

METRO'S YOUTH CRUZ FREE PROGRAM EXTENDED TO APRIL 2026

Since its launch in March 2023, Santa Cruz METRO's Youth Cruz Free pilot program has been making waves. The initiative, which provides free local bus rides to youth in grades K-12, has resulted in a remarkable 536% increase in youth bus ridership.

Now extended through April 3, 2026, Youth Cruz Free serves as a beacon of accessibility and empowerment for young people in Santa Cruz County. By eliminating transportation barriers, METRO aims to cultivate a lifelong habit of transit usage while broadening opportunities and resources for all youth, especially those in historically underserved communities.

The Youth Cruz Free pilot program has already transformed the lives of many young individuals by granting them the freedom to effortlessly explore their community. Through the program, children and teenagers can now access a myriad of educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities scattered throughout Santa Cruz County. By riding METRO buses, they can conveniently reach schools, libraries, parks, museums, and numerous other destinations without financial constraints.

METRO firmly believes in the power of transportation to elevate lives, and the Youth Cruz Free pilot program exemplifies this commitment. The program fosters a sense of independence in young individuals while also reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. By encouraging Santa Cruz County's youth to embrace sustainable transportation alternatives from an early age, METRO actively contributes to a greener and more connected community. Together, let's pave the way for a community where every young person can thrive.

Youth Cruz Free Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who qualifies for METRO's Youth Cruz Free Pilot Program?

A: Youth, grades K-12, receive free fares on METRO services throughout Santa Cruz County, excluding Highway 17 Express Service.

Q: What form of validation is required for the Youth Cruz Free Pilot Program?

A: Riders in 8th Grade and under, may be asked by the driver to identify their grade level or the school they attend. Students may be asked to provide Student ID, if one is available. Riders in Grades 9 – 12 will be asked to show ID to the driver. No registration is necessary with Student ID.

Q: If I don't have a student ID, how can I receive free fares for Youth Cruz Free?

A: Obtain a METRO Youth Cruz Free ID, by visiting one of METRO's Customer Service windows at either the Watsonville Transit Center or Customer Experience Center in Downtown Santa Cruz, Monday – Friday, 8AM – 5PM.

For more information, call Customer Service at (831) 425-8600, email youthcruzfree@scmetro.org, or visit scmetro.org/youthcruzfree.

K-12 Students ride METRO for free

Show your student ID to board (required for 9-12th grade only).

**YOUTH
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