

ADA Paratransit Service Eligibility Process

WHY DO WE HAVE PARATRANSIT?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), a civil rights bill, was designed to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in American society. In the area of public transportation, the ADA clearly states that regular bus service should be the primary means of public transportation for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Under the ADA, transit agencies like NAIPTA are required to provide origin to destination, demand-responsive Paratransit service that mirrors their fixed-route service (in terms of service times and areas). The service is a safety net, only for those persons with physical, cognitive, emotional, visual, or other sensory disabilities who do not have the **functional** capability to ride fixed-route buses, either permanently or under certain conditions. The fixed-route bus system is fully accessible, with wheelchair accessible buses and major transfer facilities.

In addition, other accommodations such as bus stop and route announcements and easy-to-read signs make using the fixed-route buses possible for many people with disabilities. Persons who are able to use fixed-route buses are expected to do so whenever they can. The unavailability of fixed-route service does not constitute eligibility for a person who could otherwise take the same trip on buses, if service were available.

Travel Training service is also available to those who need help in learning how to use the fixed-route buses.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO USE PARATRANSIT?

Under the ADA, disability alone does not qualify a person to ride Paratransit. A person must be functionally unable to use the fixed-route service. Paratransit service is provided to the following three general groups of persons with disabilities:

1. Persons who have specific impairment-related conditions which make it impossible — not just difficult — to travel to or from the bus stop.
2. Persons who need a wheelchair lift-equipped bus, but it is not available on the fixed-route when they need to travel. **All Naipta fixed-route buses are ADA accessible.**
3. Persons who cannot board, ride, or exit from the fixed-route buses even if they are able to get to a bus stop and the bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift.

Those persons who are certified eligible are classified as having unconditional, temporary, or conditional eligibility for ADA Paratransit Service as follows:

Unconditional status is assigned to persons who are determined unable to ever independently use fixed-route buses, even with training.

Temporary status is assigned to persons who are determined capable of using accessible buses but cannot do so at present, either because of a temporary disability or other temporary changes to the bus route, stops, or other conditions.

Conditional status is assigned to persons who are able to use fixed-route buses some of the time, but would, under certain circumstances and for certain trips, be prevented from independently

using fixed-route buses. Examples of conditional eligibility include persons with extreme fatigue after treatments such as dialysis, a bus stop which requires a traveler who is blind to maneuver a dangerous pedestrian area such as a large, open parking lot with no reference points, or a fixed-route bus route that is not yet accessible.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

All applicants seeking eligibility for ADA Paratransit Service must go through an eligibility determination process. An in-person evaluation interview is required to determine if the applicant can use the fixed-route bus system. Transportation assistance is provided as necessary to and from the evaluation appointment.

The purpose of the evaluation interview is to determine when and under what circumstances the applicant can use fixed-route buses and when Paratransit service is required.

The ADA Paratransit eligibility evaluation includes a medical verification of disability, the applicant's own assessment of his ability to use fixed-route buses, and an in-person evaluation interview. Information provided by a social service agency or other professional regarding the applicant's ability to use the fixed-route bus may also be considered.

All requested information must be provided and the application process completed before an eligibility determination can be rendered.

IN-PERSON INTERVIEW

The in-person interview helps determine whether an applicant has the ability to use fixed-route buses, and if so, under what circumstances. The interview consists of a series of questions designed to evaluate the functional abilities, limitations, and individual needs of each applicant. Variables in the environment, as well as the applicant's ability to perform the tasks required to use the bus, are also considered.

APPEALS

Information regarding the appeals process is available from the Paratransit Program Manager. Applicants who are determined not eligible, or who do not agree with the conditions established for their use of ADA Paratransit Service, may request a review of their determination by the Appeals Committee.

We are always happy to hear from you. Questions? Need Assistance?
Please call: (928) 679-8911

