

Mobility Plus Rider's Guide

Paratransit Services

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Hall Area Transit
Gainesville Connection Administrative Office
687 Main St.
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-503-3333

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I. Welcome to Mobility Plus Paratransit Services

Mobility Plus is a complimentary ADA paratransit service provided for individuals who, because of their disability, are unable to use the fixed route bus service provided by Hall Area Transit. Mobility Plus is not designed for persons for whom accessing the fixed route bus service is merely difficult or inconvenient; rather it is for those who absolutely cannot safely navigate their way to and from a bus stop. Mobility Plus provides comparable service to the regular fixed route bus in terms of shared rides, curb-to-curb pickup, service area (3/4 mile of the fixed route), and hours and days of service.

Eligibility

Mobility Plus provides rides for people who are certified as eligible for paratransit service under the rules of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Eligibility for Mobility Plus is open to persons in the following three categories: Conditional, Temporary and Unconditional.

1. Persons unable to navigate the fixed route system.
2. Persons who require a lift-equipped bus when the fixed route service does not provide accessibility.
3. Persons whose disability makes it impossible for them to travel to or from the nearest bus stop.

If you believe you have a disability (including mobility, cognitive and visual impairments), that prevents you from independently using lift-equipped accessible fixed-route bus service, write or call for an application:

Hall Area Transit
Gainesville Connection Administrative Office
687 Main Street, S.E.
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
770-503-3333

Let us know if you need an application in an alternative format or require in-person telephone assistance to complete your application.

Within 21 days of receiving your application, the HAT staff will arrange an interview with you. It may be determined, based on your abilities, that you are eligible for some rides but not for others, or it may be determined that you are capable of using Mobility Plus-equipped fixed route bus service. All application information will be kept confidential.

II. Service Areas and Hours

Mobility Plus operates during the same days and hours as the regular fixed route service, Hall Area Transit.

Weekdays: 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

(Weekend and Holidays services are not available)

The City observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

The service area includes corridors that are within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the fixed bus route.

III. Scheduling a Ride

You must call 770-503-3333 to make a reservation. You can arrange a trip from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. the day before you travel. Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. When calling to reserve a ride, have the following information ready:

- Your first and last name
- Date when you want to travel
- Pick-up and Drop-off address: number, street, apartment number, city
- Your requested pickup or drop off time
- Your requested return time if you want a round trip
- Where you want to go: number, street, suite number, city, zip code
- If you will be bringing a service animal

- If you will be accompanied by a personal care attendant (PCA) and/or companion (including children)
- Any other information the driver should know to assist with your travel needs

Helpful Hints:

Because of the demand, the more advanced notice you can give (7-14 days in advance), the more likely you are to get the ride you need. You may be asked to change your requested pickup time to accommodate your request for a reservation. The ADA allows us to negotiate a revised pickup with you that may be up to one hour before or after your requested pick-up time.

Reservation telephone lines are busiest in the morning hours; if possible, call after 10:00 a.m. Trip demand is heaviest between 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Try to schedule your trips outside these times, if possible, to increase the likelihood your ride request can be better accommodated.

Companions and Personal Care Assistants (PCAs)

As a certified rider you may arrange to bring one (1) companion along on each ride for the same fare that you would pay. You may add extra fare-paying companions to your trip only on a space available basis.

A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) is someone whose assistance you must have in order to take

your trip. As a certified rider needing assistance, the PCA may ride with you at no charge. Your PCA and companion may both ride with you on the same trip. When making your reservations for your ride, please tell the dispatcher if a companion or Personal Care Assistant will be riding with you.

Cancellations (call 770-503-3333)

To cancel trips, call the reservation line and speak to the dispatcher. Cancellations can be left on an automated recorder that is turned on 24 hours a day. Please remember to cancel trips you cannot use as soon as possible or at least one hour before your pickup times. This will help free up space for others to ride and keep program costs down.

No-Show – Definitions and Penalties

You will be considered a “no-show” if you:

- Reserve a ride but do not meet the vehicle within 5 minutes of its arrival.
- Call to cancel a trip less than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time.

If you are a “no-show” for a trip and we are unable to contact you, **any subsequent trips scheduled for the same day will be cancelled unless we hear from you.**

Subscription Service

If you travel to and from the same destination at the same time and day at least two times a week, you may request to use Mobility Plus' subscription service. This service allows riders to make regular trips without telephoning in for reservations or to confirm rides. Subscription riders need only to call to cancel their ride. A change in time, origination, or destination may change your eligibility for a subscription ride.

Under certain conditions, you may discontinue subscription service for a prearranged, specific period of time and may return to subscription service without penalty following the absence. Subscription service may be temporarily discontinued for reasons such as illness, vacation, or school break.

Subscription service is limited in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that not more than 50% of the rides at any hour of any day may be subscription rides.

There may be a waiting list for subscription rides.

IV. Riding Mobility Plus

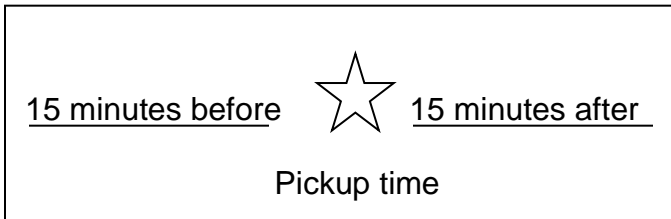
Fares

All riders must pay a fare. Only a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) traveling with an ADA certified rider is carried free of charge. Fares for Mobility Plus are twice the fare for the same trip on the fixed route bus, Hall Area Transit.

Your driver cannot make change. Please have the exact fare ready in cash or check. You may purchase a coupon book through the Hall Area Transit office.

Pickup and Drop Off

You can expect to be picked up within a 30-minute “window” of your scheduled pick up time. You should be ready to board the vehicle at the beginning of your “Pickup Window”.



A paratransit vehicle arriving any time within the pickup window will wait up to 5 minutes for the passenger. It is important to remember that buses arriving within 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after

the scheduled pickup time are considered on time and within the time window. Should a vehicle arrive early (before the 30 minute pickup window), you are not required to board until 15 minutes before the scheduled time (at the beginning of the pickup window).

You will not be considered a “no-show” if you refuse a ride that arrives later than the 15-minute window.

Boarding with a Mobility Device

All vehicles are equipped with passenger lifts that meet ADA specifications. Lifts will only accommodate mobility devices and four-wheel scooters up to 48” by 30” with a total weight up to 600 pounds, including the passenger. Mobility devices that exceed these standards may not be transportable.

- If you need a passenger lift to board a vehicle, the driver will assist you. All drivers are trained to operate the passenger lift.
- If needed, you may also board the vehicle while standing on the passenger lift.
- For your safety, please make sure your mobility device or other mobility device is maintained in accordance to manufacturer’s specifications.

Transporting Packages

Because the vehicle will be shared, riders should limit their parcels to one armload or the equivalent of two grocery bags. Packages must be transported on your lap or under the seat. Drivers must adhere to a schedule and cannot assist with packages. For the safety of all riders, you may not transport explosives, acids, flammable liquids, or other hazardous materials.

Transporting Life-Support Equipment

You may bring a respirator, portable oxygen, and/or other life-support equipment as long as it does not violate laws or rules related to transportation of hazardous materials and will fit in the paratransit vehicle.

Transporting Children

ADA-eligible children must pay the full fare. Children traveling as companions must pay the full fare. ADA certified children ages six (6) and over may travel without an accompanying adult only if it can be demonstrated they would be able, if not prevented by their disability, to use public transportation independently. Children ages four (4) and under or children under forty (40) pounds must be secured in a child safety seat provided by an accompanying adult. Passengers must provide the child safety seat.

Transporting Animals

You may travel with a service animal such as a guide dog or canine companion. You should tell the dispatcher when you reserve trips that you will be traveling with a service animal. Pets and other non-service animals may be transported only in a properly secured cage or container.

- Beginning on March 15, 2011, only dogs and miniature horse are recognized as service animals under titles II and III of the ADA.
- A service animal is a dog or miniature that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability.

How “Service Animal” Is Defined

Service animals are defined as dogs or that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a mobility device, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability. Dogs whose sole function is to

provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

This definition does not affect or limit the broader definition of “assistance animal” under the Fair Housing Act or the broader definition of “service animal” under the Air Carrier Access Act.

Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. Information about such laws can be obtained from the State attorney General’s office.

Where Service Animals Are Allowed

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. For example, in a hospital it would be inappropriate to exclude a service animal from areas such as patient rooms, clinics, cafeterias, or examination rooms. However, it may be appropriate to exclude a service animal from operating rooms or burn units where the animal’s presence may compromise a sterile environment.

Service Animals Must Be Under Control

Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless these devices interfere with the service animal’s work or the individual’s disability

prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.

Inquiries, Exclusions, Charges, and Other Specific Rules Related to Service Animals

- When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff may ask two questions: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability, and (2) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform. Staff cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
- Allergies and fear of dogs are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people using service animals. When a person who is allergic to dog dander and a person who uses a service animal must spend time in the same room or facility, for example, in a school classroom or at a homeless shelter, they both should be accommodated by assigning them, if possible, to different locations within the room or different rooms in the facility.
- A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove his service animal from the premises unless: (1) the dog is out of control and the handler does not take

effective action to control it or (2) the dog is not housebroken. When there is a legitimate reason to ask that a service animal be removed, staff must offer the person with the disability the opportunity to obtain goods or services without the animal's presence.

- Establishments that sell or prepare food must allow service animals in public areas even if state or local health codes prohibit animals on the premises.
- People with disabilities who use service animals cannot be isolated from other patrons, treated less favorably than other patrons, or charged fees that are not charged to other patrons without animals. In addition, if a business requires a deposit or fee to be paid by patrons with pets, it must waive the charge for service animals.
- If a business such as a hotel normally charges guests for damage that they cause, a customer with a disability may also be charged for damage caused by himself or his service animal.
- Staff are not required to provide care or food for a service animal.

Miniature Horses

In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department's revised ADA regulations have a new, separate provision about miniature horses that have

been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. (Miniature horses generally range in height from 24 inches to 34 inches measured to the shoulders and generally weigh between 70 and 100 pounds.) Entities covered by the ADA must modify their policies to permit miniature horses where reasonable. The regulations set out four assessment factors to assist entities in determining whether miniature horses can be accommodated in their facility. The assessment factors are (1) whether the miniature horse is housebroken; (2) whether the miniature horse is under the owner's control; (3) whether the facility can accommodate the miniature horse's type, size, and weight; and (4) whether the miniature horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility.

For more information about the ADA, please visit our website or call our toll-free number.

ADA Website

www.ADA.gov

To receive e-mail notifications when new ADA information is available, visit the ADA Website's home page and click the **link** near the top of the middle column.

ADA Information Line

800-514-0301 (Voice) and 800-514-0383 (TTY)

24 hours a day to order publications by mail.

M-W, F 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Th 12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) to speak with an ADA Specialist. All calls are confidential.

For persons with disabilities, this publication is available in alternate formats.

Duplication of this document is encouraged.

Out-of-Area Visitor Riding Privileges

Hall Area Transit can provide 21 days of service for ADA-certified persons with disabilities who are visiting from outside the Gainesville, Georgia area. Call Hall Area Transit for further information.

V. Responsibilities

Hall Area Transit has a short list of common-sense guidelines designed to ensure safety and comfort for all riders as well as the driver.

Rider Responsibilities

- Read carefully and understand all sections of the Guide to Ride.
- Make reservations at least one or more days in advance.
- Be ready at pickup location and be on time.
- Call to inquire if the vehicle has not arrived by the end of the 30-minute “window”.

- Call to cancel unneeded rides as soon as possible; avoid “no-shows”.
- Pay the correct fare in cash or coupons (drivers do not make change).
- Wear seat belts.
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers with inappropriate behavior.
- Maintain mobility device or other mobility device in a safe condition according to manufacturer’s specifications.
- Expect “shared-ride” service; others may be picked up after or dropped off before you reach your destination.
- Maintain acceptable standards of hygiene.
- No eating, drinking or smoking on board.
- No riding while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- No littering in the vehicle.
- No radio, cassette tape players, compact disc players, or other sound-generating equipment are to be played aloud aboard the vehicle (headphones are permissible).

Driver Responsibilities

Drivers are to adhere to the same standards of common courtesy and personal hygiene, as those required of the riders.

- Treat riders with courtesy.
- Be uniformed with visible name tag.

- Stay within the “line-of-sight” of their vehicle
Maintain the assigned service schedule for the convenience of all riders.
- If requested, assist riders when entering and leaving the vehicle.

Drivers are Not Permitted to:

- Enter a rider’s residence or other buildings.
- Perform any personal care assistance for riders, including but not limited to, assisting riders to dress.
- Load or Unload Packages or Groceries.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Carry riders or mobility devices up or down steps.
- Accept tips or gratuities.

VI. Suspension of Service

Misusing the system can result in suspension of your paratransit service. The following are misuses of the paratransit services that could lead to suspension.

- 1. Obtaining or using paratransit services under false pretenses.**

The Americans with Disabilities Act reserves paratransit services for individuals certified eligible. Your service may be suspended if:

- You have made false or misleading statements on your eligibility application.
- You allow other non-eligible individuals such as friends or family members to ride using your name.

2. **Suspension for “No-Shows”**

No-shows delay vehicles and use up space and resources other riders could use.

If you “no-show” 3 times in six months you may be suspended. The following process will occur:

1st No-Show: A *Notice* is sent.

2nd No-Show: A *Final Warning* is sent.

3rd No-Show: A *Suspension Notice* is sent.

- 1st suspension in 6 months:
1 week suspension
- 2nd suspension in 6 months:
2 weeks suspension
- 3rd suspension in 6 months:
30 days suspension

3. Suspension for abusive or disruptive behavior.

Disruptive or abusive behavior endangers passengers, drivers, and the HAT staff. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Intimidation or threats of physical harm to drivers or other riders.
- Verbal abuse of drivers, staff, and/or other passengers.
- Unlawful harassment, including unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior having sexual, violent, or racial connotations.
- Unauthorized use of vehicle equipment.
- Voluntary and repeated violation of riding rules, including:
 - Smoking, eating, and drinking on vehicles.
 - Refusing to remain seated with seat belt on.
 - Defacing equipment.

Circumstances that are beyond your control

Examples of situations not within the passenger's control may include but are not limited to:

- A sudden personal emergency.
- Sudden or worsening illness.
- Late arrival of the paratransit vehicle.
- A driver does not provide appropriate assistance.

If an investigation reveals your disruptive behavior is due to a disability and is beyond your control, your service may not be suspended. However, Hall Area Transit may require you to travel with a Personal Care Assistant (PCA). If your PCA cannot help you to control your behavior, and/or a safety problem continues to exist, your service may be disallowed.

VII. The Appeals Process

If you are not in agreement with a decision made by Hall Area Transit regarding eligibility or a suspension, you should get in touch with the Director of the Community Service Center at **770-503-3340** for an administrative hearing. An appointed panel of transportation officials, medical/disability professionals, and rider representatives (two ADA Committee members) will review the circumstances of your suspension. The appeals process will be carried out in accordance with the ADA regulations.

- An explanation of the appeals process is listed below.
- Appeals must be filed within 60 days of a denial of eligibility or a decision to suspend service.
- Appeals must be filed in writing or on audiocassette; accommodations will be made for persons unable to do so.
- You may ride the service until your eligibility / suspension appeal is heard.
- A decision will be made within 30 days and rendered in writing.

NOTE: If you are appealing a suspension based on an illegal, seriously disruptive, or violent behavior, you may not ride until the Appeals Panel reviews and overturns your suspension.

Guidelines for Requesting/Holding An Appeal Hearing

Requirements:

- a. An individual must request an appeal within 60 calendar days of the denial of their initial application or suspension.
- b. An individual must have an opportunity to be heard in person to present information and arguments.
- c. There must be a “separation of function” between those involved in the initial determination and those deciding appeals.
- d. Written notification of the appeal decision, stating the reasons for the finding, must be provided.
- e. Presumptive eligibility must be granted to the individual if a decision is not made within 30 days of the completion of the appeals process.

Process:

1. Written appeal is submitted to Transit Coordinator, who schedules the appeal hearing.
2. At appeals hearing, introductions of panel members, passenger and presiding member.

3. An explanation of conflict of interest should an individual have a professional or personal relationship with a decision-maker.
4. An explanation of the appeal policy and the applicant's rights to ensure that there is a clear understanding of process.
5. The basis on which decisions will be reached (e.g., majority vote, etc.).
6. A brief overview of eligibility/suspension policy to ensure that the applicant/passenger has a clear understanding of key issues such as the functional nature and trip-by-trip nature of ADA paratransit eligibility.
7. A summary of initial determination / suspension findings and the informal review findings.
8. An opportunity for the applicant and/or her representative to provide additional information or dispute the initial determination / suspension findings.
9. An opportunity for the hearing officer or panel members to ask the applicant or her representative questions and other persons involved.
10. Appeals panel deliberates and makes a decision on course of action, with written decision concerning the appeal so that the applicant clearly understands what will happen following

the hearing. The agency has 30 days to make a determination once the appeal has been heard.

11. Restatement of services or eligibility or denials/suspensions upheld.

HOW TO FILE A TITLE VI COMPLAINT

Hall Area Transit is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the grounds of race, color or national origin as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended (*Title VI*). If you feel that you have been subjected to discrimination on the grounds of your race, color or national origin under Title VI, you may file a written complaint with: City of Gainesville EEO Manager, P.O. Box 2496 Gainesville, Georgia 30503.

VIII. Using Fixed-Route Public Transit Services

Listed are some benefits of the Hall Area Transit fixed-route system:

- Fares are at least half of those charged for Mobility Plus services.
- Senior citizens and people with disabilities are eligible for reduced fares on Hall Area Transit.
- Mobility device accessible buses operate on timed schedules and require no advance reservations.
- You have more choice and independence since you may go anywhere the bus goes any time according to its schedule.

For information about riding Hall Area Transit, please call **770-503-3333**.

IX. Customer Service

If you experienced a problem with a specific ride or you need to make an appointment for eligibility certification, please call our office at **770-503-3333**.

Hall Area Transit is committed to using customer input as a tool to improve service quality.

If you are experiencing a problem with eligibility, or a suspension, and you would like to talk with

someone other than the ADA coordinator, you may call or write to:

Gainesville-Hall County Community Service Center Director
430 Prior Street, SE
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
770-503-3340

X. Quick Reference Numbers

General Information**770-503-3333**
Reservations/Cancellations**770-503-3333**
Complaints/Problems.....**770-503-3358**
Appeals Process.....**770-503-3340**

Eligibility
Coupons
ADA Paratransit Application
Travel Training Programs
Comments or Complaints
Materials in Alternative Formats
Administrative FAX..... **770-287-7317**

Georgia Relay Service:

For hearing Impaired/TTY
Customers..... **1-800 -255-0056**
For hearing customers..... **1-800 -255-0135**

