



Mr./Ms.

This letter is to inform you of the new changes coming to Manatee County Area Transit!

With the goal to provide greater access to public transportation in our community, MCAT has modified the eligibility requirements for the Handy Bus Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program. Currently, TD eligibility is determined by annual gross household income.

Effective July 1st, 2023, applicants may qualify for TD services based on age (60 and older), income, **or** disability.

MCAT has also updated the application procedure for paratransit services. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Transportation Disadvantaged applications will now be combined into one application. Applicants may be subject to an in-person assessment. It is our hope the updated application procedure will streamline the eligibility process and provide access to those who depend on paratransit services.

If you have been deemed “ineligible” for Transportation Disadvantaged services, we encourage you to complete the enclosed application and return to our office.

Should you have any questions regarding this new initiative please feel free to contact our office at (941) 747-8621 ext. 3567.

Sincerely,

Manatee County Area Transit



Manatee County Area Transit Handy Bus Application

2411 Tallevast Rd, Sarasota, FL 34243

Effective July 1st, 2023

Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) Handy Bus service provides complementary paratransit service, as mandated by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990; as well as other transportation services funded by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD). The Handy Bus is a shared ride, door-to-door service for people who, because of their disability, socioeconomic status, or age (**≥60**), are unable to independently use the regular MCAT fixed route bus system. Applicants may qualify for one or both programs. Please read the ADA and TD program qualifications and service parameters below.

If you have any questions, or need assistance please call: 941-747-8621 x3567.

ADA Eligibility and Service Delivery Qualifications

1. ADA eligibility is based on an individual's functional ability to use the MCAT fixed route bus system. Applicants must prove that because of a physical or mental/cognitive impairment, they are unable to independently used the MCAT fixed route bus system. These impairments can be permanent, temporary, or conditional under certain circumstances, and must be verified by an authorized medical professional.
2. ADA Paratransit Handy Bus trips are only available during the same days, hours, and service area locations as the MCAT fixed route bus system. Origin and destination of trips must be within the ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Corridor. **The ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Corridor extends three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of a mile on either side of an active MCAT fixed bus route.**
3. ADA Paratransit Handy Bus Trips are not subject to prioritization and fares cannot exceed twice that of the base fare of the fixed route bus system.

TD Eligibility and Service Delivery Qualifications

1. Per Florida Statute 427.011, Transportation Disadvantaged individuals are those, who because of a physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, or other life-sustaining activities; or are children who are handicapped or high-risk or at-risk as defined in F.S. 411.202.
2. TD eligibility is based on one of the following criteria for Handy Bus service:

- (a) An individual's functional ability to use the MCAT fixed route bus system. Applicants must prove that because of a physical or mental/cognitive impairment, they are unable to independently use the MCAT fixed route bus system. These impairments can be permanent, temporary, or conditional under certain circumstances, and must be verified by an authorized medical professional.
- (b) Applicants' annual gross household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines as defined by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. Income verification is required for all family members residing in the household.
Accepted Proof of Income as follows:
 - 1st page of your tax return
 - DCF Cash Benefit/Child Support Letter
 - Minimum of (2) most recent pay stub
 - Unemployment Compensation Income Verification
 - Retirement/Pension Statement (Includes VA)
 - Social Security Income Verification or Proof of Income Letter (includes SSI and SSDI)
- (c) Applicants age (**≥60**) prevents them from accessing available transportation service.

- 3. TD Handy Bus trips are available Monday through Saturday between the hours 7:30am - 4:00pm. Trips are reserved for health care, employment, education, or other life-sustaining activities (grocery shopping, etc.).
- 4. TD trips are prioritized according to trip purpose, days, times, location, and available resources.
- 5. These restrictions are subject to change in effort to optimize MCAT's service delivery.

In-Person Assessment

Manatee County Area Transit may require an applicant to complete an in-person assessment evaluating functional and cognitive ability to travel on the fixed route bus system. This assessment will be free of charge to the applicant and MCAT will provide transportation to/from the facility.

Appeal Process

If you have been denied ADA or TD eligibility, or have received conditional ADA eligibility, and wish to appeal the decision, you may contact our office and request a copy of the appeal procedures. You will have (60) sixty days to submit the appeal form and supporting documents.

Once all documents have been received and reviewed, the Transit Operations Superintendent will schedule an appeal hearing. Written notice of the appeal hearing will be provided to you (5) five days prior to the date of the hearing by certified mail. A return receipt is requested.

Recertification Process

ADA and TD eligible clients are required to recertify with MCAT every three (3) years, unless otherwise stated on the eligibility letter.

Please check that all information is provided and mail application to:

Manatee County Area Transit
Attention: Handy Bus
2411 Tallevast Rd
Sarasota, FL 34243
OR Fax to: 941-745-377

Application for MCAT Handy Bus Transportation

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Male Female Date of Birth _____

Street Address _____ Apt. _____ Bldg. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of subdivision, building, complex, or additional information needed to find address:

Is a gate code required for entry? Yes No Code: _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Emergency Contact Name _____ Relationship _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Are you interested in opening a prepaid trip fund account? Yes No

In the event Manatee County Emergency Management orders an evacuation, would you need MCAT service to evacuate? Yes No

I understand that the information obtained in this application will be used by Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) to determine my eligibility for paratransit (Handy Bus) services and may be shared with other transit providers to facilitate travel and/or coordinate services. This information will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose, unless authorized in writing by the applicant. I understand MCAT may need to contact an authorized medical professional to verify information given on this application regarding how my disability prevents me from using MCAT's fixed bus route system. I hereby certify that the information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

If applicant is unable to sign this form, he/she may have someone sign and certify on applicant's behalf.

Proxy Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Relationship _____

Medical Verification for ADA and/or TD Transportation

1. Are you a United States Veteran? Yes No
 2. Are you a Medicaid Recipient? Yes No Medicaid #: _____
 3. Have you used or are you currently riding the MCAT fixed route bus? Yes No
 4. Some bus trips may require you to get off one bus and onto another to complete your trip.
Can you do this on your own? Yes No
 5. MCAT's bus operators call out bus stops at major transfer and destination points, and special stops upon request. With this help, can you recognize the right stop to get off the bus? Yes No
 6. List the impairments, disabilities, or other conditions that prevent you from using the MCAT fixed route bus service: _____
-

7. How long have you had this condition? _____
8. Is your condition permanent? Yes No
9. Please indicate below if you use any of the following mobility aids or equipment:
 Manual Wheelchair* Powered Scooter/Wheelchair* Walker White Cane
 Cane/Crutches Leg Braces Portable Oxygen Service Animal
 Ramp/Lift other _____ I do not use any of these aids

*** Please provide measurements for accessibility and possible equipment limitations.
MCAT will attempt to board and secure any mobility device.**

Wheelchair/Scooter Dimensions: Length _____ Width _____

10. Is your residence accessible (ramp, paved walkway, etc.)? Yes No

11. With or without the use of a mobility aide, how far are you able to travel?

Less than 200ft One Block Two blocks ¼ mile (3 blocks)

½ mile (6 blocks) ¾ mile (9 blocks) ¾ mile or greater

Other _____

12. Do you require a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) and/or service animal to travel?

Yes No

13. How are you currently traveling (grocery, doctor visits, etc)? _____

14. MCAT offers free Travel Training. Would you be interested in learning to ride the fixed route bus service? Yes No

Verification for TD Transportation

1. Including yourself, how many family members* live in the applicant's household? _____

***Family members include: yourself, spouse, parents, children, step/foster children, siblings, grandparents, and/or grandchildren.**

2. How many personal vehicles are owned or used by members in your household? _____

3. Are you able to drive or transport yourself; or do you have a ride available for vital trips (employment, education, medical visits)? Yes No

4. Complete the table below for ALL family members living in the household.

5.

Name	Date of Birth	Relation to Applicant	Annual Gross Income*

***Gross income is the income before any taxes or withholdings are deducted; and includes wages/salary, Social Security, Disability, Retirement/Pension (including VA), Child Support/Alimony, etc.**

6. Attach proof of income for all family members' income listed above. Please provide copies, as documentation will not be returned.

Accepted Proof of Income as follows:

- 1st page of your tax return
- Minimum of (2) most recent pay stubs
- Retirement/Pension Statement (Includes VA)
- DCF Cash Benefit/Child Support Letter
- Unemployment Compensation Income
- Social Security Income Verification or Proof of Income Letter (includes SSI and SSDI)

Please complete the above portion, regardless of if you provide proof of income or not.

Authorization for Release of Medical Records

I, the undersigned, understand that the medical information requested is confidential and will not be shared with any other person or agency, with possible exception of another transit provider to facilitate travel. I hereby authorize the following named professional to provide information about my disabilities or abilities to Manatee County Area Transit for determination of eligibility for paratransit (Handy Bus) services.

I also understand that verification of a disability by a qualified professional does not guarantee eligibility for paratransit (Handy Bus) services. It is important that any professional verifying an individual's disability be familiar with that particular disability, but also with his/her ability or inability to travel using MCAT's fixed route bus system.

NOTE: Manatee County Area Transit may require an applicant to consult another medical professional for verification of disability, or, to complete an in-person assessment evaluating functional ability to travel.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

If applicant is unable to sign this form, he/she may have someone sign and certify on applicant's behalf.

Proxy Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Relationship _____



NOTE: This portion must be completed by one of the following currently licensed professionals before returning the application to our office. Accepted medical professionals are, but not limited to, as follows: Physician (MD, DO, etc.), Audiologist, Ophthalmologist, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Registered Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Dear Medical Professional,

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires that Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) provide Paratransit services to anyone who, because of a disability, cannot use the regular fixed route bus system.

The applicant has submitted this application to you indicating you can provide information regarding their disability and its impact on their ability to utilize the fixed route bus system. Please review, complete, and sign this application so that the applicant's eligibility may be determined for MCAT's paratransit services. Paratransit service is intended only for those trips that the applicant cannot make on their own or using MCAT's fixed route bus service. This application is intended to help determine when and under what circumstances the applicant can use the fixed route bus service and when they require paratransit services.

Please note: ALL Manatee County Area Transit buses are fully equipped with wheelchair lifts and kneeling features, bus operators announce major streets and intersections and specific stops upon request, and buses are equipped with automated annunciators, making all MCAT vehicles accessible to people with disabilities. Resources for this program are limited and your evaluation should be based solely on the individual's ability or inability to utilize MCAT's fixed route bus system.

Thank you for your assistance.

Must be Completed by Medical Professional Only

Please review the information provided by the applicant in Parts I - II of this application and answer the questions in the following section.

1. Has this person been diagnosed with a physical, visual, cognitive, or other disability preventing use of the MCAT fixed route bus service? Yes No

If yes, please explain in detail, the severity and any restrictions or limitations:

2. What normal life functions are hindered or prevented by the disability?

3. How long have the conditions present? _____

4. Is the condition(s) permanent or temporary?

5. If the condition is temporary, what is the expected recovery date? _____

6. Is the applicant able to recognize destination or landmarks? Yes No

7. With **or** without the use of a mobility aide, how far are is the applicant able to travel?

- Less than 200ft One Block Two blocks ¼ mile (3 blocks)
 ½ mile (6 blocks) ¾ mile (9 blocks) ¾ mile or greater
 Other _____

8. Does the applicant require special assistance or use of a mobility aid? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

9. Does the applicant with his/her mobility aid weight more than 600lbs? Yes No

If yes, weight: _____

10. Can the applicant navigate traffic, roadways, and/or crossings safely and independently?

Yes No

11. Is the applicant able to consistently state his/her name, address, personal or emergency phone number upon request? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

12. Is the applicant able to ask for, understand, and follow directions? Yes No

If no, please explain: _____

13. Is the applicant able to handle unexpected situations or change in routine?

Yes No **If no, please explain:** _____

14. Does the applicant require a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) when traveling? (Note:

PCA's are designated or employed by a person with a disability to assist that person in meeting his/her personal needs and/or to facilitate travel for specific trips.)

Yes No Took off the "please explain" line

I hereby certify that I am familiar with the applicant's particular disability and with the applicant's ability or inability to travel on MCAT's fixed route bus system. MCAT staff is hereby authorized to contact me or a staff member in my office if necessary to complete the eligibility determination process according to ADA regulations (49CFR Parts 37 and 38). I also agree to provide all documentation deemed necessary by MCAT for eligibility determination or a subsequent appeal.

I certify the statements I have made herein are true and correct, and understand that false or fraudulent statements and certifications are punishable by law under 18 U.S.C. Subsection 100001 (1982).

Medical Professional Signature Required

Name (print): _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Medical License Number: _____

Practice Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Please check that all information is provided and mail application to:

Manatee County Area Transit

Attention: Handy Bus

2411 Tallevast Rd

Sarasota, FL 34243

OR Fax to: 941-745-3776

OFFICE USE ONLY – DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

Date Received: _____ Review Start Date: _____

NEW Applicant Recertification

Currently riding MCAT fixed route? Yes No

IN ZONE OUT OF ZONE Closest Stop: _____

Travel Training? Yes No

Medicaid? Yes No Medicaid Number: _____

Is the application complete? Yes No: _____

Comments: _____

Initial Reviewer: _____ **Date:** _____

ADA APPROVED ADA Denied

Client Contacted: _____

TD APPROVED via Disability Income Age

TD Denied

Reason for Denial/Comments: _____

Second Reviewer: _____ **Date:** _____