

CAC

Metro's Citizens' Advisory Council

June 24, 2020

Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

RE: LIFE Program Presentations, on August 28, 2019 & May 27, 2020

Mr. Washington,

We have had multiple opportunities to date to learn about the LIFE Program for Low-Income Metro riders. We thank Metro staff for their presentations, in which both provided excellent information to CAC members.

After the August presentation select CAC members had some relevant concerns with the programs performance, particularly in two areas; 1. Low over-all enrollment given the share of our ridership that would qualify. 2. The cumbersome enrollment process. Metro staff explained to members the evolutionary stage that the program was in at that time. The CAC challenged the LIFE program staff to report back by March/April with better enrollment numbers, confirmed administrators and more partners.

The LIFE program staff **crushed** any reasonable expectations, especially given the current unprecedented global and national events. The 60%+ increase in enrollment was phenomenal along with the final number of community/government organization partners. The CAC membership feels successful efforts such as these should be acknowledged and exemplified.

However, in subsequent and more in-depth discussions some members noted the use of the HUD Very Low-income rather than the higher Low-income calculations. Notwithstanding, the members ultimately agreed with the Very Low-income standard. The CAC membership would ask you to challenge the, more that capable, staff of the LIFE program to, in this time of economic uncertainty, look for perhaps temporary solutions that may allow families in the Low-income calculated range to participate in the LIFE program. Specifically when evaluating household income. Could there be and workaround or hardship weaver to not consider the previous years Income and instead consider current circumstances'. We are assured if this is a

possibility the LIFE staff will know the necessary legislative and administrative steps it would take to implement such a solution and could report back to you.

The CAC membership recognizes the finite funds allocated to the LIFE program and will always advocate for increasing resources overall in this area. Furthermore, we are hopeful that not many families will experience this level of financial/transportation disruption, but we can anticipate some and we should be preparing for the worst-case scenarios in this new environment.

In conclusion, the members of the CAC would like to again acknowledge the successful work of the LIFE program staff and appreciate Metro, as a not for profit public entity, exemplifying programs that provide equity to our most reliable and transit dependent communities who contribute to Metro with their fares, as well through their sales tax dollars.

Sincerely,