

Recommended Regional Eligibility Determination Process for Valley Metro ADA Paratransit Service

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In-Person Interviews and Testing

All new and renewal applicants will complete an ADA application and are interviewed in person. Based on the interview, some applicants are referred to functional assessments and/or FACTS (Functional Assessment of Cognitive Transit Skills) testing. Interviews, FACTS tests, and other functional assessments are conducted by specialized health and rehabilitation professionals (such as physical, occupational therapists, orientation and mobility specialist, etc.) contracted by Valley Metro RPTA. Based on the results of the interview, each applicant will be recommended for:

- Life-time eligibility certification, or
- 1 to 5-year eligibility certification, or
- Additional testing (one or both of the following)
 - FACTS testing
 - Other functional assessments

Upon completion of additional assessments, applicants who are found to be eligible for ADA paratransit service will be recommended for either 1 to 5-year, or life-time certification, as appropriate.

Once each applicant has completed the interview and assessment process, the contractor will forward a recommendation to the Valley Metro ADA office. A Valley Metro RPTA staff member will review the recommendation and make the final determination. In addition, the staff member will act as the transit case-manager for that applicant, ensuring that each customer is treated as an individual, that the unique circumstances of each case are properly considered, and that each application is brought to conclusion in a timely manner. The in-person interview and assessment process will allow Valley Metro staff to provide more personalized service to customers and identify customers who could also benefit from supplemental programs (see below).

Interviews and assessments are conducted at one site central to the region. Transportation to and from the testing site is provided at no expense to the applicant. A photo of every applicant will be taken at the time of the interview so that photo IDs and/or passes can be distributed by mail. To renew certification, existing riders must apply for recertification in this program prior to the expiration of his or her current certification. Any rider who wishes to apply for certification under this program prior to expiration of his or her current certification may do so.

Lifetime certification will be recommended for any customer who participates in the interview/assessment process, is deemed fully eligible and whose functional ability to use fixed route public transportation will clearly not improve at any time in the future.

If a customer is not found to be eligible for ADA paratransit, the customer has the right to appeal the decision. The current Valley Metro appeals process remains in place.

Supplemental Programs

To the extent possible, Valley Metro RPTA, and its member agencies will implement or enhance alternative and additional transportation options

- ADA bus and rail pass for conditionally eligible paratransit riders—this pass will encourage pass holders to choose fixed route transit over paratransit by allowing unlimited rides on fixed route bus and rail service at no cost to the pass holder. Each jurisdiction providing paratransit has the option to participate in this program or not.
 - This is a photo-ID pass and must be renewed annually.
 - Upon renewal, the pass-holder must update or validate his or her home address and may be required to participate in further functional assessments.
 - The pass uses Valley Metro's Platinum Smart Card technology.
 - The fare due for each boarding covered by the pass is billed to the user's jurisdiction of residence.
- Valley Metro member agencies are encouraged to start, continue, or enhance additional programs that provide enhanced mobility options for disabled transit users, such as
 - Taxi subsidy programs
 - Travel training programs
 - Mileage reimbursement programs
 - Neighborhood circulator routes

Benefits to Customers

- Customers have better access to certification decision making resources— Assistance in navigating the certification process is more available to those who need assistance. It provides an alternative for customers who do not have access to a rehabilitation or health professional.
- Valley Metro RPTA professionals ensure that each customer's circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis, and that each application is brought to a timely conclusion.
- Lifetime certification is provided to some customers when appropriate.
- A bus and rail pass is made available to conditionally eligible riders.
- Customers who can benefit from travel training or other alternative programs are identified and offered these programs—leading to a higher level of mobility independence.

Educational, Marketing, and Outreach

Valley Metro actively promotes educational, marketing, and outreach programs. In doing so, Valley Metro works with:

- Disability groups formed under a Mayor's or City Council's direction
- Disability groups within local governments
- Organizations and support groups for people with disabilities

Many resources are available to help with outreach efforts.

- Project Action videos of how the tests are administered are available to address concerns of Valley Metro customers.
- The National Transit Institute offers local training programs for city and political entities and transit staffs.
- An advisory committee composed of people with disabilities will assist with marketing, education, and outreach; and help ensure the process is sensitive, sensible, friendly, and effective.

Fiscal Considerations

The operating cost of the in-person eligibility process is born by Valley Metro RPTA. ByRPTA Board policy, 7% each year's revenues in the Public Transportation fund (Proposition 400 sales tax revenues) is set aside for meeting the federal ADA requirements to provide complementary paratransit service. Valley Metro RPTA has and will continue to pay for the regional eligibility program from that 7% set-aside. After the regional eligibility program is funded, the remaining portion of the 7% set-aside is divided among Valley Metro agencies according to a formula. This process continues unchanged. Jurisdictions will continue to use their allocation of the 7% ADA fund to cover the cost of providing ADA paratransit trips as well as those supplemental programs that provide transportation specifically to riders who are eligible for ADA paratransit.

Monitoring the Program

The use of the ADA bus and rail pass program will be tracked and monitored for purposes of evaluation. Because the pass is a smart card similar to the Platinum Pass, its use on fixed route bus and rail is recorded by the fare box or Ticket Vending Machine. RPTA staff will work with the City of Phoenix Transit Department to ensure that usage is tracked. RPTA will also track costs incurred in setting up and running the new eligibility program. Data will be made available to Valley Metro members. In this way, the cost effectiveness and benefits of the combined new eligibility program and the ADA fixed route pass can be evaluated. RPTA staff will look into making this data part of the Annual Transit Performance Report.