

# **Autauga County Rural Transportation Reasonable Modification Policy**

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the reasonable modification policy is to ensure that Autauga County Rural Transportation offers equal and effective opportunities and access to public transportation services for persons with disabilities and full compliance with the provisions of the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## **2. Policy**

Autauga County Rural Transportation is committed to providing equal access and opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities in all programs, services and activities. Autauga County Rural Transportation recognizes that in order to have equally effective opportunities and benefits, individuals with disabilities may need reasonable modifications to policies and procedures. Autauga County Rural Transportation will adhere to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable modifications, as necessary, to afford equal access to programs for persons with disabilities. does not discriminate on the bas Autauga County Rural Transportation is of disability in admission to, participation in, or receipt of services and benefits under any transit program or activity. [Insert name of transit provider] will take appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of Autauga County Rural Transportation, or be subject to discrimination by Autauga County Rural Transportation.

## **3. Reasonable Modifications**

A reasonable modification is a change or exception to a policy, practice, or procedure that allows disabled individuals to have equal access to programs, services, and activities. Autauga County Rural Transportation will make reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures when necessary to ensure access to transit services for qualified individuals with disabilities, unless:

- Making the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the public transportation service.

- Making the accommodation would create a direct threat to the health or safety of other passengers.
- The individual with a disability is able to fully use Autauga County Rural Transportation’s service without the accommodation being made.

For the purposes of this section, the term reasonable accommodation shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the term “reasonable modifications” as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II regulations at 28 CFR 35.130(b)(7), and not as it is defined or interpreted for the purposes of employment discrimination under Title I of the ADA (42 U.S.C. 12111–12112) and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 1630.

#### **4. Eligibility Criteria**

An individual is eligible to be considered to receive a reasonable modification if that individual has: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such impairment; or been regarded as having such impairment.

#### **5. Requests for Reasonable Modifications**

Autauga County Rural Transportation shall make information about how to contact [Insert name of transit provider] to make requests for reasonable modifications readily available to the public through its website and rider policy guidelines. Autauga County Rural Transportation shall follow these procedures in taking requests:

- a. Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service.
- b. Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term “reasonable modification” when making a request. Personnel at Autauga County Rural Transportation will determine if the request represents a reasonable modification and proceed in accommodating the request accordingly.
- c. Whenever feasible, Autauga County Rural Transportation requests that individuals make such requests for modifications before Autauga County Rural Transportation is expected to provide the modified service.
- d. Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance (*e.g.*, because of a condition or barrier at the destination of a paratransit, demand response, or fixed route trip of which the individual with a disability was unaware until arriving), operating personnel shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Operating personnel may

consult with Autauga County Rural Transportation 's management before making a determination to grant or deny the request.

Requests for accommodation may be made either orally or in writing. The reasonable accommodation process begins as soon as the request for accommodation is made.

The request can be submitted in any written format. Alternative means of filing a request, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

## **6. Interactive Process**

When a request for accommodation is made, Autauga County Rural Transportation and the individual requesting an accommodation must engage in a good faith interactive process to determine what, if any accommodation shall be provided. The individual and the Autauga County Rural Transportation must communicate with each other about the request, the process for determining whether an accommodation will be provided, and the potential accommodations. Communication is a priority throughout the entire process.

## **7. Time Frame for Processing Requests and Providing Reasonable Modification**

[Insert name of transit provider] will process requests for reasonable accommodation and then provide accommodations, where appropriate, in as short a time frame as reasonably possible. Autauga County Rural Transportation recognizes, however, that the time necessary to process a request will depend on the nature of the accommodation(s) requested and whether it is necessary to obtain supporting information.

## **8. Granting a Reasonable Modification Request**

As soon as Autauga County Rural Transportation determines that a reasonable accommodation will be provided, that decision shall be immediately communicated to the individual. This notice must be in writing in order to maintain the required information for reporting purposes. Upon request, alternative means of response will be provided.

In choosing among alternatives for meeting nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements with respect to new, altered, or existing facilities, or designated or specified transportation services, Autauga County Rural Transportation shall give priority to those methods that offer services, programs, and activities to qualified individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

## **9. Denying a Reasonable Modification Request**

As soon as Autauga County Rural Transportation determines that a request for reasonable accommodation will be denied, Autauga County Rural Transportation will communicate the basis for the decision in writing to the individual requesting the modification. The explanation for the denial will clearly state:

- a. the specific reasons for the denial;
- b. any alternative accommodation that may create the same access to transit services as requested by the individual; and
- c. the opportunity to file a complaint relative to the Autauga County Rural Transportation's decision on the request.

## **10. Complaint Process**

Autauga County Rural Transportation has a process for investigating and tracking complaints from qualified individuals. These procedures shall be posted on the Autauga County Rural Transportation's website and will be provided to any individual where the Autauga County Rural Transportation has denied a request for accommodation. The process and any forms necessary to file a complaint are readily available from the web. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews, phone calls, or taped requests, will be made available for persons with disabilities if unable to communicate their request in writing or upon request.

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against in obtaining a reasonable modification may file a complaint by completing and submitting a Autauga County Rural Transportation's Reasonable Modification Complaint Form. Autauga County Rural Transportation investigates complaints received no more than 30 days after receipt. Autauga County Rural Transportation will process complaints that are complete. Once the complaint is received, the complainant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. If more information is needed to resolve the complaint, Autauga County Rural Transportation may contact the complainant. The complainant has 30 business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to Autauga County Rural Transportation.

If Autauga County Rural Transportation is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information within 30 business days, the Autauga County Rural Transportation may administratively close the complaint. In addition, a complaint may be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue their case.

After Autauga County Rural Transportation investigates the complaint, a decision will be rendered in writing to the complainant. Autauga County Rural Transportation will issue either a Letter of Closure or Letter of Finding.

- a. *Letter of Finding* – This letter will summarize the complaint, any interviews conducted regarding the complaint, and explain what actions will be taken by Autauga County Rural Transportation to address the complaint.
- b. *Letter of Closure* – This letter will explain why Autauga County Rural Transportation has determined that the complaint does not merit accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and that the complaint will be closed.

If the complainant disagrees with the decision of Autauga County Rural Transportation, an opportunity to appeal the decision may be pursued provided the complainant files notice of appeal within 21 days of the initial decision of Autauga County Rural Transportation.

In the event of appeal, the complainant will be granted all due process, including the ability to be present additional evidence, present the case in person during an appeal hearing, and to be represented by counsel.

#### **11. Designated Employee**

Autauga County Rural Transportation shall designate one official within the organization responsible for processing reasonable modification requests and handling complaints. This individual is:

Rose Thomas-Williams, Director  
Autauga County Rural Transportation  
218 North Court St. Rm. 104  
Prattville, AL, 36067  
334-358-6730  
Rose.thomas@autauga.com

#### **12. Record Retention**

Autauga County Rural Transportation will maintain all records related to reasonable modification requests and denials for at least three (3) years.

### **Request for Reasonable Modifications**

**Policy:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and directives from the Federal Transit Administration, Autauga County Transit will make every effort, to the

maximum extent feasible, to ensure that a person with a disability has access to, and benefits from, its services. Autauga County Transit will make reasonable modifications to its policies, programs, and procedures applicable to its transportation services when necessary to avoid discrimination and ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.

Reasonable modifications do have limitations and are not intended to:

- Cause a direct threat to the health and safety of others
- Create undue financial and administrative burdens
- Constitute a fundamental alteration to a service
- Not necessary to provide equal access to an Sound Transit service

Considerations when making a reasonable modification request:

- Individuals requesting modifications shall describe what they need in order to use the service.
- Individuals requesting modifications are not required to use the term “reasonable modification” when making a request.
- Whenever feasible, requests for modifications shall be made and determined in advance, before the transportation provider is expected to provide the modified service, for example, during the paratransit eligibility process, through customer service inquiries, or through the entity's complaint process.
- Where a request for modification cannot practicably be made and determined in advance (e.g., because of a condition or barrier at the destination of a paratransit or fixed route trip of which the individual with a disability was unaware until arriving), operating personnel of the entity shall make a determination of whether the modification should be provided at the time of the request. Operating personnel may consult with the entity's management before making a determination to grant or deny the request.

The request must identify the modification needed in order to use the service. Whenever feasible, please make the request in advance, before the modification is needed to access the service.

Within the scope of the ADA and reasonable modification, if Autauga County Transit denies a request it will make every effort, to the maximum extent feasible, to ensure that a person with a disability has access to, and benefits from, its services.

**Procedure:** To request reasonable modifications based on a disability please use the [Reasonable Modification Request Form](#), or contact Autauga County Transit's ADA Coordinator for assistance.

Contact Person Name  
Accessibility Coordinator  
Agency's Name  
Agency Telephone Number

TTY Relay \_\_\_\_\_ (if available)  
website

You may be asked to complete a request form. Autauga County Transit will review the request in accordance with its reasonable modification plan. Autauga County Transit strives to respond, in writing, to each request within 15 calendar days.

**All the information involved with this process will be kept confidential.**

## ADA Reasonable Modification Request Form

Use this form to request a modification to current Autauga County Transit policies or procedures. Be specific and provide as much detailed information as possible. This will allow us to effectively process and evaluate your request. Before filling out this form please review Sound Transit's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Request for Reasonable Modifications Procedures.

Please include the following items in your request:

- Based on a disability, why is the modification necessary?
- Provide a description of your limitation(s) and how it is affected by Autauga County Transit's policies/procedures.

Name:

Date:

Phone#:

Email address:

Mailing Address:

Best way to contact you:

Modification Request:

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Please send to:

Rose Thomas-Williams

Director

Autauga County Rural Transportation

(334) 358-6730

Website:

**All the information involved with this process will be**

## **Accommodation of Mobility Devices**

Consistent with Department of Transportation regulations, Autauga County Transit will transport a mobility device with three or more wheels and its user so long as the lift can safely accommodate the size and weight of the mobility device and its user and there is space for the mobility device on the vehicle.

## **ADA Grievance Procedure**

Autauga County Rural Transportation  
Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Autauga County Transit. Sound Transit's personnel policies govern employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Rose Thomas-Williams  
Director  
Autauga County Rural Transportation  
218 North Court Street Rm.104  
Prattville, AL 36067  
(334) 358-6730

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the Director or his/her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the Director or his/her designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format accessible to the complainant, such as large print or Braille. The response will explain the position of the Agency and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the Director or his/her designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Administrator or his/her designee. Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Administrator or his designee will meet with the complainant to



discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Administrator/Director or his/her designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by Director or his/her designee, appeals to the Administrator or his/her designee, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the Agency for at least three years.

Formal complaints should be submitted by filling out the form online at <https://www.surveymoz.com/s3/1134015/ADA-Grivance-Form>, or by following the instruction above.