



## Step Up Loop Bus Policy and Procedure

The Loop Bus provides at-risk youth with free transportation to free activities that connect them to mentoring and gang prevention programs throughout Tulare County. The program is funded by Measure R and is part of the Step Up program.

The following Loop Bus Policy and Procedure was approved by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on June 5, 2018 per Resolution # 2018-0441.

### **Request Process:**

Requests to use the Loop Bus must be made via the online request application. Completed applications for service must be made at least four weeks in advance of the requested service date to ensure adequate time for processing and required planning. Applications may be submitted no more than three months in advance. Organizations may only request one date per application. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

In order to use the Loop Bus service, organizations must demonstrate in the application how the trip furthers the mission of the Step Up program. For more information on the Step Up program, please visit the website: <https://stepuptc.com/index.cfm/overview/>

Organizations must also demonstrate in the application that the youth being transported on the Loop Bus are at-risk. The following will be accepted definitions of at-risk: youth that face one or more of the following barriers: school dropout; youth within the age of compulsory school attendance but has not attended school for at least the most recent school quarter; a youth who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; a homeless or runaway youth or an youth who is in foster care; a youth eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act; a youth who is pregnant or parenting; a youth with a disability; a youth who is emancipated; youth who have been suspended five or more times or who have been expelled; youth who have been deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official; youth who have been referred to or are being treated for substance abuse related problems.

Youth will be defined as any young person who is within the age of compulsory school attendance of an elementary, middle school, or high school. This includes public, private, alternative schools so long as the individuals are under the age of eighteen.

### **Cancellation Policy and Changes to Confirmed Trips**

A confirmed Loop Bus means the bus has been reserved by MV Transit staff and the applicant has been notified by e-mail and phone call by MV Transit staff.

A confirmed Loop Bus trip must be cancelled at least two weeks from the requested date of service.

Any changes to a confirmed Loop Bus trip must be made at least two weeks ahead of the requested date of service. Changes include: pick up or drop off location changes, changes to the pick up or return trip time, adding or deleting stops to routes, etc.

### **No Show Policy:**

A trip will be considered a no show if not cancelled within two weeks of the requested date of service.

A trip will be considered a no show if the riders are not at the pick-up location within ten minutes of the requested pick-up time.

A site will be notified of their No Show status by an email sent from Loop Bus Transit staff. The first No Show will cause the Loop Bus Transit staff to issue a written warning to the applicant. If a site has two no shows within three months, the site will be temporarily suspended from using Loop Bus Services for six months. The No Show policy is site specific, not organization-wide.

In the event that a confirmed trip must be cancelled due to inclement weather that will not allow the scheduled activity to occur, last-minute cancellations may be accommodated on a case by case basis by staff.

**School District usage:**

School districts are prohibited from using the Loop Buses for school-sponsored events, including, but not limited to, after-school programming, transportation of school sports teams, or the transport of music programs to festivals or concerts. School Districts may be permitted to use the bus for community events that are taking place at the school site and will be approved on a case by case basis by staff.

**First Amendment Clause:**

In order to comply with the U.S. and California Constitutions, the Loop Bus shall not be used to transport persons to religious activities, including, but not limited to: activities whose sole intent consists of prayer, religious instruction, and/or proselytism.

**Rider Minimum and Maximum:**

There are four buses in the Loop Bus fleet. Two buses have a capacity to transport twenty-eight passengers and two buses have a capacity to transport thirty passengers. Loop Buses are equipped to transport wheelchairs; however, one wheelchair will minimize the number of available seats on a bus by six.

Trips shall have at least twelve passengers.

Organizations may not request more than one bus per request.

If an organization has a need to transport less than the minimum number or more than one bus, special consideration will be given but will be approved on a case-by-case basis by staff.

**Chaperone Policy:**

Chaperones are required to be present on the Loop Bus at all times. Chaperone contact information will be gathered at the time of the request. Chaperones identified at the time of the request should be present for the trip; however, any changes to the chaperones on the trip must be submitted to Loop Bus staff at least two weeks prior to the date of service. One chaperone is required for every twenty students. If there are more than twenty students, two chaperones will be required.

**Overnight Trips:**

Overnight trips will not be permitted. The pick-up and drop off dates must be the same day.

**Preference for Step Up events:**

In order to support Step Up programming, the Loop Bus will give preference to Step Up related events and organizations; including, but not limited to: Youth Challenge, Summer Night Lights, and for organizations who are currently receiving Step Up Youth Activities grant funding.

**Hours of Operation:**

The Loop Bus may be requested for use within the following hours of operation; however, during the school academic year, the Loop Bus may not be used during normal school instructional hours:

Weekdays – 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Weekends – 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

The Loop Bus will be closed for service in observance of the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The following holidays will operate on Sunday Level Service: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President’s Day, Veteran’s Day, the day after Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Eve.

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster which has necessitated the use of County buses or transit contractor staff for transportation communications, or evacuation purposes, Tulare County may suspend Loop Bus service for the duration of the emergency or natural disaster.

**Destination Limitations:**

The Loop Bus may not travel to destinations above 2,000-foot elevation.

The Loop Bus may not travel to destinations outside of Tulare County.

**Consent Form Responsibility:**

The applicant is responsible for the consent and emergency information forms that are required to ride the Loop Bus. Transportation consent forms can be downloaded on the Step Up website: [https://stepuptc.com/stepup/assets/File/LOOP%20consent%20form\(2\).pdf](https://stepuptc.com/stepup/assets/File/LOOP%20consent%20form(2).pdf)

Disclaimer: The County of Tulare can terminate services, without cause, up to five business days prior to service if the applicant fails to meet obligations