

# Moving People

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[rideRTA.com](http://rideRTA.com)

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Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
1240 West 6th Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1331

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# How ADA functional testing will work

RTA and NovaCare Rehabilitation will soon begin to functionally test applicants on a limited basis, to ensure the system runs smoothly.

Testing for all applicants – new and renewals – is expected to start around June 1, says Hilda Perez, who coordinates the Paratransit application process. Here is how it will work.

**#1.** Obtain a Paratransit application form in one of several ways.

- Go online to RTA's Web site, where you will find a wealth of info on all transit services. [rideRTA.com](http://rideRTA.com) > Riding Options > Paratransit
- Call the RTA ADA line, 216-566-5124. An application will be mailed to you.
- Go to RTA Main Office, 1240 West Sixth Street, in the Warehouse District. Free service to the site is provided by two downtown trolley routes.

**#2.** Fill out pages 1-6. A social worker or medical professional must fill out page 7. Have page 8 notarized. If a notary is not available, RTA can help you with that later.

**#3.** Mail the application to:

RTA-ADA Eligibility  
1240 West Sixth Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1331

**#4.** After your application is received, an RTA staff member may call you to clarify certain parts of the your application. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**#5.** When your application is complete, RTA will review your finished application.

- If it is clear that you qualify for Paratransit service, the RTA staffer will approve the application and notify you in writing. The letter will include instructions on how to pick up your Paratransit ID card.
- If it is NOT clear that you qualify for Paratransit service, the RTA staffer will call you to schedule a functional test at one of six NovaCare locations around Greater Cleveland. When needed, RTA will arrange Paratransit service to the assessment site.
- RTA estimates that 40 percent of all applicants will be required to take a functional test.

**#6.** Each functional test is conducted by a trained professional. The test should be completed in less than an hour, and will determine if you have the physical and cognitive ability to ride fixed-route RTA service.

If you miss your functional test appointment, the application process will not continue, and you will have to re-apply.

**#7.** After the test, a NovaCare professional will make one of two possible determinations.

- You qualify for a fixed-route, disabled discounted fare card, OR
- You will be certified for Paratransit service.

**#8.** Based on NovaCare's recommendation, RTA will make a final decision. You will be notified of your ADA eligibility status within 21 working days from the date that the application was received by RTA.

*See Testing, page 3*

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# Meet Hilda Perez:

## Her cheerleader's a heavenly soul

Hilda Perez often smiles to herself as she works each day – and she has good reason to.

She has a heavenly soul for her own personal cheerleader.

As coordinator of RTA's Paratransit application process, Perez spends much of her time helping members of the local disabled community. She is certain that her work pleases her late brother, Reynaldo, who died of brain cancer in the 1970s, at age 13.

"I have a lot of empathy for our Paratransit customers," Perez says. "When my brother was ill, there was no Paratransit service, and my parents did not drive or speak English. It was always difficult to get him to medical services, and when we did, I had to translate talks between the doctors and my parents."

"Every day, I try to help somebody by making their life easier. I know my brother is in heaven, cheering me on. I love what I do. This is much more than just a job for me."

Perez, one of several RTA bilingual staffers, was born in Puerto Rico. She moved to Cleveland at age 2, and never left.

She has worked at RTA for 22 years, and formerly scheduled trips for Paratransit custom-

ers. For the past nine years, she has supervised the Paratransit application process, supervising Customer Service Representatives Benita Washington and Ruby Lee, and reviewing some 40 Paratransit applications each day.

Combined, the three employees bring more than 73 years experience to the department, at RTA's Main Office Building, 1240 W. Sixth St.

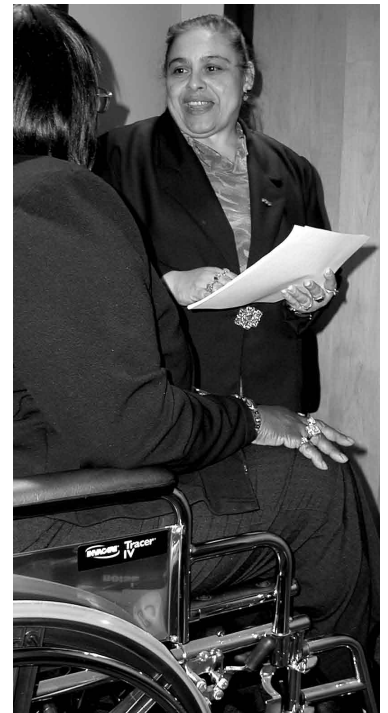
"Paratransit is one of the most important services RTA provides," Perez says. "People need us to reach vital medical services. For some, they have no other choice."

Perez is pleased that RTA will soon begin functional testing.

"This is one of the best things that ever happened to RTA," she says. "It's another tool to help us serve those who truly need transit."

Perez finds inspiration in learning how people live with, and overcome, their disabilities.

"Our customers are great people...just amazing. They are a pleasure to deal with."



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## Testing, from page 2

**#9.** If you disagree with the decision, write a letter telling RTA that you plan to appeal. Send it to Hilda Perez, at the address listed above.

**#10.** Perez will forward your letter to Felicia Brooks-Williams, Manager, EEO & ADA Programs, in RTA's Office of Equal Opportunity. She will call you to set up your appeal process.

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# New vehicles offer seat belts for extra safety

The Paratransit staff is constantly seeking ways to better serve you. One of those ways is to increase your safety while you are being transported.

In March, RTA Trustees agreed to spend up to \$1.5 million to purchase 20 new vehicles.

The new vehicles are expected to arrive in July. They will replace vehicles that are eight years old. The normal life span is five years, so these vehicles have exceeded their useful life.

Each new vehicle will be equipped with seat belts for our ambulatory passengers, and we strongly encourage everyone to use them.

Cleveland's streets are filled with surprises, and many operators have to stop quickly to avoid a collision. Keeping yourself strapped in is just common sense.

New vehicles also break down less, so they naturally increase our service reliability. We are looking forward to their arrival.

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In recent months, one of our key goals has been to reduce the amount of time you are on hold when you call in to schedule a trip.

By revising the way we handle calls, we have reduced waiting time more than 66 percent. Here are some changes that RTA has made, or is in the process of making:

- We are in the process of hiring a scheduling manager. Other positions are being considered



*A message from  
Michael Hargrove,  
Paratransit Director*

that will help make our call center more efficient.

- Added \$1.5 million to Paratransit's annual budget.
- Developed standards for phone operators to increase productivity.

Other changes to enhance your service are in the works. Stay tuned.

By revising the way we handle calls, we have given even more people access to Paratransit service.

We look forward to continuing the effort.

## Moving People

is produced bimonthly by RTA's Marketing Department for Paratransit customers; their families, and caregivers.

If you prefer receiving the newsletter in a different format – such as Braille, cassette tape, larger type or electronically – please let us know.

Mail your preference to:

RTA Marketing Department

1240 W. Sixth St.

Cleveland, OH 44113

or send e-mail to: [jmasek@gcrta.org](mailto:jmasek@gcrta.org)

We appreciate your comments and suggestions.