

Zero Fares Community Report





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Introduction



Be Brotherly.

History of T4B and Transit Equity (Zero Fares)

Zero Fares and transit equity have been core to Together for Brothers (T4B). T4B was founded in the summer of 2015. T4B envisions healthy boys and young men of color (BYMOC) as well as their families and communities. In the past eight years, T4B has centered and built capacity by, for and with BYMOC to be leaders at all levels in their communities as “most impacted communities” who should tell their own stories including identifying their own problems, root causes and solutions.

In 2017-2018 T4B completed a health impact assessment (HIA) focused on transportation and identifying important social determinants of health which include access to education, employment, recreation and promoting healthy habits like exercise and healthy food. T4B has since centered “transit equity”, which is getting transit-dependent bus riders the transit they need, as a vital focus in organizing with most impacted communities. T4B organized with the City of Albuquerque to offer free summer youth passes in 2018 and 2019, and helped distribute bus passes to our communities. Along with the community and partners, T4B supported and organized to advocate for the recognition of Transit Equity Day to honor Rosa Parks’ birthday in

Albuquerque, NM. This included free public transit in 2019 and 2020. With the COVID pandemic, T4B again organized with the city to give students free transit with their school IDs. And, with Transit Equity Day in 2021, T4B encouraged the city to add seniors and veterans for free fares and later with the budget process ultimately to advocate for the City Council to budget for the Zero Fares pilot program. 2021 was also when T4B began hosting the Albuquerque Bus Riders Union (ABRU) to engage with bus riders and transit equity.

T4B recognizes the many community partners including the Zero Fares Coalition and funders who have supported the art making, community research, leadership development, organizing and storytelling with BYMOC, bus riders and other most impacted communities. Storytelling by bus riders has always been key to the success of the organizing, which included surveys with bus riders since 2022 as well as co-creating the Zero Fares mural that summer. And in the summer of 2023, T4B and community partners co-hosted art-making activities with bus riders to document their stories with zines, PhotoStories, StoryCorps and more.

Part One

Zero Fares Surveys

T4B ZERO FARES COMMUNITY REPORT

Since January 2022, Together For Brothers (T4B) has collected surveys from almost 400 bus riders across Albuquerque who have shared their stories about how Zero Fares impacts them and how public transit is an integral part of their daily lives. These are just some of the stories.

"I'm a mom. So getting to work and picking up my kid from school are extremely important. Zero Fares has helped me get what I need done, done."

- Anonymous

"I'm not currently working, so it's been a huge help. Service has also been fast and the no cost helps me get to the laundromat, grocery store, clinic and gives me the ability to still live my life despite my current unemployment situation."

- Alan

"I love the Zero Fares program! I have started using the bus for most of my everyday transportation. Earlier this year my car was totaled in an accident. Losing our most reliable vehicle was hard on our household and the Zero Fares program has given me a viable option for getting around while saving money. I feel better not buying another car."

- Anonymous

"I don't have any transportation. We don't have enough money sometimes, barely making money to get around every penny counts. I ride the bus every day to get groceries and it's very convenient."

- Sady

"Zero Fares has helped me get around to interviews and to work. I support free bus passes because people are going through some really hard times and it helps a lot to save money. A lot. To be supported like this is awesome."

- Joshua and Britney

"It impacts me because now I don't have to miss the bus and look for change. I can now get to places like the mall, school, friends and my brother's house."

- Angel

"My dad can't take me to school every day, so the days he's not able to, I take the bus to school. I take the bus most days from school to the bus, I might walk if I forget or don't have extra change. With Zero Fares I guess I don't have to worry about that anymore."

- Bryan

"I have to use the bus to get to work, doctor appointments and to visit family. Zero Fares has helped a lot because oftentimes I would stress out about making sure I had the right amount of change, and have to get bus passes regularly which sometimes jeopardizes me getting to work on time. Now I don't worry about that and can focus on actually getting to where I need to go and be on time. I remember I've had to ask bus riders for "pity rides" when I've lost, forgot or didn't have the necessary funds to make it to work"

- Isaiah

"I have been riding the bus my whole life. It has always come with challenges, this Zero Fares has helped me save and put my money on food, worrying less about budgeting for my weekly commute is a big stress reliever."

- González

"Zero Fares has helped me because I don't always have money so I couldn't get to doctors' appointments or people between paychecks looking for work. It's been so helpful. I support it being permanent!"

- Robert

Part Two

Zero Fares Mural

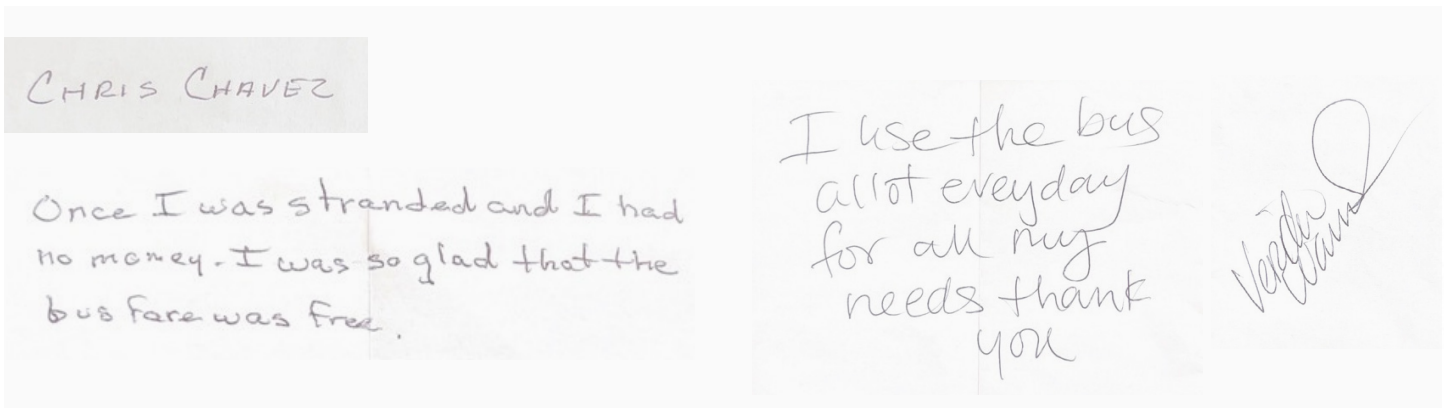
In the summer of 2022, T4B was funded by an anonymous donor with the American Endowment Foundation and used the funds for an art-making project with BYMOC and bus riders to plan, including feedback and research with bus riders and community partners, and implement a portable Zero Fares mural with Working Classroom and community artist, Angel Pavia. The mural has been transported and set up at community activities and meetings across Albuquerque.



Part Three

Zines and Photos from June Activity

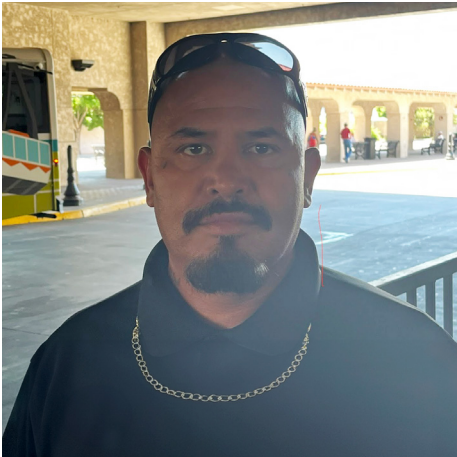
Storytelling has been an integral part of connecting data to real-life experiences of bus riders. In the summer of 2023, T4B and community partners including Keshet Dance & Center for the Arts and Working Classroom worked together to plan community activities focused on art-making and storytelling with bus riders. In June, dozens of “zines” or a method of using folded paper and low technology to share bus rider “stories of self” – challenge, choice and outcome – connected to Zero Fares and public transit. Below are a few zines and pictures of bus riders who participated in making zines.



Part Four

PhotoStories and Photos from July Activity

Together for Brothers, Keshet and Working Classroom collected additional stories in July of 2023 including PhotoStories or photos with captions from bus riders. Some of these PhotoStories below also share the stories of bus riders and the impact of Zero Fares.



“Zero Fares helps a lot when you have no income. I use the bus to go to work and the store.”
- Jesse Montaño



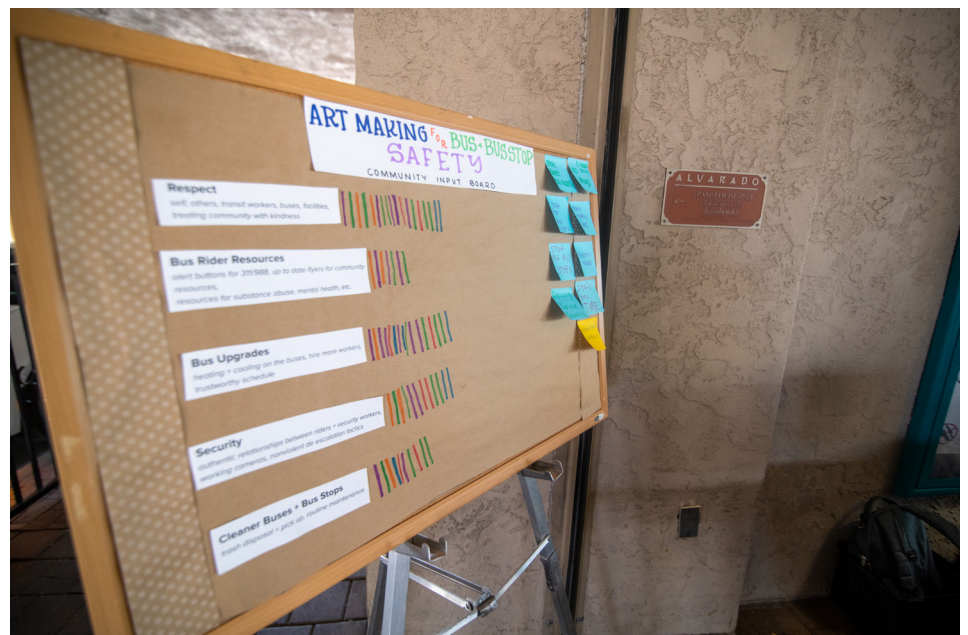
“Zero Fares helps because I don’t need money to get around town and to appointments.”
- Thomas



Part Five

Photos from August Activity

Together For Brothers collects stories in many different forms. Below are pictures of people who participated in our bus and bus stop safety events over the summer at the Alvarado Transit Center, one of the places where it is commonly mistaken to be an unsafe space. Together for Brothers collected PhotoStories and gave food and water to attendees and partners including Keshet, Working Classroom and ENLACE. The event also had art-making activities.



Part Six

Next Steps

Together for Brothers will continue to organize with most impacted communities including transit-dependent bus riders. Public transit is a human right. Transit equity is a step in the right direction. The future of Albuquerque is mobility sovereignty that includes accessible and affordable, ideally free, public transit; clean and low/no emissions buses and vans; safe buses and bus stops; biking, walking and mobility for people with disabilities; and documenting and sharing the stories of transit-dependent bus riders.

T4B is also excited to continue organizing for Zero Fares statewide and collaborating with Las Cruces and Los Alamos, who are already piloting free public transit, and other New Mexican communities to collaborate with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and other local, state and federal partners.

Supporters

T4B ZERO FARES COMMUNITY REPORT

Since 2017, T4B has collaborated with many community partners who support transit equity and Zero Fares including:

Affordable Housing Coalition
Albuquerque Community Foundation
Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless
Albuquerque Public Schools
Casa Q
Catholic Charities
Central New Mexico Community College
City of Albuquerque Transit Advisory Board
East Central Ministries
Encuentro
Engaging Latina/o Communities in Education (ENLACE) New Mexico
Enlace Comunitario
Families United for Education
Fathers New Mexico
Forward Together
Health Equity Council (HEC)
Healthy Here Initiative
HopeWorks
International District Healthy Communities Coalition (IDHCC)
Keshet Dance and Center for the Arts
La Plazita Institute
McCune Charitable Foundation
Native American Community Academy
Native Health Initiative
New Day Youth & Family Services
New Mexico Dream Team
New Mexico Health Equity Partnership
NewMexicoWomen.Org
Organizers in the Land of Enchantment
Prosperity Works
Sierra Club
Strong Families New Mexico
The Wilderness Society
Three Sisters Kitchen (TSK)
Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico
University of New Mexico Community Engagement Center
University of New Mexico Medical Group - School Based Health Centers
Vizionz-Sankofa
Working Classroom

About Together for Brothers

T4B has a vision of “better health outcomes and health equity for boys and young men of color, their families and communities” and a mission of “led by community & love, partners across New Mexico with BYMOC and allies to build power, demand justice & create change”. T4B is funded and fiscally sponsored by Albuquerque Community Foundation, Annie Casey Foundation, Bernalillo County, Center for Civic Policy, Centers for Disease Control, City of Albuquerque Urban Enhancement Trust Fund, Energy Foundation, Forward Together, Fund for Frontline Power, Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing, McCune Charitable Foundation, New Mexico Department of Health, New Mexico Outdoor Equity Fund, Orange County Community Foundation, Presbyterian Healthcare Services, Schmidt Family Foundation, Solutions Project, TK Foundation, The Wilderness Society, Token Ibis, United Way of North Central New Mexico and University of New Mexico.

Learn more at www.togetherforbrothers.org.





Be Brotherly.