

## South LA

### City plans free and discounted Uber rides for

### South L.A. residents to USC vaccine site



The partnership is one way Mayor Eric Garcetti hopes to decrease COVID-19 vaccine inequity, but community leaders say more needs to be done.

 Expand



Brad Streicher/Annenberg Media

By Briton Allen, Esther Cho, Betsy Travis, Emily Bonilla, Nicholas Cassol,

Katherine Salisbury, Victoria L Westover, Wyatt Allsup and Valeria Diaz

March 15, 2021 at 9:47 pm EDT

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced in a [statement](#) last week that the rideshare company Uber plans to contribute approximately \$500,000 worth of free rides for South Los Angeles residents to a new vaccination site that opened last week at USC.



The new partnership between Uber and the city will give South L.A. residents access to 15,000 free Uber rides and 20,000 rides at a 50% discounted rate to get to the new site, according to Garcetti.

“Transportation should never be a barrier to getting the vaccine,” said Uber Chief Executive Dara Khosrowshahi in a [statement to the L.A. Times](#).

In his statement, Mayor Garcetti explained that vaccine distribution in Los Angeles must account for the Angelenos most affected by the pandemic in order for the rollout to be considered equitable.

As of Feb. 20, 25% of residents in wealthy neighborhoods on the west side of Los Angeles, such as Beverly Hills, have received their first dose of the vaccine, while in lower-income communities in South L.A., like Compton, only 5% of residents have been vaccinated, according to the [L.A. Times](#).

Josie Clerfond, the coalitions and external relations manager of T.R.U.S.T. South L.A., a nonprofit that focuses on providing equitable housing to South L.A. residents, said the issue of transportation is crucial in South L.A. due to the percentage of residents that depend on public transportation.

“Residents of South Central are less likely to own a car, so it’s really important that we organize alternative ways to get folks around, especially for their health care needs,” she said.

Clerfond called South L.A. an “institution desert,” referring to the scarcity of healthcare clinics and pharmacies in its neighborhoods. As a result, residents of South L.A. might have to travel further to access healthcare facilities, making transportation a challenge.

Clerfond said she is happy to see Uber working with the city to provide affordable transportation, but that there is room for expansion on the program.



“We would love to see more programs that help folks access other types of resources beyond just the vaccine,” she said.

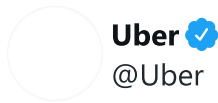
The new vaccination site is located at the corner of Exposition and Figueroa, near the Expo Park Metro Station, and will operate daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The site comprises all seven levels of USC’s Flower St. parking garage to accommodate drive-up, walk-up and patients who need additional access to service, according to the statement. It has the capacity to vaccinate approximately 5,000 people a day, making it the second largest vaccination site operated by the city.

USC becomes the seventh fixed vaccination site operated by the city of Los Angeles, joining others at Hansen Dam, San Fernando Park, Lincoln Park, Pierce College, Crenshaw Christian Center, and Dodger Stadium.

“It’s our privilege to help in this effort and actively partner with the City and Mayor Garcetti to fight this virus,” [Dr. Carol Folt, president of USC, said in the statement](#). “This center will help bring vaccines into communities most impacted by COVID-19.”

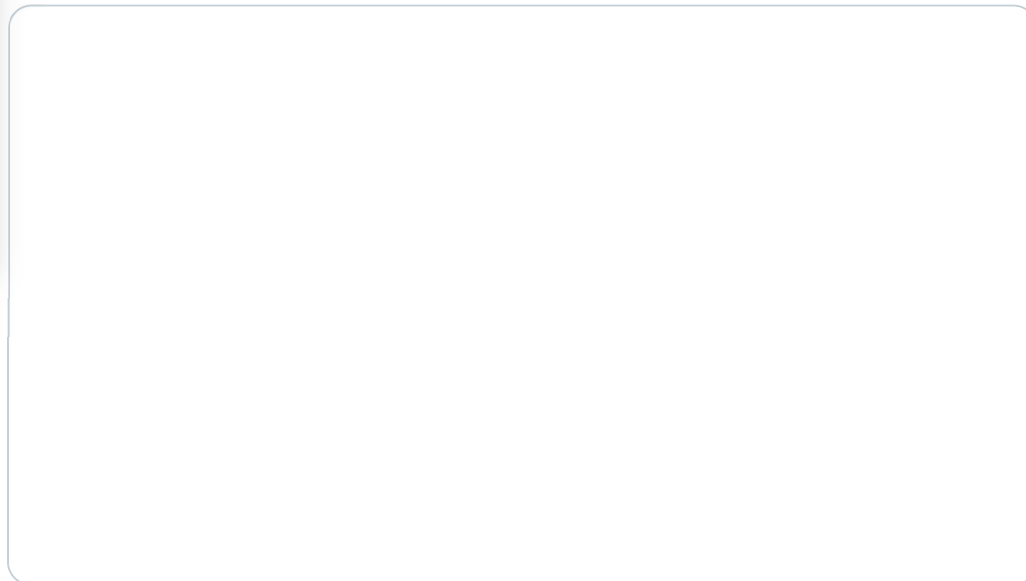
The initiative follows Uber’s [pledge on Twitter](#) from December to give 10 million free and discounted rides for vaccine distribution equity and to eliminate transportation as a barrier. Uber has also teamed up with Walgreens and Moderna to provide rides for residents in underserved areas.



As we look toward a new year, health authorities are asking us to celebrate at home & limit gatherings, so we're asking you to use Uber for essential needs only.

If you need to ride, wear a mask, wash your hands, & keep the window down.

Learn more → [uber.com/safety](https://uber.com/safety)



9:56 AM · Dec 24, 2020



56



See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter



Uber's free ride program started in areas with underserved communities in Chicago, Atlanta, Houston and El Paso and is now coming to Los Angeles, [according to CBSLA](#). Patients are able to pre-schedule their rides on Uber when making a Walgreens vaccination appointment, and the ride will be covered by Uber's \$500,000 free-ride budget.

Rideshare company Lyft also said in a statement released on March 8, 2021 that it is partnering with companies such as Anthem, JPMorgan Chase, NAACP and United Way to provide 60 million free rides to and from vaccine appointments. The company believes this service will be immensely helpful in getting those at higher risk to and from vaccination sites, including members of the South L.A.

City plans free and discounted Uber rides for South L.A. residents to USC vaccine site – Annenberg Media  
 higher risk to and from vaccination sites, including members of the South L.A.  
 community.

Eric Craig, the digital content creator behind [the South LA Recap](#) — a YouTube channel about South L.A. life — says transportation can be a barrier to equitable distribution of vaccines.

✉️  
 📘  
 📌  
 🐦  
 📺

“A lot of vaccination sites, it looks like, don’t necessarily discriminate, but make it harder to get a vaccine if you don’t have a car,” Criag said. “And then walk-up clinics might not necessarily be in your neighborhood.”

According to Craig, healthcare equity also presents a problem in South L.A., even before the pandemic and vaccine rollouts.

📺

“Healthcare inequity is, I think, the biggest factor,” he said. “The fact that we don’t have as many CVSs or Rite Aids or Walgreens and that we don’t have many options to visit medical facilities within the region. That would be holding us back.”

Although the city has a rocky past with fair healthcare access and distribution, Craig is hopeful that Uber’s new discounted and free ride system will help reduce those inequities in the South L.A. health care system.

“It looks like the city has really, sort of, taken itself by its bootstraps and looked into the inequalities that exist in our city and is finding more ways to service South L.A.,” Craig said. “That makes me a very proud resident of this city, to know that, definitely, there are people that still care.”

## Editor's picks

1 Welcome to Black.





2 Former student sues tenured Marshall professor and USC for sexual assault, discrimination



3 A South LA business owner finds a second home in the Trojan family



4 Portraits of A New Normal: Episode 3



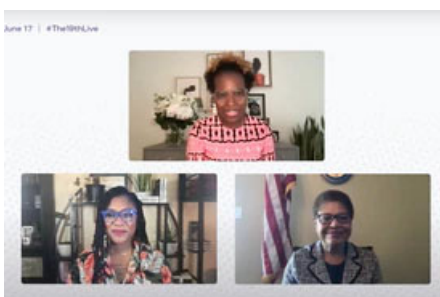
5 Annenberg students express appreciation for retiring journalism professors



### Latest



Spitballing: MLB All-Star Game snubs and duds



A year after protests began, what is the future of BLM?

### Simonds' Scouting Report: How USC can pull off a road win over Washington State



Skyler's Swishes: To Live and Die in L.A.



We should advocate for trade schools just as much as college, especially after a pandemic