How Do I Get a Half-Fare MetroCard for People with Mental Disabilities?

WHAT IS THIS SPECIAL METROCARD?

The Half-Fare Fairness Law forced the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to add people with serious mental illness who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to its Half-Fare MetroCard program for people with disabilities. Eligible people can now get half-fare rates on all subways, local buses, express buses during non-rush hours, and various other buses and railroads, including the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North.

You must fill out an application form for the Half-Fare MetroCard and file it with the MTA. To get a copy of the form, call the MTA Reduced-Fare Line at (718) 243-4999, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and ask that the application for an "MTA Reduced-Fare MetroCard for People with Disabilities" be sent to you. If you are hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD, (718) 596-8273, Monday to Friday, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., and on weekends, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also get the form on the web: http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nyct/fare/RFindex.htm.

WHAT DOES THE APPLICATION FORM REQUIRE?

The application form requires you to authorize the release of any records or information from your Social Security Administration (SSA) files, for the purpose of verifying that you receive SSI due to a serious mental illness. You must also submit a 2” x 1” (passport type) photograph of yourself and you must print your name on the back of the picture as well.

The application form comes with detailed instructions. Read these instructions and the application form itself VERY, VERY CAREFULLY. If you have any questions or concerns about what you are required to authorize or to produce or if you need more information about the program or its requirements, call MFY’s Mental Health Law Project at (212) 417-3830.

After you have filled out the application form and pulled together all of the necessary documentation, you must get the application notarized and return it to the MTA. The MTA will then decide if you meet the rules for this reduced-fare benefit.

WHAT IF THE MTA DENIES MY APPLICATION?

If the MTA denies your application, you will need to speak to a lawyer or someone who knows what your rights are. Call MFY’s Mental Health Law Project at (212) 417-3830 to speak to an advocate.