

## CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

### ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Note: **If you are at least 65 years of age**, you are eligible for paratransit service based on age under a state-funded lottery program for senior citizens. If you are qualify as a senior citizen but are also unable to use buses because of disability, please complete the application for disabled passengers for our records.

Note: **If you are under age 65** and are applying for paratransit service based on a disability, please review the following information on eligibility carefully before submitting an application. The service operates only at the times and on the days that buses operate, within 3/4 mile of bus routes. If you are able to use buses, but wish to apply because they do not run when or where you wish to go, you will not be eligible for paratransit service.

The ADA requires that CATARIDE complementary paratransit service be provided to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route bus system without assistance (except for assistance of the bus driver to operate the lift/ramp and to secure a wheelchair) as follows. There are three categories of eligibility; please review the eligibility requirements below to assist in completing your application for paratransit service on the basis of disability. In each case, eligibility may apply to some trips and not others, based on the availability of accessible buses or your ability to ride fixed route bus service under certain conditions. Note that the specific conditions for eligibility, and not simply the existence of a disability in and of itself, must be met.

#### **Category 1 eligibility:**

An individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of a physical, vision or mental impairment, to board, ride, or disembark from any accessible fixed route bus usable by individuals with disabilities, without the assistance of another individual (except an operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device).

Examples include:

- Individuals who cannot “navigate the bus system” because of cognitive or vision impairments which make them unable to obtain and understand system information, recognize and board the correct vehicle, have the correct fare available and/or use the fare collection system, recognize destinations, transfer from bus to bus, or otherwise be unable to use buses.
- Individuals with disabilities who cannot stand on a crowded bus when seats, including priority seats, may not be available.
- Individuals who use wheelchairs and who cannot use the lift or get to the wheelchair securement area without assistance, except for the assistance of drivers in using lifts, ramps, and securement devices. Individuals who can use buses with such driver assistance are not eligible under this category.

Individuals trained to use buses for certain trips are eligible for paratransit only for trips not included in the training.

Individuals with mobility impairments who do not use wheelchairs, but cannot board the bus using steps because they use canes, leg braces or otherwise cannot use steps, must be allowed to board by standing on the lift and are not eligible for paratransit service if they can do so.

Only “common wheelchairs” as defined by the ADA are accepted on fixed route and paratransit service. A “common wheelchair” includes any mobility aid belonging to any class of three or four-wheeled devices, usable indoors, designed for and used by individuals with mobility impairments, whether operated manually or powered, which does not exceed 30" in width and 48" in length (measured two inches above the ground) and does not weigh more than 600 pounds when occupied. Individuals whose wheelchairs do not meet this definition will not be transported.

## **Category 2 eligibility**

An individual with a disability who needs to use a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device, and who is able to board, ride, or disembark from any accessible fixed route bus usable by individuals with disabilities, without the assistance of another individual (except an operator of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device), but an accessible vehicle is not available on a fixed route or routes at the times those fixed routes operate, or if the lift cannot be deployed at the stop which is required.

Because all CATA fixed route buses are equipped with ramps or lifts, the bus system is considered 100% accessible, and individuals who can use accessible buses are not eligible for paratransit service, as noted under Category 1.

## **Category 3 eligibility**

An individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents travel to the bus stop or from a bus stop. Environmental conditions, distance, weather, terrain and architectural barriers do not, in and of themselves, confer eligibility.

Examples of such barriers include lack of curb cuts, distance to the bus, steep terrain, snow and/or ice, temperature extremes or major intersections or other barriers which are difficult to negotiate. However, the conditions or barriers must prevent the individual from traveling to and from stops, not simply make it more difficult to do so. In many circumstances, it is possible for an individual with a disability to travel to and from a bus stop, and the individual is not eligible for paratransit under this category. Eligibility will be based on whether or not the individual cannot find a reasonable alternative path to and from the stop.

For example, a lack of curb cuts might require a wheelchair user to take a less direct route than an ambulatory individual to or from a destination and would require more time, trouble, and effort for the wheelchair user. But if the individual can still get to the bus stop, that individual is not eligible for paratransit service.

Eligibility under this category may be conditional. In the example above, the wheelchair user may be eligible only when there is sufficient snow on the ground to prevent travel to and from the destination, and such conditions must be detailed on the application.

## **Personal Care Attendants (PCA's)**

Paratransit service also must be provided to a personal care attendant (PCA) traveling with an eligible rider and to one companion in addition to the PCA. Additional companions will only be accommodated if space is available. PCA's and companions must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as the eligible rider. Companions must pay the same fare as the eligible rider, while PCAs pay no fare.

A PCA is someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his or her personal needs and may always ride with that individual. The need for a PCA is not necessarily related to travel on paratransit service, but a companion is only considered a PCA if the eligible individual regularly makes use of and requires the use of a PCA to assist with daily life and the companion actually acts in that capacity. The need for a PCA must be detailed on the application.