



## For Immediate Release

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## THE BUS REINSTATES FARE COLLECTION

MERCED – The Bus is reinstating the collection of fares on all of its services starting Monday, March 15, 2021. The suspension of fares on all fixed-route and paratransit services started in April last year as a key COVID-19 mitigation measure to reduce contact between bus operators and paying passengers. Additional safety protocols aimed at protecting passengers and bus operators such as daily disinfecting and social distancing measures will remain in place. Passengers are also required to wear a mask while riding on The Bus as well as when waiting at bus stops.

There are several ways that passengers can pay their bus fare. The Merced Transpo will reopen on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> and will have all bus pass types available for purchase; however, all sales will be done by credit or debit card, no cash will be accepted. Passengers will also be able to purchase one-day and seven-day passes onboard the bus with cash. Finally, The Bus administrative office located at 369 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Merced will also sell all pass types and will take all forms of payment.

Several free fare programs that were in place before the fare suspension will also return. All students attending UC Merced and Merced College are able to ride any fixed-route service by showing their current student ID to the driver when boarding. In addition, free rides will also continue to be provided to all seniors, veterans, and ADA-eligible passengers on fixed-route services through the Measure V fare program.

The Bus continues to encourage passengers to wash their hands often, cover all coughs and sneezes, stay home when sick, and avoid direct contact with sick individuals. For more information about COVID-19 vaccinations, please visit the Merced County website: [www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com](http://www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com).

The Bus is the single public transportation service provider for all of Merced County and is administered by the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County and managed by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). All bus schedules and hours of operation can be found at [www.mercedthebus.com](http://www.mercedthebus.com) or by calling The Bus at (209) 723-3100. Real-time information regarding bus locations, services and arrival times can be found at [www.thebuslive.com](http://www.thebuslive.com) or by downloading 'The Bus Live' app on your smart phone for free. All buses are equipped with bike racks and are wheelchair accessible.

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