# Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS)

# Trip Program Modifications

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# Presentation Overview

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- Pandemic-Related Funding Impacts
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- MTS Service Data
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# Transit Service Providers

- **Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)** – Largest transit system between Atlanta and Washington, D.C.; 69 local, express and regional bus routes, including LYNX Blue Line, City LYNX Gold Line, vanpools and paratransit

- **Special Transportation Services (STS)** – Paratransit with CATS operating under ADA law that guarantees all trips within system service area

- **Mecklenburg County Transportation Services (MTS)** – MTS and six (6) contracted vendors provide non-emergency transportation for Medicaid recipients and non-Medicaid residents 60 and older or individuals with disabilities; 46 staff; 25 Light-Transit Vehicles; and three 15-passenger vans

# MTS Transportation Vendor Partners

| Vendor Name | Total vehicles | ADA-accessible Vehicles |
|---|---|---|
| **A-1 Wheelchair** | 10 | 10 |
| **City Cab** | 28 | 1 |
| **Inner City** | 15 | 1 |
| **Orange** | 45 | 2 |
| **Prestige** | 30 | 5 |
| **Royal** | 51 | 9 |

# Medicaid Trips (Mandated)

The County is obligated to ensure that Medicaid recipients have transportation to access medical care. Both MTS and its contracted vendors provide Medicaid transportation.

| Fiscal Year | Clients | Trips |
|---|---|---|
| FY23 | 2,460 | 190,142 |
| FY24 (Jul-Feb) | 2,170 | 144,610 |

# Non-Medicaid Trips (Discretionary)

| Maintenance of Health | General Purpose |
|---|---|
| Medical (Non-Medicaid) | Government/Non-Profit Organizations |
| Adult Daycare | Paid Employment |
| Dialysis and Chemotherapy | Financial Institutions |
| Congregate Nutrition Sites | Fitness Centers |
| Grocery | Post-Secondary Education |
| Food Bank | Hair Salons/Barber Shops |
| Farmer's Market | Faith-Based Organizations |

# Pandemic-Related MTS Funding Impacts

- From FY21-FY23, MTS received $8.9M in additional federal funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - ❑ Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) - $4,095,288
  - ❑ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - $3,861,645
  - ❑ Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) - $982,163
- MTS used the federal funding to expand non-Medicaid trip services by 28% (4,472 more trips than in FY21) and facilitate social distancing.

# Pandemic-Related Funding Impacts

- CARES Act funding will be fully expended by the end of FY24.
- ARPA/CRRSAA funding will be fully expended before the end of FY25.
- The exhaustion of COVID funding will generate a revenue loss of approximately $1.54M after FY25.
- Maintaining current service levels would require an additional $1M of revenue in FY25, $2.4M in FY26 and continued escalation in future fiscal years.

# MTS Trip Program Modifications

For FY25 and beyond, MTS will make the following adjustments to trip services:

- Continue all Medicaid trip services
- Continue all Maintenance of Health trip services
  - Medical, Dialysis, Chemotherapy
  - Nutrition Sites, Grocery, Food Bank, Farmer's Market, Adult Day Care
- Discontinue General Purpose trip services (eff. July 1, 2024)
  - Government/Non-Profit Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations
  - Employment, Financial Institutions, Post-Secondary Education
  - Fitness Centers, Hair Salons, Barber Shops

# MTS Trip Program Modifications

- Freeze enrollment of new, non-Medicaid customers
- Reinstate $1.50 passenger trip fare after the required 30-day notice and comment period (July 1, 2024)
- Implement new scheduling and routing software (January 2025)
- Evaluate the feasibility of increasing fares by $2.00 to align with the $3.50 CATS/STS fare (FY26)

# MTS Trip Program Modifications

- Discontinuing General Purpose trips will reduce costs by $1.7M and allow MTS to continue providing Maintenance of Health trips that meet the most critical needs of the community.

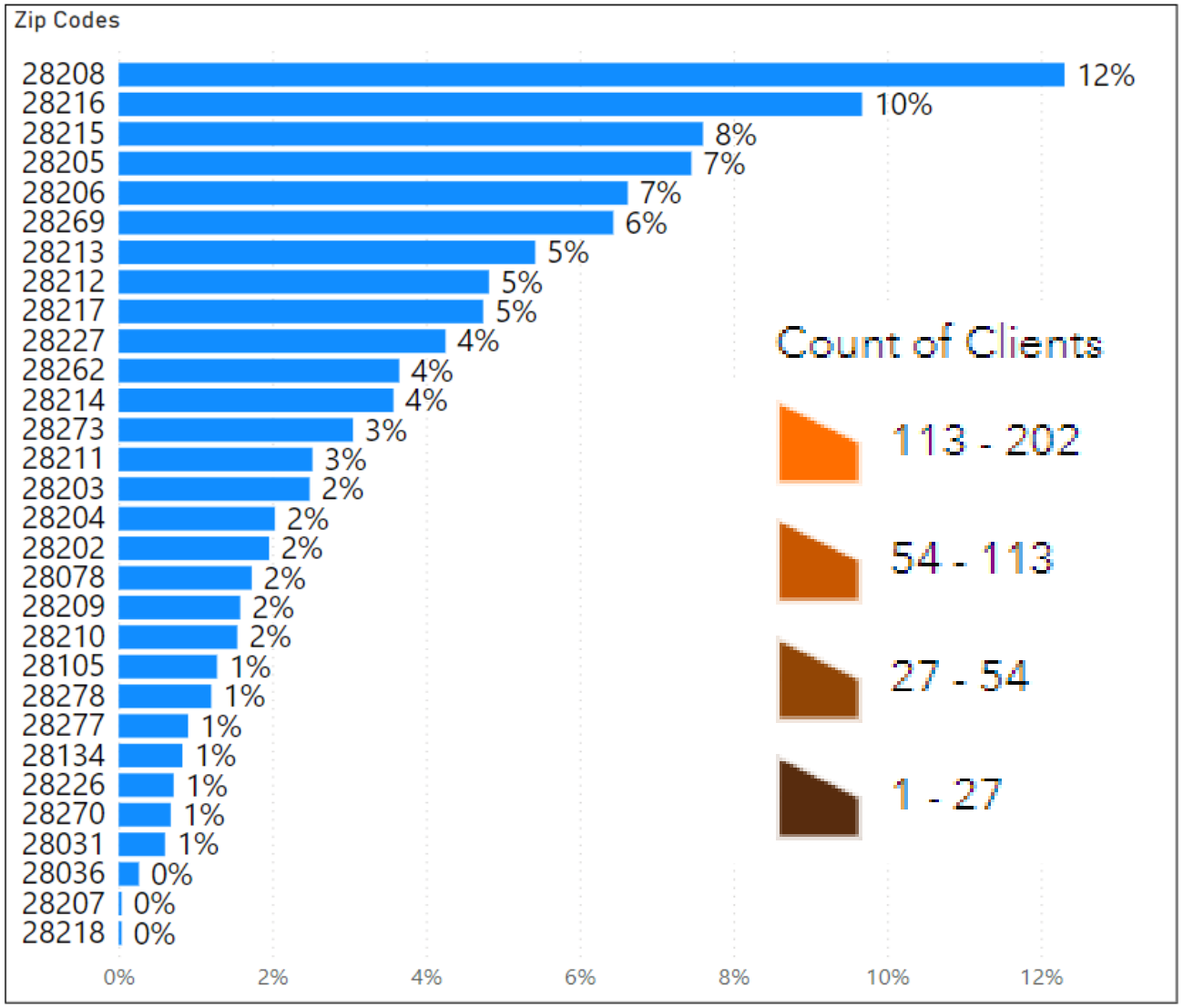
- The $1.50 passenger fare was waived from October 2021-present in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reinstating the $1.50 fare will reduce FY25 vendor costsby an estimated $170,000 out of a total vendor cost of $3.4 million.

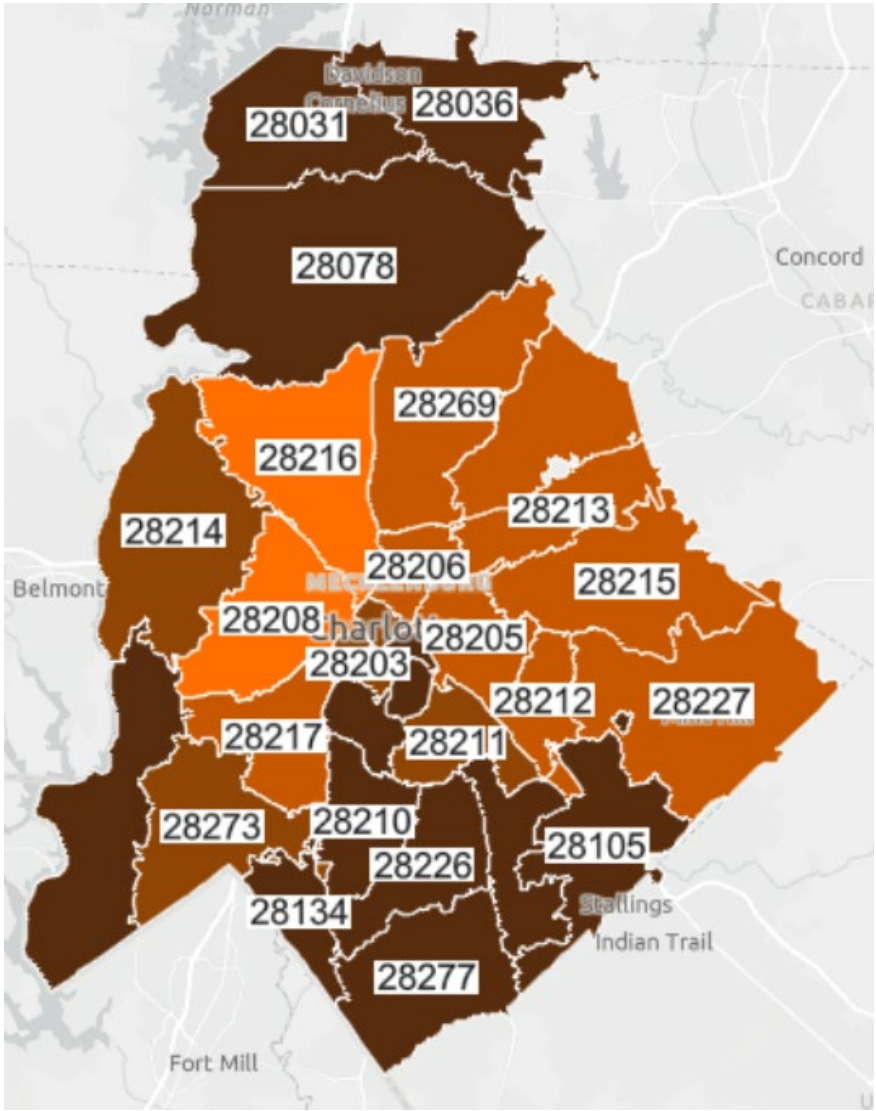
# MTS Non-Medicaid Service Data

| Trip Type | FY21 | | FY22 | | FY23 | | FY24 (Jul-Feb) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Clients | Trips | Clients | Trips | Clients | Trips | Clients | Trips |
| **Maintenance of Health** | 1,546 | 66,254 | 1,658 | 80,203 | 1,898 | 94,598 | 1,714 | 71,452 |
| **General Purpose** | 630 | 15,471 | 562 | 19,943 | 573 | 32,783 | 652 | 32,499 |
| **Total** | ***1,755** | **81,725** | ***1,848** | **100,146** | ***2,109** | **127,381** | ***1,925** | **103,951** |

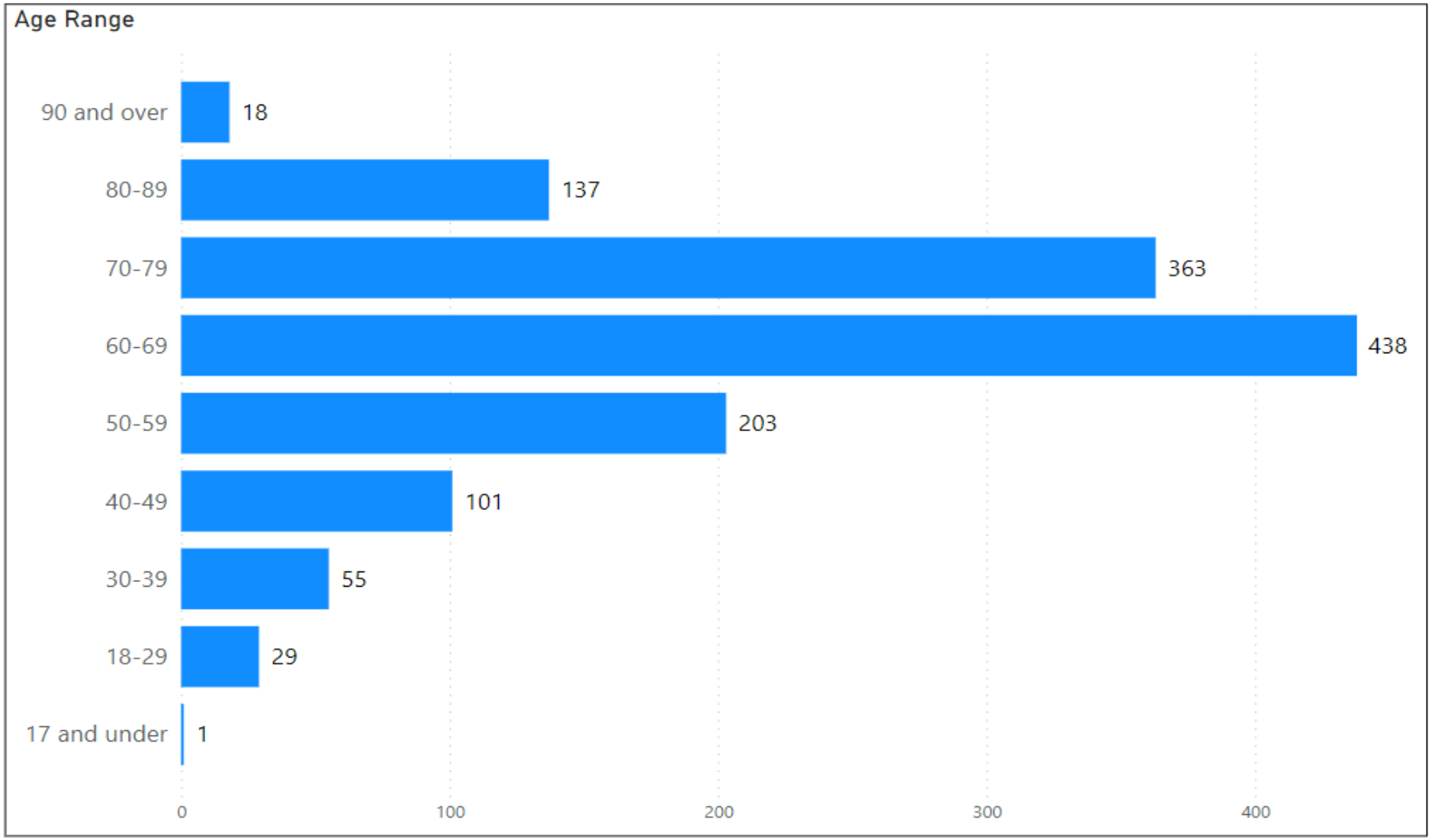
*Client totals reflect an unduplicated count. Some clients receive both Maintenance of Health and General Purpose trips.

# FY24 YTD Non-Medicaid MTS Clients by Zip Code

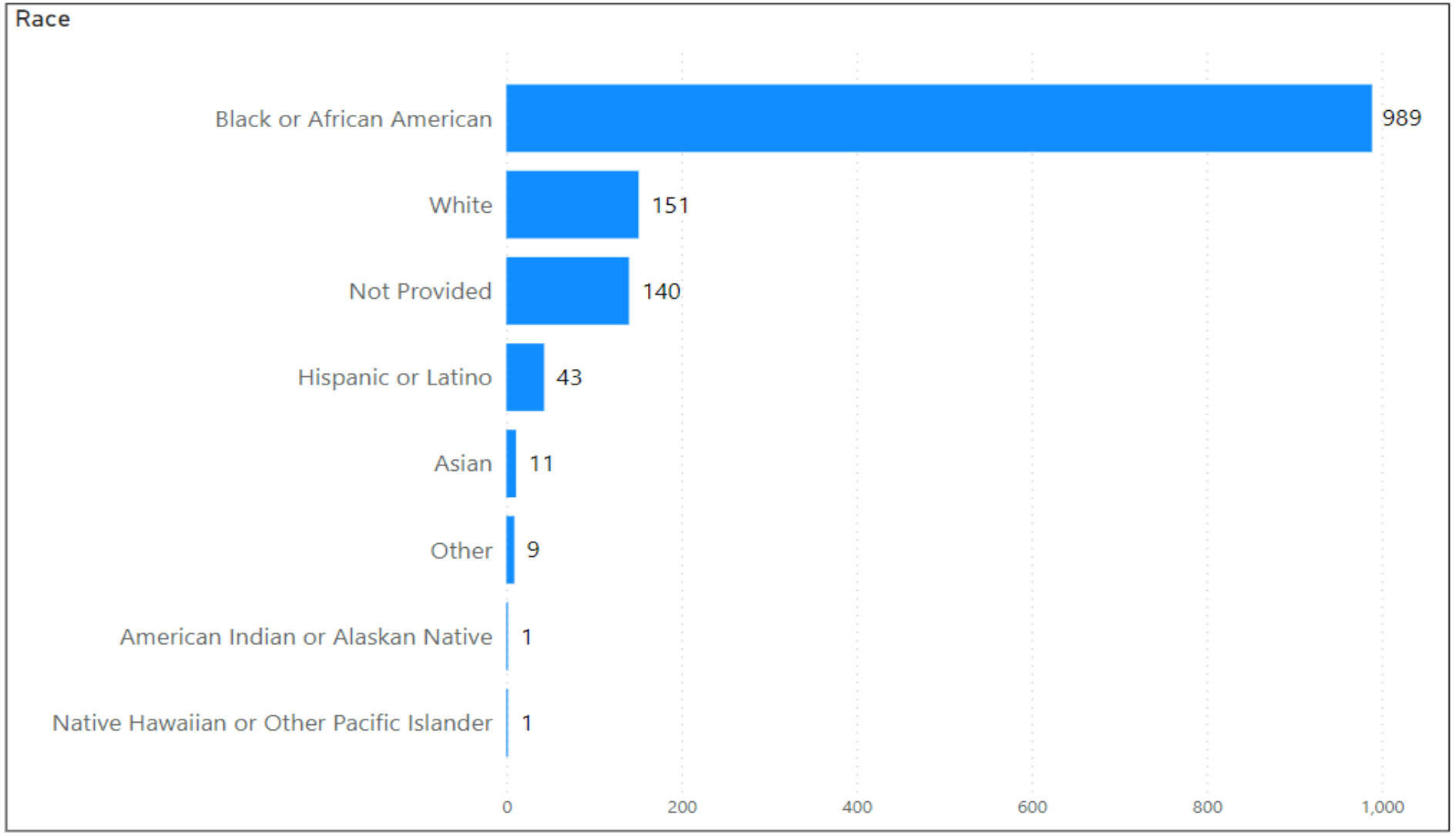


# FY24 YTD Non-Medicaid Clients by Age



# FY24 YTD Non-Medicaid Clients by Race



# Waived Passenger Fares

$1.50 fare was waived from October 2021-present in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

| Fiscal Year | MTS & Vendor Trips | Waived Fares |
|---|---|---|
| FY21 | 87,614 | $ 131,421 |
| FY22 | 106,359 | $ 159,539 |
| FY23 | 131,339 | $ 197,008 |
| FY24 (Jul-Feb) | 105,404 | $ 158,106 |
| **Total** | **430,716** | **$ 646,074** |

# Local Transit Service Fare Comparison

| Provider | Status | Adult One-Way Trip |
|---|---|---|
| Iredell County Area Public Transit (ICATS) | Active | $1.00 |
| MTS | Reinstating July 2024 | $1.50 |
| Fayetteville Area System Transit (FAST)<br>FASTTrac Program | Active | $2.00 |
| GoDurham ACCESS | Reinstating July 2024 | $2.00 |
| GoWake Access | Active | $2.00 |
| Union County | Active | $2.00 |
| GoRaleigh Access | Reinstating July 2024 | $2.50 |
| CATS ADA Paratransit Service (STS) | Active | $3.50 |
| Wave Transit ADA Paratransit<br>Service (Wilmington) | Active | $4.00 |

# FY23-FY24 YTD General Purpose Trips

| | FY23 | | | FY24 (Jul-Feb) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trip Sub-Purpose | Clients | Trips | Cost | Clients | Trips | Cost |
| Education | 28 | 2,101 | $50,761 | 23 | 677 | $21,460 |
| Faith-Based Organizations | 35 | 302 | $5,304 | 103 | 1,454 | $44,801 |
| Paid Employment | 128 | 14,083 | $279,186 | 120 | 14,171 | $433,912 |
| Park and Recreation | 205 | 11,571 | $177,810 | 209 | 8,372 | $234,524 |
| Miscellaneous (government facilities; non-profit organizations; financial institutions; hair salons/ barber shops) | 299 | 4,726 | $105,232 | 448 | 7,825 | $223,263 |
| **Total** | ***573** | **32,783** | **$618,293** | ***652** | **32,499** | **$957,960** |

* Unduplicated client totals

# FY23-FY25 Trip Budget Comparison

| Funding Source | FY23 | FY24 | Proposed FY25 |
|---|---|---|---|
| CATS/EGP/GATS | $81,614 | $107,159 | $107,159 |
| VATS | $39,039 | $30,000 | $30,000 |
| ROAP | $613,585 | $398,468 | $398,468 |
| Section 5307 | $236,539 | $1,118,816 | $1,197,709 |
| ARPA/CRRSAA | $0 | $2,346,319 | $1,311,831 |
| CARES | $1,333,532 | $55,892 | $0 |
| County Match | $303,978 | $553,623 | $619,333 |
| **Total Trip Budget** | ***$2,608,287** | **$4,610,277** | ****$3,664,500** |

*In FY24, MTS increased vendor rates, which resulted in an increase in the average cost per trip from $18.96 to $32.26. If adjusted using FY24 costs, the total FY23 trip budget would be $4,147,175.85.

**FY25 total does not include Capital funding of $84,829 (ARPA/CRRSAA) or $451,964 ($361,571 Section 5307 + $90,392 Local Match). Total County local match requirement is $709,725.

# Summary - MTS Trip Program Modifications

- Continue all Medicaid trip services
- Continue all Maintenance of Health trip services
  - Medical, Dialysis, Chemotherapy
  - Nutrition Sites, Grocery, Food Bank, Farmer's Market, Adult Day Care
- Discontinue General Purpose trip services (eff. July 1, 2024)
  - Government/Non-Profit Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations
  - Employment, Financial Institutions, Post-Secondary Education
  - Fitness Centers, Hair Salons, Barber Shops

# Summary - MTS Trip Program Modifications

- The trip reduction strategy will help sustain future MTS operations.
- Reinstating the $1.50 trip fare will help offset vendor-related expenses.
- The overall strategy will improve overall customer service delivery when paired with anticipated technology enhancements.
- MTS will continue to provide transportation services that help meet the most critical health needs of the community.
- In early May, MTS will begin communicating program modifications to clients and making resource referrals.

# Community Transportation Resources

## Transportation Alternatives

MTS will work collaboratively with our community partners to provide transportation services for our diverse population. Referrals will be made for:

- **CATS/STS Paratransit** – Individuals whose disability impacts their ability to ride the CATS fixed route service; Fee: $35 (10 tickets)

- **Charlotte Regional Center** – Individuals who need Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; Fee: $0

- **Disability Rights & Resources** – Older adults and persons with disabilities who would like to learn how to travel safely and independently within the community; Fee: $0

# Community Transportation Resources

- **First in Families (InReach)** – Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities; Fee: based on the household size and 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

- **Metrolina Association for the Blind** – Individuals who are visually impaired; Fee: $5-$20

- **PACE of the Southern Piedmont** – Older adults who desire an all-inclusive health care plan, which includes transportation to medical appointments and social activities; Fee: $0

# Community Transportation Resources

- **Road to Recovery, American Cancer Society** – Individuals who request services for cancer-related medical appointments; Fee: $0

- **Shepherd's Center of Charlotte** – Individuals 55+ who need transportation anywhere in Mecklenburg County; Fee: Donation

- **Supportive Services for Veteran Families** (Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte) – Refugee families only; Fee: $0

# Thank you!

# Discussion

# APPENDIX

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ARPA | American Rescue Plan Act |
| CARES | Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security |
| CATS | Charlotte Area Transit System |
| CRRSAA | Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act |
| EGP | General Assistance Transportation Services |
| GATS | Elderly General Purpose |
| ROAP | Rural Operating Assistance Program |
| Section 5307 | Urbanized Area Formula Program 5307 |
| VATS | Veterans Assistance Transportation Services |

# Community Transportation Resources

**CATS Paratransit - Charlotte Area Transit System**

- https://www.charlottenc.gov/CATS/Paratransit
- (704) 336-5055

**Charlotte Regional Centers for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**

- https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing/regional-centers-deaf-and-hard-hearing
- (704) 918-1554 (Video phone)

**Disability Rights & Resources**

- http://www.disability-rights.org/
- (704) 537-0550

# Community Transportation Resources

**First in Families, by InReach**

- https://www.inreachnc.org/first-in-families
- (704) 536-6661

**Metrolina Association for the Blind**

- https://www.mabnc.org/
- (704) 887-5134

**PACE of the Southern Piedmont**

- https://www.pacesp.com/
- (704) 887-3840

# Community Transportation Resources

**Road to Recovery - American Cancer Society**

- https://www.cancer.org/support-programs-and-services/road-to-recovery.html
- (800) 227-2345

**Shepherd's Center of Charlotte**

- https://www.shepherdscharlotte.org/
- (704) 365-1995

**Supportive Services for Veteran Families**

- https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.html
- (704) 495-3315