



**PROTECTION & ADVOCACY**  
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, INC.

*The Protection & Advocacy System for South Carolina*

3710 Landmark Drive, Suite 208, Columbia, SC 29204  
803-782-0639; FAX 803-790-1946  
1-866-275-7273 (VOICE) 1-866-232-4525 (TTY)  
EMAIL: [info@pandasc.org](mailto:info@pandasc.org)  
WEBSITE: [www.pandasc.org](http://www.pandasc.org)

---

## **FACT SHEET**

### **ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives people with disabilities many important rights in the area of transportation. This fact sheet is limited to public transportation systems. For more information on your rights to other types of transportation, please contact one of the resources listed on our contact sheet. If you have a disability, you are entitled to the same right to use and enjoy public transportation as people without disabilities. The local transit provider does have the duty to make public transportation accessible. Here are some examples of things that are needed to make a transportation system accessible. Public buses need to be accessible to those in wheelchairs. Drivers need to announce their stops out loud to benefit riders who are have visual impairments. Telephones, drinking fountains, and restrooms inside the terminal should also be accessible.

#### **Paratransit Services**

If the local transit authority cannot adequately serve its clients with disabilities in its regular system, it is required to create a parallel transportation system for people with disabilities. This system is referred to as a paratransit system. Paratransit systems are curb-to-curb demand responsive systems. What this means is that you should be able to schedule a trip, be picked up at your door and then be taken to your destination and returned home. You should be able to schedule your ride just twenty-four hours in advance. Your pick-up time should be within one hour before or after your desired departure time. You should not be asked to schedule your trip during off peak hours. The transit authority should put additional vans and buses on the road during peak hours to keep up with the demand.

#### **Complaints**

If you feel that you have been discriminated against based on your disability by your local transit provider, you should write a letter to the manager describing the problem. Keep a copy of the letter so that you can have it later to prove that you complained. Sending a letter may prompt a quicker, more positive response from the manager. After receiving your letter, the manager may call you to discuss your problem. If the

manager feels it appropriate, the manager will arrange a meeting to discuss your problem with you.

If you have attempted to work out your problem with the local transportation provider and are unsatisfied with the results, you may file a complaint with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). You are not required to contact the local transit provider before filing a complaint with the FTA but it is probably a good idea to do so in most cases. If you choose to file an FTA complaint, here is some more information about the process. The complaint form requires you to give yes/no answers to some questions and give written explanation to others. The form is approximately three pages in length. You should spend some time thinking about your responses before writing them. You may even want to write a rough draft of your comments before you enter them on the form. Doing a draft insures accuracy and clarity, allowing you to make your case in the most favorable light possible. A copy of the complaint form and the address to send it to are enclosed. You may also access a copy of the complaint form at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/fta-civil-rights-complaint-form>.

You also may have the right to file a lawsuit against your transit provider. For more information about this you should contact a private attorney. If you do not know of one you would like to use you may contact the Lawyer Referral Service at either (803) 799-7100 or toll-free 1-800-868-2284.

**If you need additional information about either of these processes, please call the P&A Intake Line:**

**1-866-275-7273 (voice) or 1-866-232-4525 (TTY)**

This information packet has been prepared based on the law at the time it was written. Future changes in the law may make some information incorrect. Please feel free to contact the Intake Line for updates. This fact sheet is not intended to be legal advice.

This publication is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Administration for Community Living) and the US Department of Education (Rehabilitation Services Administration). It does not necessarily represent the official views of the funding authorities.

P&A does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, citizenship, age, religion, sex or sexual orientation, veteran status or any other class protected by law in the provision of its programs or services. Pete Cantrell is P&A's designated coordinator for Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. June 2016, ADA

## **CONTACT SHEET FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you have questions about paratransit or public transportation services, you may find the following resources helpful:

### **Southeast ADA Center**

1419 Mayson Street NE  
Atlanta, GA 30324  
1-800-949-4232 (voice/TTY)  
404-541-9001 (voice/TTY)  
404-541-9002 (fax)  
[www.adasoutheast.org](http://www.adasoutheast.org)  
[ADAsoutheast@law.syr.edu](mailto:ADAsoutheast@law.syr.edu)

**OR**

### **Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)**

3075 Adeline Street, Suite 210  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
510-644-2555 (voice)  
510-841-8645 (fax/TTY)  
[www.dredf.org](http://www.dredf.org)  
[info@dref.org](mailto:info@dref.org)

**OR**

### **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

#### **Office of Civil Rights**

Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
United States  
Phone: 888-446-4511  
<http://www.fta.dot.gov>



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Transit Administration**

## Civil Rights Complaint Form

The Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring that providers of public transit properly implement several civil rights laws and programs, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, and the External Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program.

In the FTA complaint investigation process, we analyze the complainant's allegations for possible deficiencies by the transit provider. If deficiencies are identified, they are presented to the transit provider and assistance is offered to correct the inadequacies within a predetermined timeframe.

Please mail your completed form to:

**Director, FTA Office of Civil Rights East  
Building, 5th Floor – TCR 1200 New  
Jersey Ave., SE Washington, DC 20590**

If you have questions about how to prepare a complaint, you may contact our toll-free FTA Assistance Line at 1-888-446-4511. More information about transit-related civil rights requirements may be found on the FTA's website at [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov).

**Note:** Apart from the form, *on separate pages*, please describe your complaint. You should include specific details such as names, dates, times, route numbers, witnesses, and any other information that would assist us in our investigation of your allegations. Please also provide any other documentation that is relevant to this complaint, including any related correspondence from your transit provider.

**Important:** We cannot accept your complaint without a signature, so please sign on the last page of the form after printing out.

### **Section I**

**I believe that I have been (or someone else has been) discriminated against on the basis of:**

- Race / Color / National Origin
- Disability
- Not Applicable
- Other (specify)

**I believe that a public transit provider has failed to comply with the following program requirements:**

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- External Equal Employment Opportunity
- Not Applicable
- Other (specify)

---

**Section II**

Name:

Street Address:

City:  State:

Zip Code:

Telephone Numbers:

Home:

Cell:

E-Mail Address:

Accessible format requirements:

Large Print

Not Applicable

Other

**Section III**

Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?

Yes  No

[If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section IV.]

If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are complaining:

Please explain why you have filed for a third party:

Please confirm that you have obtained the permission of the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party:

Yes  No

**Section IV**

Have you previously filed a civil rights complaint with FTA? Yes  No

If yes, what was your FTA Complaint Number?

Have you filed this complaint with any of the following agencies?

Transit Provider

Department of Transportation

Department of Justice

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Other

If yes, please attach a copy of any response you received to your previous complaint.

Have you filed a lawsuit regarding this complaint?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide the case number and attach any related material.

**Note:** FTA encourages, but does not require, riders to first file complaints with their local transit agencies to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue.

**Section V**

Name of public transit provider complaint is against:

Contact person

Title

Telephone number

**Section VI**

May we release your identity and a copy of your complaint to the transit provider?

Yes  No

**Note:** We may be unable to investigate your allegations without permission to release your identity and complaint.

Please sign here: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

**Note:** We cannot accept your complaint without a signature.