

# Gadsden Transportation Services

## ADA Paratransit Program

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights law that, among other things, requires equal access to public transportation services for persons with disabilities. Transit agencies such as Gadsden Transportation Services (GTS) must take specific steps to make [regular bus service](#) (Trolley service) accessible to persons with disabilities. Regular accessible bus service is intended to be the primary mode of public transportation for persons with disabilities. GTS will offer free [transit instruction](#) to individuals and groups that meet certain criteria. This training teaches persons with disabilities and seniors how to ride regular public transportation, including use of the lift or ramp.

The ADA also requires origin to destination paratransit service to be provided as a 'safety net' for those persons whose disabilities prevent use of accessible fixed route bus service. The Federal government adopted minimum criteria that transit agencies have to meet in operating this complementary paratransit service. Complementary paratransit service is intended to offer a comparable level of service to that provided by regular fixed route bus service. *Paratransit service is not required nor intended to meet all the transportation needs of persons with disabilities.* Rather, it is intended to provide public transportation in a more specialized form as a safety net.

GTS's ADA Paratransit Program is designed to meet the minimum service criteria established by the Federal government.

For more information, call DART office during regular weekday business hours at 256-543-3278. You can also reach DART by fax at 256-549-4864 or by e-mail at [kpayne@cityofgadsden.com](mailto:kpayne@cityofgadsden.com)

### Eligibility

The DART ADA Paratransit Program serves persons age 6 and up. Eligibility is based on whether your disability **prevents** you from performing the tasks needed to ride regular bus service some or all of the time. You must apply and be determined eligible ahead of time to use this program. Potential applicants must complete the relevant application package. All applications must be co-signed by a health care professional.

An in-person evaluation/assessment will become part of the determination process in 2016. (the assessment will be conducted at no cost to you and free transportation will be provided if needed.) DART will notify you within 21 days after we receive all information necessary to determine your eligibility. You will receive written notification of the eligibility determination. An appeal process is available if you disagree with the determination. If a determination is not made within twenty one (21) days the applicant can use the service until the determination is made.

Persons who have been found eligible may need to have their eligibility re-certified periodically. Written notice of the need for re-certification will be sent.

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When you travel outside the Gadsden area, your paratransit eligibility is valid at other transit agencies. If you have not already been found eligible, you still may be able to use paratransit service when visiting other cities.

Persons with disabilities visiting Gadsden from outside the Gadsden area should contact the DART office (see information above) in advance of arriving to establish visitor status. ADA eligible visitors can receive DART paratransit service for 21 days out of any 365-day period. Receiving service beyond 21 days requires an eligibility determination by Gadsden Transportation Services.