SENATE, No. 3875



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE



INTRODUCED MAY 22, 2023

Sponsored by:

Senator PATRICK J. DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “NJpass Program” to provide discounted fares to eligible organizations; establishes “GO NJ Transit Card Program” to develop transit cards that can be used to purchase any NJT service.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



An Act concerning discounted New Jersey Transit Corporation fares and supplementing P.L.1979, c.150 (C.27:25-1 et al.).

Be It Enacted by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. As used in P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

“Approved class” means a group of employees, clients, students, or customers of an eligible organization.

“Corporation” means the New Jersey Transit Corporation, established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1979, c.150 (C.27:25-4).

“Eligible organization” means any provider of a training program including, but not limited to, a provider of a training program listed on the Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s State Eligible Training Provider List, an apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship program sponsor, a provider of an alternate route to certification program approved by the State Board of Education, an institution of higher education, a private occupational school, an employer, a State or local government agency, and a public or nonprofit social service provider in the State.

“GO NJ Transit Card Program” means the program established pursuant to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

“New Jersey Transit Corporation service” or “corporation service” means motorbus regular route service and rail passenger service, including light rail service, operated by or under contract to the New Jersey Transit Corporation.

“NJpass Program” means the program established pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

“State Eligible Training Provider List” means the Statewide list of eligible training providers maintained pursuant to section 14 of P.L.2005, c.354 (C.34:15C-10.2).

“Transit card” means the “GO NJ Transit Card” established pursuant to section 3 of P.L.    , c.    (C.        ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

2. a. No later than one year after the effective date of P.L.    , c.    (C.        ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the New Jersey Transit Corporation shall establish and implement the “NJpass Program.” The purpose of the NJpass Program shall be to support workforce development and increase access to public transportation in the State by providing discounted rates to approved classes of eligible organizations when purchasing a ticket or pass for a New Jersey Transit Corporation service.

b. To carry out the purposes of the NJpass Program, the corporation shall contract with eligible organizations, that have been approved by the corporation to participate in the NJpass Program pursuant to subsection d. of this section, to provide discounted rates to approved classes of the eligible organizations. The amount of the discounted rate to be provided and the manner in which the discounted rate is to be provided shall be determined by the corporation during the process of entering into a contract with an approved eligible organization pursuant to subsection d. of this section.

c. The corporation shall establish eligibility criteria and develop an application process for eligible organizations to apply to participate in the NJpass Program. An eligible organization that seeks to participate in the NJpass Program shall submit an application to the corporation in a form and manner prescribed by the corporation. In addition to any other information that the corporation deems appropriate, the application shall require the eligible organization to submit information demonstrating that the organization meets the eligibility requirements to be established by the corporation pursuant to this subsection.

d. The corporation may approve applications for the NJpass Program on a rolling basis. Upon approval of an application, the corporation and the eligible organization shall have the opportunity to negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract to be entered into pursuant to this subsection, including, but not limited to, the amount of the discounted fares to be offered and the types of corporation services to be accessed under the NJpass Program. Following any negotiations necessary between the corporation and the eligible organization, the corporation shall enter into a contract with the eligible organization to provide discounted group rates to the approved class of the eligible organization. The terms and conditions of the contract shall include, at a minimum:

(1) the discounted rates to be offered to the approved class of the eligible organization;

(2) specific information as to what the approved class of the eligible organization will be;

(3) information concerning any limitations on times of use or types of corporation services available to the approved class; and

(4) the amount of compensation or reimbursement required from the eligible organization, if any, to cover the administrative costs of the corporation.

e. A contract under the NJpass Program shall be valid upon the approval of the corporation for a term of not more than two years, except that the first contract with an eligible organization shall not exceed 12 months. Prior to any renewal of a contract with an eligible organization under the NJpass Program, the corporation shall consider any corporation service expenditure increases incurred by the corporation for the purpose of re-evaluating the amount of compensation or reimbursement that may be required, if any.

f. Information concerning the NJpass Program, including, but not limited to, the eligibility criteria and application process established pursuant to subsection c. of this section, shall be published on the corporation’s Internet website and updated as necessary.

g. No later than two years after the effective date of P.L.    , c.    (C.        ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and annually thereafter, the corporation shall submit a report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature, on the effectiveness of the NJpass Program in supporting workforce development and increasing access to public transportation in the State. The report shall also specifically include information on each contract with an eligible organization that was entered into, or already in existence, during that year.

h. In establishing and implementing the NJpass Program, the corporation shall consider efforts other states have taken to establish and implement similar programs.

3. a. No later than one year after the effective date of P.L.    , c.    (C.        ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the corporation shall establish and implement the “GO NJ Transit Card Program.” The purpose of the GO NJ Transit Card Program shall be to develop GO NJ Transit Cards and a system in which the transit cards can be purchased and utilized to purchase a ticket or pass for any New Jersey Transit Corporation service in the State.

b. An individual who purchases a transit card shall load money onto the transit card, in an amount determined by the individual, except that a minimum of $10 shall be loaded on the transit card at all times. Once money has been loaded onto the transit card, the transit card can be used to purchase a ticket or pass for any corporation service within the State. Money loaded onto the transit card shall never expire.

c. In establishing the transit cards under the GO NJ Transit Card Program, the corporation shall:

(1) develop and implement a fare capping system to ensure individuals who utilize a transit card are paying the lowest authorized fare for any period of travel, without having to pay the full cost upfront; and

(2) provide discounted fares, in an amount to be determined by the corporation, to transit card users, which are to be in addition to any other discounted fares already provided by the corporation, including, but not limited to, the discounted fares provided to any senior citizen or person with a disability who receives reduced fares for transportation provided by the corporation, or provided under contract with the corporation, pursuant to P.L.1973, c.126 (C.27:1A-64 et seq.).

d. Information concerning the GO NJ Transit Card Program, including, but not limited to, information on where the transit cards can be purchased and the types of discounts that will be available to transit card users shall be published on the corporation’s Internet website and updated as necessary.

e. No later than two years after the effective date of P.L.    , c.    (C.        ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and annually thereafter, the corporation shall submit a report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature, on the effectiveness of the GO NJ Transit Card Program in increasing access to public transportation in the State.

f. In establishing and implementing the GO NJ Transit Card Program, the corporation shall consider efforts other states have taken to establish and implement similar programs.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the New Jersey Transit Corporation (corporation) to establish the “NJpass Program” and the “GO NJ Transit Card Program.”

The purpose of the NJpass Program is to support workforce development and increase access to public transportation in the State by providing discounted rates to approved classes of certain eligible organizations when purchasing a ticket or pass for a New Jersey Transit Corporation service (corporation service). Under the program, the corporation would be required to contract with eligible organizations that have been approved by the corporation to participate in the NJpass Program to provide discounted rates to approved classes of the eligible organizations.

The corporation would be required to establish eligibility criteria and develop an application process for eligible organizations to apply to participate in the NJpass Program. Upon approval of an application, the corporation and the eligible organization will have the opportunity to negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract to be entered into, including, but not limited to, the amount of the discounted fares to be offered and the types of corporation services to be accessed under the NJpass Program. Following any negotiations necessary between the corporation and the eligible organization, the corporation will enter into a contract with the eligible organization to provide discounted group rates to the approved class of the eligible organization. The terms and conditions of the contract are required to include, at a minimum: (1) the discounted rates to be offered to the approved class of the eligible organization; (2) specific information as to what the approved class of the eligible organization will be; (3) information concerning any limitations on times of use or types of corporation services available to the approved class; and (4) the amount of compensation or reimbursement required from the eligible organization, if any, to cover the administrative costs of the corporation. A contract under the NJpass Program will be valid upon the approval of the corporation for a term of not more than two years, except that the first contract with an eligible organization cannot exceed 12 months.

The bill also requires the corporation to establish the “GO NJ Transit Card Program.” The purpose of the GO NJ Transit Card Program is to develop GO NJ Transit Cards (transit cards) and a system in which the transit cards can be purchased and utilized to purchase a ticket or pass for any corporation service in the State. Under the program, transit cards would be available for purchase. Individuals who purchase a transit card would be able to load money onto the transit card and utilize the transit card to purchase a ticket or pass for any corporation service within the State. Money loaded onto a transit card never expires. In establishing the transit cards under the GO NJ Transit Card Program, the corporation is required to: (1) develop and implement a fare capping system to ensure individuals who utilize a transit card are paying the lowest authorized fare for any period of travel, without having to pay the full cost upfront; and (2) provide discounted fares, in an amount to be determined by the corporation, to transit card users, which are to be in addition to any other discounted fares already provided by the corporation, including, but not limited to, the discounted fares provided to any senior citizen or person with a disability who receives reduced fares for transportation provided by the corporation, or provided under contract with the corporation.

The bill requires the corporation to publish information concerning the NJpass Program and the GO NJ Transit Card Program on its Internet website and update the information as necessary. The bill also requires the corporation to submit reports to the Governor and the Legislature on the effectiveness of each of the programs established by the bill. In establishing and implementing the programs, the corporation is required to consider the efforts other states have taken to implement similar programs.