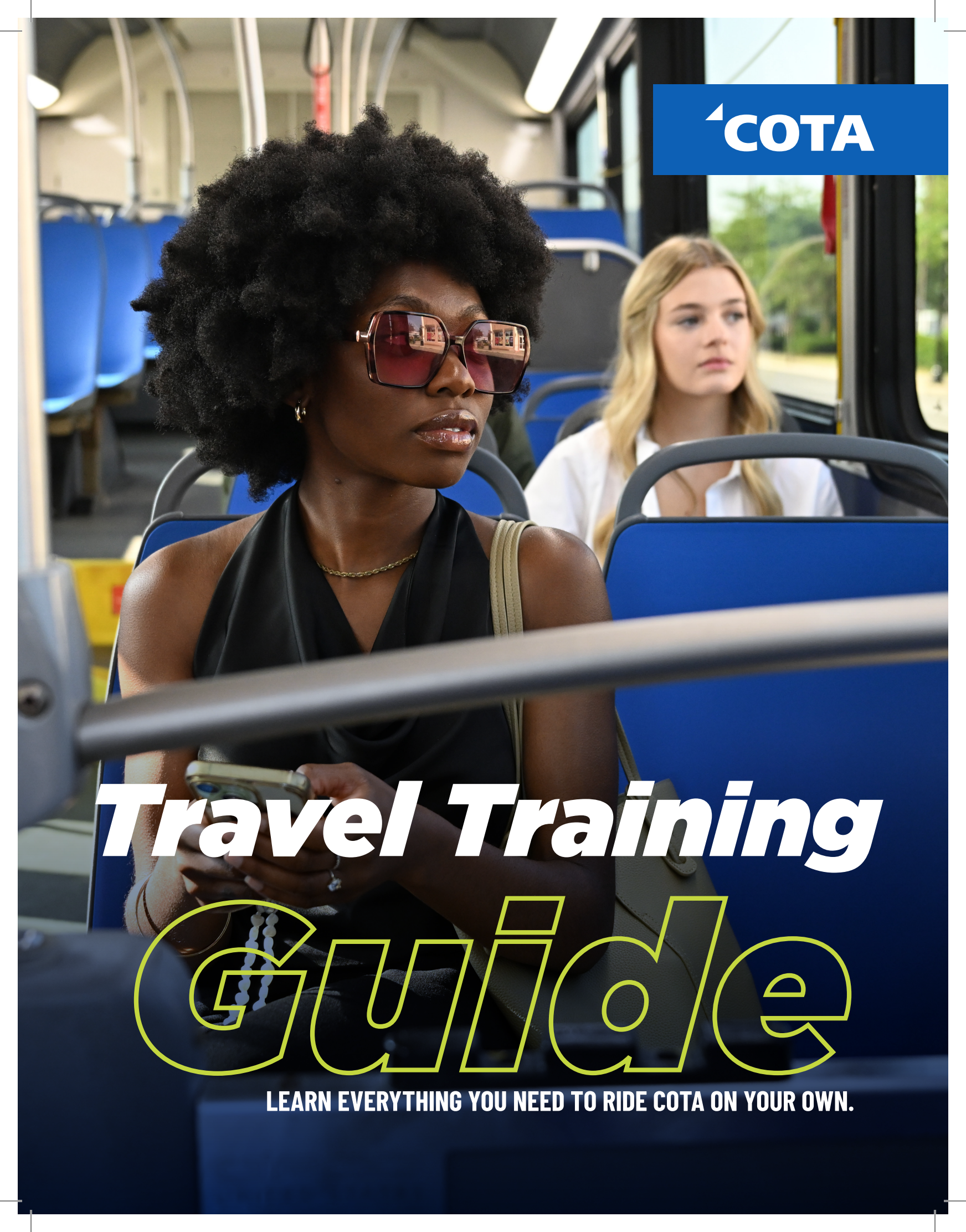




COTA

Travel Training **Guide**

LEARN EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO RIDE COTA ON YOUR OWN.

Inside This Guide

Whether you’re new to transit or want to refresh your skills, this guide will help you navigate with confidence.

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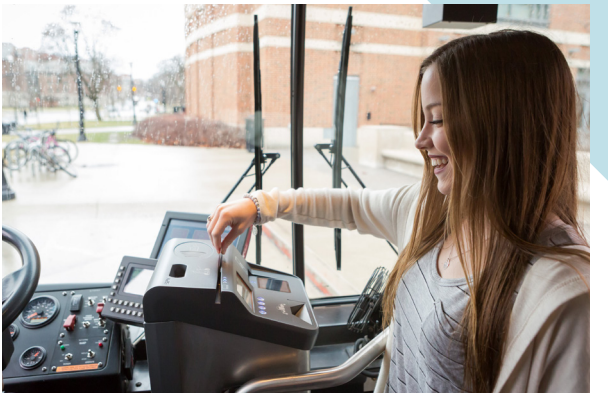
FIXED-ROUTE FARES & PASSES

TYPE	COST	COST WITH DISCOUNT
Standard, Frequent, Rush Hour	\$2	\$1
Transfer (up to two hours)	FREE	FREE
Children (4 and under)	FREE	FREE
Children (ages 5-12)	\$1	—
With ADA Card	FREE	FREE
Day Pass	\$4.50	\$2.25
31-Day Pass	\$62	\$31

WAYS TO PAY

Exact Cash

- Must have exact cash.
- Request a two-hour transfer pass from your COTA Operator upon boarding.
- Insert exact cash into the Farebox.



Transfer Pass

- Transfers are available upon boarding for up to 2 hours of travel for no additional fare.
- If paying with cash or a paper pass, request a transfer pass from your COTA Operator. All other payment methods do not require a printed transfer pass.
- Transfer passes are not reloadable.
- Swipe your transfer pass on the Farebox.

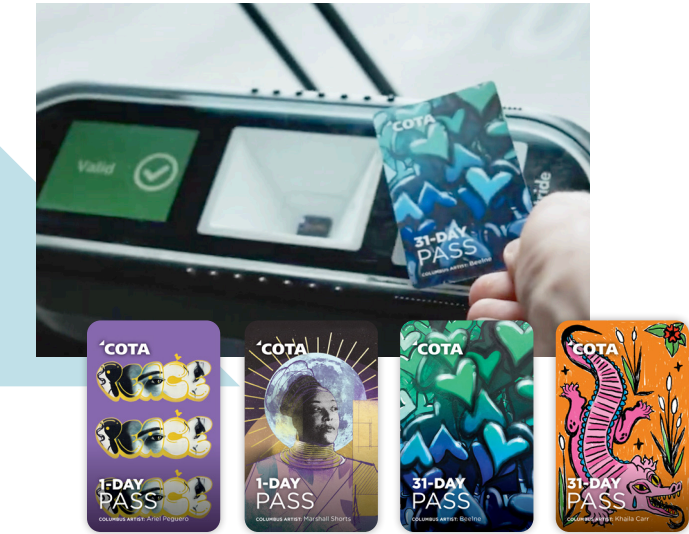
Paper Pass

- Available as a Two-Hour Pass, Day Pass and 31-Day Pass.
- Paper passes are available at COTA's Customer Experience Center or at ticket vending machines located throughout COTA's service area.
- Request a two-hour transfer pass from your COTA Operator upon boarding.
- Swipe your pass on the Farebox.



Single-Use Pass

- Laminated, single-use Day Passes and 31-Day Passes are distributed by COTA's community partners.
- Single-use passes are not reloadable.
- Fare capping and free two-hour transfers automatically apply.
- Tap your single-use pass on the validator to the right when boarding.



COTA SmartCard

- A physical card that allows you to access all the benefits of digital ways to pay without a smartphone.
- Visit COTA’s Customer Experience Center to set up your account, pick up your Smartcard and connect a credit or debit card or add funds to your account.
- You can also connect a credit or debit card or add funds to your account at passes.cota.com.
- Fare capping and free two-hour transfers automatically apply.
- Tap your Smartcard on the validator to the right when boarding.



Transit App

- Download the Transit app to plan, track and pay for your COTA trips from your smartphone.
- Connect a credit or debit card to your Transit app account.
- Funds and passes can also be added to your account at COTA’s Customer Experience Center.
- Fare capping and free two-hour transfers automatically apply.
- Scan the app-generated QR code on the validator to the right when boarding.



Tap to Pay

- Use a smart device or a tap-enabled credit or debit card to pay your fare.
- Funds are connected directly to your credit or debit card through your smart device or tap-enabled card.
- Fare capping and free two-hour transfers automatically apply on the same card.
- Tap a smart device, tap-enabled card or digital wallet (Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay) on the validator to the right when boarding.



Visit **COTA.com/fares** or scan the QR code above for detailed information and step-by-step instructions on how to pay for your COTA ride.

REDUCED FARE PROGRAM

Qualified customers receive 50% off fares.

This program is available to select groups, ensuring more people can reach their destinations.

To apply, visit COTA's Customer Experience Center. Once approved, we'll set up your discount on whichever account-based payment system you use: the Transit app, COTA Smartcard, Tap to Pay or a registered account at passes.cota.com.

Eligible Customers:

- Adults age 65 or older
- Veterans
- Medicare Card Holders
- SSDI recipients
- Customers with disabilities
- Individuals participating in the following public assistance programs with proof of participation:
 - SNAP food assistance
 - Publicly funded childcare
 - Ohio Works First cash assistance
 - Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program
 - Medicaid
 - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)



COTA.com/discount-fares

Thanks to fare capping, Reduced Fare customers **never pay more than \$2.25 per day or \$31 per calendar month**. To learn more about COTA's Reduced Fare Program, visit COTA.com/discount-fares.

HOW TO RIDE



Choosing the Correct Vehicle

1

Plan Your Trip:

Use COTA's Trip Planner found at COTA.com, the Transit app or Google and Apple Maps. You can also call COTA Customer Care at 614-228-1776.

2

Know Your Route Details

Write down or save:

- Your route number and name
- Your stop's cross streets
- The direction you're headed (North, South, East, West)
- Your stop number (four-digit number)

3

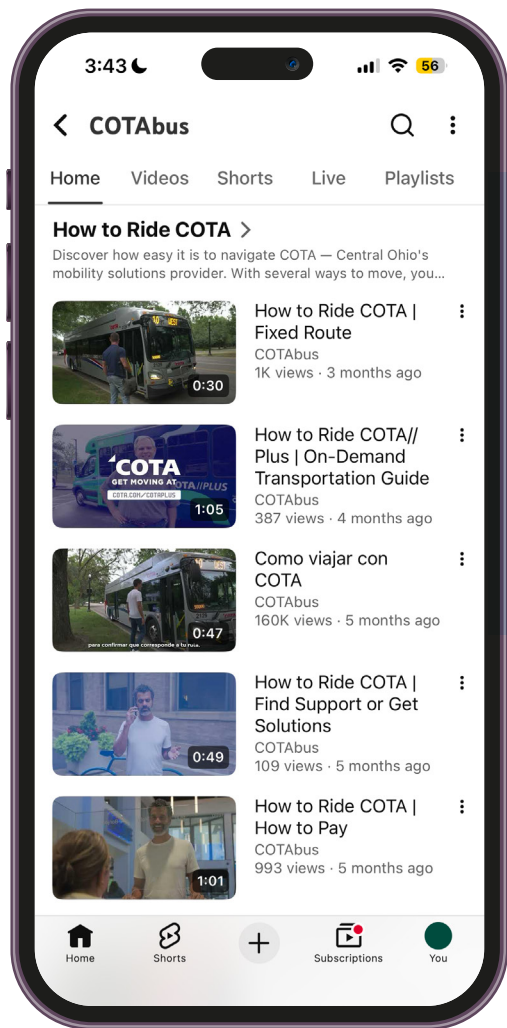
Understand Route Frequency:

COTA uses a color-coded system to show how often buses run:

- **Standard routes (blue):** every hour or less
- **Frequent routes (red):** every 15 minutes or less
- **Rush Hour routes (green):** only available during rush hour service, Monday through Friday from 6:30 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m.

Waiting at a Transit Stop

- 1 **Arrive Early:** Arrive at your stop a few minutes early and wait for your vehicle at the transit shelter or by the transit sign.
- 2 **Confirm Location:** Check that your stop number matches the stop number located at the top of the transit sign.
- 3 **Track Your Bus:** Text the stop number (found on the transit sign) to 95292 to get real-time information about upcoming vehicles. You can also track your bus at COTA.com and in the Transit app.
- 4 **Check Your Bus:** As your vehicle arrives, check the route name and number on the LED bus header found above the windshield.



Scan to watch our *How to Ride video* series



youtube.com/@TheCOTAbus

Using the Bicycle Racks

- 1 **Find the Rack:** Two bicycle racks are located at the front of every COTA bus. They are free for customers to use and are on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 2 **Alert Your Operator:** Signal to the Operator that you need to load your bike. Remove all loose items from your bike before loading.
- 3 **Load Your Bike:** Squeeze the handle at the center of the rack to lower it and place your bike into the rack's wheel wells. Ensure your front tire is at the same end as the support arm. Raise and pull the support arm up and over the bike's front tire to secure it.
- 4 **Unload Your Bike:** When you arrive at your destination, inform the Operator that you need to unload your bicycle. Raise the support arm off the front tire and lower it, then lift your bike out of the rack. Return the rack to the upright position and signal to the Operator that you've removed your bike.



HOW TO RIDE



Indicating Your Stop

1

Follow Along:

Stops are announced ahead of time through audio announcements or by the Operator, with scrolling text appearing at the front of the bus above the Operator. You can also follow your route using the Transit app.

2

Pull the Yellow Cord:

When you're ready to exit, signal to stop by pulling the yellow cord above the window.

Boarding and Paying Your Fare

1

Be Prepared:

Have your fare or payment method ready before you board.

2

Ask For Assistance:

If you need the vehicle to be lowered or the accessible ramp to be deployed, ask the Operator.

3

Pay Your Fare:

COTA offers a variety of payment options. Details can be found on page 4, under Ways to Pay. In summary:

- Insert exact cash, swipe a paper pass, or transfer pass using the Farebox next to the Operator. Ask for a transfer pass during this time, if needed.
- Scan the app-generated QR code on the Transit App or The Ohio State app on the validator to the right.
- Tap a single-use, laminated pass, Student Success Card, Smartcard or tap-to-pay payment method on the validator to the right.





Exiting the Bus

- 1 Exit at the Back:**
Exit through the back door of the vehicle. Touch the door to exit if it doesn't automatically open. Customers needing the accessible ramp or kneeling feature may exit at the front of the vehicle — just alert the Operator.
- 2 Be Safe:**
Use a crosswalk where available. Wait for the vehicle to leave before crossing the street, or cross the street behind the vehicle.

Rules & Tips

- 1 Follow Posted Rules:**
No smoking, vaping, eating, drinking, drugs, alcohol, illegal weapons, dangerous equipment, solicitation or petitioning on board or on any COTA property.
- 2 Be Considerate:**
Respect other passengers and your COTA Operator. Keep the bus clean, use headphones or turn down your device volume and give priority seating to those who need it.
- 3 Stay Safe and Alert:**
Hold onto straps or railings while the bus is moving. If you need help or see suspicious behavior, alert the Operator.
- 4 Collect Your Items:**
If you lose something on a COTA bus, call 614-308-4378 to check if it's been found, then collect it at COTA's McKinley Facility at 1600 McKinley Ave. For items lost on COTA Mainstream, call 614-308-4355 and collect items at COTA's Mobility Services Facility at 1330 Fields Ave.



COTA MAINSTREAM

Accessible transportation that picks you up.

COTA Mainstream and Mainstream On-Demand provide origin-to-destination rides for people whose functional limitations prevent them from using COTA’s fixed-route buses. Eligibility is based on your ability to use the fixed-route system. You must apply and be certified as eligible before scheduling trips.

For more information, call Mobility Services at 614-275-5828 or visit **COTA.com/Mainstream**.

	COTA MAINSTREAM	COTA MAINSTREAM ON-DEMAND
What is it?	Shared-ride, origin-to-destination paratransit service (ADA)	Private-ride, point-to-point service and premium trips considered “non-ADA” within Franklin County
Service Area	Within a ¾-mile radius of a COTA fixed-route line	Outside a ¾-mile radius of a COTA fixed-route line
Reservations	1-7 days in advance	Same day (one hour) or up to 30 days in advance
Online Booking	COTA.com/book-mainstream or the COTA Mainstream mobile app.	—
Phone Booking	COTA Reservations Department: 614-272-3033	UZURV Call Center: 614-344-4488
Fares	ADA Trips: \$3.50 per one-way trip \$105 monthly pass	\$5 for the first five miles and \$1 per additional mile
Payment	• Exact cash • COTA Mainstream ticket or COTA Mainstream monthly pass • Pay digitally by adding a credit or debit card to your account through the online booking system or mobile app • Tickets and passes can also be purchased at COTA’s Mobility Center at 1330 Fields Ave. or COTA’s Customer Experience Center at 33 N. High St.	Credit or debit card in advance of the trip

COTA//PLUS

On-Demand Microtransit

COTA//Plus is an on-demand microtransit service that extends the reach of COTA's fixed-route network. Operating within defined zones, it offers flexible, app-based or phone-scheduled rides in areas where traditional transit may not be easily accessible.

1

Book When You're Ready:

Use the COTA//Plus app or call to request rides on your schedule.

2

Fast Pickup:

Vehicles arrive within 15 minutes and provide corner-to-corner service anywhere in the zone.

3

Zone-Based Coverage:

Available in Grove City, Westerville and the South Side.

4

Affordable:

\$3 fare with free connections to COTA's fixed-route network and reduced rates for seniors, students and eligible riders.

5

Accessible Vehicles:

Available upon request for riders with mobility devices.



To request a ride, download the
COTA//Plus app or call **614-308-4400**.



For more
information, visit
COTA.com/cotaplus.

MAGNUSCARDS



Making Transit Accessible For All

MagnusCards is a free mobile app that helps people use public transit independently by providing visual cues, step-by-step instructions and optional audio in English or Spanish to guide users through the transit process.

MagnusCards Available for COTA Customers:

- Fares and Ways to Pay
- Getting Help: Having a Safe Trip and Rules and Tips for Riding
- How to Ride: Boarding and Riding COTA
- How to Transfer Vehicles on COTA
- Planning Your Trip
- Navigating the Transit App
- COTA Mainstream
- COTA//Plus
- COTA Park and Rides
- Adding a Pass to Your Smartcard

Download the free MagnusCards app and search **COTA** within the Travel section.

All decks are available in English and Spanish, with some decks available in Somali.



For more information about MagnusCards, visit COTA.com/magnuscards.



TRAVEL TRAINING

NO-COST, HANDS-ON SUPPORT TO NAVIGATE COTA

Travel Training provides the support you need to ride COTA independently and confidently in a safe, supportive environment. Available for individuals or groups, training options include virtual or in-person presentations, demonstrations with out-of-service vehicles and hands-on practice in the community.

You'll Learn To:

- Navigate using the Transit app
- Plan your trip using the easiest and safest route
- Read and understand route maps and schedules
- Locate and transfer to other vehicles
- Board the vehicle with a mobility device
- Recognize vehicle numbers, transit stops and landmarks
- Pay fares and purchase passes

COTA Travel Trainers

TravelTraining@COTA.com

cota.com/travel-trainers

Customer Experience Center

33 N. High St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215

COTA Customer Care

Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
614-228-1776



COTA.com/travel-trainers



MOVING EVERY LIFE
FORWARD

 **COTA**

COTA.COM

