

A Rider's Guide *Student Edition*

2026



The MBTA is pleased
to welcome new and
returning students and
to help them get to
where they need to go!



Table of Contents

Welcome & Overview of the MBTA..... 3

Planning Your Trip..... 4

What Does it Cost to Ride the MBTA? 5

How to Use Your CharlieCard 6

Middle and High School Student CharlieCards 7

College Student Passes 8

Safety Tips for Students Riding the MBTA..... 9

MBTA Map & Back-to-School Guide to Taking the T..... 10

A New Way to Pay: Contactless Payment 11

MBTA Fare Checks..... 12

Stay Connected..... 13



Welcome & Overview of the MBTA

Welcome, Students!

The MBTA is proud to serve our city's students and help you get to where you need to go to take advantage of all the area has to offer!

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), known as the T, is one of the oldest public transit systems in the United States. The T serves 200+ communities in Massachusetts. From the Commuter Rail to the subway and buses, the T offers affordable ways to explore the city and beyond.

The MBTA works with the City of Boston, our municipal partners, and the many schools in the area to provide students with alternative travel options during track closures. The T is committed to working together with you to keep traveling on public transportation safe.

This ***A Rider's Guide Student Edition*** is a tool to provide students with options and information to inform their travel needs.





Planning Your Trip

Trip Planner Tool

[MBTA.com/trip-planner](https://www.mbta.com/trip-planner)

Use this tool to plan a trip on public transit with directions and suggestions based on real-time data.

Schedule

Most bus and train service starts at 5 AM and ends at 1 AM on weekdays, with some bus services on busy routes running later and starting as early as 3:30 AM. Weekend subway and select bus service runs until 2 AM. Schedules depend on the type of transit and day of the week. The service runs more frequently during weekday rush hours (7–9 AM and 4–6:30 PM).

Get T-Alerts

[MBTA.com/Alerts](https://www.mbta.com/alerts)

Receive text or email alerts that are relevant to you, at times when you want them.

Transit Ambassadors, wearing red shirts and carrying tablets, are available to assist riders in-station.



MBTA Go is our official mobile app for live information about MBTA service. You can check arrival times, track vehicles, and learn about the latest closures.

The screenshot shows the MBTA Trip Planner website. At the top, there is a blue header with a 'Menu' button, the MBTA logo, and the text 'Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority'. To the right is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search for routes, info, and more'. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Trip Planner'. The main heading is 'Trip Planner'. On the left, there are input fields for 'From' (labeled 'A Enter a location') and 'To' (labeled 'B Enter a location'), with a swap button between them. Below these are 'When' options: 'Now', 'Leave At', and 'Arrive By'. The 'Modes' section has a dropdown menu set to 'All Modes' and a checked checkbox for 'Wheelchair accessible'. A large blue button at the bottom of the form says 'Get trip suggestions'. On the right, a map of Boston is displayed, showing the Charles River, various neighborhoods like Charlestown, North Point, and Waterfront, and major roads like I-93 and I-90.



What Does it Cost to Ride the MBTA?

There are several ways to pay fares. Most students use a reloadable MBTA pass or CharlieCard. Riders can now also pay cash or use a contactless debit/credit card, smartphone, or watch.

- Subway 1-way: \$2.40
- Local Bus 1-way: \$1.70
- Commuter Rail 1-way: \$2.40–\$13.25
- Ferry 1-way: \$2.40–\$9.75

Student Fares

The MBTA offers a variety of reduced-fare programs to support youth and students:

- Middle and High Schools [MBTA.com/studentcard](https://www.mbta.com/studentcard)
- College Student Semester Passes [MBTA.com/semester](https://www.mbta.com/semester)

Many public schools, including Boston Public Schools, provide monthly MBTA passes for students in grades 7-12.

The MBTA is committed to providing reliable, accessible transportation to all. Learn more about reduced fares and apply at [MBTA.com/reduced](https://www.mbta.com/reduced)





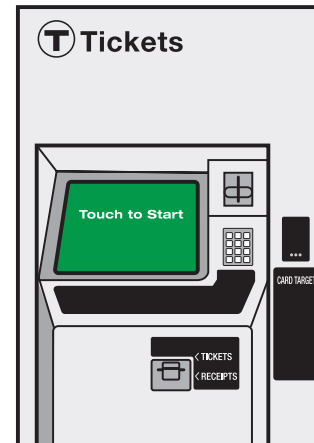
How to Use Your CharlieCard

A CharlieCard is a reusable transit fare card. You can load it with value or passes to ride the subway or bus.

Learn more at
[MBTA.com/charliecard](https://www.mbta.com/charliecard)



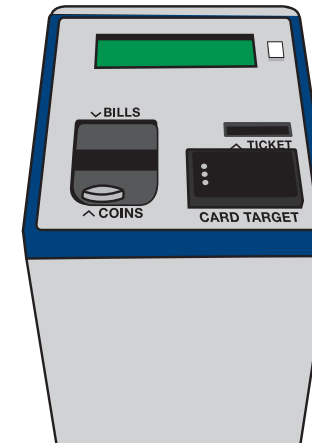
Step 1: Add Value



At a subway station

You can add value using a fare vending machine located inside the station.

1. Tap your card on the target.
2. Select the value or pass you want to add.
3. Pay with cash/credit.
4. Tap the card again to finish.



On a bus or street-level train

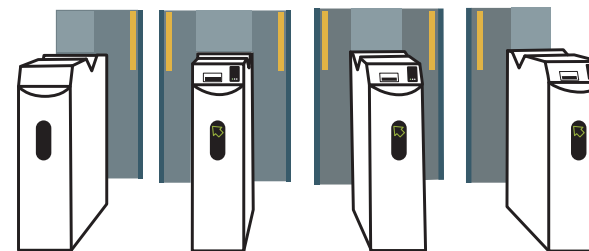
You can add value using the onboard fare box located at the front of the bus or subway car.

1. Press the white button.
2. Tap your card on the target.
3. Insert cash or coins.
4. Press the white button again.
5. Tap the card again to finish.

Step 2: Tap and Hop On

At a subway station

You can enter and pay by tapping your card on a fare gate target at the station's entrance.



At a bus or street-level train stop

You can board and pay by tapping your card on the fare box near the front door as you enter.



Middle and High School Student CharlieCards

Some middle and high schools participate in the Student Pass Program making their students eligible for either an M7 Card or an S-Card at the beginning of every school year.

- M7 Cards are preloaded with passes paid by schools for the entire school year.
- S-Cards need to be loaded with cash value or passes by students, parents, or guardians.

Students with a homeschool or online school letter from their school district's Superintendent's office may be eligible for a Student CharlieCard and can request an M7 or S-Card.

Learn more at [MBTA.com/studentcard](https://www.mbta.com/studentcard)

Middle or high school administrators can arrange participation for students. Learn more at [MBTA.com/student](https://www.mbta.com/student)





College Student Passes

Most colleges and universities in Greater Boston offer students discounted MBTA fares on Semester Passes. Students can use these unlimited passes all semester to get to class, head to work or catch up with friends.

Students' CharlieCard or CharlieTicket arrive loaded with the Semester Pass of their choice:

- Semester LinkPass: Unlimited travel on the subway and local bus
- Semester Commuter Rail Pass: Unlimited travel on the Commuter Rail (up to the zone distance purchased), plus unlimited subway and local bus trips
- Bus-only passes and ferry passes are also offered.

University Passes are available, billed monthly for use throughout the entire year. Schools are billed for the rides students take.

Semester and University Pass:
Learn more at [MBTA.com/college](https://www.mbta.com/college)

College administrators can order cards to offer to students.
Learn more at [MBTA.com/pass-program/semester](https://www.mbta.com/pass-program/semester)





Safety Tips for Students Riding the MBTA

- The best way to be safe while riding the T is to stay alert.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially if wearing headphones.
- Stay in well-lit areas near groups of people whenever possible.
- Keep your phone and wallet close to your body.
- Watch for closing doors when boarding an MBTA vehicle.
- Cross tracks and busways only at marked walkways. Look both ways.
- If you drop something onto the tracks, do not attempt to retrieve it.

Report an emergency:

Call **911** or Transit Police at **617-222-1212**



Download the [MBTA See Say App](#) to anonymously report suspicious activity on the MBTA. [MBTA.com/seesay](https://www.mbta.com/seesay)





MBTA Map & Back-to-School Guide to Taking the T

BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE TO RIDING THE T

The MBTA is pleased to welcome NEW and RETURNING Students!

Wherever you're going in Greater Boston, the T can help get you there.

BEGINNER'S GUIDES:



Student, Visitor, Bus, Subway and Commuter Rail Guides

HOURS OF OPERATION

[MBTA.com/Schedules](https://www.mbta.com/schedules)

FARES

[MBTA.com/Fares](https://www.mbta.com/fares)

\$2.40 - \$1.70

\$2.40 - \$13.25

The MBTA offers a variety of reduced-fare programs to support youth and students:

Middle & High Schools

[MBTA.com/Studentcard](https://www.mbta.com/studentcard)

College Student Semester Passes

[MBTA.com/Semester](https://www.mbta.com/semester)

Learn more about reduced fares:

[MBTA.com/Reduced](https://www.mbta.com/reduced)

Note: Many public schools including Boston Public Schools provide monthly MBTA student passes for students in grades 7-12.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

T Rapid Transit & Frequent Bus Routes



BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUIDE TO RIDING THE T

TIPS FOR TAKING THE MBTA BACK TO SCHOOL

- Take a practice trip.
- Buddy up.
- Stay alert.
- Be prepared.

RESOURCES

To plan a trip
 [MBTA.com/Trip-planner](https://www.mbta.com/trip-planner)

Sign up for service alerts
[MBTA.com/Alerts](https://www.mbta.com/alerts)

Sign up for texts and emails on service changes
 [MBTA.com/Signup](https://www.mbta.com/signup)

Planning for accessibility
 [MBTA.com/Accessibility](https://www.mbta.com/accessibility)

TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY:



Call the Transit Police at 617-222-1212 or dial 911

DOWNLOAD MBTA SEE SAY APP



to report safety and security concerns directly to Transit Police

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority



A New Way to Pay: Contactless Payment

Riders are now able to pay for MBTA subway and bus travel using a contactless credit/debit card, phone, or watch. Riders can still pay with a CharlieCard, student pass, or cash. Contactless payment is best used for pay-as-you-go travel.

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Choose the way you want to pay
2. Tap the reader
3. Ride

Learn more at [MBTA.com/TapToRide](https://www.mbta.com/TapToRide)



Tap^{to} Ride

Introducing a new way to pay
for MBTA bus and subway travel:

Use your contactless debit/credit
card, smartphone, or watch with a
mobile wallet.

[MBTA.com/TapToRide](https://www.mbta.com/TapToRide)



Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority

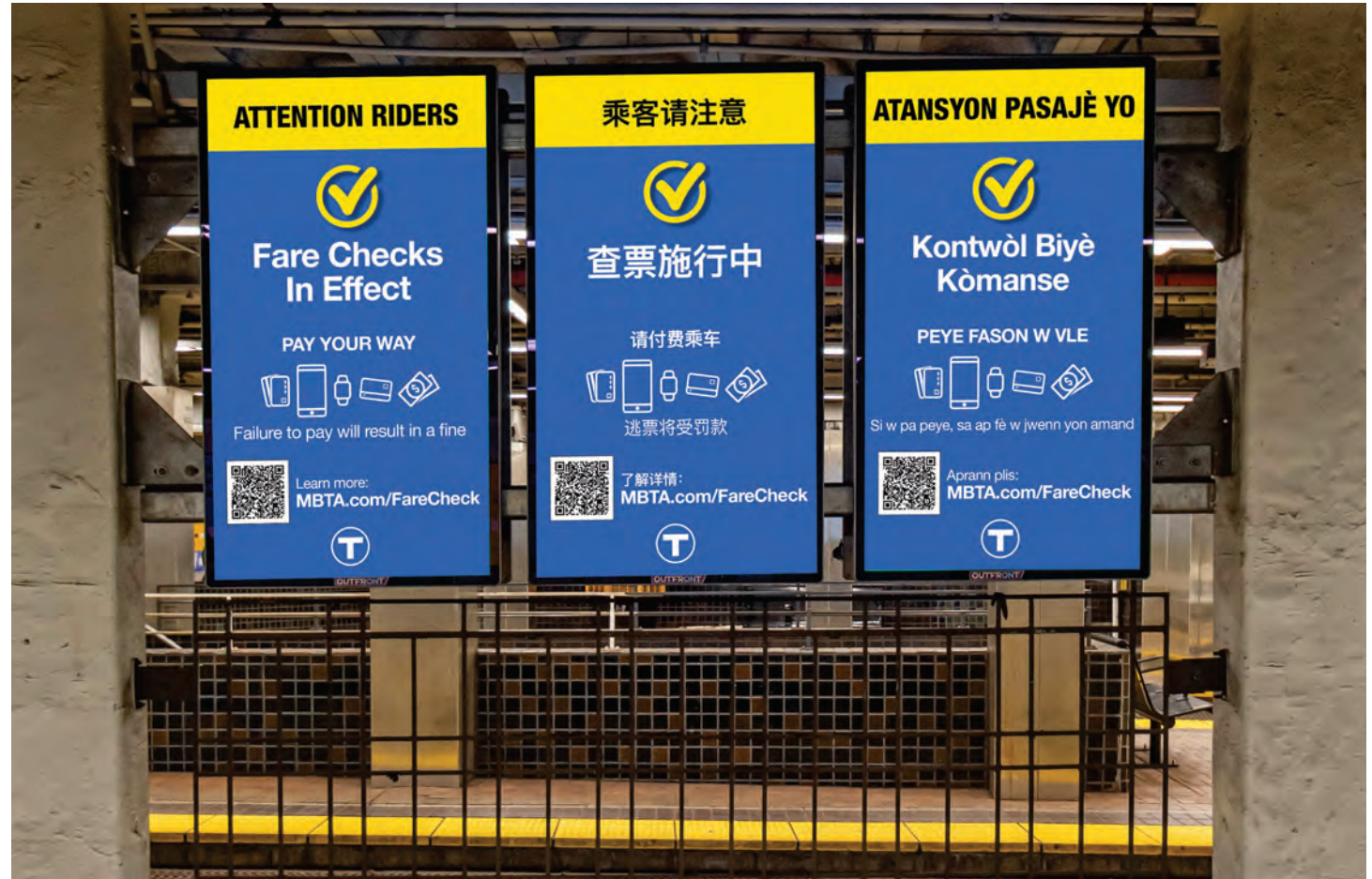


MBTA Fare Checks

PAY YOUR FARE

The MBTA is taking action to deter fare evasion.

If you don't pay your fare, you may be fined. The MBTA's Fare Engagement Representatives will be conducting fare checks at subway stations and onboard vehicles.





Stay Connected

Contact us:

Monday - Friday: 6:30 AM - 8 PM

Saturday - Sunday: 8 AM - 4 PM

Phone: **617-222-3200**

Toll-Free: **800-392-6100**

711 for TTY callers; VRS for ASL callers

Web: [MBTA.com/customer-support](https://www.mbta.com/customer-support)

For the latest service updates, news, and more, follow the MBTA on social media.



[@MBTA](https://twitter.com/MBTA)



[@TheMBTA](https://www.youtube.com/TheMBTA)



[@TheMBTA](https://www.facebook.com/TheMBTA)



[@TheMBTA](https://www.tiktok.com/@TheMBTA)



[@TheMBTA](https://www.instagram.com/TheMBTA)



[@TheMBTA](https://www.snapchat.com/add/TheMBTA)

