



## Marin Access Low Income Fare Assistance Policies

This document details the policies and procedures related to the Marin Access Low Income Fare Assistance (LIFA) program.

### LIFA Enrollment

Applicants for Marin Access can apply for the LIFA program by providing information about their Medi-Cal eligibility status, or annual income and living situation. This application can be completed over the phone, online, or via a paper application.

Applicants determined eligible for LIFA will receive a letter that confirms enrollment, advises on how to use their LIFA credit, and provides further instruction about how to get a Marin Access LIFA bus pass for use on Marin Transit local bus service. Applicants that are determined ineligible for LIFA will receive a letter detailing the reason they are ineligible and providing further instruction on how to appeal the determination should they choose to do so.

### LIFA Eligibility Determinations

LIFA eligibility is determined by three factors: residence, age, and demonstrated need. Eligible participants must be Marin Access clients that currently:

- » have a primary residence in Marin County
- » are age 65+; applicants under the age of 65+ may qualify if they are eligible for Marin Access Paratransit
- » have a need for financial assistance, either through:
  - demonstrating enrollment and eligibility for Medi-Cal; applicants must provide their Medi-Cal ID number (typically 14 digits and may include letters) and Medi-Cal Benefits Card Issue Date
  - demonstrating an annual income that is at or below the current Elder Economic Index standard that aligns with their living situation

The Elder Economic Index standard is updated annually. Eligibility determinations will be made based on the most up to date information available and the standard will be posted on our website.

Housing Situation	Single	Couple
Owner without Mortgage	\$24,684	\$35,856
Owner with Mortgage	\$49,272	\$60,444
Renter	\$45,888	\$57,060

*Elder Index. (2019). The Elder Index™ [Public Dataset]. Boston, MA: Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston. Retrieved from ElderIndex.org*

Acceptable documents for demonstrating income include:

- » Most recent 3 paystubs
- » Most recent 3 financial assistance documents
- » Most recent tax return
- » Most recent year end social security statement

Documents can be submitted online at [www.marintransit.org/lifa](http://www.marintransit.org/lifa) or via US mail to the Travel Navigator department. Applicants must provide copies of these documents as documents will not be returned. Applicants are encouraged to remove or cross out all instances of social security number, identification number, and / or account numbers for their bank or financial institution on the documents that they provide.

Exceptions will not be made for those that do not meet the eligibility requirements or are in the process of enrolling in Medi-Cal or for financial assistance. Applicants are encouraged to apply again once they are eligible for Medi-Cal or financial assistance.

Following receipt of a complete application, processing may take up to 21 days, not including mailing time. All applications are processed in the order received. If determined eligible, all clients will be eligible through the end of the fiscal year (June 30) in which they apply. Applicants will have their accounts updated on the date of the determination and can begin to use LIFA credit immediately.

We will attempt to contact all applicants who submit incomplete applications; if we do not receive a response within 10 business days, the application will be returned by mail including a letter that details why the application is being returned.

### **LIFA Eligibility Renewal**

All LIFA eligible clients must renew their eligibility on an annual basis regardless of the date of initial application or eligibility determination. The renewal process is similar to the initial eligibility process and applicants must submit all relevant information and documentation to remain enrolled in the LIFA program. This process also allows clients to update contact information that may have changed.

Eligible clients will be sent a postcard by May 1<sup>st</sup> advising them of the need to reapply with instructions on how to do so. Applicants must submit renewal applications by June 1<sup>st</sup> to ensure that there is no interruption to their LIFA benefit.

Once eligibility is renewed clients will receive a letter confirming eligibility. If they have opted into the LIFA pass for local bus service, they will receive a sticker to affix to their ID that will show that they are eligible to use the pass for the current LIFA year.

### **LIFA Credit**

LIFA credit will be added to each enrolled client account on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Each eligible client will receive \$20 per month to use toward the fare for local Paratransit trips, Point Reyes Dial-A-Ride, Dillon Beach Dial-A-Ride, and the base fare for Catch-A-Ride. LIFA credit is applied to trips as they are booked. LIFA credit will be used for all trips before cash fare is required; if a rider does not want to use LIFA credit and prefers to pay cash fare they must notify the scheduler when booking the trip. The fare payment type cannot be changed at time of boarding. Once a rider uses all of the credit in their LIFA account they must pay all remaining fares in cash at the time of boarding. LIFA credit is for the eligible rider only and cannot be applied to pay the fare of companion riders.

LIFA credit rolls over monthly but does not roll over annually. LIFA has no cash value and riders will not be refunded for any credit not used by the end of the fiscal year. LIFA credit is not reimbursed in the event of no-shows or late cancellations (ie. less than two hours before your trip); incidents out of the control of the rider will be reviewed on a case by case basis. LIFA credits due to advance cancellations may take up to 24 hours to post to your rider account. All requests for LIFA credit reimbursement must be submitted to the Travel Navigator department and require supervisor approval prior to reimbursement.

Riders can request a detail of their trip history including details on LIFA credit usage and fare payment by contacting the Travel Navigator department.

### **Marin Access LIFA Pass for Local Bus Service**

Clients that are eligible for LIFA have the option of receiving a pass to use local bus service at no cost. This pass will be in an ID format and include your photo. To opt into the pass, applicants must view the Marin Transit travel training video, provide a recent photo, and consent to the terms of use. The LIFA pass must be renewed annually as part of the LIFA renewal and all enrolled riders will be sent a sticker to attach to their card that shows the current eligibility period. The pass is a “flash pass” and the photo side must be shown to the driver upon boarding the bus. Pass holders do not pay any fare upon boarding the bus and showing a valid pass. This pass **is valid** on local Marin Transit fixed route bus routes and **not valid** on Marin Access services (Paratransit, Connect, Dial-A-Ride), the Muir Woods Shuttle, the SMART trains, or Regional Golden Gate Transit routes.

To view the Marin Transit travel training video, applicants can visit the LIFA page on the Marin Transit website and click the LIFA Local Bus Pass button to watch the video and upload their photo. For those that do not have access to the internet, Marin Access orientation sessions will be offered where the video can be viewed. The dates of orientation sessions will be posted on our website at <https://marintransit.org/travel-navigators>. These orientation sessions will require registration, are one hour in length and are targeted to newly eligible Marin Access clients. Attendees will learn about how to use Marin Access programs and be able to sign up for the LIFA pass. The video will be shown during the orientation session and the attendee will have the opportunity to have their photo taken for the LIFA pass. Transportation to and from the orientation session will be the responsibility of the attendee. One-on-one orientation sessions can be arranged during regular business hours by request. *Please note that for the duration of the Marin County Shelter in Place Order due to COVID-19, in-person orientation sessions are suspended; the Marin Access Travel Navigator team can assist with completing the process for the LIFA Local Bus Pass.*

Photos for the LIFA pass must be current and have a white or solid background. Photos should be 2” x 2” (similar to a passport photo) and show a clearly visible face with sunglasses and/or hats removed. The Travel Navigator team will review and confirm whether photos are usable. A LIFA pass will not be created until we receive a usable photo.

Once determined eligible, your Marin Access fixed route pass will be mailed to you. LIFA passes are non-transferrable and misuse will be reported to MCTD staff. You may be asked to present picture ID when you ride. If misuse is reported, the District reserves the right to revoke the pass. If misuse is reported, the Marin Access LIFA pass holder will be sent a letter detailing the allegation and advising of the rules of proper use; renewal of the LIFA pass will not be

granted to riders that are found to be misusing the LIFA pass. Riders attempting board a vehicle using a pass that does not belong to them will have the pass revoked.

The Marin Access LIFA pass can only be replaced once during a fiscal year if lost. Replacement of lost passes will cost \$20; this fee is meant to encourage safe keeping & discourage abuse. The fee for a lost pass can be paid via credit card by contacting the Travel Navigator department. Clients that lose their pass must complete a lost pass form and submit this to the Travel Navigator department. There is a 10-day processing period for all replacement cards; replacement cards must be picked up in person by the owner. Clients will be required to show picture ID when picking up a replacement card. If pick-up is not possible exceptions may be made with MCTD staff approval.

### **Appealing a LIFA Eligibility Determination**

If you believe that your application has been denied in error, you may appeal this decision and have it reviewed by Marin Access staff. Your determination letter will explain common reason(s) for denial of eligibility and explain the procedure to follow if you would like to appeal the decision.

#### *Common Reasons LIFA Applications are Denied*

- » The applicant is not eligible for Marin Access
- » The applicant's income is above the Elder Economic Index standards
- » The information provided in the application is incomplete
- » The applicant is not eligible for Medi-Cal at the time of application
- » The applicant provided a Medi-Cal ID number or Issue Date that is not valid
- » The applicant did not demonstrate income per program standards

All requests for an appeal must be received by Marin Access within 30 days of issuance of denial of eligibility. In all cases, the appeal process will be concluded as expeditiously as possible. Once we receive an appeal request, the information you provide will be reviewed by Marin Access staff. You may elect to have a representative provide documentation or information on your behalf if additional documentation or information is requested by Marin Access staff.

You will receive a determination to your appeal via US Mail. The determination decision is final, and the appeal will be closed. Should the appeal be successful, and you are determined eligible for the LIFA program, eligibility and benefits will be granted starting the first day of the month following the date we received a complete application.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about this document or the LIFA program, please contact the Marin Access Travel Navigators by phone at (415) 454-0902 or by email at [travelnavigator@marintransit.org](mailto:travelnavigator@marintransit.org).