

Press Release



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

For immediate release

Date: November 3, 2014

Ride Free Permit Expiration Date Quickly Approaching

Senior Ride Free Permits Expire November 30

CHICAGO – The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is reminding riders that the expiration date of November 30 on Ride Free permits, used by qualifying seniors, is quickly approaching. If riders have not yet applied for the [State of Illinois Benefit Access Program](#) (BAP) they are encouraged to do so now in advance of the rapidly approaching expiration date.

In June, the RTA extended the expiration date of Ride Free permits for seniors to November 30. The extension allowed more time for riders to apply for the BAP program as it could take between four and six weeks for eligibility to be approved.

“We extended the renewal process to ensure every qualified rider is able to ride the transit system,” said Leanne Redden, Executive Director of the RTA. “We hope the extension has given the riders the time they needed to apply through the BAP program to ensure there are no interruptions in their service. If they have not applied yet, they should do so immediately, as time is running out.”

Approximately 24,000 seniors have yet to renew their permits. The RTA is required by law to issue these permits to individuals who have been approved by the BAP program.

If a senior has recently applied for or has received a new Senior Ride Free permit, no additional action is required at this time.

There are two ways to apply for eligibility through BAP:

1. From any computer or mobile device, visit the Illinois Department on Aging Benefit Access Program website at www.illinois.gov/aging and click on the “Benefit Access” tab.
 - The State only allows applications online, not in writing or over the telephone
 - The applicant must submit documentation online, which may require scanning documents to a computer to submit them online
2. If assistance is needed filling out the online form to confirm eligibility for the Illinois Benefit Access Program, an applicant may do one of the following:

- Chicago residents can visit any of the City of Chicago's six Regional Senior Centers Monday through Friday, between 8:30 AM and 3:30PM. Riders can call 311 to find the closest Regional Senior Center or
- Call the Illinois Department on Aging at (800) 252-8966 to find a conveniently located center where staff can assist in filling the application.

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About the RTA

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is the only transit agency charged with regional financial oversight, funding, and transit planning for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace bus and paratransit. Riders take more than two million trips each weekday on the RTA region's transit system in six counties with 7,200 transit route miles throughout Northeastern Illinois. The Agency also provides customer services including online and telephone travel planning assistance and travel training for seniors and people with disabilities. For more information, visit www.RTAchicago.org.