

2023 ADA Participation Group Forum Meeting Dates



Please join us for the ADA Participation Group Forum! Meetings are held on the **3rd Wednesday of every other month, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The next ADA forum is:

- **January 18, 2023**
- **March 15, 2023**
- **May 17, 2023**
- **July 19, 2023**
- **September 20, 2023**
- **November 15, 2023**

Please note: All ADA forums will be held virtually unless otherwise indicated. To obtain the link to join the meeting or for more information including accommodation requests, please visit our website at www.hartfordtransit.org, or contact Pat Williams by email: pwilliams@ghtd.org or phone: **(860) 380-2011**.

Please provide notice prior to the meeting if you would like to share your input with the rest of the attendees. If time allows, all participants will have the opportunity to share their comments and concerns with the group.

We will look forward to seeing you at our next ADA Participation Group Forum!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know that if you have a question, compliment and/or concern about your ADA Paratransit trip we would like to hear from you?

Who do I contact? You may contact the Customer Service Department by calling (860) 724-5340 extension 9, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (For the hearing impaired, please dial Relay of Connecticut at 1-800-833-8134.) You may also contact Customer Service by sending an email to Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com, fax (860) 936-3750 or write:

**Customer Service Department c/o First Transit
148 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT 06108**

How soon should I call? Please contact the Customer Service Department as soon as possible when you wish to report an incident (ideally within 48 hours of the incident).

What information will I need to provide? Please be certain to have the day of the week, date, location, and time of all incidents that you would like to report. Any additional details you can provide will be helpful.

When will I receive a response? Any communication with the Customer Service Department will be addressed in a timely manner.

ADA RIDER TIP: Passengers may cancel trips after hours from midnight to 4:30 a.m. by calling (860) 724-5340 and selecting “0”.



To obtain a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format or if information is needed in another language please contact us at: (860) 380-2011.

Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al (860) 380-2011.

CONTACT US AT: (860) 724-5340

Reserve, Cancel, ConfirmSelect 1

Dispatcher.....Select 2

Spanish. Select 5

Scheduling.....Select 6

Service Updates.....Select 8

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THE S.T.A.R.

(Safe, Timely, Accessible, Reliable)

ADA Paratransit Newsletter

Winter 2023



FREE ADA PARATRANSIT AND CT TRANSIT BUS SERVICE THROUGH MARCH 31, 2023!



The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) announced that all public transit buses will be fare-free across Connecticut through March 31, 2023. A previous policy signed by Governor Lamont made buses fare-free from April 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022, but that was extended to December 1, 2022 in a budget passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor on May 9, 2022. The legislature held a special session on November 28, 2022 which passed a bill to continue the fare-free program, and this bill was signed by the Governor on November 29, 2022.

Free transportation services include all CTtransit local buses statewide, CTtransit Express and CTfastrak services. ADA Paratransit is also fare-free statewide through March 31, 2023.

Please note that CTtransit will not be able to refund partially used bus passes. ADA Paratransit ticket books have no expiration date, and so pre-purchased ticket books can still be used when the ADA bus fare resumes on April 1, 2023.

For additional information and/or to view the press release, please go to: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2022/11-2022/Governor-Lamont-Signs-Legislation-Extending-Gas-Tax-Cuts-and-Fare-Free-Bus-Service>



Getting Ready for Winter Weather

Winter is here! We do our best to keep the ADA Paratransit service running during severe weather, and if there is an interruption, to resume service as soon as possible following a storm. Severe winter weather can sometimes cause delays and/or cancellations. In the event of a winter storm warning or other severe weather, we will post updates on our website at www.hartfordtransit.org to keep you informed about potential ADA Paratransit service changes. You can also tune in to CRIS radio, WTIC 1080 AM radio, or watch WFSB Channel 3 television for information regarding cancellations, delays, or changes to your ADA Paratransit trip. Be sure to also check on your trip connections! Even if Greater Hartford Transit District's ADA Paratransit service has not been cancelled or delayed due to severe winter weather, if you have a trip connection with another transit agency, keep in mind there might still be changes and/or delays to their ADA service. Stay informed, and be ready for winter weather!

"I SEE THE BIG PICTURE"

TESTIMONIAL BY NICOLE FINCHAM-SHEHAN



Pictured: Nicole Fincham-Shehan, Assistant General Manager at First Transit in East Hartford, CT.

Nicole Fincham-Shehan is the first blind woman and individual to serve in a major leadership position with First Transit. She shares this testimonial:

"I was born with an eye condition called Achromatopsia, which affects one out of 35,000 individuals, and I am legally blind. I attended public school growing up well before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Transit has always been a passion of mine. I depended on public transportation for my livelihood and became involved in transit advocacy when I entered college and got to class late. I strived to improve my

transit experience, but I realized many others like me needed someone to be their voice, either because they didn't know how to speak up for themselves or were unable to do so because of their disability.

I became involved with the Maryland Transit Administration's Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation. I later served as chair and assisted in creating Disability Rights Maryland: Consumers for Accessible Rides Service (CARS) Committee. I learned everything there was to know about transit and paratransit so I could help others and eventually work with agencies to ensure they were ADA-compliant for all individuals.

My mission is to help ensure that all individuals have equal access to transportation, connecting them to education, employment, healthcare, and food. Transportation is one of the biggest barriers for blind and visually impaired individuals to access services within the community and is one of the leading causes of this population's unemployment rate. I believe that when individuals have equal access to transportation, it allows them to be active, contributing members of society, and this is all that anyone wants to be.

I tell drivers in the training I conduct, 'I may not be able to drive that bus, but I can operate everything on it, including performing securement with wheelchair tie-downs, operating the wheelchair lift, and working with the MDTs.' I also use simulators with the operators and staff to replicate various eye conditions so that they can understand that everyone who is blind or visually impaired does not see the same. This is especially true for individuals with the same eye condition.

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"I SEE THE BIG PICTURE" (CONTINUED)

TESTIMONIAL BY NICOLE FINCHAM-SHEHAN

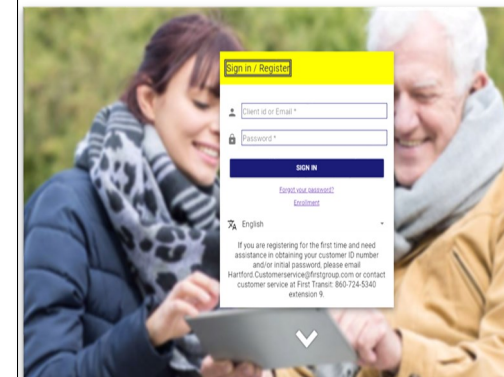
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I believe I bring a different perspective to management, because I see the big picture. As a daily user of public transit, and as a member of the community it serves, I can relate to the drivers, customers, and management, all at the same time. I intend to use this perspective to foster greater mutual understanding among all of these groups and I'm proud to be a part of the First Transit team."

Nicole is the Assistant General Manager at First Transit in East Hartford, Connecticut. She holds two bachelor's degrees from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in Health Administration Public Policy and Sociology with concentrations in Epidemiology and Health Disparities. She is extremely passionate about serving the community and paving the way for other blind or visually impaired individuals, but especially young women. Nicole is involved with the Conference of Minority Transit Officials (COMTO); the League of Women Voters (LWV); the National Federation of the Blind (NFB); and her children's PTO.

GREATER HARTFORD TRANSIT DISTRICT IS ONLINE!

BOOK ADA TRIPS USING PASS-WEB



Pictured: PASS-WEB online home page for booking ADA trips.

The Greater Hartford Transit District (the "District") services are now available online! Passengers now have the ability to go online using a computer, tablet, or smart phone and make ADA travel arrangements. Users of PASS-WEB can check the status of an upcoming trip, view past and upcoming trips, book trips, pay for trips, and update contact information all online. Trip booking is available daily from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Users of PASS-WEB can pay for trips online using an E-check or credit card in order to get the discounted fare of \$28 for ten (10) trips.

Paying online allows passengers the ability to board the ADA Paratransit bus without having to provide the driver with a ticket or cash. Passengers can now load money onto their account online, and then choose whether to schedule their trip by calling the Reservations Department or booking online. The District hopes that providing our riders with more options to book and pay for their trips will make ADA Paratransit travel easier, and provide a better overall trip experience for our passengers.

To create a PASS-WEB account to book or pay for ADA trips online, please visit <https://ghtdonlinebooking.org>. The PASS-WEB program suggests using the internet browser Google Chrome or Safari for an optimal experience. Once on the website, click on "Enrollment" to get started. Passengers who wish to receive a guide on how to use PASS-WEB can request one by emailing hartford.customerservice@firstgroup.com or calling the Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 extension 9.



Señor Pepe's Pointers for Winter

Señor Pepe's friend, Ralphie is clearing his driveway of snow and ice to prepare for the arrival of their ADA bus!

Pepe says, "All entrances (sidewalks, driveways, ramps, steps) proceeding up to your place of residence must be free of snow and ice. Failure to comply with this request might result in the ADA driver not being able to provide transportation to you.

Please also help by notifying First Transit of any changes in your scheduled pickup time and/or location due to winter weather."

If you have any questions, please contact the Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 x 9 or via email at Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com.

Have a safe and happy winter!



Your friend,
Señor Pepe

