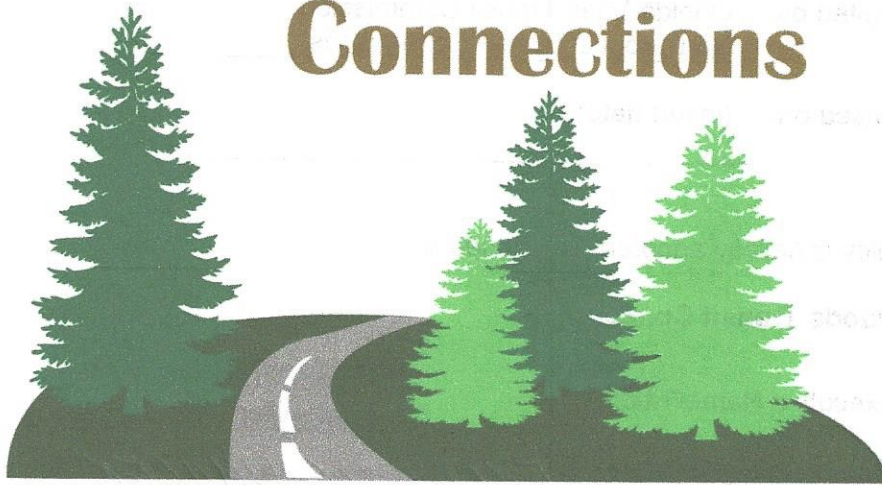


Northwoods Transit Connections



**ONEIDA-VILAS
TRANSIT COMMISSION**

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Paratransit Plan

Northwoods Transit Connections ADA Paratransit Plan

Adopted on: May 13, 2016

Adopted by: Oneida-Vilas Transit Commission
Northwoods Transit Connections

Revised on: (insert date)

This policy is hereby adopted and signed by:

Northwoods Transit Connections

Executive Name/Title: Erv Teichmiller - Chair

Executive Signature: 

Contact Information

Northwoods Transit Connections (NTC)

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Policy Updates – Activity Log

Date	Activity (Review/Update/Addendum/ Adoption/Distribution)	Person Responsible	Remarks
6/3/16	Update NO-Show policy	Oneida-Vilas Transit Commission Board of Directors	approved at 6/3/16 Board meeting

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Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and 2008

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities. The stated national goals of the ADA are to guarantee that persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity, a chance to fully participate in society, ability to live independently and be economically self-sufficient.

Section 223 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that public entities that operate non-commuter fixed-route transportation service also provide complementary paratransit service for individuals unable to use the fixed route system. The regulations define minimum service characteristics that must be met for this service to be considered equivalent to the fixed-route service it is intended to complement. ADA complementary paratransit standards are provided for in 49 CFR Sec. 37.123 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

In general, the law prohibits public transit systems from denying individuals with disabilities the opportunity to use public transportation services, when they are available. It prohibits public entities from providing services that discriminate against persons with disabilities. The ADA requires the development of programs that will ensure the integration of all persons into the public transportation system, and thus all of the opportunities transportation makes possible. The goal is to ensure non-discriminatory, equitable, accessible and safe public transportation, enhancing the social and economic quality of life people with disabilities.

Specific actions must be taken by public transit agencies to avoid discrimination. For example, the law requires that:

1. All newly purchased or leased vehicles used in fixed-route service must be accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. Public agencies which provide fixed-route public transportation service also must offer similar complementary paratransit services to individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed-route system.
3. New facilities must be accessible.
4. Alterations to facilities must include features to make them accessible.

Services Provided by the Northwoods Transit Connections (NTC)

Northwoods Transit Connections is a public transit system providing fixed rate routes in Vilas County and on-demand for seniors in Oneida County and Vilas County. Every other Monday a free trip for seniors to the Oneida County Food Pantry. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Northwoods Transit Connections

NTC is proud to announce transportation available to the general public from locations in Eagle River for shopping on the following route:

TUESDAYS/THURSDAYS -- PICK UP LOCATIONS/TIMES:

12:00pm Pick-up 416 Mill Street (Mill Street Apartments)
 12:10pm Pick up 420 Michigan Street (The Willows Apartments)
 12:20pm Pick up 444 N. Main Street (James Pohlman Apartments)

DROP OFF LOCATIONS TUESDAY:

Pick n' Save Store/Walgreens

DROP OFF LOCATIONS THURSDAY:

Shopko/Trigs

Pick Ups from these stores will start at 1:45 pm

WEDNESDAYS/FRIDAYS -- PICK UP LOCATIONS/TIMES:

12:00pm Pick up 227 Jonathan Street (Apartments)
 12:10pm Pick-up 202 E. Pine Street (Pines Apartments)
 12:20pm Pick up 404 E. Pine Street (Pines Apartments)

DROP OFF LOCATIONS WEDNESDAY:

Pick n' Save Store/Walgreens

DROP OFF LOCATION FRIDAYS:

Shopko/Trigs

Pick Ups from these stores will start at 1:45 pm

A stop at the Post Office each day will be on way back from these locations.

NTC is proud to announce transportation available to the general public originating in Eagle River and traveling to Woodruff-Minocqua Area (on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays):

MONDAYS/WEDNESDAYS/FRIDAYS

9:00 a.m. Pick-up Eagle River Inn
 9:25 a.m. Pick-up Sunrise Apartments Building #2 (453 Sunrise Lane, St. Germain)
 9:30 a.m. Leave St. Germain
 9:50 a.m. Drop off at DaVita
 10:00 a.m. Drop off at Wal-Mart-Minocqua
 10:10 a.m. Drop off at Minocqua Post Office (Downtown)
 10:40 a.m. Pick-up Dianne's Home in the Northwoods-Eagle River
 10:45 a.m. Leave Eagle River
 11:15 a.m. Drop off at DaVita
 11:30 a.m. Pick-up at Wal-Mart-Minocqua
 11:40 a.m. Pick-up at Minocqua Post Office (Downtown)
 11:45 a.m. Leave Minocqua
 12:05 p.m. Drop off at Sunrise Apartments Building #2 (453 Sunrise Lane, St. Germain)
 12:10 p.m. Leave St. Germain
 12:30 p.m. Drop off at Eagle River Inn

- No need to call to reserve, just be at the pick-up points at the scheduled times for a ride to the specified locations.
- Drivers are only allowed to wait 5 minutes or less for any passenger. Please be ready.
- Passengers must be prepared to pay the driver upon entry to vehicle (exact change appreciated, or purchase a multi-ride card).
- Each stop is considered a one-way fare; passengers should plan to pay a fare for every one-way trip (stop).

Northwoods Transit Connections

NTC is proud to announce transportation available to the general public from Phelps to Land O'Lakes and Eagle River.

FIRST/THIRD WEDNESDAYS OF MONTH -- PICK UP LOCATIONS/TIMES:

7:30am Pick-up 4390 Hackley Circle Apartments
 7:35 am Leave Phelps
 8:00am Food Pantry-Land O'Lakes
 Grocery Store-Land O'Lakes
 10:30 am Arrive Back to Phelps

SECOND/FOURTH WEDNESDAYS OF MONTH -- PICK UP LOCATIONS/TIMES:

1:30pm Pick-up 4390 Hackley Circle Apartments
 1:30pm Leave Phelps
 2:00 pm Arrive in Eagle River (See locations below)
 4:30 pm Leave Eagle River

DROP OFF LOCATIONS WEEK 2:

15-20 Minutes Bank (which bank?)
 45-60 Minutes Trigs/Pharmacy
 Specials)
 20-25 Minutes The Rock
 20-25 Minutes Family Dollar
 20-25 Minutes General Dollar
 15-20 Minutes Pick n' Save Store/(Pick Up Specials)

DROP OFF LOCATIONS WEEK 4:

15-20 Minutes Bank
 15-20 Minutes Trigs Pharmacy/(Pick up
 20-25 Minutes Ace Hardware
 20-25 Minutes Wall Street Pharmacy/Walgreens
 45-60 Minutes Pick n' Save Store
 20-25 Minutes Shopko

- No need to call to reserve, just be at the pick-up points at the scheduled times for a ride to the specified locations.
- Whatever you purchase, you will need to carry and be responsible for.
- Passengers must be prepared to pay the driver upon entry to vehicle (exact change appreciated)
- Drivers are only allowed to wait 5 minutes or less for any passenger. Please be ready.

Rules for ADA Eligibility for Complementary Paratransit Services

ADA complementary paratransit service must be provided to all passengers described as being ADA eligible under 49 CFR Sec. 37.123. AADA eligibility includes the following:

1. Any individual with a disability who is unable, as a result of physical or mental impairment (including a visual impairment), and without the assistance of another individual (except the operator of a lift or other boarding assistance device), to board, ride or disembark from an accessible vehicle in the fixed-route system. Included in this category are individuals with mental or visual impairments who cannot navigate the fixed-route system.
2. Persons who cannot use vehicles without lifts or accommodations. These persons are eligible for paratransit service if accessible fixed-route vehicles are not available on the bus routes in which they need to travel, when they need to travel during operations hours of **Northwoods Transit Connections'** fixed-routes. All **Northwoods Transit Connections Buses** are ADA accessible.
3. Persons with specific impairment related conditions that cannot travel to a board location or from a disembarking location to their final destination. The condition must prevent the person from using the fixed-route system. Condition must prevent the person from using the fixed-route system. Conditions that make getting to the fixed-route bus stop "more difficult" do not grant eligibility. Second, architectural barriers (such as no curb cuts) are not under the control of **Northwoods Transit Connections**, and environmental barriers (such as distance, terrain, and weather) do not, when considered alone, confer eligibility. If, however, travel to or from a boarding location is

impossible when these factors are combined with the person's specific impairment-related condition, conditional paratransit service will be provided to eligible passengers.

Eligibility Certification Process

Northwoods Transit Connections utilizes self-certification at this time. **Northwoods Transit Connections** may in the future require additional medical verification in its certification process. Applications for **Northwoods Transit Connections** ADA eligibility for complementary paratransit service are available at the **Northwoods Transit Connections'** office, 1831 N. Stevens St., Rhineland, WI 54501 or a request for an application to be mailed can be made by calling the **Northwoods Transit Connections'** office at 715 420-0585.

An application (see appendix A) must be completed before you are allowed to use the **Northwoods Transit Connections'** complementary ADA paratransit service. The Applicant's Questionnaire must be filled out by the applicant or someone on the applicant's behalf. **Northwoods Transit Connections** uses this information to determine eligibility for using the ADA complementary service.

Once the completed application is received, **Northwoods Transit Connections** will notify the applicant within twenty-one (21) days of his/her eligibility status. If a determination has not been made within 21 days of receiving the completed application, the applicant will be treated as eligible and will be provided service until **Northwoods Transit Connections** determines their eligibility. The applicant will receive a letter verifying whether they are eligible for service or not, and if so, what type of eligibility, and for how long. If the eligibility is limited or denied, **Northwoods Transit Connections** will state specifically the reason for the limitation or denial. For visually impaired customer, a phone call will be made in addition to the letter.

Types of Eligibility

There will be three (3) types of eligibility: Temporary Eligibility, Conditional Eligibility, and Full Eligibility. There can also be Temporary Conditional Eligibility. Temporary Eligibility will expire on a specified date determined by **Northwoods Transit Connections** staff based on the application information. Full eligibility is eternal, but will be reviewed annually. A Conditional Eligibility, for example, may allow individuals to take complementary ADA trips to certain destinations due to inaccessible infrastructure, where other destinations can be accessed successfully by the individual using the fixed-route system. Certain weather conditions like snow or high temperatures may also determine criteria for Conditional Eligibility.

Eligibility Expiration/Reapplication

Northwoods Transit Connections can request any or all customers to reapply at any time based on health conditions or after legal or policy changes, among other reasons, but must give a 90-day minimum notice of expiration in writing. These requests cannot be arbitrary or capricious, discriminatory, or unreasonably frequent.

Eligibility Determination Process

Eligibility will be determined by trained **Northwoods Transit Connections** staff and will be based on ADA eligibility standards described in 49 CFR 37.123 and 49 CFR 37.125. The Transit Manager will review applications to ensure that due process has been observed. The applicant will receive a letter describing their eligibility. If eligibility is denied or limited, the letter will describe why they were denied or provided limited service, and how they can appeal the decision. The letter will be sent in the format requested in the application.

Appeals Process for ADA Eligibility

If the applicant disagrees with the determination, he/she may appeal the decision. The appeals process will be carefully explained to all applicants who are affected or granted limited eligibility. The following steps will be used to appeal the eligibility determination:

- The applicant will have sixty (60) days to file an appeal with the Transit Manager, which can be mailed, emailed or presented in person to **Northwoods Transit Connections** 1831 N. Stevens St., P.O. Box 853 Rhinelander, WI 54501.
- An appeals committee consisting of the Transit Manager, a representative from the Oneida County Department on Aging and a representative from the Vilas County Commission on Aging will investigate all eligibility appeals.
 - The Transit Manager may collect additional information as part of the review. The applicant will have the opportunity to be heard in person or may submit all of his/her arguments in writing or an accessible format.
 - The appeals committee will have fourteen (14) days from the date of the appeal to render a decision.
 - After fourteen (14) days, the applicant will be presumed eligible until a decision has been reached. The applicant will be notified by letter, and other methods requested.
- If a customer appeal is denied and the applicant believes the ADA paratransit eligibility process was unfair, the applicant can file a complaint with the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C. 20590 (866)377-8643 (Voice) (800) 877-8339 (TTY).

ADA Eligible Visitor Policy

Visitors who are ADA eligible with another transit system may use **Northwoods Transit Connections'** busses. Visitors shall provide **Northwoods Transit Connections** with documentation that (1) they are not residents of Oneida and Vilas County, and (2) they are paratransit eligible elsewhere. If they cannot show **Northwoods Transit Connections** staff they are eligible elsewhere, but can show sufficiently they are a visitor and are disabled, they may use **Northwoods Transit Connections'** busses for up to 21 different days for one (1) year. If the visitor needs further service, he/she must apply for eligibility.

Meeting the Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Under the **Northwoods Transit Connections'** Paratransit Service Plan, the level of service provided to persons determined to be ADA eligible is similar to **Northwoods Transit Connections'** fixed-route bus service. Six service criteria are included in the regulations. The following is a description of how **Northwoods Transit Connections'** paratransit service meets or exceeds the serviced criteria.

Service Area:

ADA complementary paratransit service is centered on each fixed-route and extending $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to either side of the fixed-route during evening and weekend service.

Response Time:

As stated in the regulations, pick up times will be negotiated with ADA eligible passengers to make scheduling more efficient. As a shared-ride service, **Northwoods Transit Connections** is allowed to negotiate within a one-hour window on either side of the requested pick up time. Any negotiation of time will be discussed with the passenger prior to pick up. The vehicle can arrive up to fifteen (15) minutes before or after the agreed upon time.

Fare Structure:

Fares charged for an ADA eligible complementary service trip to ADA eligible users will be the same amount of the base cash fare paid by passengers on the **Northwoods Transit Connections'** fixed route system. The 20156 fare for a one-way complementary paratransit trip is currently \$1.00. Personal Care Attendants (PCA) traveling with the ADA eligible passengers will not be charged, as defined in the regulations.

Trip Purposes:

There are no priorities for trip purpose.

Hours and Days of Service:

ADA complementary paratransit service shall be offered during the same days and hours that **Northwoods Transit Connections'** offers fixed-route service. The hours of service are Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Hours and Days of Reservation Requests:

24-hour in advance telephone reservation requests are accepted Monday – Friday between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. Reservations may be made from one (1) week before the trip.

Capacity Constraints

There are no capacity constraints at this time. **Northwoods Transit Connections** has strict service standards that are adhered to. **Northwoods Transit Connections** strives to accept every trip request.

Northwoods Transit Connections does not limit the number of trips an eligible passenger can make.

To ensure there are no capacity constraints, Northwoods Transit Connections will maintain a *Trip Denial Log*.



Personal Care Attendant Policy

Personal Care Attendants (PCA) will be permitted to accompany ADA eligible riders on ADA eligible trips at no charge. **Northwoods Transit Connections** will require that passengers state the need for a PCA when they scheduled their trip. **Northwoods Transit Connections** does not provide PCA's.

Origin-to-destination Assistance Policy

It is the policy of **Northwoods Transit Connections** to provide paratransit services within the Oneida and Vilas Counties. Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible buses. To ensure timely service, **Northwoods Transit Connections'** paratransit services are considered curb-to curb. Operators are trained to provide minimal service only.

Drivers will help to and from the door if Personal Care Attendant, friend, family member, or companion have been asked but are not available, and such special assistance has been requested the day before the trip or earlier.

Shopping Policy

To ensure timely service, passengers are encouraged only to bring what they can carry on their own or with the assistance of a PCA.

Pick-up Policy

Northwoods Transit Connections has a 30-minute pick-up window which allows the bus to arrive 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. Customers must board within 5 minutes of the vehicle that arrive within the 30-minute window. Drivers can leave after waiting 5 minutes if the customer does not appear.

- Customers will be charged with a "No Show" if they do not board the bus within 5 minutes after it arrives. If the driver has not left after 5 minutes, the customer will still be charged with a "No Show".
- If the bus will be more than 15 minutes late for a scheduled pick up time, **Northwoods Transit Connections** will make every effort to let the customer know.

- If the bus is 20 minutes later than the scheduled pick-up time, then the bus trip is free.

Cancellation Policy

To cancel reservations, passengers should notify dispatch as soon as possible, but at least one (1) hour before their scheduled transport time. Canceling within one (1) hour of the schedule time will result in a "No Show".

The customer may be considered a "No Show": if:

- No Show – customer does not show up for a scheduled ride
- Late Boarding-Boards more than 5 minutes after the bus arrives (bus can leave after 5 minutes)
- Not Riding-Chooses not to ride once the bus arrives
- Late cancellation- Cancels the ride within 1 hour of scheduled time

No Shows will not be imposed for circumstances beyond the customer's control.

If the customer does not show up for a trip, any subsequent trips scheduled for the same day will be cancelled. **Northwoods Transit Connections** will notify the customer of the No Show within 24 hours. This can be done verbally in person, by phone, email, etc. as long as there is an acknowledgement from the customer of the notification.

Northwoods Transit Connections reserves the right to suspend from services any ADA qualified person, who establishes a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips without calling to cancel their scheduled trip. **Northwoods Transit Connections** will work with qualified persons to reduce their no shows prior to suspending service. **Northwoods Transit Connections** will also review all no shows to ensure the process was followed properly to accurately record the number of occurrences.

No shows that exceed 20% per month may result in service suspension. The first occurrence of 20% or more per month may result in a 1-week service suspension. The second occurrence within a 3-month timeframe may result in a 2-week suspension of service. The third occurrence within a 6-month timeframe may result in a 3-week suspension. The fourth occurrence in a 6-month timeframe may result in a 4-week suspension. All suspension decisions will be the responsibility of the Transit Director and subject to appeal.

No Show Appeals

A **Northwoods Transit Connections'** customer may appeal a No Show. The appeal must be in writing and provided to the Transit Manager within ten (10) days of the notification. Appeals may be initiated by the customer or by another person on the customer's behalf and document

the specific reason that the incident was beyond the customer's control or other reasons the appeal should be granted. The appeal will be determined by the Transit Manager within fourteen (14) days, or the No Show will be removed.

Suspension Appeals

The customer may appeal suspensions within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the suspension letter. Appeals may be initiated by the customer or by another person on the customer's behalf and received by mail or presented in person to the Transit Manager. The appeal must document the specific reason that the incident was beyond the customer's control or other reason the appeal should be granted.

For suspensions, the same Appeals Committee as described in the "Appeals Process for ADA Eligibility: section above will be used. The customer will have the opportunity to be heard in person or may submit all his/her arguments in writing or an accessible format. The Committee will issue a response in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the receipt of the appeal. During the appeals process, the customer's eligibility will remain until the outcome of the appeal.

Complaint Process

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against on the basis of a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service by **Northwoods Transit Connections** may file a complaint by completing and submitting the **Northwoods Transit Connections' Complaint/Suggestion/Comment Form**. The **Northwoods Transit Connections** investigates complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident.

Once the complaint is received, SPT will review it to determine if **Northwoods Transit Connections** has jurisdiction to address the complaint. The complainant will receive an acknowledgement letter informing her/him whether the complaint will be investigated by our office.

ADA Comment/Complaint Form

Northwoods Transit Connections is committed to providing you with safe and reliable transportation services and we want your feedback. Please use this form for suggestions, compliments, and complaints.

Please submit this form in person at the address below or electronically at northwoodstransitconnections@gmail.com.

Northwoods Transit Connections

1831 N. Stevens Street

P.O. Box 853

Rhineland, WI 54501

You may also call us at 715-420-0585. Please make sure to provide us with your contact information in order to receive a response.

SECTION I: TYPE OF COMMENT (Choose One)*				
Compliment__	Suggestion__	Complaint__	Other: _____	ADA Related? Y / N
SECTION II: CONTACT INFORMATION				
Salutation [Mr./Mrs./Ms., etc.]: _____				
Name: _____				
Rider ID (if applicable): _____				
Street Address: _____				
City, State, Zip code: _____				
Phone: _____		Email: _____		
Accessible Format Requirements:	Large Print__	TDD/Relay__	Audio Recording__	Other _____
SECTION III: COMMENT DETAILS				
Transit Service (Choose One) [as applicable] [Bus/Subway/Paratransit]* _____				
Date of Occurrence: _____		Time of Occurrence: _____		
Name/ID of Employee(s) or Others Involved: _____				
Vehicle ID/Route Name or Number: _____				
Direction of Travel: _____				
Location of Incident: _____				
Mobility Aid Used (if any): _____				
If above information is unknown, please provide other descriptive information to help identify the employee: _____				
Description of Incident or Message [Text box on web form for narrative]:				
SECTION IV: FOLLOW-UP				
May we contact you if we need more details or information?		Yes	No	
What is the best way to reach you? (Choose One)*	Phone	Email	Mail	
If a phone call is preferred, what is the best day and time to reach you? _____				
SECTION V: DESIRED RESPONSE (Choose One)*				
- Email response - Telephone response - Response by U.S. Postal Mail				
