



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF FIRST-IN-THE-STATE PILOT INITIATIVE THAT CENTRALIZES TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE BUS PASSES ON EBT CARDS

Individuals must receive Temporary Assistance through Monroe County Department of Human Services to be eligible for the program

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today joined Regional Transit Service (RTS) CEO Miguel Velázquez and Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Thalia Wright to announce the launch of a pilot program that enables eligible residents to use their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to access public transportation.

“Access to transportation is a key driver of opportunity and success in Monroe County. With this program, we are breaking down barriers, making public transportation more accessible and convenient for residents – without the stress of lost or misplaced bus passes,” said County Executive Bello. “I am grateful for this first of its kind collaboration among our DHS team, RTS and OTDA, together we are advancing technology and streamlining transit services for our residents.”

The program, a partnership with New York State Office of Disability Assistance (OTDA) and RTS, allows eligible individuals to swipe or tap their EBT card at the fare box on RTS Connect buses. Eligible participants will no longer need to carry a separate bus pass or wait for a pass to be mailed to them. Those enrolled in the pilot can use their EBT cards for transportation to get to medical appointments, behavioral health treatment, job training, apprenticeships and to their jobs.

“This pilot program is yet another example of how Monroe County is working to bring services directly to our residents, meeting them where they are,” said Commissioner of the Department of Human Services Thalia Wright. “Historically, many of our clients who rely on Temporary Assistance have needed a separate bus pass to access transportation for medical care, job training, apprenticeships, or work. With this new pilot program, the goal is clear: break down barriers and streamline essential services. It’s about making government work for the people—using innovation and collaboration to deliver convenient, more efficient services.”

“One of our primary areas of focus at RTS is to foster strategic partnerships that help us utilize the public transit system to address some of the most pressing needs in our

community,” said RTS CEO Miguel Velázquez. “The RTS team is proud of the long-standing partnership we have with Monroe County and New York State to open-up access to critical destinations and services for the people in this community most in need. By building on that partnership and leveraging our strong record of innovation, we are able to improve this important program and make it easier for our customers to get where they need to go. I thank County Executive Bello, Commissioner Wright, the team at OTDA, and everyone at RTS for making this possible.”

This program saves taxpayer money by reducing the potential for lost or stolen paper bus passes, fraud and abuse.

Transportation allowances will be added to the EBT card that is already being used for cash benefits and SNAP. Individuals must be deemed eligible by New York State and Monroe County DHS in order to use their EBT cards for bus fares. Currently, around 200 residents eligible for monthly bus passes are using the program. Monroe County plans to launch the full program that will expand to those eligible for daily RTS bus passes by the end of the year.

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