



CTA Fare Changes Effective 1/14/2013

Frequently asked questions

What fares are changing?

CTA base fares will remain unchanged. CTA has proposed reducing the discount for 1-day, 3-day, 7-day and 30-day passes, the first pass price increase in four years.

Why is the pass discount being changed?

Pass prices have not been changed in four years and have been more heavily discounted than nearly every other transit agency around the country.

These pass price changes will enable the CTA to achieve financial stability for the coming years, and avoid the “doomsday” budgets of previous years.

The new pass prices continue to be good values for customers who heavily use the transit system. Riders who use the system multiple times a day will receive deep discounts over full fares. But even riders taking just a few more trips beyond their weekday commutes will see value. For example, a 30-day pass user would need to take just one additional rail trip during that month to realize value from the pass. The changes would also bring prices more in line with other transit agencies around the country.

Are student ride prices affected?

CTA is pleased to be able to decrease the cost of a student ride to 75 cents (from 85 cents) to make transit more affordable and encourage school attendance. That’s \$1 or more of savings per week and more than \$35 a year per student.

Will the proposed changes mean better service?

Yes. CTA has focused heavily on running a leaner, more efficient operation so that it has the ability to reinvest in its infrastructure and in customer improvements. On December 16, CTA added morning and evening rush-hour service on 48 bus routes and increased rail service on six of eight train lines, among other changes. What's more, CTA has more than \$2.8 billion in improvement projects planned over the next few years that will improve bus and rail service.

Why doesn't the CTA just cut costs in lieu of changing its pass prices?

Since May 2011, the CTA has cut around \$50 million in costs not directly related to providing service—many of which involved finding better, smarter ways of doing business. Examples include reducing absenteeism and workers compensation claims, modernizing business functions like supply-chain management, and upgrading technologies that produce cost savings. The CTA continues to look for ways to reduce unnecessary costs and do business more efficiently to ensure financial stability for the agency and therefore best serve its customers.

Will current 1-day, 3-day, 7-day and 30-day passes expire at some point?

Yes, all magnetic strip farecards have a finite life and will expire. Expiration dates are clearly marked on all cards.

What happens to my pre-purchased 1-day, 3-day, 7-day and 30-day passes after January 14?

Any passes purchased and/or activated prior to January 14 will continue to work as usual. What changes on January 14, 2013 is the price of these unlimited ride passes.

Does the increase in 30-day passes also apply to Chicago Card Plus users?

Yes, the increase applies if you are using your Chicago Card Plus as a 30-day unlimited ride pass.

Are reduced fares changing?

Reduced fares will increase slightly to \$1 for bus (non-cash) and \$1.10 for rail and bus fares paid with cash, the first time reduced fares have had an increase since 2004. Please note that there will be no changes to the Illinois Circuit Breaker program that allows eligible disabled and senior citizen riders to ride for free if they have registered with the RTA Circuit Ride Free Permit program.

Why is a trip from the O'Hare Blue Line Station going up to \$5?

CTA will charge a \$2.75 premium fee on top of the \$2.25 base rail fare from O'Hare. CTA's service from O'Hare provides an affordable, convenient way for travelers to get downtown and around the city that saves time and money by avoiding traffic congestion and \$50 cab fares. Transit agencies around the country/across the world provide affordable transit service for a small premium.

What if I meet a passenger at the airport – will I be charged \$5 to ride the train back into the city?

No, residents meeting arriving air passengers will pay just the 25-cent transfer fee for a return trip within two hours.

Who will pay the new \$5 O'Hare fare? Who is exempt?

Customers who pay per ride will pay the new \$5 fee – that includes those who use a magnetic stripe card at O'Hare that is not a 1-day, 3-day, 7-day or 30-day pass.

Exempt from the \$5 fare are reduced fare riders; customers who use 1-day, 3-day, 7-day or 30-day passes; and Chicago Card Plus users who have selected a 30-Day Pass option (meaning, the customer's card's value is set up to be replenished every month with unlimited 30-day pass privileges).

Special note: Also temporarily exempt through July 1, 2013 will be all Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus customers who pay per ride for trips originating at O'Hare. CTA will work with the Chicago Department of Aviation to develop a system to ultimately exempt employees working on O'Hare International Airport property; however, until that system is developed, the Board approved a temporary solution through July 1, 2013, to exempt all Chicago Card and Chicago Card Plus customers. CTA will work with employers that have operations at O'Hare to encourage their employees who currently use magnetic strip pay-per-ride cards to sign up for Chicago Card or Chicago Card Plus.

Will the price of the Soldier Field Express bus change?

The new fee for the #128 Soldier Field Express is \$5 round-trip and \$2.50 round-trip for a reduced fare paying customer (seniors and people with disabilities), providing convenient, affordable transportation between Ogilvie Transportation Center and Union Station and Soldier Field for Chicago Bears games -- much cheaper than parking near Soldier Field!

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