. Students will be picked up and dropped off at existing stops.

Q: DO THE PASSES ONLY WORK DURING THE HOURS BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL?

A: The student passes will work at any time of the day that COTA is in service, which means that students can still ride with COTA even if they have extracurricular activities before or after regular school hours. The passes are valid through August 2021.

Q: WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE COTA PASSES?

A: All CCS students in grades 8th through 12th.

Q: ARE ALL STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A PASS FOR COTA?

A: There is a phased approach to releasing passes to students. Seniors and Juniors are able to start using COTA March 15, then other classes will be added in March and April. This will give the students and COTA time to adapt and promptly resolve challenges prior to full implementation.

Q: ARE CHARTER AND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR COTA PASSES?

A: COTA passes are supplemental to yellow bus transportation for CCS students. As such, charter and non-public school students would not receive the passes.

Q: MY STUDENT IS A STUDENT IN COLUMBUS, BUT NOT A CCS STUDENT. HOW WILL THEY GET TO SCHOOL WITHOUT A C-PASS LIKE CCS STUDENTS?

A: Columbus students attending schools other than a Columbus City Schools public school (i.e. charter, parochial and private school students) will still receive yellow bus service. COTA service is not replacing standard school bus service for CCS, it's a supplemental service.

Q: HOW DO I REQUEST A COTA PASS FOR MY STUDENT (8TH THROUGH 12TH GRADE ONLY)?

A: Contact your student's school administrator or secretary. Then, download the COTA//Connector mobile app to set up your student's C-pass account. You can also request a hard pass from your administrator.

Q: HOW CAN MY STUDENT OBTAIN A PASS TO USE COTA TO GET TO SCHOOL?

A: CCS students will have two pass options. The primary option is to use a compatible Android or iOS cell phone. The student will use their phone and the COTA//Connector mobile app to board COTA transportation. A secondary option, for those students who do not have a compatible cell phone, is to request a hard pass through their school administration.

Q: HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHAT COTA ROUTE WOULD BE BEST FOR MY STUDENT TO USE TO GET TO SCHOOL?

A: You can plan a trip on COTA using several different resources:

◢ GOOGLE MAPS

Use Google Maps just like you would for driving directions. After entering your starting and ending locations, select the transit icon to see the options for COTA. Google Maps also provides real-time bus tracking.

◢ TRANSIT MOBILE APP

Transit is a mobile application available in Google Play or the Apple App Store for download. Simply type in your starting and ending locations and the app will plan your entire trip. You can adjust the plan for a specific arrival or departure time to ensure your student arrives at school on time. Transit also provides real-time bus tracking.

◢ COTA.COM

COTA has a trip planner available on the website. Like the others, simply type in your starting and ending locations to generate directions.

◢ CALL COTA CUSTOMER CARE

Students or parents can call COTA Customer Care at 614-228-1776 for assistance with trip planning. Customer Care Representatives are available from 6am–8pm, Monday through Friday, and 8am–6pm, Saturday and Sunday.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF MY STUDENT LOSES THEIR COTA PASS, IS THERE A REPLACEMENT FEE?

A: You can contact COTA Lost & Found at (614) 228-1776 to see if anyone turned in your lost pass. If you do need a new pass, you must contact your school administrator/secretary to place the request. There is a $25 replacement fee for lost passes.

Q: ARE MAPS OR BROCHURES AVAILABLE FOR SPECIFIC CCS SERVICE ZONES?

A: Yes. Please visit https://www.cota.com/ccs/ for service zone maps and brochures by school and additional C-Pass information for students.

Q: HOW DO YOU CREATE A COTA C-PASS ACCOUNT ON THE COTA//CONNECTOR MOBILE APP?

A: Here are step-by-step instructions on how to set up a C-pass account.

OPEN THE APP and tap My Connector.

CREATE YOUR PROFILE by tapping New Customer. The information you enter must exactly match your Columbus City Schools email address and your first and last name as it appears on official school documents (i.e., report card). Create a unique password and tap Sign Up.

SEND A TEXT MESSAGE TO VERIFY your account by tapping the SEND SMS button. This will populate a message in your message app. You should receive a return verification text that your account has been created.

NEXT, CREATE YOUR WALLET. For C-pass users, this is simply a name to give your pass. Tap Create New Card. Once your account is authenticated, you are ready to use your C-pass.

Q: HOW DOES MY STUDENT USE THE APP TO RIDE COTA?

A: Simply follow these instructions:

1. To ride COTA with C-pass, tap **PAY AS YOU GO** and then **C-PASS MOBILE.** A pop-up screen will appear and ask you to confirm activation of your bus pass. Once your vehicle arrives, tap Yes.

2. The QR code that appears will only work for 5 minutes. This is your active pass. You will generate a QR code each time you ride the bus.

3. Upon boarding the bus, scan the QR code on the farebox as indicated by the yellow arrow. (Make sure your brightness is turned up!) A valid pass will beep and show a green checkmark on the farebox screen. An invalid pass generates a red X on the farebox screen with a "card not valid" message.

4. *Note:* As a C-pass user, you will never need to add funds to use your C-pass.

Q: MY STUDENT IS HAVING DIFFICULTIES WITH THEIR C-PASS IN THE COTA CONNECTOR APP. WHO SHOULD WE CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE?

A: Please call COTA Customer Care at 614.228.1776, or contact your school office for additional support. Customer Care hours are 6am–8pm, Monday through Friday and 8am–6pm, Saturday and Sunday.