

MRC TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE: ADA Paratransit Service & The RIDE

ADA Paratransit Service

Description:

Paratransit is a shared ride, origin-to-destination service for eligible individuals with disabilities (including physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental health disabilities). Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public transit agencies that run fixed route services--such as the buses, subways and trolleys--must also provide complementary ADA Paratransit Services for persons with disabilities who are prevented from using public transportation all or some of the time. (This requirement does not apply to commuter bus, commuter rail, or intercity rail services.)

Complementary means that ADA Paratransit Services must be available within a ¾ mile area surrounding a fixed route and operate during the same hours as fixed route service (which will generally vary by day of the week and route). Travel times should be comparable to fixed route travel times which includes the time necessary to travel to the bus stop, wait for a bus, ride time, transfers and travel to the ultimate destination.

ADA Paratransit Service has no restrictions on trip purpose and rides generally must be scheduled at least one day in advance.

Eligibility:

To access ADA Paratransit Service you must be determined eligible and the eligibility process varies across the state. Most Regional Transit Authorities utilize an application form and require certification from a licensed health care professional. Some request that the application package be mailed, while others utilize an in-person application process (with a full or partial interview) which may include a functional assessment. You may submit supporting documentation (e.g. from a health care or mental health professional) and if an in-person application is required then you, plus a guest, will be offered a free Paratransit ride to the interview. Decisions are issued in writing within 21 days of completing the application process and you will either be granted either conditional, unconditional or temporary eligibility (e.g. in the event of a medical condition) or be determined not eligible. If you disagree with the decision, you may appeal it and instructions on how to do so will be included in the decision letter.

Scheduling a Ride:

Paratransit rides must generally be booked 1-7 days in advance by contacting a call center number. The following information should be provided when scheduling a ride:

- Your name
- The exact address (number, street and city) where you want to be picked up
- The time you would like to be at your destination (be specific if going to an appointment)
- The exact address where you want to go (number, street, and city)
- Whether you will be travelling with a mobility device
- Whether you will be travelling with a service animal, companion, or Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

ADA regulations permit the Paratransit provider to schedule your trip up to one hour before or one hour after the trip time requested as long as you are not late for an appointment.

The evening before your trip you will receive a call informing you when to be ready for pick-up. For example, you will be given a 20 minute "pick-up window" and you are responsible for being ready and in a location where you can see the vehicle. Once the Paratransit Van/Vehicle arrives it will only wait five minutes before leaving for the next scheduled pick-up. If the driver is late or gets you to your destination late, then you are encouraged to report the incident.

Cancellations & No Shows:

If you need to cancel your trip you must do so within one hour of the pick-up window. Excessive no shows or late cancellations may result in your service being suspended (see your Transit Authority for specific cancellation and no-show policies).

Fares:

The cost of Paratransit rides vary by region and trip length. If the Transit Authority does not utilize an electronic fare system, then tickets or exact fare is required as drivers do not give change. PCAs ride for free but must be picked-up and dropped-off at the same address as the rider. Companions are permitted on a space available basis, pay the same fare as the rider they are accompanying, and must be picked up and dropped off at the same location.

Further Information:

For specific information concerning the application process, fares, scheduling, restrictions and policies, contact your local Transit Authority (phone numbers and websites are provided at the end of this information sheet).

MBTA's ADA Paratransit Service: The RIDE

Description:

The RIDE is the ADA Paratransit Service administered by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). It is a door-to-door, shared ride transportation service for individuals with disabilities who are prevented from using an MBTA bus, subway or trolley all or some of the time. The RIDE is available in 58 cities and towns in the greater Boston area, and generally operates from 5:00 am

until 1:00 am daily. To access the RIDE you must be determined eligible. Once approved you can schedule trips from 1-7 days in advance.

MBTA also runs an on-demand Paratransit pilot program with Uber and Lyft. Under this program, RIDE customers can book subsidized trips instantly from their smart phones.

How to Apply:

To apply for The RIDE, you must undergo an in-person interview at The RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC):

The RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC)

 $1000~\text{Massachusetts Ave.,}~2^{\mathrm{nd}}~\text{Floor}$ Boston, MA 02118

Phone: 617-337-2727

Call TREC at 617-337-2727 to schedule your interview. All applicants (and 1 guest) can travel on The RIDE for free to the interview. This can be arranged when you call to book your appointment.

The Interview Process:

Bring your contact information, the contact information for your licensed health care provider (name, phone number, and fax) and your mobility device if applicable (e.g. cane, walker, wheelchair, scooter). You may also bring any supporting documentation such as a list of your current medications, statement from your health care or mental health provider, and Visual Acuity or Field of Vision statement from a vision care provider. You may have a family member, friend, advocate, or counselor present with you at the interview.

Your interview will be conducted by a Mobility Coordinator. It is important that you relay all your needs & barriers regarding transportation during the interview. They will verify your disability and may test your functional ability (such as balance, strength, coordination, or range of motion). The Mobility Coordinator may also contact your health care provider after the interview concerning what barriers prevent you from using public transportation.

Decision:

You should receive written notification of their decision within 21 days of your interview (however most applicants hear back in 2-3 business days). Your decision letter will indicate whether you were granted unconditional, conditional or temporary eligibility or were determined not eligible. If you disagree with the decision, you have the right to appeal. Instructions concerning the appeals process will be included in the decision letter.

Eligibility is granted for a certain period of time and the date of expiration will be noted in your decision letter. You must be recertified to continue this service and will receive notification via mail when your eligibility is about to expire.

Scheduling a Ride & Transfers:

The RIDE is a large operation and MBTA contracts with several companies to cover the entire service area. For details concerning which phone number to call for scheduling a trip, and whether a transfer will be necessary, visit the MBTA's website below for details (or contact The RIDE Access Center at 844-427-7433).

Fares:

Currently, the local one-way fare for each registered passenger is \$3.15 when booking 1-7 days in advance. One-way fares for premium non-ADA trips are \$5.25 per trip (i.e. for trips outside the ¾ mile route, and same-day trip requests or changes). PCAs ride for free and one other person may travel as a guest, on a space available basis (the guest is charged the same fee as the rider). Both PCAs and guests must travel to and from the same destination as the registered user.

You must establish a RIDE account and have funds in your account to schedule a trip. Funds may be added on-line, via telephone or mail, or by visiting the CharlieCard Store (Downtown Crossing Station). The RIDE fare is debited from your account as you board the vehicle.

Further Information:

For more information concerning fares, establishing a RIDE account, scheduling, and policies, visit the MBTA RIDE web page:

http://www.mbta.com/riding the t/accessible services/default.asp?id=7108

Massachusetts Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)

Boston Area RTAs:

Metrowest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) Phone: (508) 935-2222; TTY: (508) 935-2242

Website: http://www.mwrta.com/

Northern Massachusetts RTAs:

▶ Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA)

Phone: (978) 283-7916 Website: http://canntran.com/

▶ <u>Lowell Regional Transit Authority</u> (LRTA)

Phone: (978) 459-0164 Website: http://lrta.com/

▶ Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA)

Phone: (978) 469-6878

Website: http://www.mvrta.com/

Central Massachusetts RTAs:

Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART)
Phone: (978) 345-7711; TDD: (800) 789-0577

Website: http://www.mrta.us/

Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)

Phone: (508) 791-9782

Website: http://www.therta.com/

Southeastern Massachusetts RTAs:

▶ Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)

Phone: (508) 588-1000; TTY: (508) 586-0009

Website: http://www.ridebat.com/

▶ Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)

Phone: (508) 823-8828; TDD: (508) 824-7439

Website: http://www.gatra.org/

▶ Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)

Phone: (508) 999-5211

Website: http://www.srtabus.com/

Cape Cod & the Islands RTAs:

Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA)
Phone: (508) 775-8504, TTY: (800) 439-0183
Website: http://www.capecodtransit.org/

Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA)

Phone: (508) 693-9440

Website: http://www.vineyardtransit.com/Pages/index

Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA)

Phone: 508-228-7025 TTY: (508) 325-7516

Website: http://www.nrtawave.com/

Western Massachusetts RTAs:

▶ <u>Berkshire Regional Transit Authority</u> (BRTA)

Phone; (800) 292-2782; (413) 499-2782 Website: http://www.berkshirerta.com/

Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA)

Phone: (413) 774-2262

Website: http://www.frta.org/

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)

Phone: (413) 781-7882; TTY: (413) 733-0449

Website: http://www.pvta.com/