



Colorado Association of Transit Agencies CASTA



Colorado Association of Transit Agencies

What does CASTA Do?

- An organization to support transit agencies and professionals in Colorado
 - 55 agency members from around the state
 - Advocacy at the State and Federal levels
 - Administer the Rural Transit Assistance Program- Training and Technical Assistance
 - [DDTOC](#) Defensive Driving Transit Operator Certification Program
 - Administer the Ozone Season Grant Program
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Benefits of Youth Ride Free programs

- Improves mobility and access for 20% of the population
- Helps lower family transportation costs which on average make up 16% of all household expenses
 - This can be especially impactful for families with lower incomes as they often see a higher percentage of their income going to transportation
- Kids gain independence
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Gain transit navigational skills

Why are youth riding transit?

Top trip purposes when surveyed:

- School
- Special school programs (vocational and other career focused programs)
- School field trips
- After school activities
- Employment opportunities
- Recreational activities
- Parents dropping off kids to daycare





Why are youth riding transit instead of school buses?

School bus programs are facing challenges:

- School choice
- Rural districts may not provide service outside of town
- Driver shortage
 - Combining routes
 - Limiting and consolidating stops
 - Reduced frequency (may not do a late run for after school program participants)
 - Limited availability during school hours for field trips
 - May need to cancel some routes or delay them some days if drivers are out

Snapshot of youth ridership

- 40% of La Junta's ridership is youth. Kids are primarily accessing school from outside of town but also going on field trips to the library, the pool and other destinations with their summer camps and day care programs.
- Transfort is currently fare free and has routes to access high schools and provides transit training for youth.
- 15% of Fountain's ridership is youth when community college students are included in the count.



Snapshot of youth ridership



- Breck Free Ride finds that 50% of their total summer ridership is children under 18, many of them ride as parts of summer camps and day care programs.
- Montrose doubled their youth rides with a Kids Ride Free summer program in 2022.

Snapshot of youth ridership



- Grand Valley Transit has a youth ride free program with almost 80% of the riders from TANF eligible households.
 - Cripple Creek has a youth ridership of 35% primarily for school access.
 - SMART has about 15% of their ridership under 18 accessing school because families live outside the district busing program boundaries.
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Resources

- <https://www.energy.gov/eere/vehicles/articles/fotw-1248-july-25-2022-average-us-household-spent-nearly-1000#:~:text=While%20those%20in%20the%20highest,Table%201203%20Income%20Before%20Taxes%20.>
 - <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CO/PST045222>
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