

## Access-A-Ride – Initiatives Focused on Service



Paratransit ridership, which returned faster than all other transit services, remains at approximately 80% of pre-pandemic levels. We continue to contend with increased traffic volumes and construction across the city, combined with industrywide driver shortages that have posed a challenge at the national and local levels. We recognize the significant

impact these issues have on our service performance and our customers, and we continue to work with our brokers and carriers daily to find innovative solutions to deliver the level of service our customers deserve. As a result of recent Primary Carrier hiring campaigns, there has been an uptick in drivers, vacancy rates are down to 16% from a summer high of 22%. We also saw some incremental improvements in primary carrier performance between September and October, with No Show rates decreasing from 6.60 per 1,000 scheduled trips to 4.68 and on-time performance up slightly.



New driver classes at an AAR carrier. Drivers must complete 80 hours of training which includes an overview of the ADA, disability etiquette and wheelchair securements

Recognizing our immediate challenges, we are implementing action plans to address service issues and have declared an immediate operating need to quickly enact contractual initiatives designed to improve service. We are also working closely with our newer brokers to help mentor and train them so that they can ramp up service faster. We will leave no stone unturned to address these service performance issues.



This month we also extended our E-hail/On-demand pilot program as we continue to evaluate the future of this program.

In addition, we recently received Board approval to award three five-year service contracts for Eligibility Assessment Services. These contracts provide an independent eligibility assessment of an applicant's disability and how it may, or may not, prevent their use of fixed-route transportation. Assessment Centers will be located in Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. While we were unable to award a contract for an Assessment Center in Manhattan, we will continue our efforts to secure a Manhattan location.

In November we saw our highest ever usage of the MY AAR trip planner on the MYmta app. We continue to encourage our customers to book their trips through both these platforms.

For more information about MYmta app, please visit:

<https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements/Mymta-app-for-Access-A-Ride>





In Memory...the Paratransit team wants to recognize the contributions of one of our long term and original Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC) members, Stanley Weinblatt, who sadly passed away in November. Stan was an AAR customer since its inception in 1990. He was an inspiring person who proudly supported the Paratransit Division and made many valuable contributions. He will be greatly missed.

**Weather Alerts** may be issued to remind our customers of possible delays due to forecasted storms. Does AAR have your most up-to-date phone number and email on record (see phone directory on pg. 6)? Announcements are also posted online at [mta.info](http://mta.info) and on social media (@nyctAAR). Safe Travels!



## **Fastest Way to Submit Authorized Taxi/Car Reimbursement Requests: ONLINE!!**

- Go to the AAR website:  
<https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit>
- Scroll down to **Policies and Forms** and click the ***“Online Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Request”*** link.
- Complete the form and attach a PDF (Scan) or Photo (JPEG) of the receipt and press “submit.”

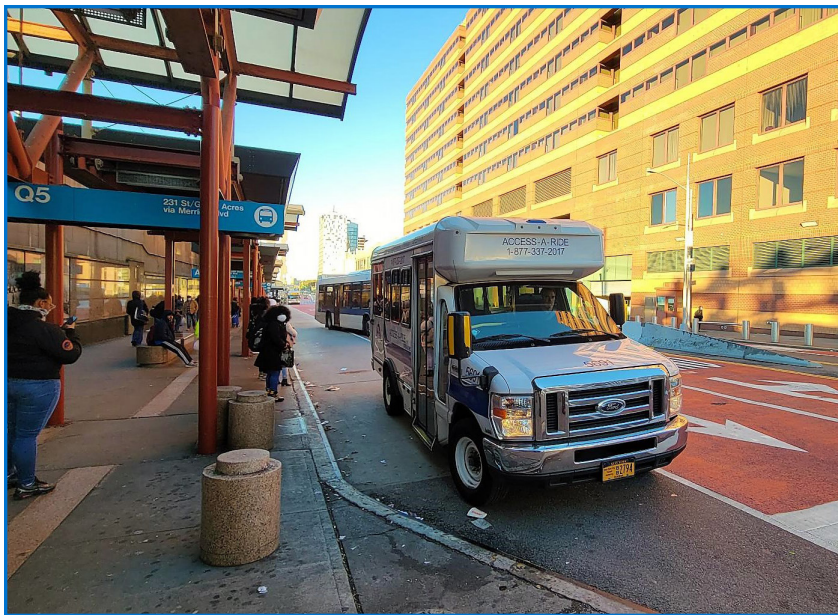
For those who prefer to mail the request/receipt to AAR, that option is still available. Please remember, the Taxi/Car Service Reimbursement Policy still applies.

## **About Taxi/Car Service Reimbursements**

In order to provide efficient service and enable expedient travel, taxicab/car service reimbursement authorization may be offered to customers at the time of the reservation (when traveling within their borough) or in the event of a day of service issue.

Customers are not required to accept a taxicab/car service reimbursement authorization; however, all taxi reimbursements must be pre-authorized. When a taxicab or car service is authorized, the customer is responsible for paying the full fare plus any tolls and obtaining a valid receipt from the driver. Only valid licensed NYC Taxi and Limousine commissioned taxi or For-Hire Vehicles (FHV) service receipts are qualified for reimbursement. For more information visit:

<https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/policies-and-forms/taxicab-car-service-reimbursement-policy>



The new busways on Jamaica and Archer Avenues (launched in October) provide speedier commute to Paratransit customers using AAR (Blue and White) primary/dedicated services. NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) allows select dedicated Access-A-Ride (AAR)

vehicles to travel in dedicated bus lanes since May 2019.

AAR vehicles cannot accommodate wheelchairs or scooters wider than 33 inches, longer than 51 inches and weighing more than 800 lbs. when occupied. Please note - reclining chairs with casters are not wheelchairs and will not be transported.

## **Your AAR Eligibility**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, AAR assessment centers were closed and all in-person paratransit interviews and eligibility assessments were suspended. All of our assessment centers are now open, supporting the return to our normal eligibility process.

Whether you are applying or recertifying for AAR, please call our Eligibility Unit to start the process (see telephone directory on page 6 and 7).



Except for those with temporary eligibility, customers who need to recertify received an automated phone call about the recertification process last month. If you did not receive a call, please call the Eligibility Unit to review your eligibility status.

Those who need to be reassessed and agree to visit an AAR assessment center will be sent an application and a letter providing the date, time, and location of their in-person interview and eligibility assessment appointment, including instructions for scheduling a round-trip visit to the assessment center. The documents should arrive within about five days. Please call Eligibility if the documents do not arrive.

There is no fare charged for the trip to and from the assessment center.

### **Access-A-Ride (AAR) Telephone Directory**

*Call 877-337-2017 toll-free from area codes in the NY Metro Area and adjacent counties. Reminder that we have a 718 number and from other area codes, call 718-393-4999. Customers who are deaf/hard of hearing can use their preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service.*

*After an important announcement, callers will be guided to*

- press “1” for English. If “1” is not pressed, callers will hear choices in each of the respective languages:*
- press “2” for assistance in Spanish,*
- press “3” for assistance in Russian, Chinese, French Creole, Korean or Bengali,*
- press “4” for all other languages.*

**Callers will then be directed to press one of the following prompts:**

**Prompt #1 – Eligibility Unit**

Agents are available to assist with eligibility, appeals, certification or application questions, requests for updates to customers' contact information, visitor status/reciprocal service, etc. on Monday–Friday from 9 am - 5 pm.

**Prompt #2 – Trip Planning**

Agents are available to make a reservation 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm.

**Prompt #3** – Agents are available 7 days a week from 7 am - 5 pm to change a trip.

**Prompt #4** – Agents are available 24/7 to cancel a trip.

**Prompt #5 – Travel Services**

Agents are available 24/7 for assistance with same day trip. This may include getting information about your vehicle and its estimated arrival time, help with delays that may arise with your pick-ups or with your return trip such as rescheduling a later pick-up, etc.

**Prompt #6 – Subscription Service**

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to help arrange, re-schedule or cancel subscription service. This service is offered to any customer who travels from the same location to the same destination at the same time of day for each trip at least one day a week.

**Prompt #7** – Automated system to check status of your same day service.

**Prompt #8** – **Customer Comment Line**

Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 am - 5 pm to submit suggestions, commendations, complaints, along with requests for publications, and outreaches. If one prefers, submit **online**.

Callers may repeat the prompt menu by pressing “0.” They may also hold for assistance if they don’t have a touch-tone phone. Conversations with AAR personnel are recorded and may be monitored.

The most updated AAR information, including AAR policies, newsletter and customers’ bill of rights are available Online at **[new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit](https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit)**.

Manage and Monitor your AAR trips online or via your smartphone: **<https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/making-a-reservation-and-managing-trips/faqs>**





On the Move is posted online quarterly at: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/paratransit/newsletter-and-announcements>. To ensure that you are alerted to postings and all other AAR updates, please provide AAR with a viable email address. If you don't have an email address, please consider sharing one of a trusted family member or friend who will alert you to these communications.

**Your questions and comments about On The Move are welcome. Please send them to:**

MTA NYC Transit, Department of Buses Paratransit Division,  
130 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Or go to: <https://new.mta.info/customer-feedback>

Follow us on Social Media @nyctAAR



**Mask Up & Stay Safe on AAR!**