

# California Integrated Mobility Program & Cal-ITP: Equity through Payments

Executive Meeting  
Interagency Equity Advisory Committee  
May 13, 2026



# What is the California Integrated Mobility Program (CIM)?

A Caltrans Program to:

- Reduce barriers between modes\*
- Reduce barriers within modes

...so travelers can make the trips they need to take, **seamlessly**.

\*car, bus, train, bikeshare, EV...



# What is Cal-ITP?

The California Integrated Travel Project (**Cal-ITP**) is a statewide initiative designed to unify transit in California with a common fare payment method, real-time data standard, and seamless verification of eligibility for transit discounts.

The Cal-ITP is “housed” at Caltrans on behalf of CalSTA, and funded by a TIRCP grant.



# Cal-ITP Objectives

Making travel simpler and more cost-effective by developing standardized policies and practices to:

- Get accurate and complete information to plan trips in real time
- Enable contactless payments
- Automate transit eligibility verification & discounts
- Advance financial inclusion for un/underbanked



# Contactless open payments

A new way to pay for transit (but not new for anything else)



# Vision

From a customer's perspective, paying for transit should be as easy as paying for a cup of coffee - customers know they can instantly pay by tapping their bank card or smartphone, no matter where they travel.



# Advantages of contactless payment

Allowing customers to use what's already in their pockets—bank cards or smart devices—to pay for transportation creates advantageous outcomes, including:



Improved customer experience



Higher ridership



Lower costs for customers and providers



Reduced emissions by reducing dwell times



More equitable access through fare capping and automated discounts

# Using Cal-ITP to Address Equitable Access through Payments

**CAL**  
**ITP**

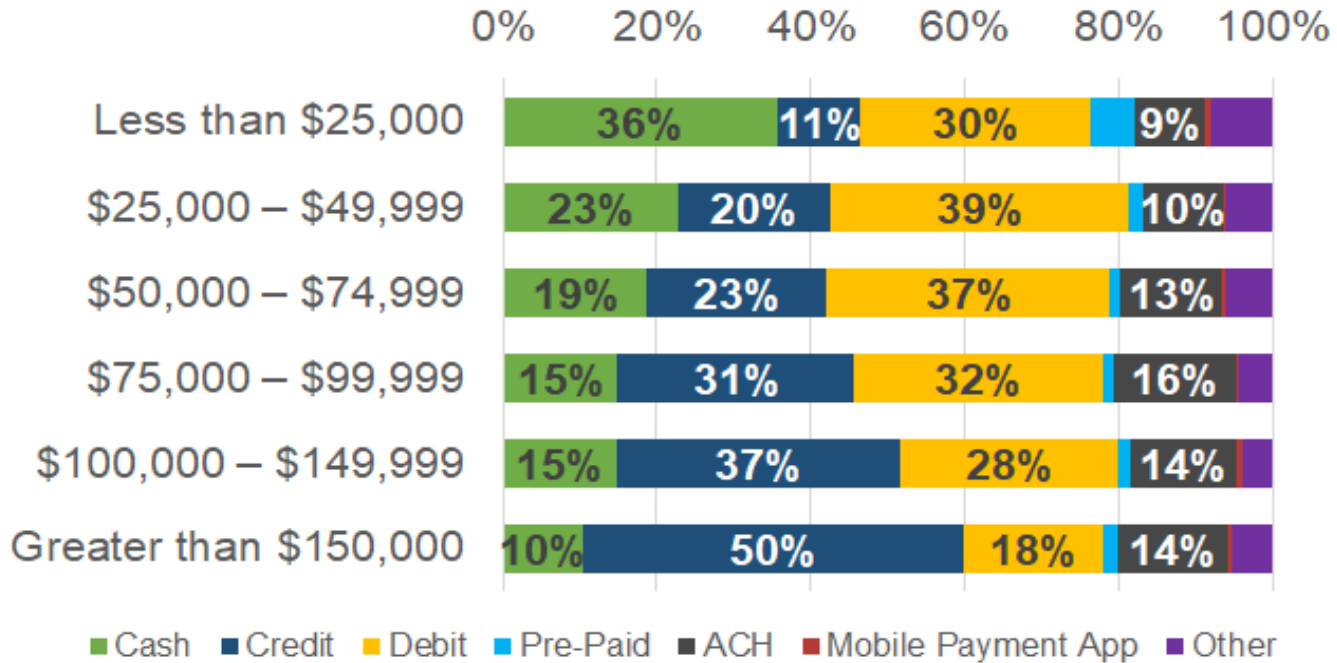


An estimated 4.5 percent of U.S. households were “unbanked” in 2021, meaning that no one in the household had a checking or savings account at a bank or credit union (i.e., bank). This proportion represents approximately **5.9** million U.S. households.

Conversely, 95.5 percent of U.S. households were “banked” in 2021... This proportion represents approximately **126.6** million U.S. households.



# Share of Payment Method by Household Income



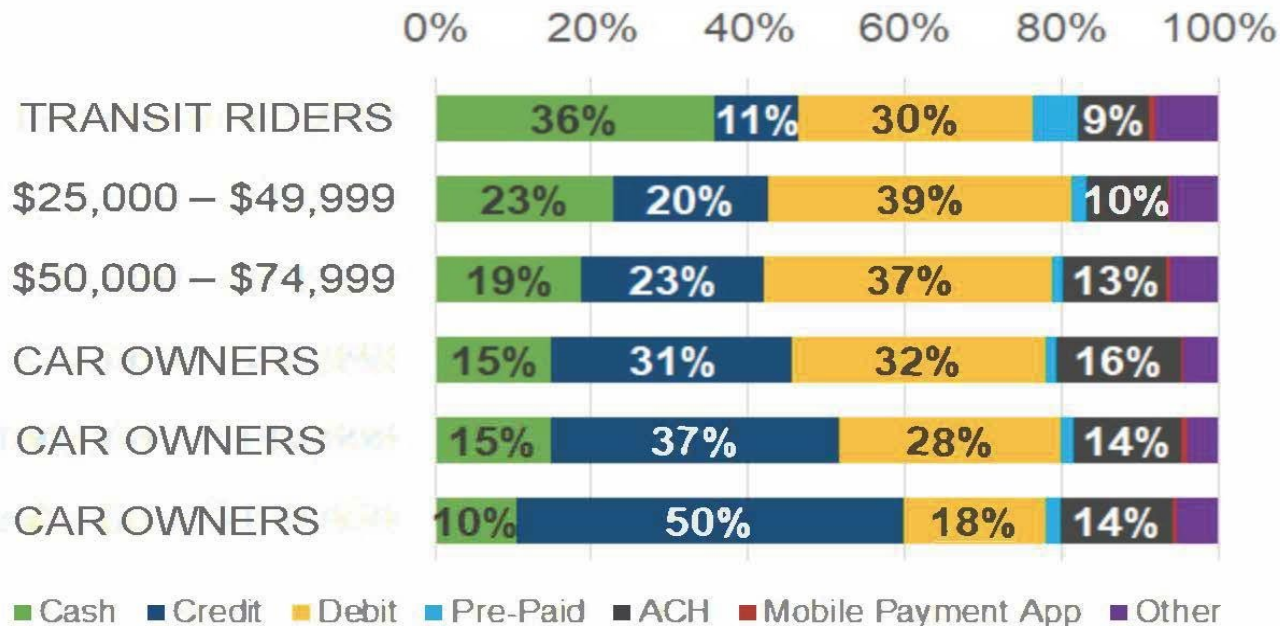
<https://www.frbsf.org/cash/publications/fed-notes/2023/may/2023-findings-from-the-diary-of-consumer-payment-choice/>

# Who accepts contactless payments? Who doesn't accept cash?

Another way to think of the previous slide....

Households earning less than \$25,000 are

Households earning more than \$75,000 are



<https://www.frbsf.org/cash/publications/fed-notes/2023/may/2023-findings-from-the-diary-of-consumer-payment-choice/>

**“Cash use for consumers making less than \$25,000 a year exceeded the combined cash use for all other household income groups making more than \$75,000. This highlights that the access and use of the full suite of payment choices is not always available to all members of the U.S. population.”**

**What’s up with that?**

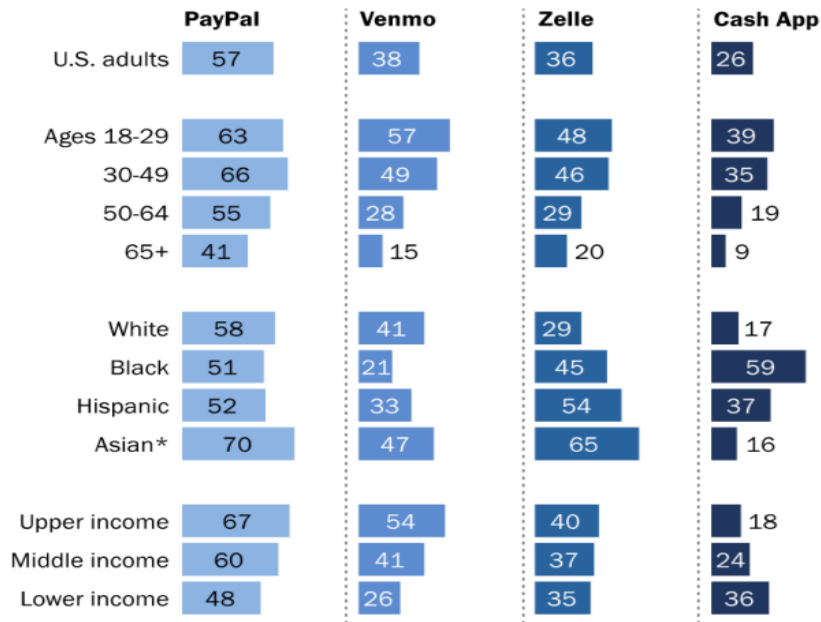


<https://www.frbsf.org/cash/publications/fed-notes/2023/may/2023-findings-from-the-diary-of-consumer-payment-choice/>

# Payment Options

## Black Americans more likely than other racial, ethnic groups to say they use Cash App; Venmo use varies widely by age, household income

*% of U.S. adults who say they ever use the following*



\*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2020 earnings. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 5-17, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



# Cal-ITP Benefits

Making Travel Easy and Welcoming  
through  
Transit Discount Automation



# Cal-ITP Benefits: Automated transit discounts

## Cal-ITP Benefits objectives

- 1 Increase ridership by improving consumer experience
- 2 Reduce burden on local transit providers to define and verify eligibility for transit discounts
- 3 Reduce burden of discount enrollment for consumers by demystifying bureaucracy

# Transit discounts today: Who gets transit discounts?

Transit providers offer reduced fares to specific rider groups, typically those presumed most transit-dependent and/or high-need, including:

- Older adults
- Veterans
- Students
- Low-income consumers
- Persons with disabilities



# Context: Discount enrollment

Today, the burden of proving discount eligibility falls on the consumer.

- Confusing policies that vary by jurisdiction/agency
- Complex instructions
- Invasive verification, with storage of personal data
- In-person process, limited to business hours
- Requirement to recertify eligibility (e.g., every three years for seniors)

**191**  
transit  
providers'  
discount  
policies  
reviewed

**83**  
unique  
discount  
eligibility  
criteria

**17**  
definitions of  
"senior,"  
ranging from  
55–80 years

# A Solution: Cal-ITP Benefits



# Key features

- **Define “older adults” as 65+ years.** Standard DMV definition, allows for interoperability across agencies and more convenient, predictable consumer experience
- **Centralize eligibility, not fare policy.** Leaves fare decisions to local operators while reducing administrative burden
- **Digitized enrollment process.** Improved consumer convenience
- **Increased rider data privacy**
  - Only non-identifying information is collected (65+? Yes/No)
  - No personally identifiable information (PII) stored by transit providers or other government agencies

# Benefits in action

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)  
demonstration project

# Demonstration scope

Launched in 2022, the Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) demo included:

- Transit riders
  - Who are seniors (65+) OR have an MST Courtesy Card AND
  - Have a CA-issued driver's license or ID card AND
  - Have a bank card (credit/debit)



# Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) demonstration

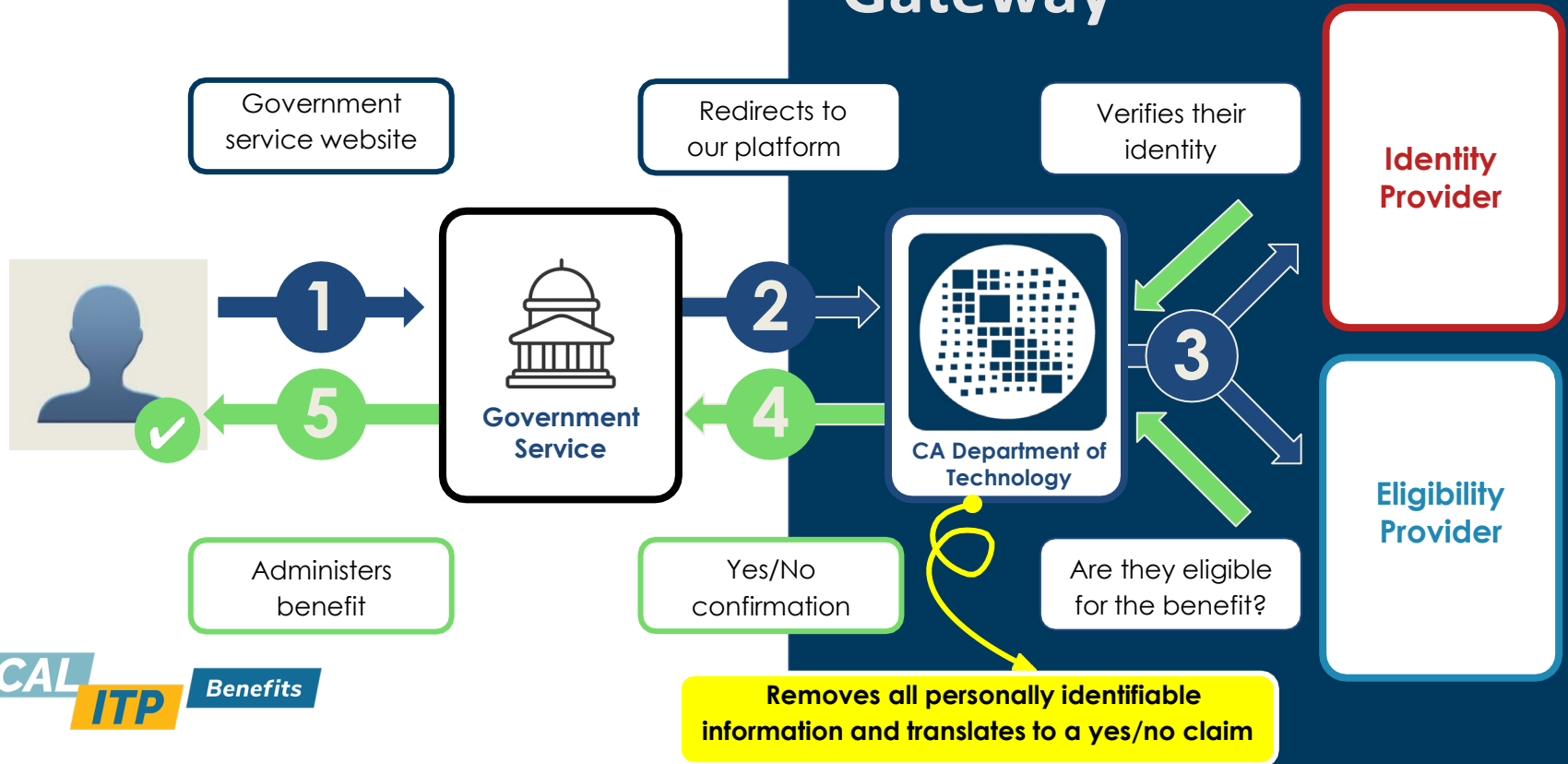
- First open-loop contactless fare collection demo in California
- Lets riders tap contactless bank cards (Visa or Mastercard credit/debit) to pay for the bus
- Through Cal-ITP Benefits tool, older adults receive transit discount when they tap to pay
- All content available in English and Spanish



How it works:

# Californians

# California Identity Gateway



## Key players

## Role



Identity Provider: Digital Identity service



Authentication Gateway:

Confirms rider's eligibility for senior discount (65+ years old) using login.gov



Transit processor: Charges correct fare when rider taps to pay, accounting for eligible discounts.



## Key players

## Role

Medicare.gov

Identity Provider: Digital Identity service

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Identity Provider: Digital Identity service

CalFresh

Identity Provider: Digital Identity service

CAL  
ITP Benefits

# Putting it all together

Transit + Benefits + Financial Inclusion



# Why stop at Transit?

Here are some other benefits that require cumbersome verification:

- State Parks (age)
- Tolling Agencies (income)
- CARB Programs (income, age)
- California Lifeline (income)
- Medical (income)



# When everyone has an account...

- Relief is easier to distribute
- Transit and tolling speed up
- Rangers freed of cash handling
- Consumers build credit
- Incentives become possible



# Get in touch

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