

Accessible Formats

What are the requirements for alternative accessible formats?

Public and private transportation providers must make their communications and information available to people with disabilities through the use of accessible formats and technology (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, computer disk, email, TDD/TTYs etc.) to enable customers and potential customers to obtain adequate information about transportation services and the ability to schedule them.

Here are a few examples:

- Schedule and route information must be made available in a format a customer can use to access the bus system.
- An adequate number of phone lines must be available for customers eligible for ADA complementary paratransit to schedule service without experiencing excessive hold times or chronically busy lines.
- All materials associated with the ADA complementary paratransit process (e.g., public information brochure, cover letter, application form, eligibility determination letter etc.) must be available in alternative formats so that eligible and potentially eligible customers can effectively apply for and use ADA complementary paratransit.

What formats should be offered for blind or visually impaired persons?

Transit agencies should be prepared to provide the format that is requested by the customer. The most common formats are described below.

Documents in electronic format: Many blind or visually impaired persons have computer technology which allows them to read documents in standard WORD format; however, often maps, graphs, charts or photos are not readable and should be described. Documents such as schedules or other materials with graphics may need to be revised accordingly.

Large Print: Depending on the preference of the customer, documents should be available in 14 or 18 point font. The font should be plain.

Braille: Though the population of braille readers may be comparatively small, it is important that this format be offered to those who need it. Braille printers are available for purchase, or documents can be translated into Braille through appropriate service providers or agencies that serve blind or visually impaired persons.

Audio: Since many people who are blind or visually impaired have become accustomed to listening to recorded texts, this alternate format is one that should be available if requested. This means that the document is recorded through a tape recorder or other electronic equipment.

Website: Certain design features can also improve access to the internet for persons with disabilities, and should be taken into consideration when setting up or updating information on agency web sites.

What accommodations should be offered for deaf or hearing impaired persons?

Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired should be able to access telephone services through a telecommunication device for the deaf, sometimes referred to as "TDD." Or, allowing for receiving text messages may also facilitate communication for deaf persons.

Relay services can also be arranged through your telephone company. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted use of the 711 dialing code for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). TRS permits persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without such disabilities. For more information about the various types of TRS, see the FCC's consumer fact sheet at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html, or visit the Web site of our Disability Rights Office (DRO) at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/.

What resources are available in my community to prepare accessible documents?

Organizations such as Centers for Independent Living, Lighthouse for the Blind, or other organizations serving persons who are blind or visually impaired can provide you with additional guidance on how to prepare materials in accessible formats.

What additional resources or information is available about accessible formats?

The American Council for the Blind has an excellent resource on-line to answer many questions about accessible formats at <http://www.acb.org/accessible-formats.html>

Another valuable resource is available through Easter Seals Project Action:

http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_homepage

This website: <http://www.accessible.org/bobby-approved.html> provides information on how to make a website accessible for blind and visually impaired people.