



ADA Complementary Paratransit Service
Policies & Procedures

North Central Regional Transit District

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Exhibits Map - Service Area

I. General

Goal

It is the goal of the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) through its ADA complementary paratransit service, to design, implement and maintain an efficient and effective transportation system for persons with disabilities who are "ADA paratransit eligible."

Policy

It is the policy of the NCRTD, in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Volume 1, Part 37, Subpart F, Section 37.121 that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity undertaken by the NCRTD that receives or benefits from federal financial assistance.

Purpose

The ADA complementary paratransit service was developed to provide safe and efficient transportation within the Espanola and Town of Taos areas to persons with disabilities who are "ADA paratransit eligible."

Objectives

The specific objectives of the ADA complementary paratransit service are:

1. To provide origin to destination complementary paratransit service to include curb-to-curb and based on special need, door-to-door, demand response transportation on specially equipped vehicles designed to accommodate persons with disabilities.
2. To maintain a trained staff for the operation and control of the service.
3. To provide on-going mechanisms for persons with disabilities to provide input on ADA complementary paratransit service, policies and procedures.
4. To provide all public information tools on the NCRTD services in accessible formats.

II. Operations

General

ADA complementary paratransit service is provided in accordance with the six service criteria established by the U.S. Department of Transportation for ADA paratransit operations: service area, response time, fares, trip purpose restrictions, hours and days of service and capacity constraints.

Service Area

1. Complementary ADA Service for Espanola and Town of Taos Area Fixed Routes

ADA complementary paratransit service shall be provided to origins and destinations within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed route services and within the core service area.

Para-transit service will also be offered within a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile radius of the Espanola Transit Center located at Paseo de Onate at Calle Espinosa.

ADA Eligible passengers within the City of Espanola and Rio Arriba County outside of the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius up to 15 miles of the Espanola Transit Center can request demand service at no cost to the passenger.

Fixed Routes within the Espanola/Rio Arriba County 15-mile radius zone are:

#100 Riverside Route

#110 Westside/Crosstown Route

#150 Chimayo- Las Trampas Route up to the East Cordova entrance.

#160 Santa Clara Route

ADA complementary paratransit service shall also be provided to origins and destinations within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed route service and within the core service area of the Town of Taos.

Fixed Route within the Town of Taos radius zone are:

#340 Red Route

2. Complementary ADA Paratransit Service on all Regional Area* Fixed Routes

For all other NCRTD operated routes the fixed route bus will “flex” up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on paved and/or graveled roads for qualifying persons with disabilities. These are “origin to destination” transportation services for persons with disabilities who

cannot use the fixed bus service. The type of ADA service provided is origin to destination service via curb-to-curb or door to door as needed, when roadway conditions permit.

Individuals who wish to be considered for this service will need to complete an application, have the information verified by a medical professional, and be certified by the NCRTD as ADA eligible. There is no cost for this service.

Regional Area Fixed Routes are:

#150 Chimayo
#160 Santa Clara
#170 Jicarilla
#180 El Rito
#190 Chama
#200 Santa Fe
#220 Tesuque
#230 San Ildefonso
#255 Mountain Trail
#260 La Cienega
#270 Turquoise Trail
#280 Eldorado
#290 Edgewood
#300 Taos
#305 Taos Express
#310 Red River
#320 Questa
#330 Penasco
#341 TSV Green
#350 UNM Taos
#360 Tres Piedras
#400 Los Alamos

3. ADA Service - Regional Fixed Route -Safety and Road Requirements

- Roads must be paved or graveled, meet minimal local county maintenance standards;
- Be regularly maintained by the local jurisdiction, including snow removal;
- Have sufficient drainage during heavy rains or during periods of flash flooding;
- Be of sufficient width for 2 large vehicles to operate side to side in either direction;
- Have overhead clearance of at least 12';
- Have within reasonable distance from pick up/drop off location a wide point or pullout that would facilitate turning around a 40' vehicle.

- Locations where lift service is required must have a flat level surface to ensure safe lift deployment.

The Transit Operations Director or their designee will make the final determination as to roads meeting the standards listed above.

4. ADA Service To/From Areas Where ADA Service Is Provided by An Agency Other Than NCRTD

In areas where ADA service is being provided by an agency other than the NCRTD, Flex Service can be scheduled to and from common connecting/transfer points where both the other agency and the NCRTD's services meet for passenger transfers. It is the responsibility of the passenger to schedule with the other agency for connecting service required to complete their trip. Pre-qualification and fares for ADA services with another agency may be required.

Other agencies that connect with the NCRTD are:

City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe Trails/Santa Fe Rides
505-955-2001
866-554-7433 - toll free

Los Alamos County, Atomic City Transit
505-661-7433

Red River Miner's Transit
575-770-5959

Ohkay Owingeh Popay Messenger Service
505-852-4014

NMDOT Park &
Ride 505-424-1110

New Mexico Rail Runner 866-795-7245 -toll free

Reservations and Response Time

Two types of service will be available: subscription and reservation.

Subscription service will be offered for any trip that occurs every week, originates and terminates at the same scheduled location, at the same hour each day. Requests for subscription service must be made at least one (1) day prior to the first trip, and may be made up to four (4) days in advance. The number of subscription service trips accepted shall not exceed 50% of the total trips scheduled by all passengers unless there is non-subscription

capacity.

Reservation service shall be available for any trip. Requests for reservation service must be made at least one (1) day prior to the desired trip time, and may be made up to four (4) days in advance.

Requests for service shall be accepted from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the service day. NCRTD's voice messaging service is available for requests made one day prior on weekends or holidays between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. for service on Monday or the day after a holiday. Passengers shall request both pick up and return trips when making reservations.

Trips shall be scheduled to begin no more than one (1) hour before or after the desired departure time. The trip shall be scheduled to arrive at the pick-up location within a 30-minute time frame (see Riding ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, Section IV. C).

Fares

The fare for a trip charged to an ADA paratransit eligible user of the complementary paratransit service shall not exceed twice the fare that would be charged to an individual paying full fare on NCRTD's fixed-route system. Thus, no fare will be charged for ADA certified passengers who are picked up and delivered within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from a fixed route.

Personal care attendants ride free with passengers who need assistance while boarding, riding, or alighting from a vehicle. Passengers must state the need for a personal care attendant on the ADA paratransit eligibility certification application. Dispatcher must be notified at the time the reservation that a personal care attendant will also be riding.

Passenger companions are allowed on a space availability basis. Each companion will pay the same fare as the ADA paratransit eligible individual they are accompanying. There is no additional fare charged for companions within the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile zone of a fixed route. See section VII, D. for fares companions outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile zone.

No Trip Purpose Restrictions

Trips for any purpose will be accommodated and will not be prioritized by trip purpose. Passengers may be asked the nature of their trip so as the NCRTD can be prepared to provide appropriate safety measures.

Hours and Days of Service

The ADA complementary paratransit service shall operate from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. No Saturday or Sunday service is provided. Other than flex route

#255 Mountain Trail Route, #305 Taos Express Route and #341 TSV Green Route which provide Saturday and Sunday service.

Service is not offered on the following holidays:

Exclusion ADA flex routes #255 Mountain Trail Route, #305 Taos Express Route and #341 TSV Green Route

New Year's Day
Dr. Martin Luther King
Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Indigenous People Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve Day
Christmas Day

No Capacity Constraints

NCRTD will not constrain capacity by 1) restricting the number of trips an individual will be provided; 2) maintaining waiting lists for access to the service; or 3) any operational pattern or practice that significantly limits the availability of service to ADA paratransit eligible persons.

The following performance data will be collected and monitored by the NCRTD for the purpose of establishing whether capacity constraints exist:

1. Number of missed calls on the trip reservation line. Missed calls will be measured by the amount of reservation calls that roll over and go to voicemail.
2. Number of late pick-ups or drop-offs for initial or return trips. A pick-up or drop-off is considered late when it is more than twenty (20) minutes past the scheduled pick-up or drop-off time.
3. Number of trip denials or missed trips. Trip denials include rides that are accepted outside the hour scheduling window. Declined round trips will be counted as two (2) denials when one leg of a round trip cannot be scheduled within the hour window and the requester declines the round trip.
4. Number of late pick-ups. A pick-up is considered late when the bus arrives after the pick-up window.

5. Number of trips with excessive lengths. Excessive trip length is defined as a trip that takes longer than a reasonable time traveled on a fixed route, including travel time to the bus stop, wait time for the bus, and travel time from the bus stop.

If, after analysis of the above performance data, NCRTD determines that there is an increase in demand when administering its ADA complementary paratransit service, NCRTD shall increase its capacity to respond to peaks in demand in a way that is comparable to dealing with changes in demand on the fixed route system.

ADA paratransit eligible persons shall have priority on the ADA complementary paratransit service, and tracking for capacity constraints shall be done separately for ADA paratransit eligible persons and others who may use the service.

Inclement Weather

In the unlikely event of service cancellation due to inclement weather, NCRTD personnel shall attempt to contact all scheduled passengers at the telephone numbers listed on the ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Eligibility Application.

Lost and Found

Neither NCRTD will be responsible for items left on vehicles. However, if found, the item(s) will be held for a maximum of thirty (30) days.

Passengers attempting to locate lost items should call the NCRTD office. If the passenger's item has been located, every effort will be made to return the item to the passenger on his/her next scheduled trip.

III. Eligibility and Certification Procedures

General Eligibility

To receive ADA complementary paratransit service, individuals must be certified "ADA paratransit eligible," per the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to include:

1. Any individual with a disability who is unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment (including a vision impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
2. Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and is able, with such assistance, to board, ride

and disembark from any vehicle which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities if the individual wants to travel on a route on the system during the hours of operation of the system at a time, or within a reasonable period of time, when such a vehicle is not being used to provide designated public transportation on the route.

3. Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents such individual from traveling to a boarding location or from a disembarking location on such system.

Generally, the following four tests are applied when determining an applicant's eligibility:

1. Does the individual's disability prevent him/her from getting to and from a bus stop at the point of origin or destination?
2. Can the individual board, utilize and disembark the vehicle at the bus stop?
3. Can the individual recognize the destination and disembark the bus?
4. If the passenger's trip requires transfers, are the paths of travel between routes accessible and navigable by the individual?

Trip-By-Trip Eligibility

While there are some passengers who are eligible to ride ADA complementary paratransit service for all their transportation needs, most passengers are certified for service on a trip-by-trip basis. In other words, passengers who may normally be able to ride NCRTD fixed-route service may be eligible for certain trips on the Curb-to-Curb or Origin to destination service. Examples include:

1. An impairment-related condition that makes the person severely sensitive to cold or hot temperatures.
2. A person unable to maneuver a wheelchair through snow.
3. An individual with cognitive disabilities who must use a route other than the one he/she has learned or been trained to ride.
4. An individual who must travel an alternate route due to circumstances, where this alternate route is inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

Eligibility for Visitors and Out-of-Area Residents

Visitors to the Espanola and the Town of Taos area who present documentation that they are ADA paratransit eligible in the jurisdiction in which they reside shall be allowed to use

the NCRTD service. If a visitor does not present such documentation, NCRTD may require the visitor to present documentation of his/her place of residence and, if the individual's disability is not apparent, of his/her disability. NCRTD will not require a functional assessment and will accept a self-certification from the visitor that he/she is unable to use fixed route transit.

NCRTD shall make the service available to visitors for any combination of twenty-one (21) days during any 365-day period beginning with the visitor 's first use of the service.

The location of an applicant's residence is not a factor in determining eligibility. Persons living outside the service area can be certified for the ADA complementary paratransit service. However, only trips with both an origin and destination inside the service area will be provided.

Application Process

The applicant shall return the completed ADA Paratransit Application to the NCRTD office in either Espanola or the Town of Taos to be considered complete, all of the information requested on the application must be entered and the application must be signed by the applicant.

In addition, the Professional Verification Form must be completed and signed by a qualified licensed professional.

Once the completed application is received in our offices an interview will be scheduled between the applicant and a NCRTD representative in order to complete the certification process.

Applicants can request transportations to and from the NCRTD offices in Espanola or Taos for in person interviews.

*See Exhibit A, Paratransit Application.

NCRTD staff will attempt to make a determination from the information included in the ADA Paratransit Application. Should the staff be unable to make a determination based upon the information provided, they may request clarification from the applicant or the professional who completed the Professional Verification Form.

If a determination still cannot be made, NCRTD may require applicants to submit to a functional assessment to determine if they can use the regular fixed-route bus service. NCRTD will pay the cost of the functional assessment as well as provide transportation to and from the appointment.

NCRTD staff will normally make a determination regarding eligibility within twenty on (21) days of receipt of a complete ADA Paratransit Application. Should the staff fail to make such a determination within the twenty-one (21)-day period, the applicant will be "presumed eligible" until such time a determination has been made.

When applications are approved, applicants will be notified by mail they have been certified to use ADA complementary paratransit service for three (3) years, if they are permanently disabled; or for a shorter, specified time if their disability is temporary. Certified passengers may begin using service immediately following notification.

Approved applicants must recertify for paratransit service every three (3) years or when their physical address has changed.

Recertification applications must include an updated Professional Verification Form. The form must be thoroughly completed and signed by a qualified licensed professional.

At any time during a passenger's three (3) year certification, NCRTD staff may require the certified passenger to submit a new ADA Paratransit Application if there is sufficient cause to believe the passenger's condition has changed making the person no longer "ADA paratransit eligible."

Applicants who are deemed ineligible for ADA complementary paratransit may appeal by following the procedure established in Section VIII, Appeal Procedures. Applicants denied service may reapply for the service at any time.

All passenger information will be kept confidential by the NCRTD staff unless a release is required by law or court order.

IV. Passenger Responsibilities

General Passenger Condition

All passengers must be able to sit in a bus seat or wheelchair in order to be transported.

Any passenger whose medical condition is such that the passenger is incoherent or requires immediate medical attention to sustain life may be denied service. ADA complementary paratransit service is to be considered a "common carrier" and does not perform ambulance or emergency service.

If the driver reasonably believes a passenger's physical condition or conduct is hazardous, or if a passenger possesses weapons, instruments or equipment that are reasonably believed to be dangerous, or if the passenger presents a direct threat to others, service may be terminated immediately. The passenger will be notified of his/her right to appeal the termination and NCRTD will hear the appeal as soon as reasonably possible.

Reservations

Reservations for service are accepted one (1) day or up to four (4) days in advance prior to the desired trip time. Same day reservations are accepted on a space available basis. In order to schedule a trip, one must speak (either in person or via telephone messaging) with NCRTD staff that will require the following in scheduling a trip:

1. Name
2. Phone Number
3. Pick-Up Address
4. Destination Address
5. Desired Pick-Up Time
6. Desired Drop-Off Time (Appointment Time)
7. Total number of passengers including personal care attendants or companions
8. If Round Trip, Approximate Time of Return Trip

Passengers can schedule service by calling NCRTD at 1-866-206-0754 from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the day prior to service. Requests made one day prior on weekends or holidays between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. for reservations for service on Monday or the day after a holiday shall be accepted as received on the NCRTD's voice messaging service.

Riding ADA Complementary Paratransit Service

Paratransit passengers shall be ready to go fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. NCRTD makes every effort to arrive as close to the scheduled pick-up time as possible. However, NCRTD may arrive up to fifteen (15) minutes before or fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time.

Example: If you schedule a 9:30 a.m. pick-up, the vehicle may arrive between 9:15 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.

This thirty (30) minute window (consisting of fifteen (15) minutes before to fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled time) is called the "pick-up time period."

Drivers, after arriving within the pick-up time period, will wait up to five (5) minutes. Any passenger who is not at his/her scheduled pick-up point and ready to go by that time will be considered a "no show" and the driver will leave to pick up other riders. The driver will not return for a second attempt. The only exception will be passengers who have been detained during a medical appointment.

If a passenger knows that he/she will be detained during a medical appointment, the passenger shall call NCRTD at 1-866-206-0754 as soon as possible. When the passenger is ready, he/she shall call NCRTD and the next available vehicle will be dispatched to pick up the passenger.

Service may not be rendered if the vehicle cannot access the origin or destination location, or if the location does not provide safe passage for the vehicle or safe access to the vehicle by

the passenger. The driver shall immediately call the dispatcher for further instructions in such case.

Locations where lift deployment is required must have flat level surfaces to ensure safety for the client and safe operation of the lift.

If you plan on having several stops during a single trip, please schedule each stop separately. Do not ask the driver to drop you off at a location that was not previously scheduled. All pick-ups and drop-offs must be scheduled through the office by calling 866-206-0754. Be sure to allow for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes between your first drop off and the second pick up for each round trip. Drivers are not permitted to wait for passengers.

Drivers have other pick-ups and drop-offs on the route. Please do not ask the driver to take you home first or for special arrangements as this will cause delays in the schedule. Please schedule pick-up early enough to account for other pick-ups or drop-offs that may be completed during your trip. NCRTD cannot be responsible for any of passenger's late arrivals or missed appointments and does not guarantee arrival times.

Drivers are not permitted to enter a passenger 's home under any circumstance.

Drivers are not permitted to maneuver a wheelchair for the passenger, except to assist in moving the wheel chair onto or off the lift and into the bus for securement and transporting. This rule is provided for the safety of the passenger and the driver.

Drivers are not permitted to physically lift passengers.

Drivers are not permitted to handle passengers' personal belongings.

If all other passengers on the vehicle are required to wear seat belts, ADA complementary paratransit service passengers shall also be required to wear seat belts. A physician's statement of a passenger's physical inability to wear a seat belt may waive this requirement.

Profanity or abusive conduct shall not be permitted and may result in suspension or termination of service.

Eating or smoking is not allowed on NCRTD vehicles. Drinking is permissible only from a hard container with a Snap-On or screw type lid.

Transportation of Children

The minimum age for a child to travel alone aboard ADA complementary paratransit service vehicles is 10 years of age. Children under the age of 10 must have a guardian of legal age accompany them during transport.

"No Shows" and Cancellations

If riders are unable to keep the scheduled appointment time, they should notify NCRTD at least two hours prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Failure to do so may result in the recording of a "no show." A record of all "no shows" will be maintained at the "NCR TD office.

Riders will be suspended for seven days for no-shows if the following criteria are met:

1. No-shows represent 10 percent or more of their scheduled trips, AND
2. The rider has three or more no-shows.

Circumstances beyond the passengers control resulting in a No Show will not be counted against the passenger. Qualifying circumstances include but are not limited to passenger illness, family emergencies, mobility aid failure, cancelled or delayed appointments, adverse weather conditions, and other similar circumstances. Qualifying circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Transit Operations Director. The passenger will be given an opportunity to appeal the suspension before the suspension takes effect.

Accommodation of Wheelchairs and Mobility Devices

A wheelchair is a mobility aid belonging to any class of three- or more-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed or modified for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered. NCRTD will accommodate wheelchairs unless the wheelchair is too wide or heavy to be accommodated by the lift or the wheelchair will block the aisle.

All wheelchairs and other mobility devices must be secured to the floor of the vehicle using the securement equipment. The drivers will make every effort not to damage wheelchairs with the securement straps and hooks. Service will be provided even when the wheelchair cannot be secured to the driver's satisfaction.

In the case where a mobility device is incapable of being properly secured by the securement devices, the driver will notify the rider and will recommend the rider transfer to a seat. In those cases, it will be up to the rider to decide to continue with the ride.

Personal Care Attendants and Companions

A personal care attendant (i.e., someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his/her personal needs) may ride with the eligible individual at no cost. The personal care attendant must board and alight at the same stops as the passenger.

Passengers are guaranteed a seat for at least one companion. Additional companions will be scheduled on a space-available basis. Companions pay the same fare as the ADA paratransit eligible individual they are accompanying. Companions must board and alight at the same stops as the passenger.

A companion (e.g., friend or family member) does not count as a personal care attendant unless the eligible individual regularly makes use of a personal care attendant and the companion is

actually acting in that capacity.

As part of the initial eligibility certification process, an individual must indicate whether he/she travels with a personal care attendant. If someone does not indicate the use of an attendant, then any individual accompanying him/her would be regarded simply as a companion.

Service Animals and Pets

Please refer to the District policy on Service Animals and Pets.

Carry-On Packages

There is a five (5) bag limit or what the passenger can carry comfortably for all groceries and goods purchased during the scheduled trip. The driver will hand them to the passenger but will not carry them out of the store or into their home. The bus operator will assist an individual to get on or off the bus.

If an individual needs assistance beyond this, The District recommends that he/she be accompanied by a personal care attendant or companion.

V. Public Involvement

Goal

NCRTD is committed to providing on-going mechanisms to involve the public in decisions regarding its services, policies and procedures.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

Consumer satisfaction survey forms will be mailed one time each year to all certified ADA complementary paratransit service passengers. These surveys will measure customer satisfaction with aspects of NCRTD services including prompt telephone answering, scheduler courtesy, ability to get requested pick-up time, timeliness of pick-ups and drop-offs, response time for return trip, amount of time traveling, courtesy of drivers, level of assistance by drivers, safety of service and general satisfaction with service. The results of these surveys will be compiled and reported to the NCRTD Board of Directors.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held on an as-needed basis to obtain input from persons with disabilities on such topics as proposed service changes, proposed fare increases, and other similar topics.

Focus Groups

Focus groups made up of persons with disabilities and representatives from agencies serving the needs of persons with disabilities will be held on an ad hoc basis to deal with specific service and policy issues that require in-depth discussion.

VI. Public Information Dissemination

Goal

NCRTD is committed to providing information about its services, policies and procedures to the public in accessible formats for persons with disabilities.

Accessible Formats

NCRTD makes use of an operator-assisted RELAY service so that persons with hearing or speech impairments may, by dialing 711, communicate with and receive information from NCRTD staff.

Persons with vision impairments may request braille information through the State library, or request NCRTD provide big font print, or request information via New Mexico School for the Blind reader service.

VII. Appeal Procedures

Goal

NCRTD has adopted the following appeal procedures as the mechanism for resolving complaints relative to the ADA complementary paratransit services, policies and procedures.

The following administrative procedure has been established to insure prompt and equitable resolution of appeals of any person with a disability that has been denied eligibility for ADA complementary paratransit service. The same appeal procedure will be used for appeals filed by persons who have been notified of a pending service termination or suspension.

Appeal Procedure

An applicant/passenger who wishes to appeal an eligibility determination, service suspension or termination must address an appeal, in writing, to the NCRTD within 60 days of the denial of the application or the notification of suspension of service. The appellant will be entitled to be heard in person and to have necessary support, such as a sign interpreter, or may choose to be represented by another person.

The appellant will be notified in writing of the NCRTD decision as soon as possible. NCRTD

will not provide paratransit service to the individual pending the determination on appeal. If a decision has not been made within 30 days of the completion of the appeals process, NCRTD will provide paratransit service from that time until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.