

ACCESS EXPRESS PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Eligibility Information Sheet

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that complementary paratransit service be available to persons who, because of a disability, are unable to use the regular bus system. While complementary paratransit service for ADA paratransit eligible person shall be origin-to-destination service – the basic mode of Access Express service in Springfield is a curb-to-curb service. The ADA requires service be provided within a defined service area, which includes an area within 3/4 of a mile from any regular City Utilities bus route. City Utilities is currently providing more service than the ADA requires by serving the entire city limits of Springfield.

Eligibility

Eligibility for paratransit service is based upon a person’s functional inability to use regular CU bus service. Three categories of persons who are eligible for paratransit are:

Category A

Any person with a disability who is able to use a lift or ramp equipped bus, but for whom any desired trip cannot be made because the fixed route he/she wants to ride is not operated by a lift equipped bus. Eligibility for paratransit would be limited to those occasions when the appropriate fixed route buses are not wheelchair accessible or the appropriate bus stops do not accommodate the lift. **All CU buses are wheelchair accessible.**

Category B

Any person who is unable, because of a disability, to independently board, ride, and/or disembark from a lift-equipped bus. This includes persons who are unable to “navigate” the CU system without the assistance of another person. For example, the individual is unable to:

- board or disembark from an accessible vehicle without assistance
- maintain balance while seated on a moving bus
- identify correct bus or stop
- understand transfer directions needed to complete the trip

Category C

Any person with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition which prevents him or her from traveling to or from a boarding or disembarking location.

- A. Only a specific impairment-related condition which prevents the individual from traveling to or from a bus stop is a basis for eligibility under this category. A condition, which makes traveling to or from a bus stop difficult, but does not prevent the travel, is not a basis for eligibility under this paragraph.

- B. Architectural barriers not under the control of CU and environmental barriers (e.g., distance, terrain, weather) do not alone form a basis for eligibility. However, the interaction of such barriers with an individual's impairment-related condition may form a basis for eligibility if the effect is to prevent the individual from traveling to or from a bus stop.

Eligibility under Category C may be situational under the following conditions:

- Extreme weather conditions interact with an impairment-related condition
- Variations in the health/functional ability of the individual
- Visual, cognitive or developmental disability prevents travel to or from a stop for exceptional trips

Conditional Eligibility

Some people with disabilities may be able to use regular CU bus service under certain conditions, but not under others. Eligibility for paratransit for some individuals will be determined on a trip-by-trip basis. **Examples of conditional eligibility under each eligibility category are as follow:**

Category A: A person who requires the lift or ramp to board the bus and whose desired destination is served by accessible service is not eligible for paratransit for that particular trip. However, if that person approved as a *Category A* desires to travel to a destination that is not served by accessible buses, he/she will be eligible for paratransit.

Category B: A person with mental retardation or blindness may have received mobility training which allows him/her to travel independently to a work site, but is not able to "navigate" the system to travel to other locations. This person approved as a *Category B* will be eligible for paratransit only for trips other than work.

Category C: A person approved as a *Category C* who uses a wheelchair who can travel to the bus stop in good weather, but is unable to maneuver with snow on the ground, would be eligible only on days of severe weather conditions.

Temporary Eligibility

A person with a temporary disability will be eligible for paratransit service if the disability results in his/her functional inability to use the CU bus system as described in the three eligibility categories.

Personal Care Attendants

A personal care attendant who is accompanying a passenger who requires assistance may travel free.

Visitors

Persons visiting the CU service area who provide documentation of ADA paratransit eligibility from another area will automatically be eligible for paratransit service. Persons who do not possess documentation, but claim their disability prevents them from using the CU bus system, will be considered “presumptively” eligible for a period not to exceed 21 days. If the individual plans to remain in the area longer, he/she must go through the eligibility process which has been established for residents.

Right to Appeal

Persons who are denied eligibility for paratransit services have the right to appeal the decision. A request for appeal must be filed in writing or by telephone within 60 days of the denial of the application. The appeal will be heard by: 1) the CU Paratransit Review Committee; 2) the Director of Transit; 3) Senior Planner of the Ozarks Transportation Organization. A copy of the appeals process is available by calling 831-8782.

To apply, please do the following:

- Fill out the enclosed application form, or have someone fill it out for you.
- Have the Professional Verification filled out and signed by one of the professionals listed at the top of that page.
- Return the complete application form and professional verification form to:

City Utilities of Springfield

Transit Services

1505 N. Boonville

Springfield, MO 65803

or

Fax number: (417) 831-8803

If you have questions, please call Transit Services at (417) 831-8782.