



How to Apply for Access-A-Ride

What is Access-A-Ride?

Access-A-Ride (“AAR”) is a shared ride transportation program offered by the New York City Transit Authority (“NYCTA”) for people who have disabilities that make it difficult for them to use buses or subways. AAR customers use the service by making reservations. Depending on your disability, your AAR service may be full, conditional, or temporary:

- *Full*: You have complete, unconditional AAR service for 5 years.
- *Conditional*: You may use AAR only under certain conditions. For example, if your disability prevents you from using subway stations without escalators, you would receive AAR service only to a subway station with escalators or a bus station. This is called “feeder service.”
- *Temporary*: You have unconditional or conditional AAR service for anywhere from one month to one year.

How do I apply for AAR?

You have to call to ask for an application for AAR. Call (877) 337-2017 from NYC area codes or (718) 393-4999 from elsewhere. If you are Deaf or hard of hearing, you can use your preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service. You need to complete the application and, if possible, include documentation. You will also need to schedule an in-person eligibility assessment with NYCTA. You must take the application with you to the assessment.

What documents should I include with my application?

First, think about how your disability makes it hard for you to use buses or subways. Then add documentation to prove that point. A letter from your doctor or other health professional should explain how your disability, or its symptoms, prevent you from using buses or subways.

Also include your own personal documentation. Keep a journal to record the impact of travel on your disability, health, energy, stamina, and well-being. Make a copy and include it with your application. Travel journals should be specific. Note your fatigue or anxiety and how much time you need to rest after walking to the bus or subway station. You should also include a detailed list of any environmental, architectural, or other barriers that make it difficult for you to get to bus or subway stations such as the absence of curb cuts/ramps or the absence of sidewalks.

What does my doctor need to do?

A strong application includes at least one detailed letter from a service provider, medical professional, or other person who knows your disability (see [Tips for Doctors Filling Out Applications for Access-A-Ride Benefits](#)).

How do I schedule an AAR assessment?

After you receive an application form, you have to contact NYCTA to schedule the interview and assessment. The phone number is (877) 337-2017 from NYC area codes or (718) 393-4999 from elsewhere. NYCTA will provide AAR service to and from the assessment center, at no charge, for you and a personal care attendant if you need one. A personal care attendant can be a spouse, relative, friend, or professional attendant. When you call to schedule the assessment, let NYCTA know if a personal care attendant will be traveling with you. Also tell them if you need large print, recorded, or Braille materials, or a sign language interpreter. You may bring a friend, family member, advocate, service provider, lawyer, or other person to help you during the assessment

What happens at the AAR assessment?

Bring the completed application to the assessment. NYCTA will reject the application if you mail it. At the assessment, a NYCTA healthcare professional will judge your physical, visual, or cognitive ability. This often includes a physical evaluation during which you are asked to walk up stairs and complete other tasks. Then there is an interview during which you can tell the healthcare professional how your disability makes it difficult for you to use buses or subways. Be sure to mention any other problems related to your disability, such as fatigue, confusion, or pain. If you have a psychological or cognitive disability, be sure to tell the interviewer if it affects your ability to use buses or subways and explain how.

What happens after the AAR assessment?

You should receive a letter with a decision from NYCTA in the mail. If you do not receive this letter within three weeks, call NYCTA because you may be entitled to temporary AAR if NYCTA takes too long to make their decision.

If you are denied AAR, your letter will include a summary from your assessment and information on how to request your full assessment record free of charge. If you are denied or given only conditional services, you can appeal within 60 days. Please see [Access-A-Ride: How to Appeal a Denial or Reduction of Services](#) for more information.

What if I need help with my application or an appeal?

You may call Mobilization for Justice at (877) 417-2427 if you have any questions, need help reviewing letters from your doctor or medical professional, or need help with your AAR application or your AAR appeal.

Adapted from DREDF "ADA Paratransit Eligibility: How to Make Your Case," by Kevin Irvine and Marilyn Golden (July 2003). http://dredf.org/transportation/paratransit_eligibility.html