

CITY UTILITIES OF SPRINGFIELD
ACCESS EXPRESS SERVICE
POLICIES & PROCEDURES
Updated October 25, 2018

ABOUT YOUR ELIGIBILITY

You have applied for Access Express Paratransit Service. Access Express is City Utilities Transit's complementary paratransit service provided to individuals who cannot ride or access the fixed route system due to a disability or health condition. Please read your eligibility letter and Policies and Procedures document carefully. The different eligibility categories define the level of service available under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Eligibility for this service is dependent upon the individual's inability to use the regular fixed route buses. All riders must complete an application for certification for paratransit eligibility unless they are visitors to the Springfield area. A physician, health professional, or rehabilitation professional must verify all applications.

If two individuals from the same household are approved for paratransit service on their own merits, then both shall be responsible for payment and scheduling of their rides taken separately or together.

Review of Access Express Applications will be performed in a timely fashion with confirmation letters for approval, denial or conditional eligibility issued within 21 days of receipt of the application. If a decision is not issued within 21 days, the applicant will be granted presumptive eligibility approval until a decision is made. If the customer is denied or given conditional eligibility, the customer will be given specific reasoning for the decision and will be notified of their right to appeal.

ELIGIBILITY CODE A

Any individual with a transportation disability who is able to board, ride, or disembark from a bus equipped with a wheelchair ramp. This category includes disabled individuals who are able to travel on an accessible fixed route bus if one is available to them at the times and locations that are needed. These individuals are able to board, ride and disembark from a bus that is equipped with a wheelchair ramp without the assistance of another person, except that of the driver who will operate the wheelchair ramp and announce street locations and stops as required.

Eligibility for Access Express would be limited to those occasions when the appropriate fixed route buses are not wheelchair accessible or the appropriate bus stops do not accommodate the ramp.

ELIGIBILITY CODE B

Individuals with this eligibility code qualify for the service on an unconditional basis due to a disability that affects their ability to use the fixed route bus. They are unable, because of their disability, to navigate the fixed route system under any circumstances. We will not refer an individual certified as Code B to the fixed route system.

ELIGIBILITY CODE C

Individuals with this eligibility code qualify for the service on a conditional basis because of a disability that affects their ability to use the fixed route bus. They are able to use the fixed route service under certain circumstances, but may need Access Express service at other times.

These individuals will have their transportation provided by the Access Express service, the fixed route service, or a combination of the two. That determination will be made on a trip by trip basis by the Customer Service Agent. Access Express service will not be provided in a situation where the fixed route service could be utilized. Providing Access Express service to a passenger who could utilize the fixed route service is a costly duplication of our own service. Each situation is different depending on the individual's specific disability and the trip that has been requested. Please ask a Customer Service Agent to explain how this affects you.

If the customer would like to appeal their conditional eligibility to full eligibility on Access Express, they can do so by following the instructions attached for "Access Express Eligibility Appeals Process." Appeals regarding eligibility must be filed within 60 days of the denial or conditionally eligible letter.

APPEALS PROCESS

Access Express has established an administrative appeal process in accordance with the American's with Disabilities Act, Section 37.125(g) for individuals who are denied eligibility and for individuals who have been suspended from the provision of complementary paratransit service due to a pattern or practice of missed trips. Customers who have been denied eligibility or who are conditionally eligible for Access Express will be sent a letter stating why they were denied or determined conditionally eligible and the right to appeal that decision.

Customers will be sent information about how to appeal with their denial, conditionally eligible, or suspension letter. The process includes 1) an opportunity to be heard and to present information and arguments to an appeals board consisting of persons not involved with the initial decision to deny eligibility or suspend service and 2) written notification of the decision within 30 days of the completion of the appeals process including the reasons for the decision.

ELIGIBILITY DENIAL

If, based on the information provided on the application and the professional verification, City Utilities Transit has determined that the customer is either not eligible or conditionally eligible, and the customer disagrees with this decision, they have the right to appeal. Appeals regarding eligibility must be filed within 60 days of the denial of an individual's application. A copy of the Access Express Eligibility Appeals Process will be sent with the customer's denial or conditionally eligibility letter and the reason for the decision by City Utilities Transit.

NOTE: City Utilities Transit is not required to provide paratransit service to the individual pending the determination of an appeal. However, if City Utilities Transit has not decided within 30 days of the completion of the appeal process, Access Express service shall be provided from that time until a decision is made and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

SERVICE FOR VISITORS

Visitors to the Springfield area can use Access Express service for up to 21 calendar days each year by providing proof of paratransit eligibility in their city of residence or other documentation that they have a health condition or disability. Approval for visitor status will be granted next day with appropriate documentation of a disability with proof of residence in another city. For more information on Visitor Status with City Utilities' Access Express, please call 417-831-8711.

MO HEALTHNET (MEDICAID) RECIPIENTS

For our MO HealthNet (Medicaid) riders who are eligible for transportation services, we provide rides for "non-emergency medical trips" free of charge. CU will bill the State of Missouri Department of Social Services, MO HealthNet Division for your rides. If the customer is eligible for MO HealthNet (Medicaid), please tell the dispatcher when scheduling a ride on the Access Express.

SERVICE HOURS AND DAYS

The Access Express service mirrors fixed route hours of service and operates Monday through Saturday, between the hours of 6 A.M. and 11:10 P.M., and on Sundays from 7:10 A.M. until 11:10 P.M., except for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Services will be available on these holidays from 8:10 A.M. until 6:10 P.M., except for Christmas Day, which is from 11:10 A.M. until 5:10 P.M.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires service to be provided within a defined service area, which includes an area within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from any City Utilities bus route. While complementary paratransit service for ADA paratransit eligible persons shall be origin-to-destination service – the basic mode of Access Express service in Springfield is a curb-to-curb service.

RESERVATIONS

Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis, and must be made by Transit Customer Service Agent only. Bus Operators are not allowed to take or cancel reservations. Reservations can be made for next day service and up to one week (7 days) in advance. To make a reservation you may call 417-831-8711 between the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Weekend and after office hour calls should call 417-831-8711 to leave a message. Only the weekend next day appointments and cancellation calls will be returned on weekends. All other calls shall be made during normal business hours Monday through Friday.

Reservations will be made to allow sufficient time for the driver to reach the destination on a timely basis. If the bus has not arrived at the pickup point within twenty minutes after the schedule time, the customer should call the Customer Service Agent to verify his or her reservation.

Automatic notification of reservation times will be sent to the passenger using, but not limited to, Interactive Voice Recording (IVR). Notifications will be made by phone call after 6 p.m. the evening before the scheduled trip. Passengers opting out of the automatic notification system will be expected to be ready an hour before their negotiated drop-off time and 20 minutes before their scheduled return trip time.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

The Access Express Service Policies and Procedures can be obtained in accessible formats, such as Braille, Large Print, and Spanish upon request by calling 417-831-8711. Access Express Policies and Procedures can be accessed on our website at <https://www.cutransit.net/access/> and Spanish language documents at <https://www.cutransit.net/spanish/>.

ACCESS EXPRESS FARES

The fare for the Access Express service is \$2.50 per one-way ride. Passes available are: 30-ride ticket book for \$54.00 and a 60-ride ticket book for \$90.00.

WHERE TO BUY BUS PASSES

Paratransit Passes Only:

City Utilities Transit Center at 211 N. Main Avenue from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. – Accepts debit and credit card purchases by phone or in person. The pass is non-transferable and non-refundable.

New pass purchase options are available through Token Transit Mobile Ticketing. The free Token Transit mobile app is available from the App Store or Google Play and instructions on how to ride with Token Transit is available at <https://www.cutransit.net/token/>.

PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS (PCA)

The ADA defines a personal care attendant as “someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his or her personal needs.” Customers are required to indicate during the eligibility and certification process whether he or she travels with a PCA. Customers approved to travel with a PCA must inform the Customer Service Agent during the reservation process that their PCA will be accompanying them. PCA’s must travel from the same origin to the same destination as the customer and are not charged a fare for ADA service.

GUESTS (or Companions)

Any person, other than a personal care attendant, traveling with a customer is considered a guest. Guests must travel from the same origin to the same destination as the customer and pay the same fare as the customer.

Be sure to inform the Customer Service Agent of any PCA’s or Guests, including children, who will be traveling with the Access Express customer. Every seat must be reserved. PCA’s and Guests that are not included in the trip reservation will not be allowed to travel.

REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS

City Utilities provides reasonable modifications to individuals with disabilities by making changes to policies, practices, and procedures, if needed by an individual with a disability to enable him or her to participate in City Utilities services subject to several exceptions. These exceptions include:

1. Granting the request would fundamentally alter the nature of the Access Express services, programs, or activities (including determination of technical infeasibility);
2. Granting the request would create a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
3. Without the requested modification, the individual with a disability is able to fully use Access Express services, programs, or activities for their intended purpose;
4. For Federal Transit Administration recipients, a request may also be denied if it would create an undue financial and administrative burden.

Requests for reasonable modification must include the following: name, address, preferred phone number, disability, policy/process that you are requesting modification of, and why do you need the modification to allow you to use the Access Express service. Response to the request will be made within 7 business days upon receipt of the request. Notice of Reasonable Modification is available in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, and Spanish upon request or at <https://www.cutransit.net/spanish/>.

Requests for reasonable modification can be submitted in writing by mail, email, faxed or phone request to:

City Utilities of Springfield
Kelly Turner, Director of Transit
1505 N. Boonville Ave.
Springfield, MO 65803
Email: kelly.turner@cityutilities.net
Fax: 417-831-8803 Attention: Kelly Turner
The BUS Phone: 417-831-8782

RULES FOR THE BUS

- You must have the exact and correct address including street number and name when booking trips.
- You must be very clear when giving times when you want to travel. We schedule trips by either appointment time or requested pickup time. If you have an appointment, tell the customer service agent you need to arrange your trip by appointment time and give them the time you must be at your appointment.
- If we are transporting you for a MO HealthNet (Medicaid) medical appointment, we need the physician's name for Medicaid billing purposes.
- Our drivers are not permitted to carry sacks or packages to the door. Passengers should only bring packages they can carry, load, and unload themselves. If the passenger needs assistance with packages, they may bring a companion or personal care attendant to assist them.
- Drivers can assist the passenger on and off the bus and if requested from origin-to-destination. They are not allowed to go inside any residence or business. All service provided is origin-to-destination with the basic mode being curb-to-curb.
- All passengers on the Access Express bus must wear seat belts.
- To provide the best service available to our customers, please be ready for pickup up to 20 minutes before the initial time scheduled. However, on the return trip home the bus may arrive up to 20 minutes after your scheduled pickup time. The bus will wait 3 minutes after your scheduled pickup time before proceeding on to their next scheduled pickup.

LATE CANCELLATIONS AND NO-SHOWS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, section 37.125(h) states that “The entity may establish an administrative process to suspend, for a reasonable period, the provision of complementary paratransit service to ADA eligible individuals who establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips.”

Sometimes plans change, and you may need to cancel your trip. Trips can be cancelled by calling Access Express at (417) 831-8711. If you call when offices are closed and have a change to your Access Express ride that is scheduled for that evening or your bus has not arrived 20 minutes after the scheduled appointment time, please call 417-831-8711. This will allow you to leave a message for the supervisor on duty who will return your call promptly. All other calls concerning Access Express appointments or inquiries must be addressed during office hours.

Advanced Cancellation

Any cancellation made before 5:00 PM the day before your scheduled trip is considered an advanced cancellation. Proper advanced cancellations allow Access Express to reassign trips to other passengers and limit disruptions caused by changing schedules. No penalties are assessed for advanced cancellations.

Same Day Cancellation

Any cancellation made after 5:00 PM the day before your scheduled trip and at least two (2) hours before the start of your scheduled pick-up window is considered a same day cancellation. Cancelling your trip at least two (2) hours in advance allows Access Express to reassign your scheduled vehicle to another customer. No penalties are assessed for same day cancellations.

Late Cancellation

Each leg of your trip is counted as one cancellation for reporting purposes. A “late cancel” is any cancellation made less than two (2) hours, but at least 60 minutes before the start of your scheduled pick-up window are considered Late Cancellations and may result in penalties, which could lead to suspension of service. See the Late Cancellation and No-Show Policy for details.

Subscription Ride Cancellation

If there are any changes to a subscription trip, it is the responsibility of the customer to cancel or reschedule these trips. If the Bus Operator arrives to pick up the passenger and they have not cancelled the trip, it will be counted as a no-show.

No Shows

A “No Show” occurs when:

1. The customer cancels the trip less than 1 hour prior to the start of the scheduled pickup window.

2. The vehicle arrives on time, but the customer no longer wants the ride this is also called a “cancel at the door”.
3. The vehicle arrives on time, but the driver cannot locate the customer at the requested pick-up location.
4. The vehicle arrives on time and waits for three minutes, but the customer is not ready to go, and the driver must leave to stay on schedule.

Customers who demonstrate a pattern or practice of No Show’s and/or Late Cancellations may incur penalties which could lead to a suspension of service.

NOTE: If you No Show the first leg of your trip you will need to call the office about your additional trips scheduled for that day. They will not be automatically cancelled. You must call Access Express to cancel any remaining trips that are no longer needed or risk additional penalties.

Points System

City Utilities of Springfield Access Express has established the following points-based process to enforce its late cancellation and no-show policy. Based on the definitions in the Cancellations and No Shows section above, points are assessed for each occurrence of the following infractions:

Advanced Cancellation: 0 points – Thank you!

Late Cancellation: 1 point

No Show: 2 points

NOTE: Trips missed by the individual for reasons out of his or her control, including but not limited to trips missed due to Bus Operator error, are not assessed points, and are not used as a basis for determining if a pattern or practice Late Cancellations or No Shows exists.

Violations

No-Shows and Late Cancellations are recorded daily and accumulated each calendar month for purposes of enforcing the No Show policy. Access Express reviews total points assessed during each calendar month and calculates penalties as follows:

6 points in one calendar month: Warning letter

8 points in one calendar month: One (1) week suspension

24 points in a 3-month period: Two (2) week suspension

48 points in a 6-month period: One (1) month suspension

To account for frequent ridership, penalties are NOT assessed if total No-Shows and Late Cancellations for the period are less than 15% of the customer’s total trips or a minimum of four trips a month.

Customers in violation of the Late Cancellation and No-Show Policy will receive written notice of the violation including details of the pending suspension of service. Customers will be given 14 days from the date of the written notice to appeal the decision (see the Appeals Process) or to arrange for alternative transportation options during the suspension. If an appeal is made, CU Transit will stay the suspension pending the outcome of the appeal. Following the suspension period, customers will automatically be cleared to resume service.

NOTE: Subscription service is not automatically reinstated following a suspension. Please contact your Customer Service Agent to re-apply for subscription service.

Hint: Notices are sent to your primary address on record. It is your responsibility to ensure that Access Express has your current contact information. Please call 417-831-8711 and speak with a Customer Service Agent to verify or update your information.

SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

Customers are given a 14-day notice prior to the start of suspension to appeal the decision. Customers who appeal suspension for violation of the Late Cancellation and No-Show Policy will be allowed to continue to use Access Express, pending the outcome of the appeal. Suspensions that are upheld following the appeal will begin immediately upon completion of the appeals process. A copy of the Access Express Suspension from Eligibility Appeals Process will be sent with your suspension letter.