



# Behind the Scenes

## Executive Director's Report

The Access Board is an independent federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards.

Created in 1973 to ensure access to federally funded facilities, the Access Board is now a leading source of information on accessible design, including the built environment and transit vehicles. The Access Board is structured to function as a coordinating body among federal agencies and directly represent the public, particularly people with disabilities. Its governing board is a twenty-five member board.

From April 15-19, the Access Board will be holding its quarterly meeting in Los Angeles to understand the state of accessibility in the city. On Tuesday, the Board will hold a town hall meeting. On Wednesday, the Board will focus on accessibility in Hollywood. On Thursday, April 18, the Board will spend a whole day looking at accessibility in the City of Los Angeles as it prepares for the Olympic games.

I have been asked to participate on a panel on the 18th discussing the accessibility of transportation and transportation facilities in Los Angeles. I look forward to discussing the role that Access Services plays in making Los Angeles accessible and how new infrastructure, like bike lanes, need to consider paratransit in their design.

**Andre Colaiace**  
Executive Director

## 2024 Abilities Expo

Access staff and contractors recently attended the 2024 Abilities Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center from Friday, March 15th through Sunday, March 17th. The annual event allows staff to meet Access riders and other attendees to discuss Access Services. Close to 10,000 people attended this year's event and the Saturday event set a one-day attendance record of 4,394 people.

The Abilities Expo is a free, three-day event that highlights products, services, and technology for people with disabilities and their families. The event also offers workshops, demonstrations, and activities such as sports, dance, and service dog training. Considered "The Event" for the disability community, it provides the opportunity to network with other paratransit professionals and agencies, and to learn about current resources available to the ADA community and Access customers.



Access' eligibility services contractor, MTM, provided free marking and tethering services during the three-day event and marked and tethered 69

mobility devices. Access' travel training contractor Mobility Management Partners (MMP) offered free travel training services to Access riders who are interested in learning how to use the regional bus and rail system.

It was a great event and we look forward to next year's Expo.

**Stephen Wrenn**  
Mobility Management Administrator

## CTSA Extension host Project AIR: An Invitation to Understanding



Access' CTSA Learning and Development Program recently hosted Project AIR: "An Invitation to Understanding". Led by Kathleen Barajas, President and Founder of Project AIR, the workshop explored various aspects of disability etiquette and alternative communication options, shedding light on a more inclusive society. Kathleen, with her profound expertise, dismantled common misconceptions surrounding disabilities. Attendees learned the importance of fostering an environment of acceptance and inclusion.

"An Invitation to Understanding" was a comprehensive overview of various disabilities, emphasizing the diverse spectrum of challenges individuals may face. From physical impairments to cognitive differences, attendees gained a deeper understanding of the unique needs and experiences of people living

with disabilities. Project AIR's commitment to advocating for individuals with disabilities resonated throughout the presentation, inspiring attendees to become the change in their communities.

At Access Services, we aim to create an inclusive environment and work tirelessly to support individuals with all types of disabilities daily. Thanks to the dedication of individuals like Kathleen Barajas and organizations like Project AIR, the journey towards a more inclusive society continues, one interaction at a time!

We invite you to explore the CTSA Learning and Development Program and encourage you to invest in your professional development by registering for one or all of our classes. To register for the upcoming trainings, click on the link below:

[2024 Learning & Development Program](#)

**Mayra Noriega**  
CTSA Analyst

## Commendations

"Rider stated he had this same driver days ago and he is just so nice and accommodating and goes above and beyond to provide excellent service."

**Frank Damiani**  
Rider since November 2009

"Driver Henry is an angel, very helpful, and patient. He assisted me by the hand and escorted me to the location. Very gentle, nice, and overall great customer service."

**Vilma Argueta**  
Rider since October 2000