

# Moving People

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## Welcome to Moving People

ADA Paratransit Eligibility Discussed at RTA Seminar	Page 2
New Paratransit Supplemental Service Provider On Board	Page 3
RTA Drives Website Near ADA Certification	Page 4
Paratransit Adds 12 New Operators	Page 4



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# ADA Paratransit Eligibility Focus of Seminar

RTA sponsored a seminar and workshop focused on ADA Paratransit Eligibility, March 30-April 1 in the Main Office Board Room.

The course was designed to address several eligibility determination issues. It provided a basic review of eligibility requirements and reviewed alternative eligibility determination processes. It also provided a forum for answering questions about “difficult” determinations and issues, and presented the benefits and issues associated with in-person interviews and assessments.

Public transit agencies such as RTA that provide fixed route trips are also required by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide complementary paratransit service.

An important part of the provision of paratransit service is determining who is “ADA paratransit eligible.” The ADA regulations

establish criteria for eligibility and include several requirements that apply to conditional versus unconditional eligibility and the concept of trip eligibility.

Developing an ADA paratransit eligibility process that results in accurate and thorough determinations, that is clear and acceptable to past and future applicants, and that is administratively workable, can be a challenge. A proper ADA paratransit eligibility determination process is also important for supporting the broader goals of the ADA and for serving customers with disabilities with the travel options that can best meet their needs.

Prior to ADA, most transit systems used paper application forms to determine paratransit eligibility. In recent years, a number of transit agencies have included in-person interviews and functional assessments as part of the process. As transit agencies have gained experience in making eligibility

determinations, questions have developed concerning “difficult” determinations for persons with certain types of disabilities, such as psychiatric disabilities, seizures, children with disabilities, and persons with vision impairments.

## Americans With Disabilities Act Discussed



*It was a full house when RTA sponsored a three-day seminar and workshop that focused on ADA Paratransit Eligibility.*

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# Trapeze Project Upgrades Paratransit Service

The Trapeze Project, an upgrade of the existing Paratransit Scheduling System, Telephone Information System, and Customer Service Center, promises to bring several improvements in RTA's ability to provide "Quality Service to Every Customer, Everyday".

Phase I of the project includes the purchase of five basic products:

- PASS-CT — Trip Booking, Scheduling, and Dispatching for Paratransit Operations.
- PASS-MON — Interface application for Paratransit Operations
- CERT — Client Certification for Paratransit Operations
- INFO — Desktop trip planning and schedule look-up for fixed route operations
- INFO-IVR — Automated telephone application for fixed route schedule look-up

To date, the transit agency is on time and within budget for a full implementation by the fall of this year. So far, RTA has completed all operational reviews and installation of software for the CERT and PASS-CT applications. In addition, administrative training has been conducted for both applications, and operational training is already complete for the CERT product. In early May, operational training will be completed for the users of PASS-CT, which will result in improved efficiency and service to Paratransit customers after the "Go Live" date in early June 2004.

Foundations have also been laid to successfully implement the PASS-MON application that will greatly improve communications between dispatch and the operators of Paratransit vehicles to enhance our ability to serve custom-



*Hilda Perez (right), Assistant Supervisor of RTA's Customer Service Center, watches as Customer Service Representative Benita Washington enters data for the transit agency's new Trapeze Project software.*

ers better. New maps with geo-coded bus stop information promise to provide RTA's telephone information staff with the necessary tools to more effectively assist customers with trip planning.

Phase II and III of the project will be primarily focused on providing Web-based tools for customers to plan trips, communicate with the Authority, and to provide a new customer complaint and commendation module to help RTA maintain a high level of service and commitment to our customers.

"This year promises to be very exciting and productive, as the RTA continues with its commitment to better serve the ADA, disadvantaged, and senior-citizen customers of Greater Cleveland," says Trapeze Project Manager Oliver Draper. "By upgrading its systems, RTA will improve its ability to provide service to all of our customers."

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# RTA Drives Website Near ADA Certification

In continuing efforts to improve the RTA website ([www.rideRTA.com](http://www.rideRTA.com)) to meet or exceed ADA certification, the Authority's Internet connection has made a number of enhancements that makes a cyber-space visit more informative and user-friendly for all customers.

"We worked with the Cleveland Sight Center in upgrading our website so that it would be more ADA accessible," says Business Applications Analyst Jackie Lewis from RTA's Information Systems Support & User Services Department. "Engineer Randy Knapp was instrumental in helping us design the pages to be used by JAWS, a screen reader software that puts information in a text format and then translates it to audible signals for the visually impaired."

With this new format, visually impaired computer users can now "read" the timetables and get audible signals telling them the name of every stop and the time that the RTA bus or rapid transit train arrives and leaves.

In addition, all the critical updates have been put in text format so that it can be easily read and transmitted audibly. These include the

## Twelve Operators Added to Paratransit

RTA hired 12 new bus operators to its Paratransit staff during the last week of April. Prior to that, the Authority increased contractual service hours.

The additional operators and new service allow RTA to replace most of the current taxi service that it provided in the past two years.



*Business Applications Analyst Jackie Lewis, who is in charge of upgrading RTA's website, is constantly searching for ways to improve [www.rideRTA.com](http://www.rideRTA.com) and to make it more informative and user-friendly for all customers.*

website's scrolled marquee, ADA/Paratransit information, and Rider's Alerts.

"We even changed the routing information form to be more user friendly to our riders," adds Lewis. "Now our customers can easily complete the form online and send it directly to our operators, who in turn return it to the sender with the route information that was requested."

Physically-challenged customers can now check on the status of all of the elevators that are located in RTA's ever-growing list of ADA-accessible facilities. This list is updated three times a day.

And, for the first time, RTA's Annual Report is available in text form.

"In fact, we are currently in the process of changing everything on our website over to text form," says Lewis. "This improvement will benefit all of RTA's customers."