



DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE GUIDE

Hernando County's Public Transportation System, TheBus, features a Demand Response Service as a complementary Americans with Disability Act (ADA) service to its transit system. The service assists riders whose origins and destinations are within 3/4 mile of the fixed-route system, but are unable to access the fixed-route transit service because of a documented disability qualified under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This guide was developed to help users understand the processes required to use the service and to ensure quality service for all passengers with disabilities.

Qualification

In order to utilize TheBus demand response transportation service, users must be ADA eligible. Once the application is submitted to the Transit Operator, it will be evaluated to determine eligibility for demand response services.

Application Process

- There are two ways to obtain an application to utilize TheBus demand response:
 1. Visit TheBus website at www.hernandobus.com and download a printable version of the application, or
 2. Contact TheBus at (352) 754-4890 to request an application be sent via mail or email.
- All applications will be reviewed in accordance with Federal regulations (49 CFR 37). When the applicant completes all necessary application requirements, the application will be processed within twenty-one (21) calendar days of submittal. If an application is not processed within that time, on the 22nd day the applicant will be allowed to use the service until such time as the application is denied.
- Once a completed application is submitted to TheBus, an interview will be scheduled to review your application.
- When applicants are determined eligible for the demand response services, TheBus will send applicants a written notification of ADA eligibility, along with a user ADA Eligibility Photo Identification Card and an information packet.
- Eligibility will be recertified every three (3) years.

- If applicants are deemed not eligible, a written notice with the reason for the determination will be sent.
- Appeals. All ineligible applicants have sixty (60) days to appeal that decision. After filing an appeal, the Transit Operator will, within 30 days, send a written notification of the appeal determination. All appeals will be heard by a reviewer who did not make the original decision. If a decision is not made within 21 days of completing the appeals process, transportation is provided until and unless a decision to deny the appeal is issued.

Utilizing Demand Response

1) Scheduling a Trip

To schedule a trip, call (352) 754-4890 Monday thru Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Trip reservations must be made on a next day basis on all days prior to days of service, and can be made up to 14 days in advance of the trip. Reservations for next-day service will be taken during administrative office hours. On days prior to a service day on which the administrative offices are not open (e.g., a Sunday prior to a Monday service day or a holiday prior to a service day), riders may use the answering machine to leave a message. When calling to schedule a trip, please have the following information available:

1. Name
2. The exact address where you want to be picked-up. Origins and destinations must be within 3/4 mile on either side of the fixed-route system to qualify.
3. What time you would like to be at your destination (be specific if you are going to an appointment) and the time that you are requesting to be picked up for your return trip. (Please note that if you intend to use the service for a round trip, **you must schedule a return trip.**) Although there is a one hour window before your pick-up time, we will make every effort to pick you up as close as possible to the time requested.
4. The exact address of where you are going
5. Whether you intend to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). A PCA is someone to assist you with your personal needs.

We encourage riders to call during business hours when possible but in the event of emergency, rider may call after hours and leave a detailed message on the answering machine about their trip. Same day emergency service is not provided.

Vehicles will only stop at predetermined origins and destination points. Bus operators will not make additional stops unless it is an emergency.

Reasonable modification/accommodation will be provided upon request, please fill out the Rider Request for Reasonable Accommodation/Modification Form.

Multiple appointments in one day can only be scheduled in two-hour intervals including ride time. For example, if you are dropped off at 11:00 AM at the grocery store, the earliest time that you can arrange your return trip is 1:00 PM.

Trips to Pasco County can be arranged through TheBus. TheBus will coordinate the trip with PCPT. Riders must transfer to the other agency vehicle at the transfer point (Emerald Beach S. Blvd.). The applicable fare for each agency must be paid upon boarding. If a trip needs to be cancelled for any reason, call (352) 754-4890 and leave a detailed message. Destinations may not be changed on the day of the trip. Please review the “Late Cancellation/No-Show” section for further information.

2) **Riding TheBus Demand Response**

Riders should be prepared and waiting for the vehicle to arrive. The bus operator is only allowed to wait for 5 minutes.

- Riders must present their ADA Eligibility Photo Identification Card to the bus operator upon boarding.
- The bus operator will collect the fare upon boarding. All riders must have exact change since drivers do not carry change.
- Each trip should be paid when boarding.
- Pre-paid one-way tickets up to \$20 can be purchased from the bus operator when boarding the vehicle. Otherwise, prepaid tickets must be purchased from the Transit Operator.
- Visitors to Hernando County who are unable to use the fixed route service because of a disability are eligible to use the demand response service for up to 21 days in a 365 day period. Visitors must present documentation from another transit agency that they are eligible for ADA services. If the visitor do not have ADA certification, the visitor is required to provide proof of visitor status, proof of their disability if it is not apparent and certify that they are unable to use the fixed route service.
- ADA eligible riders may bring one Personal Care Attendant (PCA). A fare will not be charged for a Personal Care Attendant. A PCA is defined as someone designated or employed specifically to help the ADA eligible individual meet their personal needs.
- A companion may accompany the ADA eligible individual if requested at the time of reservation and space is available. Companions pay the same fare as the ADA-eligible rider.
- All individuals traveling with an ADA eligible rider must travel to the same destination as the ADA eligible rider.
- Service animals are welcome on all Hernando County Transit vehicles per Florida Statute 413.08. All other uncrated animals are prohibited.

TheBus has a set of rules and regulations specified as the “Rider Code of Conduct” ([Please see Policy MT-003](#)). Whether you ride the fixed-route or the demand response vehicles, all riders must adhere to the code of conduct.

3) **Bus Operator Assistance**

The bus operator will:

- Attempt to notify passengers of arrival by sounding the vehicle’s horn, ringing the rider’s doorbell, or knocking on the front door.
- Assist passengers in boarding and exiting the vehicle.

- Deliver the passenger to the curb of their destination or nearest entranceway if additional assistance is required.
- Assist with the securement of wheelchair and mobility devices.

Minimal assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs.
- Assisting passengers up and/or down ramps.
- Assistance in carrying personal belongings or purchases.
- Providing personal care for individuals.

Each passenger is responsible for their belongings, and all carry-on items are limited to what the passenger can physically carry aboard without making additional trips. Carry-on items must be properly stored underneath the seat or on the lap of the rider.

For your safety items cannot be stored in the aisles or in designated wheelchair spaces of the vehicles.

4) Late Cancellation/No Show Policy

The Demand Response Program acknowledges that occasionally situations will arise that result in a passenger needing to cancel or miss a scheduled trip. However, frequent and excessive late cancellation and/or no-show of scheduled trips negatively affect the efficiency of the service and the cost of providing the service. Our goal is to educate the passengers on this policy in order to reduce the incidences of late cancellations and/or no-shows.

A late cancellation is when users do not provide sufficient time for the transit system to adjust scheduling to not be affected by the cancellation. TheBus considers a late cancellation as anything less than one (1) hour before the originally scheduled trip. To cancel a trip, the passenger must call (352) 754-4890.

A no-show of a scheduled trip is when a passenger is not at the designated pick up location at the scheduled time of the trip or refuses the trip. TheBus will take every step possible to ensure that a rider is an actual no-show before canceling the trip. Bus operator will wait up to five (5) minutes before determining the rider is a no-show.

No-shows that are out of the rider's control will not count against rider. TheBus will enter the late cancellation/no show into the rider's file and will keep track of the offenses.

5) Sanctions and Appeals

Listed below are the sanctions for service suspension if a rider consistently violates the late cancellations/no show policy. The Demand Response Program will track scheduled trips, no shows, and late cancellations by rider. Each leg of the trip will be treated separately. All riders

will be issued a written notification after the first offense, and notifications will include a list of the late canceled or no-show of scheduled trips. The Demand Response Program will notify riders which meet **both** of the following criteria within a 30-day period:

1. No shows/late cancellations representing 10% or more of scheduled trips, and
2. The rider has three (3) or more no-shows

When a rider violates the no show/late cancellation policy, the following progressive action is taken:

1. First and second offense – the rider will receive a verbal warning. Verbal warnings given to rider will be documented in the rider’s file.
2. Third offense– the rider will receive a 1-day suspension
4. Fourth offense – the rider will receive a 3-day suspension
5. Additional violations will result in a 7-day suspension

All riders have the right to appeal any written notification they receive regarding their offense. Riders will be allowed to continue to use the service until their appeal is decided. All riders will receive a written notification of their appeal decision. All appeals must be reported to the General Manager at (352) 754-4890 or by mail to 700 Aeriform Drive, Brooksville, FL 34601.

Contact Information

Please contact TheBus at (352) 754-4890 or (352) 754-4444. If this guide or any service document needs to be accessible in a format required by a rider to use the system, please contact TheBus for assistance.