

<b>4. STUDENT FARES FOR LINC PARTICIPANTS</b>
---

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Transit Commission approve that concession fares be provided to all full-time students of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program.**

**DOCUMENTATION**

1. General Manager, OC Transpo report dated 26 August 1999 is immediately attached.
2. Extract of Draft Minute, 01 September 1999 follows the report and contains a record of all votes.

Our File/N/Réf. 20-8-5  
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 26 August 1999

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator  
Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP. General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET **STUDENT FARES FOR LINC PARTICIPANTS**

---

### **DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Transit Commission that concession fares be provided to all full-time students of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The LINC program provides language training in one of Canada's official languages to adult immigrants. Funding is provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through agreements with public school boards, colleges, private educational institutions, non-profit organizations and other qualified bodies. The funding covers instructors' salaries, course materials, rental costs and administrative and capital costs insofar as they apply to LINC activities. The objective of LINC is to provide participants with basic language skills, recognizing that ability to speak the language speeds the person's ability to settle into the community, seek and secure employment, and become a fully participating member of Canadian society.

When a person is first admitted as an immigrant or refugee, CIC assesses his or her English or French capabilities and identifies an appropriate level of training. CIC uses the Canadian Language Benchmarks, a national set of standards, by which to assess the person's ability to use the English or French language to accomplish a set of tasks. It is the additional integrative training and the use of the Canadian Language Benchmarks which differentiate the LINC program from the commercial language schools.

Students do not receive training allowances under LINC; if financial assistance is required, they must apply for it in the normal manner through local and provincial social service agencies or, if they held a job and lost it, through employment insurance. Some refugees in their first year of residence in Canada may receive federal financial support equivalent to provincial social assistance rates.

LINC training may be taken full-time or part-time, daytime or evening. Students may hold full-time or part-time jobs and attend LINC training on a part-time basis. Newcomers have three years after their arrival in Canada in which to take LINC training. Full-time attendees who already have some knowledge of the language may complete their training within four to six months, while those attending on a part-time basis need a more prolonged period for training.

Registration for the LINC program is continuous. In the 1997-98 government fiscal year, 2,786 new students entered the LINC program in the Region. There were others who were in the middle of a multi-year program. On the other hand, some of the new entrants had completed the program within six months or slightly less. Thus, an estimate of 3,000 to 4,000 full-time and part-time LINC students in the Region at any one time would appear reasonable.

## DISCUSSION

Eligibility for student fares is currently defined as full-time attendance at the institutions which have been specifically approved by the Commission, not by type of educational programs within each institution. Accordingly, full-time students who obtain their LINC training at public schools, such as Algonquin College, have already been benefitting from student fares, whereas those attending institutions which have not been approved do not qualify. Based on information provided by CIC, extending eligibility to include all full-time students would result in the addition of approximately 1,000 full-time students at 13 institutions.,

The LINC program receives all of its funding from the federal government which, from a funding perspective, places the program on a similar footing as that of the public school system. The full-time LINC participants comprise a unique group of students with special needs. Many LINC students have low incomes, however, successful completion of the program goes a long way towards ensuring that they and their families will rapidly become productive members of society.

From an administrative perspective, the addition of approximately full-time LINC students at roughly 13 institutions would not present any significant problems.

Assuming that there are about 1,000 full-time LINC students who attend the program at institutions which do not qualify for student fares, it may be estimated that this concession will result in an annual revenue loss of about \$50,000. The impact on ridership will be minimal.

*Approved by  
M.J.E Sheflin, P.Eng.*

Extract of Draft Minute  
Transit Services Committee  
1 September 1999

STUDENT FARES FOR LINC PARTICIPANTS

- General Manager's report dated 26 Aug 99

Responding to questions from Commissioner Holmes, Dr. Helen Gault, Manager, Planning and Development, advised staff had received this request from the Ottawa Carleton Immigrant Services organization. She noted, from past experience with vocational private institutions, things have gone extremely smoothly. Staff plan to use the same administrative approach and are confident they can handle this.

Commissioner Legendre stated he was very pleased with the report and commended staff. However, he felt staff had not gone quite far enough as he felt the focus appeared to be on the institution or the program rather than on the students, where it should be. He said he was looking forward to this program being extended to other similar institutions, and he hoped in the future the focus would be shifted onto the students.

The Committee then approved the staff recommendation.

**That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Transit Commission that concession fares be provided to all full-time students of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program.**

CARRIED