

A man named Jeff is shown from the chest up, sitting in a wheelchair. He is wearing a dark jacket and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred city street with cars and buildings. A large blue arrow graphic points to the right, partially overlapping the text.

Jeff
Oakland

ACCESS user since inception back in 1979

“ACCESS will take me anywhere I want to go.”

ACCESS
WAY TO GO

TRIP TIPS

A Guide For ACCESS ADA Customers
(412) 562-5353
RELAY 711

www.MyACCESSRide.com

A woman named Kate Allison Park is shown from the waist up, smiling and looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a white top and a colorful, patterned jacket with a red lining. The background is a blurred city street with buildings and a large blue arrow graphic pointing to the left.

Kate
Allison Park

ACCESS user since 2001

“If I didn't have ACCESS, I would not be able to work my two jobs.”

ACCESS

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WELCOME TO ACCESS!

ACCESS is a shared-ride, public transportation program sponsored by Port Authority of Allegheny County. ACCESS is part of Port Authority's family of services. Port Authority's bus and light rail service is accessible to people with a variety of disabilities. All Port Authority buses are equipped with ramps and "kneelers" to lower the first step. Other accommodations such as stop announcements and easy to read signs make using the bus easier than ever. There are also special fare incentives for ACCESS riders using Port Authority service. Make Port Authority's accessible bus and light rail service your first transportation choice whenever possible.

ACCESS service is provided throughout Allegheny County, seven (7) days per week between the hours of 6:00 am and midnight. Before 6:00 am and after midnight, ACCESS ADA service is provided for trips with origins and destinations within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of any Port Authority rail station or non-commuter bus route operating at that time.

Service is provided to adjoining counties, provided the origin of the trip is within Allegheny County and the destination is within one and a half miles of the Allegheny County line. ACCESS ADA service is also provided for trips with origins in Beaver, Washington and Westmoreland Counties within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of any Port Authority rail station or non-commuter bus route operating at that time.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

ACCESS services are provided by a number of service providers under contract to ACCESS Transportation Systems. ACCESS service providers are the companies which own and operate the vehicles and actually provide the transportation service.

To place a reservation for ACCESS service, call the ACCESS service provider in your neighborhood. Their special ACCESS phone number is listed below.

Your ACCESS Service Provider is:

CENTRAL ACCESS OFFICE

The ACCESS program is managed from the central ACCESS office with an experienced customer service staff available to answer questions or provide assistance. The central ACCESS office is located in Downtown Pittsburgh at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Smithfield Street.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, **8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Mailing address:

ACCESS Transportation Systems
Centre City Tower
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 440
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Telephone number: (412) 562-5353 or Relay 711

Fax number: (412) 391-0594

Website: **MyACCESSRide.com**

Accessible Formats: Upon request, large print, Braille, audio cassette or txt files by email.

Let us hear from you!

Providing high quality service is a top priority for the ACCESS program. You are encouraged to call the central ACCESS office any time you have a suggestion, complaint or compliment about ACCESS service. ACCESS service providers are not permitted to accept complaints from customers. Complaints may be registered by calling or writing the central ACCESS office.

When to call the central ACCESS office:

- You cannot get through on the telephone after trying for **fifteen (15) minutes**
- Your pre-scheduled vehicle is more than **thirty (30) minutes late**
- You have **waited over forty-five (45) minutes** for your will-call return
- You have missed your pre-scheduled pick-up from your home and are requesting that another vehicle be sent for you
- You would like to place your trip reservation more than one day in advance
- You have a question about your ePurse account
- You need a ride and have not called the day before (*Same day service is provided Monday through Friday on a space available basis.*)
- You would like to learn how to take your trip on a Port Authority bus
- You are traveling to or from Pittsburgh International Airport. Eligible customers and their personal assistants or companions may each take **two pieces of luggage and one carry-on bag**. Please keep luggage to a reasonable size and weight.
- You have a suggestion or a complaint. Service providers are not permitted to accept complaints from passengers.
- You have any questions or concerns

FARES

All ACCESS fares are predetermined based on trip length. When you place your trip reservation, the reservationist will tell you how much your trip will cost each way. An ADA eligible trip fare ranges between the minimum one-way fare of \$3.15 and the maximum one-way fare of \$5.25. Fares are paid from an electronic account that you will establish called **ePurse**. See the enclosed **ePurse User Guide** for information about setting up and using your ePurse.

Personal Assistants & Companions

If you require the assistance of another person to complete your trip or its purpose, you may take **one (1) personal assistant** at no additional charge:

- You must pre-schedule your personal assistant and she/he must be picked up and dropped off at the same point as you
- If you are being accompanied by someone whose presence is desired but not necessary, that person will be your **companion**
- You may take one companion who must also be pre-scheduled. You will pay a fare equal to yours for your companion. Additional companions may be scheduled on a space available basis

Discounts

Groups of **four (4)** or more passengers traveling from the same origin to the same destination may be eligible for a discount. More information about discounts is available from the central ACCESS office.

Returned Checks

If your check “bounces” or your credit card is refused after a purchase, you will be charged a service fee. The 1st incident is **\$15.00** and any additional incidents will be **\$25.00**.

SCHEDULING A TRIP

To place a reservation for ACCESS service, call the service provider listed on page 3.

- All trips must be placed **one day in advance** between the hours of **7:00 AM and 3:30 PM**
- Reservations are accepted Saturday for Sunday, and Sunday for Monday (*You may call Friday for Sunday or Monday, but this is not required.*)
- Requests for same-day service may be made by calling your ACCESS service provider, and will be honored if there is space in a vehicle already in service at that time
- When you call your provider to place your order, have the following information ready:
 - ✓ Your full name
 - ✓ PIN number for your ePurse
 - ✓ Your complete address, including neighborhood (*Ex. Troy Hill*) including any special entrance information
 - ✓ Your apartment number, intercom or bell number
 - ✓ Your home or cell phone number
 - ✓ The day and date of your trip
 - ✓ Appointment time **or** pick-up time. If you do not have an appointment time the call taker will help you determine a pick-up time that will ensure your on-time arrival, and remember, you may be asked to adjust your pick-up time to accommodate the shared-ride trip.
 - ✓ Return time. Only trips for appointments with non-predictable ending times may be scheduled with a “will-call” return.
 - ✓ Complete address of your destination, including specific entrance. The call taker will tell you which entrance to use if you are going to a mall or hospital.
 - ✓ Phone number at your destination, whenever possible

- ✓ If you use a wheelchair or need special assistance (ex: “*I am blind.*”) and if a personal assistant or companion will travel with you
- ✓ Be sure the call taker tells you his or her name, repeats your itinerary back to you and tells you the fare for your trip; please keep a record of this information.

Reservation Tips

You may be asked to adjust your pick-up or return time to accommodate a shared-ride schedule. You will always be offered a time **within one (1) hour** of the time you requested.

- When traveling during rush hours, allow some extra time to reach your destination
- Traffic and heavy demand for service during peak periods may make your ride a bit longer
- The vehicle may make other stops along the way

Standing Orders

Customers may request “standing order” reservations for trips which are taken on a regular basis. The vehicle automatically comes as scheduled unless you call to change or cancel the order. A standing order trip must meet the following criteria:

- Taken at least **three (3) times** per week at the same time
- Has the same origin and destination **all three (3) days**
- Taken at least 75% of the time.
- A cancellation rate of 50% or more may result in the cancellation of your standing order
- **Standing orders are automatically cancelled on the following major holidays:** New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you need your regular standing order trip on these days, you must call your service provider.

Will-Call Returns

If you are traveling to an appointment, with a non-predictable ending time, you may choose to call for return when you are ready to leave.

- After you make the call yourself, go directly to the entrance specified to wait for your vehicle
- You must return from the same place you were dropped off
- If you choose to call for a return trip, you should expect to wait anywhere from **5-45 minutes**
- Will-call returns are not permitted on weekends or after 5:00 PM. You **must** schedule your return trip if riding on the weekend, on a holiday or after 5:00 PM.

On-Time “Window”

Drivers are permitted to **arrive ten (10) minutes before or twenty (20) minutes past** the scheduled pick-up time and still be considered on time. Riders must be ready to go and waiting at the door **ten (10) minutes** before the scheduled pick-up time. The driver is permitted to wait only **five (5) minutes** for a late passenger.

In-Touch Automated Call Outs

You will receive an “In-Touch” phone call or text from ACCESS when the vehicle is within approximately **ten (10) minutes** of arrival at your pick-up location. You can also request a call or text within approximately **ten (10) minutes** prior to the vehicle arriving at your destination location for your return trip. In-Touch Calls are a courtesy and are not guaranteed.

Cancellations, No-Shows & Reservation Changes

You may not change your destination or time once you have boarded the vehicle. If you need to cancel a trip, call your service provider or go online to MyACCESSRide.com as soon as possible but **no less than one hour before** your scheduled pick-up time:

- You must call your service provider directly. Drivers are not permitted to accept information regarding cancellations or changes
- If your first trip of the day is a no-show, please call to either confirm or cancel your return trip
- Cancellations at the door and no-shows are a serious violation of ACCESS policy, a waste of valuable resources and may result in suspension of ACCESS service

No-shows

A no-show happens when the driver arrives on time at the correct location, announces him/herself properly, but the customer has not cancelled the trip and does not go.

- If the vehicle is late and you decide to leave before it comes, your cooperation in calling to cancel the ride before leaving will be appreciated
- Trips you do not wish to take should be **cancelled at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up** time.
- Failing to cancel a trip at least **fifteen (15) minutes** before the scheduled time is considered a no-show
- Within **thirty (30) days** you will receive a letter of explanation from the central ACCESS office outlining the penalties for no-shows

CUSTOMER GUIDELINES:

- Follow all ACCESS policies
- Refrain from abusive, indecent, vulgar, profane language/behavior or language which threatens other passengers or drivers
- Be ready to leave when the driver arrives, to avoid delaying other customers
- ACCESS passengers must wear seat belts
- There is no smoking, eating or drinking in vehicles
- Use headphones when listening to radios or other audio devices
- Refrain from using cell phones on the vehicle except in emergencies
- Carry your ACCESS ID card with you as you may be asked to present it before boarding the vehicle
- Vans, with or without lifts, and sedans are all used for ACCESS service. You must ride in the vehicle that comes for you
- You may not request any specific type of vehicle unless you use a wheelchair or need the lift to board the van
- Service Animals are permitted on vehicles
- Pets are permitted on vehicles if they are in a carrier which fits on your lap
- Riders are permitted **four (4) reasonably sized packages or bags** per trip

ASSISTANCE

Your driver is a professional. Drivers in ACCESS service are thoroughly trained, have good driving records, have had criminal history background checks and drug/alcohol screening.

Drivers **will**:

- Wear a Photo I.D. Badge, clearly displayed, with their name, employee number and company name and will identify him/herself to you upon arrival
- Knock on the door, ring the bell, or have the office call to announce his/her arrival
- Assist you to and from the door, as long as there are not more than **four (4) steps**
- Assist you in boarding the vehicle, getting to your seat and getting off the vehicle
- Assist you with fastening your seatbelt and securing your wheelchair
- Assist you with carrying up to **four (4) reasonably sized packages or bags**

Drivers **are not permitted** to:

- Enter your home, or look for you beyond the lobby of any building in which you are waiting
- Drop you off at any destination other than what you have scheduled
- Assist you up or down more than **four (4) steps**, or over unsafe surfaces such as gravel, or grassy slopes
- Accept tips

Children

Children under the age of ten (10) must be accompanied by an adult. Children aged four (4) and under must use a car seat provided by the parent. PA State law requires that children over the age of four (4) but under age eight (8) must be secured in a seat belt and a child booster seat provided by the parent.

Hand-to-Hand & Person-Centered Service

In addition to the basic paratransit service offering, ACCESS provides hand to hand service for individuals who require constant supervision and service modifications.

Some ACCESS passengers require a higher level of supervision and cannot be left unattended. These customers carry a special code in their file alerting drivers to ensure they are handed off to a responsible person and cannot leave the passenger unless there is someone available to receive them both at home and at their destination. An elaborate safety net is in place in the event of a problem. Call ACCESS at **(412) 562-5353** for more information.

Drivers are trained to report incidents which are individually investigated by ACCESS. Although they may not be strictly transportation related issues, ACCESS works with its network of community providers to resolve individual, personal issues including lack of accessibility to the house, a change in condition (onset of confusion) signs of abuse, and problems with personal hygiene or nutrition.

SPECIAL REQUESTS / REASONABLE MODIFICATION

If there is an ACCESS rule or policy that, due to your disability, makes it difficult or prevents you from using the service, you may call ACCESS (412 562-5353 or TTY Relay 711) or write to the central ACCESS office (650 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15222) to discuss your situation. When at all possible, requests should be made in advance and will be considered on a case by case basis as long as they are reasonable and do not create a direct threat to others or a fundamental change to basic ACCESS service.

DRIVER TRAINING

Drivers receive a combination of classroom and on the road training to proficiency, including the following areas:

- Defensive driving
- Substance abuse training
- Passenger assistance techniques
- Use of lifts and wheelchair securements
- Quality customer service
- ACCESS policies and procedures
- Radio and emergency procedures
- Disability awareness
- Pre-trip vehicle inspection
- Use of on-board technology

SAFETY & MOBILITY

The safety of all passengers and drivers is one of ACCESS' most important priorities. To ensure safe transportation, the cooperation of ACCESS riders is required:

- Portable oxygen, personal respirators or other life support equipment is permitted on board. The equipment must be small enough to fit into the vehicle and be secured.
- If you are not able to walk up and down the steps of the van, you can ride up and down standing on the lift. There are handrails on both sides for you to hold on to, and the driver will help you.
- If you use a wheelchair or scooter:
 - You may choose to board the lift either facing outward, or pull on facing the vehicle
 - All wheelchairs and scooters will be secured by the driver using a four-point securement system
 - Any wheelchair up to 50" long and 32" wide can be accommodated on a vehicle
 - The total combined weight of the passenger and the wheelchair must not exceed 800 lbs.
 - Requests for service from people whose mobility aid exceeds this size or weight are made on a case by case basis (*Contact the central ACCESS office for assistance.*)
 - The driver will secure the seat belt. Use of the shoulder harness is strongly recommended, but not required. Ask the driver to adjust the height if it is not comfortable. If you choose not to use the shoulder harness, just tell the driver.
 - If you use a power wheelchair or scooter, the driver is not able to provide any assistance up or down curbs or steps
 - Other than assisting you on and off the lift, the driver will not operate your power wheelchair or scooter

VEHICLES

Every vehicle used in ACCESS service is equipped with on-board video recording devices and GPS technology including Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) which displays, in real time, the location of every vehicle. All vehicles are inspected regularly and meet all state and federal requirements for safety. Vehicles are equipped with two-way radios, air conditioning and special emergency and accessibility features.

WINTER WEATHER

Path of Travel Between Home and the Vehicle

It is the responsibility of riders to make sure that the entry way of their home is free of snow and ice, and clear year-round. Local resources, like *Snow Angels (412) 475-2459*, can assist with snow/ice removal.

If there is an accumulation of snow or ice on the walkway, the driver may not be able to assist you to and from the door. If the driver can't get to your door, you will receive a phone call from the service provider.

Traffic Delays

Snowy and icy conditions make travel slower and create more traffic. You may wish to allow a little more time to get to your destination if the weather forecast is for snow. Your patience is appreciated during times when late arrivals due to severe weather conditions are beyond the driver's control