



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 (4) 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 (3) months in advance. Applicant Organizations may only request use of the Loop Bus for one (1) date per application. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

In order to use the Loop Bus service, Applicant 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/>

Each applicant organization requesting to use the Loop Bus must demonstrate that it's mission and the trip requested further the Loop Bus purpose of providing transportation to free activities that connect at-risk youth to mentoring and gang prevention programs and activities within Tulare County. The following are indicators which the County will use to determine whether a youth is "at-risk":

1. An individual under the age of 18, or who is within the age of compulsory school attendance of an elementary, middle, or high school. This includes private, public, and alternative schools. In addition, the individual also may fall under one or more of the following categories.
 - a. The individual has "dropped out" of school;
 - b. The individual is within the age of compulsory school attendance but has not attended school for at least the most recent school quarter;
 - c. The individual is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
 - d. The individual is homeless, or is considered a runaway youth (defined as being away from home for one night for youth under fourteen and for two more nights for youth fifteen or older), or a youth who is in foster care;
 - e. The individual is eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act;
 - f. The individual is a youth who is pregnant or parenting;
 - g. The has been diagnosed with a disability;
 - h. The individual is an emancipated minor;
 - i. The individual has been suspended five or more times, or who has been expelled from their academic institution;
 - j. The individual has been documented by a school official as being at serious risk of dropping out of school;
 - k. The individual has been referred to, or is being treated for, a substance abuse related medical or behavioral condition.

Cancellation Policy and Changes to Confirmed Trips:

Within one week, County staff will notify the Applicant Organization whether the trip has been approved and confirmed. A confirmed Loop Bus trip 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, date of service 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.

An Applicant Organization 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 an Applicant Organization has two (2) no-shows within three (3) months, the Applicant Organization will be temporarily suspended from using Loop Bus Services for six (6) months. For purposes of the no show policy, each Applicant Organization shall be determined by chapters or sites and not by Tax ID.

In the event that a confirmed trip must be cancelled due to inclement weather, or other natural disaster 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 will be prohibited from requesting to use the Loop Bus for school-sanctioned events, such as ASB trips, FFA trips, band or choir performances, sports games, etc.

Religious Activities:

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

Rider Minimum and Maximum:

Trips shall have at least twelve (12) passengers.

Applicant Organizations may not request more than one (1) bus per Application.

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.

Please note that the capacity of the bus changes if one of the passengers requires use of a wheelchair or any other large device. If a passenger utilizes a wheelchair, this removes six seats from the bus capacity.

Chaperone Policy:

Chaperones are required to be present on the Loop Bus at all times. Applicant Organizations must submit chaperone contact information will be gathered at the time of the request. One chaperone is required for every twenty (20) students. If there are more than twenty (20) students, two (2) chaperones will be required.

Overnight Trips:

Overnight trips will not be permitted. The pick-up and drop -off dates must be on 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:

Weekdays: 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Weekends: 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

During the academic school year, the Loop Bus may not be used during school instructional hours. 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 a Sunday schedule: 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.

Consent Form Responsibility:

The Applicant Organization 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.