

All the news on Access-A-Ride

## Accessibility Options Across New York City Transit

Did you know that many paratransit customers use mass transit under certain circumstances, and at other times use Access-A-Ride (AAR)? New York City Transit is committed to ensuring accessibility system wide and has made great progress in modernizing our transit system across all modes – buses, subways and paratransit. If you haven't used the fixed route service (bus and subway) in a while, now would be a great time to give it a try.

### Did You Know?

- AAR customers (except those with temporary eligibility) can call AAR to request a zero-fare AAR MetroCard which provides 4 free trips daily to travel on the subway, local, limited and Select buses, Staten Island Railway (SIR) and Roosevelt Island Tram (RIT).
- As we transition AAR customers to OMNY, the MTA's contactless fare payment system, AAR customers in this program will be able to tap their [AAR OMNY ID](#) card for their free bus or subway trips.
- Using the fixed route service for some of your travel has no impact on your eligibility for paratransit service.

- There are more than 150 New York City Transit subway and Staten Island Railway stations that are accessible by elevator or ramp.
- NYCT has upgraded all local and Select buses from lifts to ramps for front door access. These buses have a low floor which can be kneeled to meet customers at the curb for more efficient boarding and alighting.

## **Accessible Travel by Bus**

AAR customers who wish to travel by bus can now do so more easily using our fully accessible bus system. All buses are fully wheelchair accessible using the front-door ramp (local and Select bus routes) or lift (for coach style buses on express routes). Newer local and Select buses also feature wider entryways and ramps with a bright yellow line down the center for easier navigation for a safe and efficient boarding and alighting experience. These buses also offer more flexible seating options in the wheelchair securement and priority seating areas using single flip-up seats. These flexible flip seats may be used by companions traveling with a customer in a wheelchair, or can provide a space for those traveling with equipment which needs to be stowed out of the aisle. Most NYCT buses also feature digital information screens which provide audio and visual information about routes, stops, and transfers. All buses are equipped with OMNY contactless payment systems allowing customers to pay using a credit or debit card, smartphone, wearable device or an OMNY card.



For additional tips when traveling on a local or Select bus service, go to <https://www.mta.info/accessibility/bus>

## **Convo Access Pilot Program**

At the MTA, accessibility means much more than ramps and elevators. The MTA has launched a new pilot program with Convo Communications, a mobile application for those who communicate with American Sign Language (ASL) to connect with instant and live interpreters on your smartphone. This pilot will go through at least November 2025, and is free for all customers at select locations across the MTA service region. These locations are at select Subway Customer Service Centers, select Metro North Railroad and Long Island Railroad stations, our Mobile Sales Units and at the 3 Stone Street Customer Service Center. To learn more about the pilot, please check out this webpage: <https://www.mta.info/accessibility/convo>

If you have any feedback on this pilot, please let MTA Accessibility know by emailing them at [accessibility@mtahq.org](mailto:accessibility@mtahq.org).

## **Accessible Travel by Subway**

Ongoing improvements to New York City Transit's subway system are making the subway a more reliable option for getting customers with disabilities or access needs to their destinations faster in a safe and efficient manner. AAR customers interested in traveling by subway for all or part of their trips have many accessible features available to help in navigating the system. There are now more than 150 stations accessible by elevators or ramps. For a full list of accessible stations, visit <https://www.mta.info/accessibility/stations>. All accessible subway stations are equipped with at least one AutoGate, which is available to customers who need access for mobility devices, a stroller, or a large item (such as a bike or a suitcase). Accessible subway stations include directional signs that have the International Symbol for Accessibility (ISA).

Accessible stations have accessible MetroCard and OMNY vending machines, boarding areas near the center of the platform for easier train boarding, and in some case accessible restrooms. Large print and tactile Braille signs on columns provide assistance with navigating stations. Audio and visual information systems include HelpPoint intercoms, countdown clocks and dynamic signage to assist customers who are hard of hearing or deaf.





AAR customers who wish to use the subway are encouraged to [check the status of elevators and escalators before your trip](#). We also encourage you to [sign up to receive email or text message alerts about elevator and escalator service changes](#). You can customize these alerts so you can get real-time information only about the stations you use, at the times you travel. To access an accessible subway stations map, visit <https://www.mta.info/maps>.

For additional tips when traveling in the subway, visit <https://www.mta.info/accessibility/subway>

## Your Voice Matters!

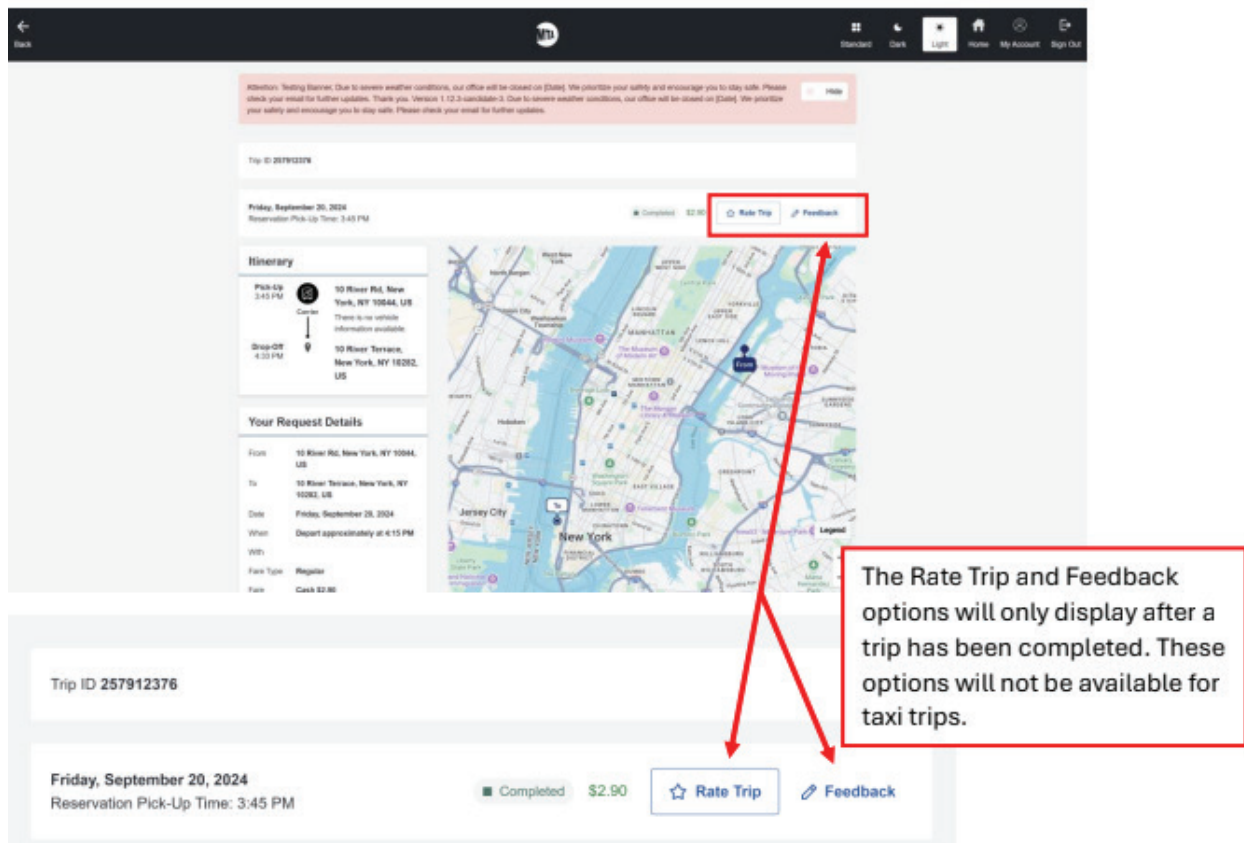
The MTA is seeking your input on which stations to prioritize for accessibility improvements over the next five years. The proposed 2025-2029 Capital Plan identified an initial 30 stations, and the MTA plans to make at least an additional 30 stations accessible, for a total of more than 60 stations. To participate in the survey, visit <https://www.mta.info/accessibility/select-stations>.

## Updates to the MY AAR App

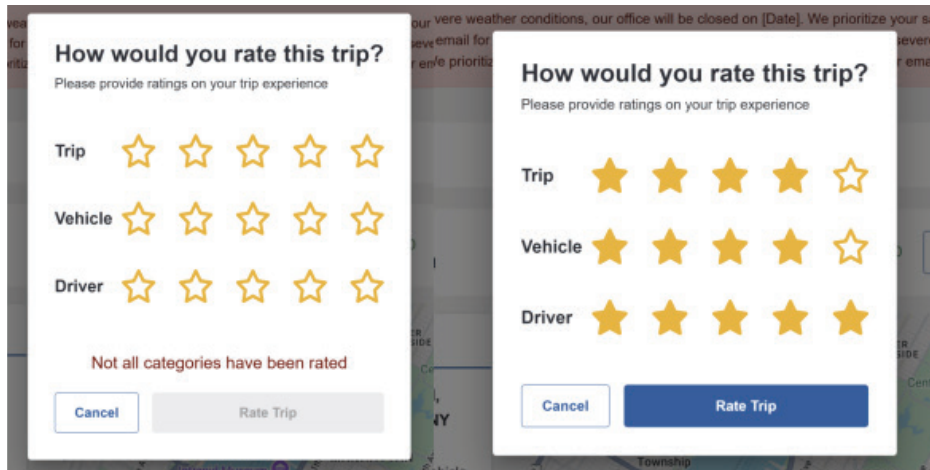
The feedback from our customers using the MY AAR app continues to be an important resource for the design team in their continued efforts to make the app user friendly. The recent enhancements, described below and found in our online [User Manual](#), illustrate the updates allowing users to provide a trip rating and “hide” or minimize the banner messaging.

### Provide Real-Time Feedback on Your Paratransit Trip

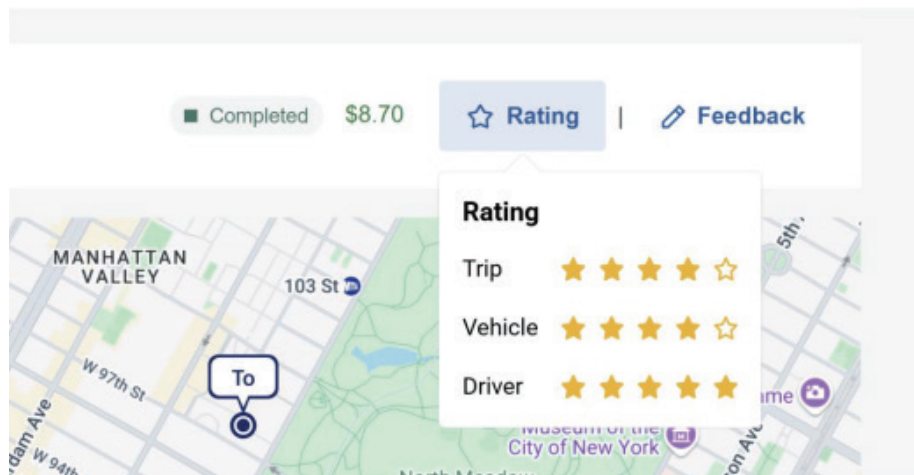
You can provide feedback on your completed paratransit trips through either ratings or a written feedback form. This feedback will help us identify and prioritize opportunities for growth. Alternatively, we can commend vendors and drivers that provide outstanding service. To submit trip feedback, navigate to the trip details page of a completed trip.



When you click the Rate Trip button a pop-up window will display that allows you to rate your driver, vehicle, and overall trip. Select the number of stars from 1-5 that you would rate your trip then click Rate Trip.



Once a trip has been rated, you can always hover over the Rating (or tap when using a tablet or mobile device) to see your submitted rating selections.



If you would like to submit more detailed feedback for your trip, simply hover over (or tap when using a tablet or mobile device) the Feedback button on the page and follow the pop up message to the MTA feedback page.

The image shows a screenshot of the MTA feedback form. At the top, there are two callout boxes. The left one, labeled 'Web Browser', shows a 'Feedback' button and a text box with the message: 'If you want to provide more detailed feedback about your trip please go here'. The right one, labeled 'Mobile App', shows a similar message with a 'Give Feedback' button. Below these, a larger callout box explains: 'Clicking on 'here' on the web browser or tapping 'Give Feedback' on the app will direct you to the MTA feedback page. Be sure to select Access-A-Ride (Paratransit) so your feedback can be sent to the right team.' The main form below has the heading 'Let us know how we're doing' and the text 'Use this form to share your feedback and questions. If you're reporting an emergency, dial 911.' The form fields include: Email, First Name, Last Name, a dropdown menu for 'Select an MTA service' (currently set to 'Access-A-Ride (Paratransit)'), and Subject. A blue 'Next' button is at the bottom.

## Ease of selecting a pickup or appointment time

Whether booking with a pick-up or an appointment time, you can now select a time from the drop-down in one-minute intervals instead of fifteen-minute intervals. This is especially helpful in providing improved compatibility with screen readers such as VoiceOver, NVDA and TalkBack. Customers will still have the ability to enter any trip time manually without the use of the drop down.



**Booking Requests**

**Paratransit Trip** | **Paratransit Subscription**

Round Trip |  One Way

**From\***

**To\***

**Your Trip** ⓘ

Depart / Pick-Up |  Arrive by / Appointment

Saturday, January 18, 2025

Approximately at | hh:mm aa | ⌵

**Your Return Trip** ⓘ

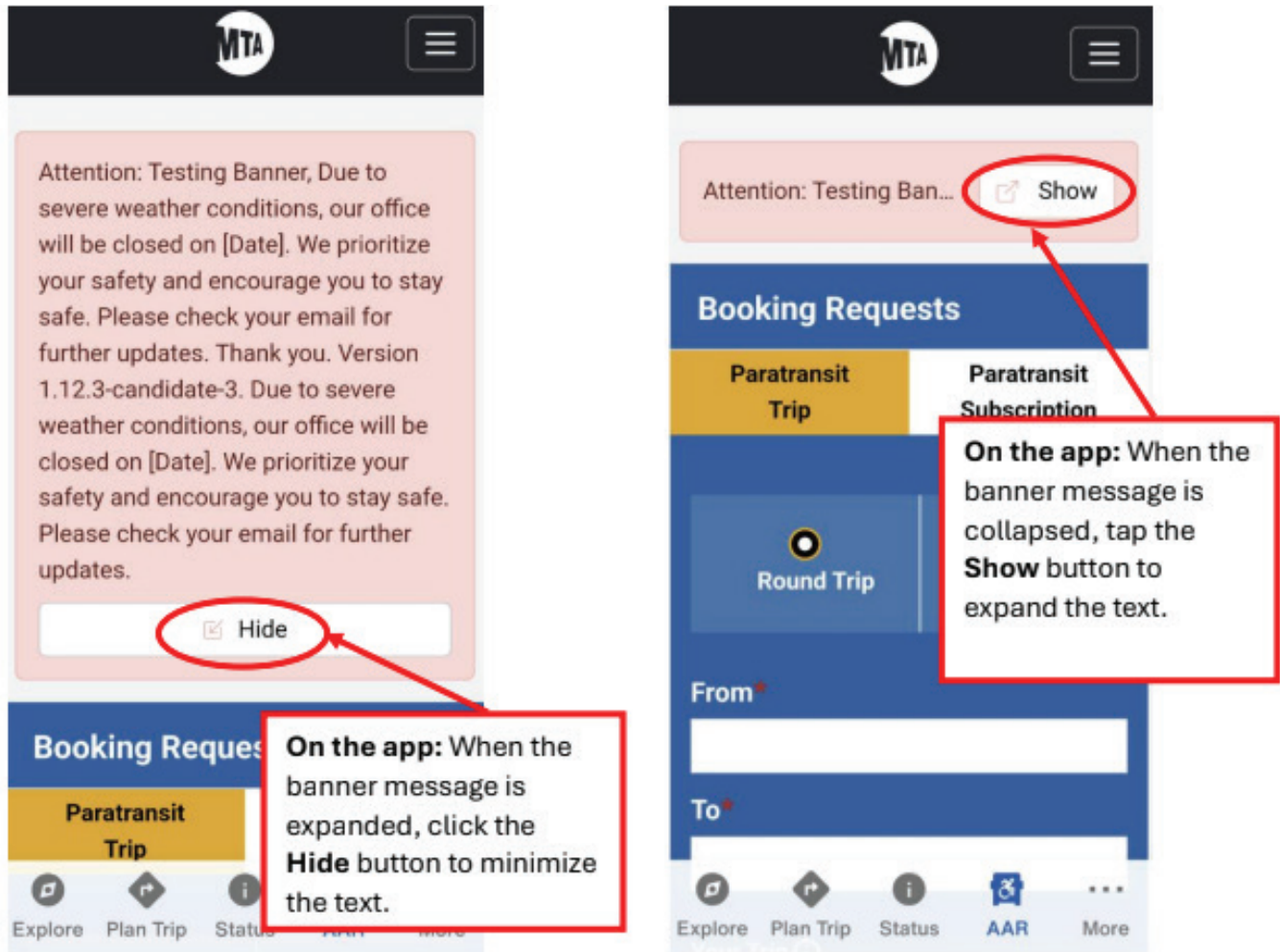
Depart / Pick-Up |  Arrive by / Appointment

Saturday, January 18, 2025

Approximately at | OK

## How to “Hide” Banner Message on the Top of the Screen

Paratransit will display pertinent information to customers using the banner on the top of the screen. Customers should read through the messages, which will include the last updated date, to remain aware of important notifications such as travel conditions, policy updates, and information on new app releases. After you read the message, feel free to tap the “Hide” button to minimize the message. This is extremely helpful for those who have limited screen view when using the mobile app.



The MY AAR app is the fastest and most convenient way to book a trip, request an advanced taxi authorization or create a subscription. The app lets you easily access and update your personal account information, and see your upcoming and past rides. Learn more with our [step-by-step](#) video or [User Manual](#).

## **Paratransit Service Beyond the AAR Service Area**

### *Paratransit in our Neighboring Counties*

AAR has established transfer locations to accommodate easier travel for AAR customers whose trips go beyond the five boroughs of NYC into either Westchester County or Nassau County. At these locations, eligible customers can connect from AAR and services to either Able-Ride / 516-228-4000 (Nassau County) or Bee-Line ParaTransit / 914-995-2960 (Westchester County). Customers must coordinate the portion of their trips beyond the AAR service area with **Able-Ride** or **Bee-Line**. There are no free transfers as each Paratransit service operates independently.

When booking a trip between the Access-A-Ride service area and Nassau County, customers can request pickup or drop-off at these locations:

- Northwell Health, Center for Advanced Medicine (450 Lakeville Road, Door D, New Hyde Park)
- Green Acres Mall in front of Panera Bread (2034 Green Acres Road South, Valley Stream)

When booking a trip between the Access-A-Ride service area and Westchester County, customers can request pickup or drop-off at these locations:

- 4340 Boston Road, Bronx (at Ropes Avenue/IHOP)
- 5661 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx (at West 258th Street)

AAR customers may also take [Long Island Railroad \(LIRR\)](#) or [Metro-North](#) to other transportation hubs within NYC and coordinate a pickup with AAR to continue their trip within AAR's service area.

For more information about accessible travel by commuter rail please visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/mta-railroads>. For subway station accessibility information, please visit: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/stations>

These are the transportation hubs within the AAR service area where customers can connect with accessible transportation like buses or commuter trains that can connect them to Paratransit services in other regions:

- Herald Square (33rd Street and 6th Avenue): Amtrak, LIRR, NJ Transit, PATH
- Moynihan/Penn Station (on 33rd Street and 8th Avenue): Amtrak, LIRR
- Grand Central Terminal (East 43rd Street and Lexington Avenue): Metro-North and LIRR
- Port Authority Bus Terminal (42nd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues): departures for select NJ Transit and private carriers

For more information about the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey please visit: <https://www.panynj.gov/port-authority/en/Accessibility.html>

### *Paratransit for Visitors to NYC*

MTA New York City Transit welcomes the opportunity to provide AAR Paratransit service to eligible visitors to New York City. At least two weeks before visiting, please send NYC Transit a copy of the visitor's paratransit ID card (front and back) or other equivalent paratransit eligibility documentation issued by the city or town in which the visitor resides. Please email it to [EDUCI@nyct.com](mailto:EDUCI@nyct.com), or mail it to AAR Eligibility, MTA NYC Transit, Department of Paratransit, 130 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, or fax it to 718-393-4306.



If these documents are not available, please submit proof of residency outside New York City and proof of disability. A legible, dated letter noting disability and signed by a doctor or rehabilitation professional is acceptable proof. More details can be found on pages 14 and 15 in our [Guide to AAR Paratransit Service](#).

## Your Mobility Device

AAR paratransit service operates within the guidelines under the Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Regulations at 49 CFR Part 38 require that wheelchair lifts have a minimum design load of 600 pounds (when occupied) and that the lift platform accommodate a wheelchair measuring 30 inches by 48 inches. The wheelchair lifts on AAR vehicles exceed these requirements, accommodating wheelchairs or scooters up to 33 inches



wide, 51 inches long and weighing up to 800 lbs. when occupied. We are unable to accommodate mobility devices that exceed these guidelines. In addition, the following devices **will not** be permitted on AAR vehicles:

- Hospital Chairs
- Gurney Chairs
- Hospital Stretchers
- Stand-up or Non-assistive motorized **electric** scooters
- Bikes (folding or full)
- Mopeds.



## **AAR's Bag/Parcel Policy - Essential to Safe Service**

When a customer is traveling with a shopping cart it must be closed and secured during your trip. This is impossible to do safely if the items are oversized and overflowing. These items, including the shopping cart, may become projectiles if there are any sudden stops or turns creating possible injuries or accidents. We recommend placing your purchases inside (not overflowing) no more than two shopping bags so that they may be removed from the cart with ease, and you can hold them during the ride. Our parcel policy is very clear, and we ask you to please adhere to it or your trip may be refused. Please consider requesting a taxi authorization when shopping within your borough to accommodate your large purchases or arrange for delivery.

Customers must fold shopping carts and board AAR vehicles with only two bags or parcels totaling 40 pounds or less. A very bulky item that fills a seat or is a safety hazard is not permitted on an AAR vehicle, even if the item weighs less than 40 pounds.

Additional shopping carts, bags/parcels carried by PCA and or guest cannot be accommodated.

# Access-A-Ride Bag Policy

## Good to go:

- 2 bags or fewer
- Easy to remove
- Cart can be folded
- Under 40 lbs.



## Can't ride:

- Lots of bags
- Items block seats
- Cart can't be folded
- Over 40 lbs.



Approved Taxi/Car Service reimbursement requests must be submitted 60 days from the trip date. Information and links to forms can be found at: <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride/policies-and-forms/taxicab-car-service-reimbursement-policy>



AAR trips are exempt from Congestion Pricing. Information about this and other exemptions, please visit: <https://congestionreliefzone.mta.info/>



Paratransit service is by nature a **shared-ride** service. The standard of service is not intended to reflect that of a taxi service, which typically transports passengers directly to their destination. A paratransit trip should be comparable in length to an identical trip on the fixed route system (NYCT buses and subways), including the time necessary to travel to the bus stop, wait for the bus, actual riding time, transfers, and travel from the final stop to the person's ultimate destination. Shared rides have always been an integral component of AAR service, as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (49 C.F.R. Section 37.121(a)) and is necessary to balance the trip demand (over 36,000 trips daily) with vehicle capacity.

## **Access-A-Ride (AAR) Telephone Directory**

Call 877-337-2017 toll-free from area codes in the NY Metro Area and adjacent counties / call 718-393-4999 from other area codes. Customers who are deaf/hard of hearing can use their preferred relay service or the free 711 relay service.

After an important announcement, callers will be guided to

- Press 1 for English (If 1 is not pressed, callers will hear choices in each of the respective languages)
- Press 2 for assistance in Spanish
- Press 3 for assistance in Russian, Chinese, French Creole, Korean or Bengali
- Press 4 for all other languages

Callers will then be directed to press one of the following options:

- #1: To use our self-service system (automated 24/7) to check the status of your trip, cancel a reservation, or manage your subscription.
- #2: Speak with an agent to schedule a trip, cancel a trip, or change a trip that is one to two days in advance. Agents are available 7 days a week from 7 AM – 5 PM.
- #3: To speak with an agent 24/7 to check the status of today's trip(s), cancel a trip for today, or request a later pickup time for today.
- #4: To speak with an agent regarding eligibility, appeals, certification, or application questions. Agents are available Monday – Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM.

#5: To speak with an agent regarding subscription service setup, subscription changes or to place subscription on hold. Agents are available 7 days a week from 8 AM – 5 PM.

#6: To speak to an intake agent to give a compliment, make a complaint or comment, or if you have an inquiry or suggestion regarding AAR. Agents are available Monday to Friday from 9 AM – 5 PM. To submit feedback online, go to [mta.info](https://www.mta.info) and select “[Give Feedback.](#)”

Callers may repeat the prompt menu by pressing “0.” They may also hold for assistance if they don’t have a touch-tone phone. Conversations with AAR personnel are recorded and may be monitored.



## **AAR Resources**

The AAR website has the most up-to-date AAR information, including [The 2024 Guide to AAR Paratransit Service](#). Go to [mta.info](https://www.mta.info) and click on MENU in the upper left corner to locate the link to Access-A-Ride Paratransit.

MY AAR is the fastest and most convenient way to book a trip, request an advanced taxi authorization to certain locations, create a subscription, and track your trips. A tutorial video and additional guidance can be found at <https://new.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride/booking-trips-with-my-aar>

Follow us on social media @nyctAAR.

[On the Move is posted online quarterly](#). To ensure that you are alerted to postings and all other AAR updates, please provide AAR with a viable email address. If you don't have an email address, please consider sharing one of a trusted family member or friend who will alert you to these communications.