

# The Ride Program



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**Participating state agencies  
in the Ride Paratransit Program  
include:**

*Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA)  
Department of Mental Health, Retardation  
and Hospitals (MHRH)  
Department of Human Services (DHS)  
RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)*

*Everything you  
need to know  
to use the statewide  
Ride Program*

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## **THE RIDE PROGRAM**

*Providing transportation  
for  
individuals with disabilities  
and seniors  
so that they may have  
the mobility they need  
to maintain  
and increase  
their quality of life*

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## **Other Useful Phone Numbers**

In addition to the transportation provided by RIdE, you may find the services listed below helpful.

### **Department of Elderly Affairs**

Main Office .....(401) 462-3000

### **Department of Human Services**

RIteCare..... (401) 462-1300

Office of

Rehabilitation Services.....(401) 421-7005

### **RIPTA**

*Use the RI Relay at 711 to reach any of these phone numbers.*

For information on ADA Paratransit

Service or to obtain an eligibility

application, call the RIPTA ADA

Coordinator .....(401) 784-9553 *or*  
1-800-745-5555 (TDD)

RIPTA Bus Service .....(401) 781-9400

RIPTA Flex Service.....1-877-906-3539  
(in-state toll-free) *or*  
(401) 784-9500 ext. 220

RIPTA Pass Programs.....(401) 784-9500,  
ext. 604

RIPTA's web site .....[www.ripta.com](http://www.ripta.com)

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## ***The Ride Program: An Introduction***

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Ride provides transportation for individuals with disabilities and seniors based on the eligibility requirements of several state agencies' programs. Certification for each program is required and is performed by the agency that funds the program. Each program that funds trips on Ride is described below.

Reservations are required for all paratransit services. Reservation procedures are described under "Scheduling Trips".

All paratransit services—except those provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—provide free door-to-door service throughout the state, but are available *only* on weekdays and trip purpose is limited mainly to medical, meal site, and sheltered workshop trips.

*Eligible passengers who require the services of a **Personal Care Attendant (PCA)** will be certified to have a PCA travel with them for free.*

ADA service does not limit trip purpose, but is available only within 3/4-mile of the fixed route\* bus service.

\* Fixed route service is bus service that has a predetermined route with specified stops that conform to a timetable.

## ***RIPTA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Service***

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Paratransit service provided under ADA is available for an individual whose disability either prevents independent use of the fixed route system or prevents travel to or from bus stops.

Under federal regulations, ADA Paratransit Service must operate within a 3/4-mile corridor on either side of a fixed route. ADA service operates during the same hours that the fixed route bus runs. All ADA trips must start and end in the corridor.

### **Escorts**

When making a reservation, ADA passengers may request that escorts travel with them from their origin to their destination. Escorts must take the same trip as the ADA passenger and are allowed to ride only if there is room on the bus. Escorts must pay the same fare as the ADA passenger.

## **How to Apply for ADA Certification**

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Anyone with a disability that prevents use of the fixed route bus system must apply to RIPTA's ADA Coordinator for certification for ADA trips. To obtain an application, either call RIPTA's ADA Coordinator at (401) 784-9500 extension 153, send a letter to the ADA Coordinator (c/o RIPTA, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, RI 02907), visit the RIPTA offices in person, or email [customerrelations@ripta.com](mailto:customerrelations@ripta.com).

Completed applications may be submitted by mail or in person. Within 21 days of receiving the completed application, RIPTA will let you know whether or not you have been found eligible. If you have not received a response within 21 days, you will be eligible for service until and unless RIPTA denies the application.

### **Requirements for Certification**

You may be eligible for ADA Service on the basis of a permanent or temporary disability. According to federal regulations, you must fall into one of three categories to be eligible for service.

*Category 1:* Your disability prevents you from getting on and off the bus or riding the bus.

*Category 2:* Because of your disability,

you need the assistance of a lift to board the bus, but there is no bus with a lift available. (Please note that *Category 2 does not apply to RIPTA's system* because all buses are equipped with lifts.)

*Category 3:* Your disability prevents you from traveling to or from a bus stop in RIPTA's system. This could be due to distance, weather, terrain, or architectural barriers.

### **Appeals**

All applications are reviewed by the ADA Coordinator. If the ADA Coordinator feels that an application should be denied, the application is sent to an outside consultant for additional review. If the consultant agrees that the application should be denied, you will receive a letter explaining the reasons for the denial and the appeal process. Written requests for an appeal must be received by RIPTA within 60 days of the denial. A hearing officer will set up a time for an appeal hearing, during which you can present any additional information. You will not be eligible for service pending the decision of the appeal. RIPTA will respond within 30 days of the appeal hearing.

### **ADA Service for Visitors to Rhode Island**

Individuals visiting Rhode Island from other states are eligible for ADA Service

for 21 days without submitting an application to RIPTA if they present documentation certifying their eligibility for ADA Service in their own state. The total of 21 days may be consecutive or accrue over several visits to Rhode Island. Any visitor wanting service for more than 21 days must complete an application and be approved for RIPTA ADA Service.

### **Alternative Formats**

All ADA materials are available in alternative formats. For more information, please call 784-9500 extension 153.

## **NON-ADA SERVICE PROGRAMS**

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### **Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA) Service**

DEA's service is for individuals aged 60 or over or low-income disabled individuals whose income qualifies them for DHS medical assistance. DEA-funded transportation is provided on weekdays, except holidays, only for the purposes listed below. Contact DEA at (401) 462-3000 for more details.

*Dialysis*—Renal Centers approve the trips and notify RIdE. Trips are available weekdays regardless of age.

*Adult Day Care*—Adult Day Care Centers approve the trips and notify RIdE. Trips are available for seniors on weekdays only.

*Senior Nutrition*—Senior Centers approve the trips and notify RIdE. Trips are available for seniors on weekdays only.

### **Non-Emergency Medical Appointments**

Seniors are eligible for trips to general medical appointments. People with disabilities as well as seniors are eligible for on-going special medical treatments such as radiation or physical therapy.

General medical trips for seniors are

available only during certain hours on weekdays. Special medical trip availability varies by city. There are no medical trips on weekends or holidays.

Individuals must call RIdE directly 2-3 weeks in advance of the trip date, and at times more advance notice is needed. Space is limited and on a first-call, first-served basis.

Please call RIdE for DEA-eligible times for medical appointments by city. It is best to call RIdE for specific information regarding medical trips.

### **ARC Service**

ARC agencies arrange group transportation to workshops for individuals with developmental disabilities. Trips are available on weekdays only. Contact your ARC agency for more details.

### **Department of Human Services**

The Department of Human Services has two programs that fund transportation under the RIdE Program.

*RItECare Service*—RItECare is a Department of Human Services program for medical consumers registered in participating HMOs. Transportation is authorized by HMOs for medical appointments when bus service is unavailable or when the patient has

medical reasons for door-to-door service. RItECare participants are also eligible for free monthly bus passes so that they can use RIPTA service to get to and from medical appointments. Talk to your HMO or RItECare Administrator for more information.

*The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)*—Under ORS, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation arranges transportation for its clients to travel to job training or rehabilitation programs, and Services for the Blind arranges transportation to programs such as Insight.

## **How to Schedule Trips**

### **Trip Scheduling**

Each program served by RIdE has different requirements for scheduling trips. ADA trips can be scheduled for any purpose as late as the day before you want to travel, and cannot be denied by federal regulation. Medical trips must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance and may be limited to the closest provider. Medical trips are provided with a set budget, and some days may be closed to trips because the budget limit has been reached. Subscription trips, which are trips that occur on a daily or weekly basis such as trips to senior meal sites, adult day care, or ARC programs, can be made once many weeks in advance.

### **Reserving Your Ride**

To make a reservation, call 461-9760 between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm from Monday through Saturday. On Sundays and holidays, *ADA passengers only* may make reservations between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm by leaving their name, address, and destination as well as the desired arrival time and desired return time on an answering machine. Someone will call you to confirm your trip the next morning.

If you are eligible to ride under more

than one program, please let the RIdE Reservationist know what program will cover the trip you are requesting.

In order to make a reservation, you should have the following information:

- The date you want to travel.
- Your starting address – where you want to get on or board the bus. Please have the exact street address.
- Your destination address – where you want to get off the bus. Please have the exact street address.
- The time you want to leave your starting address or the time you need to arrive at your destination.

Your trip may not be able to be scheduled at the exact time you request. The RIdE Reservationist will work with you to find a time that works. You may need to call back later to find out the time your trip is scheduled.

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**All trip requests must be made with RIdE. No other agency is allowed to take reservations or schedule trips for the RIdE Program.**

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### **Same Day Rides**

Sorry, we are not able to provide same day rides. All rides must be reserved in advance.

## **Getting Ready**

The RIdе Reservationist will give you a 30-minute window during which your ride will arrive. You will not be given a specific time. You must be ready at any time during this 30-minute period. Please do not call the office to check on your ride during this 30-minute period. All of our buses display the RIdе name. Watch for the bus and please be ready to go.

## **Driver Wait Time**

To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers can only wait 5 minutes for you. Please be ready to leave when your driver arrives.

## **Fares**

Fares differ depending on the program under which you are traveling. ADA service requires a fare of twice the base fare of RIPTA service for each one-way trip, which is \$2.50 as of this printing. This fare will change if RIPTA fares change. As of November 2003, no other program serviced by RIdе charges a fare.

Please have the exact fare amount ready to present to the driver. (Drivers cannot make change for large bills.)

## ***More Things You Need to Know About Using RIdе***

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### **Shared Ride**

RIdе is a public transportation service. While taxis may serve some trips under certain circumstances, RIdе vans serve most trips and other passengers are likely to be on board during your trip. Your scheduled pick-up times or travel route may be altered so that another passenger can be accommodated, and the van may stop and pick up other riders as it travels to your destination. Shared rides lower the cost of paratransit service. RIdе schedulers may ask you to accept trip reservation times that are different from your original requested pick-up time, and your reservation time may be changed so that more passengers may be served.

### **Taxicabs**

Some RIdе trips are served by taxicabs when the need arises. The same fares apply to RIdе trips served by cabs. Cabs cannot be requested.

### **Cancellations**

You must notify us of your cancellation as soon as possible and at least two hours before your scheduled pick-up time so that our buses will be free to pick up other passengers. Cancellations not made in this way will be treated as

“no-shows”. We reserve the right to suspend service for a reasonable period of time for riders who exhibit a pattern or practice of missing trips during a six month period.

### **Delays**

Traffic, weather, or other delays may sometimes result in a late pick-up that is unavoidable. Please wait until the end of the 30-minute window before calling us to ask about your ride. We will make every effort to pick you up on time.

### **Passenger Assistance**

All RIdE service is door-to-door, as needed. Drivers are trained to assist you and are sensitive to your needs.

However, drivers do not enter homes and do not go beyond the main lobby of a building. Drivers are also not allowed to lift passengers or mobility devices up and down stairs. Passengers must make other arrangements for assistance in these cases. Drivers also are not allowed to carry grocery bags or other packages.

### **Safety**

For your safety and the safety of others, you must use a seatbelt at all times. If you need assistance, please ask your driver. If you use a wheelchair or other mobility device, your driver will secure the device using a four-point system and you must use a lap and shoulder belt in

addition to any belts you may have on your mobility device. In the event of an emergency, follow the directions of your driver.

### **Snow and Ice**

If there is a winter storm or other emergency, please watch for media announcements regarding RIdE Service. Be sure that your entryway and walkways are clear of ice and snow. This will make it safer for our vehicles and drivers to get to you.

### **Tipping**

Please do not offer tips to drivers. Drivers are not allowed to accept tips or gifts.

### **Shopping Bags**

Please limit the number of shopping bags/carry-ons to no more than 3. Drivers are not permitted to carry bags for you.

### **Service Animals**

Service animals are welcome on the bus. When you are reserving a trip, please let the RIdE Reservationist know if you will be traveling with a service animal.

### **Courtesy**

As a courtesy to others, smoking, eating, drinking, and radio playing are not allowed on the bus.

## **Questions, Comments, Complaints?**

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How are we doing? We would like to know what you think about our service.

Questions, comments, or complaints may be sent to the address below or you can call the RIde administrative office at 461-8130 Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.

Customer Service  
The RIde Program  
265 Melrose Street  
Providence, RI 02907

If you have a complaint or comment about service, please have the date and time of the event and the bus number or driver name when you call.

## ***RIde Phone Numbers***

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*Use the RI Relay at 711 to reach any of these phone numbers.*

For RIde reservations, cancellations, or questions: .....(401) 461-9760 or  
1-800-479-6902

If you have a complaint or question, call:  
the RIde Manager .....(401) 461-9760  
*or*  
the RIPTA Director of Specialized  
Transportation .....(401) 784-9500 ext. 140