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NEWS  
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## **RIPTA AND RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ANNOUNCE BUS PASS PILOT PROJECT FOR VETERANS**

**Providence, Rhode Island, May 24, 2017.** . .The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs (RIOVA) announced a new pilot bus pass program today for local veterans. Funded by a grant from Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs, the project will enable RIPTA to learn more about the transportation needs of veterans while also offering fare products to some veterans. This pilot project will provide up to 200 qualified U.S. military veterans with free, unlimited rides on RIPTA’s fixed-route buses through the end of 2017. Passes will be available beginning June 1, 2017 through June 29 on a first come, first served basis while supplies last. Under this pilot project, RIPTA will also offer free service on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, 2017, to all Rhode Island veterans with proof of eligibility.

In order to apply for this pilot project, qualified veterans must present a completed application and proof of eligibility to RIPTA’s Photo ID Office starting Thursday, June 1, 2017. Participating veterans will also be required to participate in a survey aimed at gauging veterans’ transportation use and needs. Veterans can present one of the following forms of identification as proof of eligibility for this pilot program: Active Duty Military ID, Retiree Military ID, RI Driver’s License with Veterans Designation, VA Medical Card. Approved applicants will receive a “Veterans Pass” smart card with their name on it. Veterans do not need a special pass to travel for free on Memorial Day and can show RIPTA bus drivers any of the above forms of military identification.

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“We are grateful to the Office of Veterans Affairs for awarding RIPTA the grant money for this project,” said Barbara Polichetti, RIPTA’s Director of Public Affairs. “This pilot project will allow us to assist some veterans while also gathering valuable information about what their transportation needs are. We look forward to working with the Office of Veterans Affairs on this and future projects that might allow us to build on this and be of assistance to our veterans.”

In March, Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs Director Kasim Yarn announced that RIPTA was one of four organizations to receive a Veteran Supportive Services Grant.

“Our support grants help advance one of Governor Raimondo’s highest priorities: taking care of those who served,” Commander Kasim Yarn, Director of the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs. “RIPTA is a deserving partner that is committed to helping Veterans. We look forward to working with them on this important public transportation pilot program.”

**RIPTA’s Photo Identification Office at One Kennedy Plaza in Downtown Providence is open Monday and Wednesday from 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm. The Photo Identification Office at RIPTA’s headquarters, 705 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, is open on Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm.**

*For information on RIPTA’s services, call 781-9400 or visit [ripta.com](http://ripta.com).*

*For more information, on RIOVA’s programs, visit <http://www.vets.ri.gov/>*