

Accessible Transportation Matters

A Publication of the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority

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Accessible Transportation Matters is a newsletter providing information about Centro's specialized transportation services such as Call-A-Bus, Rides for Work, and accessibility matters related to Centro's fixed route system.

Centro Welcomes Customer Feedback

Communicating with Centro is very important in the mission to provide quality services whether it be the regular Centro bus system, the Call-A-Bus service, the Rides for Work program or the Senior Transportation Service. Regardless of which program or programs you use for your transportation, there is one telephone number to call if you have questions, wish to make a comment or have a complaint about the services.

442-3400

If you prefer, you may also e-mail your comments to CNYRTA@centro.org or send us a letter addressed to Centro, P.O. Box 820, Syracuse, NY 13205.

All customer feedback goes through our Customer Service Department where each item is recorded.

Complaints are assigned a number and forwarded to the appropriate department for investigation and

follow-up actions where necessary. The department provides the Customer Service Department with a report of their investigation and actions. The Customer Service Manager prepares a letter or e-mail to the customer outlining our findings and corrective actions if appropriate.

As an extra measure, we note all Call-A-Bus complaints at the time they are received and send the customer a postcard to let them know the complaint number and that an investigation has started. Call-A-Bus customers also get the letter or e-mail response from the Customer Service Manager when the investigation is completed.

Nearly all complaints are fully investigated and corrected within a few days of receipt. However, certain complaints may take several weeks to thoroughly investigate and make corrections. If, for example, witnesses need to be interviewed or staff training is involved, the issue may not be resolved immediately.

Centro's Customer Service Department and its Centro Information Service is available at the 442-3400 number, from 6:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday. On Saturdays the office is open from 7:00am to 7:00pm and on Sunday it is open from 8:00am to 7:00pm.



CALL-A-BUS DECISIONS - WHAT IF I DO NOT AGREE?

There are times identified within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that Call-A-Bus (CAB) customers or potential customers have the right to appeal a decision made by the CAB staff. In the first example, an applicant for CAB service who believes their eligibility determination is incorrect may contact CAB for reconsideration. In the second example, if an eligible CAB customer has had their service suspended for no-shows they, too, may contact CAB for reconsideration.

Contacting the Call-A-Bus Manager, Linda McKeown, is the first step in the Appeal Process and has, historically, been the place where most issues have been resolved.

Unfortunately, not every problem can be resolved by negotiating at this first level and CAB customers can take it to the next step which is to file a formal appeal request within 60 days of the event or decision. This must be in writing and sent to:

**Vice President for Transit Operations
Centro
P.O.Box 820
Syracuse, NY 13205**

The Vice President will review the circumstances and take one of two actions:

1. Reverse the earlier decision or
2. Convene an Appeals Sub-Committee of members of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Council to review the case and make a recommendation to Centro.

The Appeals Sub Committee shall render an opinion within 30 days of the committee meeting and the person filing the appeal may appear before the committee upon request.

There has not been a customer appeal that has reached the Appeals Sub Committee stage in many years due to the commitment of the Centro staff to resolve issues at their level.

Call-A-Bus Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who may use Call-A-Bus?

A. An individual may apply to use Call-A-Bus if they have a disability which prevents them from using the fixed route system.

Q. How do you define "disability"?

A. The term "disability" is defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act as "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life functions, such as seeing, hearing, walking, etc.

Q. What is the difference between unconditional and conditional eligibility?

A. If you have unconditional eligibility, we have determined that your disability or health condition prevents you from using the fixed route bus service all of the time. If you have conditional eligibility, it means that, under certain circumstances, you are able to use the fixed route bus system, and there are other times when you cannot use the fixed route system. An example of conditional eligibility and when you may be able to use Call-A-Bus may relate to the weather. Temporary eligibility means that you have a short-term disability or health condition which prevents you from using the fixed route system for a short period of time.

STARR GUCKERT - CONTRIBUTOR

How to use Centro with Service Dogs

A Service Dog is allowed to ride the Centro Buses or Call-A-Bus service vehicles with its owner. That is, and has always been the policy of Centro. However, there are times when this has been an issue for certain customers and Centro, so let's review.....

A Service Dog is a specially-trained dog responsible for providing assistance with activities of daily living for individuals with disabilities. A Service Dog usually falls into several distinct training categories:

A. Guide Dogs - act as "eyes" for the visually impaired person and help them navigate past and around obstacles in their path of travel. These animals are highly trained to warn their masters of dangerous traffic conditions and walking hazards. It is not uncommon for a Guide Dog to have \$10,000 to \$15,000 worth of specialized training.

B. Hearing Dogs - act as "ears" for the hearing impaired person and are trained to alert them to a variety of sounds that demand the person's attention. Alarm clocks, fire alarms, telephone rings, door bells and crying babies can trigger a dog's behavior such as pawing the person and running to the source of the sound.

C. Seizure Alert Dogs - act as detectors of body changes for a person who has certain neurological conditions that can cause seizures. These dogs are trained to perform a certain behavior if they sense a person is about to have a seizure. This "window" of time may be enough time for the person to get into a safe position to avoid injury or press an emergency button to summon help.

D. Mobility Dogs - are trained to perform a variety of tasks including any of the above specialty tasks along with opening doors, picking up objects and activating the phone or light switches.

E. Therapy Dogs - are specially trained dogs used to assist people with mental disabilities and can normally detect when the person is acting in a manner that is distracting, attention causing or inappropriate for the setting. Therapy dogs will respond with a behavior that helps the person come back into focus, comfort or calm them.

It is the responsibility of the person traveling with a service dog to alert the driver that the animal is indeed a service dog. It is appropriate for a driver to ask if the animal is a service animal. Proof of being a service dog is not required to board.

Owners have a responsibility to maintain control of their service dog at all times and keep them from approaching or creating a tripping hazard for other passengers. A service dog may not occupy a passenger seat, however, owners may hold a smaller service dog on their lap if desired.



Editor's Note: The Accessible Transportation Advisory Council wishes to spotlight a member organization in each of the Newsletters. In this issue we focus on:

CNY Works, Your One-Stop Center



CNY Works is a local, not-for-profit corporation, focusing on Central New York, which receives federal funding through the Workforce Investment Act of 1999. It is our mission to provide a single point of entry for workforce information, bringing businesses, job seekers, and training providers together with the goal of providing skilled workers for every business and employment for every job seeker.

The Services provided by CNY Works include; one-on-one career consultations, strategic planning of individual career/vocational plans, tuition assistance for training or re-training opportunities to update present skills or change careers, information regarding current labor market demand, Resource Center that provides up-to-date technology resources, computer software applications training from beginner to advanced levels, job search and support workshops topics covering resume techniques, interviewing techniques, reentering the job market successfully, dealing with job loss, and on line application tips, techniques and strategies, specialized services that include services provided by a Veterans Representative and a Disability Program Navigator, GED preparation and academic remediation, employment recruitment, Spanish language interpreter and specialized services for youth between the ages of 14 and 21.

CNY Works is located at 443 North Franklin Street, Syracuse, New York, phone 315-473-8250. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. There is free customer parking in the lot located at North Clinton and Genant Drive, one block from CNY Works. CNY Works is also accessible by Centro Bus Route 60, the West Direct schedule.

Senior Transportation Service Application

The Senior Transportation Service is for Onondaga County residents 60 years of age and up and provides 2 to 4 rides per week for eligible customers who have pre-registered for the service. To request an application, please call 442-3434, Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 5:00pm. The Senior Transportation Service is a program of the Onondaga County Department of Aging and Youth in cooperation with Centro.

The Single Ride Call-A-Bus Pass

Call-A-Bus Transit Passes (value: \$1.25 each) are available for sale at the Centro Information Booth at Fayette and S. Salina St and the Central NY Regional Transportation Authority Offices on Tallman Street (near Cortland Avenue). These paper passes are useable on all Call-A-Bus service vehicles including our contractors - Blue Chip, North Area Transportation, Able, and CNY Sedan.

