

# Rider's Guide for

*Funded by Lextran and operated by the Bluegrass Chapter of the American Red Cross*

## **Introduction**

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The WHEELS Transportation program is a shared ride, door-to-door, public transportation service designed to meet the needs of Lexington-Fayette County residents with disabilities by providing economical and accessible transportation. Funding for the program is provided through a contract with Lextran, Lexington's public transportation system. The service is designed for people whose needs cannot be fully met by Lextran's fixed-route system due to a disability.

Wheels operates 365 days a year, and has provided safe transportation for disabled Lexington-Fayette County residents since 1978. Wheels provides more than 200,000 trips annually and travels over 1.8 million miles per year.

## **Hours of Service**

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WHEELS operates seven days a week 365 days out of the year (including holidays).

- Monday – Saturday 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. (Midnight). Eastern Standard Time
- Sunday 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

## **Eligibility**

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Eligibility starts with an independent evaluation company called ADARIDE. ADARIDE's goal is to provide accurate evaluations and ensure that those people who are eligible for paratransit receive it in a timely and professional manner.

To get assessed for ADA Paratransit service, call between 11am-7pm Eastern Standard Time Monday-Friday to 877-232-7433 or visit [www.adaride.com](http://www.adaride.com) to get started.

## **Fare Structure**

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WHEELS is a pay-as-you-go program that collects exact cash, check or pre-sold passes when boarding. When both the origin and destination are within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an area mile of an operating Lextran fixed-route, there is a charge of \$1.60 per one way trip. If the trip is outside of this range, a premium rate of \$2.00 per one way trip is charged.

## **WHEELS Passes**

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WHEELS Passes are prepaid tickets to ride WHEELS. Passes may be purchased by contacting (859) 233-3433 ext. 1323. Passes can be ordered and mailed to your home address. You can pay by credit or debit card over the phone, and by check or money order via mail or given to any WHEELS driver. Please allow 7-10 business days for processing.

## ***Scheduling a Trip***

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Trips can be scheduled by calling (859) 233-3433.

- Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
- Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Reservations are accepted from 14 days in advance until 4:45 p.m. the day before service is to be scheduled. **We cannot schedule same day trips.**

When calling WHEELS, your call will be answered in the order it is received.

### ***When Scheduling, Please Have the Following Information Available:***

- ✓ Name of passenger
- ✓ Day and date of your trip
- ✓ Requested pick-up time or appointment time
- ✓ Exact street address of the trip origin and destination (intersections will not be accepted)
  - **It is the Rider's responsibility to provide the location addresses**
- ✓ Number of people traveling with the passenger, including personal care attendant (PCA) and/or companion and/or service animals.
- ✓ Please confirm dates, times, and addresses before ending the call to ensure the accuracy of your scheduled trip.

As established by the ADA and the Federal Transit Administration, WHEELS may schedule a pick-up time a maximum of one hour before or one hour after the requested pick-up time. The hour window before the requested time will not be utilized if it would require you to leave your job or an appointment early. The hour window after the requested time will not be utilized if it would cause you to be late for an appointment. When scheduling, you will be asked about appointment times and other factors that may affect the negotiated pick-up time. Based on availability, WHEELS may need to schedule passenger trips up to one hour before or after the requested pick-up time. However, in most cases the window is shorter. Your actual pickup will occur in a half hour window of 15 minutes before or after that negotiated time.

WHEELS is a shared ride service. Under federal regulation, no trip is given priority regardless of the purpose. Ride times can vary depending on factors such as mileage, city traffic, and other pick-ups/ drop-offs along your route. WHEELS ADA Paratransit ride times should be comparable to travelling from door to door using the LEXTRAN fixed route city bus system. Please take these factors into consideration when scheduling your trip.

## ***What is a Will-Call Return Trip?***

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On medical trips, when you do not know when your appointment will be finished, your return trip will need to be set up as a "WILL CALL". An estimated time for the return trip will be entered; however, you **MUST** contact WHEELS dispatch at (859) 233-3433 to let them know you are ready to be picked up.

Will-call trips can result in wait times of up to 1 hour. If you plan a will-call trip, please be prepared for the wait and bring with you medications and other supplies you may need while you are out.

### ***Being ready for your “30-minute” Pick-up appointment***

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When you schedule your pick-up appointment, you will be given your “30 minute ready window.” This ready window starts 15 minutes before your scheduled pick-up and ends 15 minutes after your scheduled pick-up. (Example: If your pick-up is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., your bus will arrive any time between 8:45 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.).

**The rider should be prepared to board the WHEELS bus within 5 minutes of arrival at any time during the 30-minute window.**

### ***What is the “5 Minute Wait Period”?***

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WHEELS is a shared ride, multi-passenger bus service. Wheels provides more than 200,000 trips annually and travels over 1.8 million miles per year. Each pick-up scheduled is very important to WHEELS. We ask that riders be ready to board the bus within 5 minutes of the bus arriving to allow ample time to pick up all passengers. If all attempts to locate the rider have failed within the 5 minute time period to board, the driver is instructed to depart and you will be considered a “No-Show.”

For example, if your pick-up “window” is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and the bus arrives at 8:45 a.m., you must present yourself to the driver by 8:50 a.m.

### ***Cancelling a Scheduled Trip***

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To help WHEELS provide better service opportunities for all WHEELS passengers we ask that you cancel trips as early as possible. To cancel a scheduled trip, please contact WHEELS dispatch at (859) 233-3433. All cancellations of trips should take place at least one hour prior to your scheduled pick-up time. Cancellations that occur with less than an hour’s notice have the same practical effect as a No-Show. Excessive late cancellations may be treated in a similar manner as excessive No-Shows when warranted.

### ***What is considered a “No-Show”?***

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A no-show occurs when a WHEELS passenger does not board the vehicle within five (5) minutes after it arrives on time within the 30 minute ready window. If a driver cannot locate you when they arrive, the driver is allowed to wait only five minutes for you. The driver will knock on your door or look for you in the lobby of the building, but you must be present and ready to board. If the driver cannot locate you, the dispatcher will attempt to reach you by the phone number you have provided to WHEELS. If you cannot be reached by phone within the five minute wait period, the driver will depart.

***If your trip was a “No Show” and you cannot be reached within one hour of your originally scheduled trip, we will suspend all other scheduled trips for the remainder of the day.*** If a ride is still required, you must call and speak to a dispatcher. Your trip will be based on the next available bus and could result in longer wait times.

Riders are only allowed a certain number of no-shows within a 30 day period based on the total number of trips. A courtesy letter will be sent out to customers with excessive no-shows. Passengers who continually miss scheduled rides, not due to circumstances out of their control, may face temporary suspension from the service.

It is not the intent of WHEELS or Lextran to ever deny a rider service for needed medical treatments, nor is it the intent of this policy to punish riders for rides missed due to circumstances that were out of the rider's control.

The following circumstances do not count against a rider when determining the number of No-Shows:

- Illness that prevents the rider from travelling, including chemotherapy and dialysis patients whose treatments may make them too ill to travel
- Family emergencies
- Transit agency error, including scheduling mix-ups
- Transit agency bus is late for the pick up
- Other circumstances that may arise that upon review demonstrate the missed ride was due to factors out of the passenger's control

If at any point you feel you have been charged with a No-Show in error or if you wish to appeal a suspension, you may call WHEELS at (859) 233-3433.

### ***Travel Companions and Personal Care Attendants (PCA)***

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WHEELS allows you to travel with one Personal Care Attendant (PCA) and one additional companion. The PCA can ride WEELS free of charge. A PCA is an individual who travels with an ADA eligible rider to assist that person. This may either be an employee of the eligible rider, a relative, a friend, or a care provider. The ADA defines a personal care attendant as someone designated or employed specifically to help the eligible individual meet his or her personal needs. Each additional person can ride with any given passenger for an additional \$1.60 or \$2.00 per one way trip, if space is available. All attendants and companions must have the same origin and destinations. **PCA's are required on all trips for residents of nursing homes except for scheduled Dialysis appointments at approved medical facilities.**

### ***Nursing Homes and Adult Facilities***

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WHEELS requires PCA's on all trips for residents of nursing homes except for scheduled Dialysis appointments at approved medical facilities. Drivers cannot assist riders into or out of nursing homes, so please have staff ready to assist the individual. Passengers should be in the main lobby ready to board the bus with the PCA present within 5 minutes of the bus arriving during the 30 pick-up window. Drivers are not permitted to go to rooms to pick up riders. If an individual other than the rider is responsible for the fare, please notify the dispatcher so the fare can be collected from staff personnel or a PCA at the time of boarding. Riders will be dropped off in the main lobby of the nursing home and staff will be notified.

## **Service Animals**

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All federally approved service animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities are welcome. All service animals must be on a leash. Animals going to the veterinarian, that are not service animals, must be in a cage. Drivers are not responsible for carrying cages.

## **Smoking, Eating and Drinking on the WHEELS bus**

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Smoking, eating and drinking are strictly prohibited on WHEELS vehicles. If you **MUST** eat something due to a health condition, please alert your driver in advance.

## **Seatbelts and Safety Restraints on the WHEELS bus**

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WHEELS cares about our passengers and employees and want to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of a safety restraint. All occupants are required to wear seat belts and/or safety shoulder harness where appropriate in the WHEELS vehicle.

## **Transporting Children**

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Children under the age of eight (8), or who are less than 57" tall, **MUST** be secured in a DOT approved child safety seat that is provided by and secured by the parent or legal guardian. **This is Kentucky state law, no exception.** Children 16 and under are permitted to ride WHEELS while accompanied by an adult for the duration of the trip. Exceptions to unaccompanied minors are at the discretion of Lextran and WHEELS. Children 6 years and older are required to pay the same fare as the WHEELS rider when they ride as companions. Children under 6 years of age ride for free.

## **Biohazard and Bathroom Accidents**

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Should a biohazard or bathroom accident happen to you on board the bus, please discretely notify the driver of the situation so that he/she and dispatch can make arrangements to get you home quickly and return the vehicle to a clean state. WHEELS vehicles are not permitted to make stops along your scheduled route of travel to allow you to use the restroom. Please make the proper precautions prior to departure to ensure you will be able to make your entire trip without incident.

## **Service Cancellations Due to Weather**

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Due to weather, such as ice and snow, Paratransit Service may be delayed or cancelled. WHEELS will make every attempt to operate as long as local law enforcement permits us to use the streets. For your safety, drivers will use their discretion to determine road conditions. If streets, driveways, or sidewalks are not cleared for safe passage, the driver will not be able to complete the pick-up. If you are not comfortable traveling in these conditions, please call and cancel your trip.

## Code of Conduct

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WHEELS riders and drivers have the right to travel with a maximum of personal comfort and safety, and without the threat of physical and verbal abuse. Therefore, any behavior by WHEELS riders, their companions, or their PCA's that is determined to be violent, disruptive, illegal, unsafe, unsanitary, threatening, or invades the privacy of another may cause the offending person(s) to be refused or suspended from service.

## Responsibilities of the WHEELS Passengers

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WHEELS and LEXTRAN's goal is to provide a safe, comfortable commute for individuals travelling on the WHEELS bus. To assure a pleasant commute for all, please observe the following guidelines:

- Allow the driver to assist you onto the vehicle. Please ask for special assistance if needed.
- WHEELS passengers **MUST** pay a fare, with either exact cash, WHEELS PASS or be registered as prepaid.
- Safety restraints must be worn by all WHEELS passengers.
- Children under the age of eight (8), or who are less than 57" tall, **MUST** be secured in a DOT approved child safety seat that is provided by and secured by the parent or legal guardian. **This is Kentucky state law, no exception.**
- All personal belongings and medications are the responsibility of the WHEELS passenger. They must be secured or tied down under the seat or next to the passenger. Carts and other personal property may not remain in the aisle.
- WHEELS passengers must transport their own belongings. Drivers may assist with loading and unloading.
- For grocery trips, a WHEELS driver will assist the WHEELS passenger with up to 20 plastic shopping bags and a single item not weighing more than 50 lbs. If you have more items or larger containers, we ask that you please have a dedicated assistant to load and unload your shopping items. PCA's and travel companions are responsible to load and unload their own bags.
- For laundry trips, a WHEELS driver will assist the WHEELS passenger with up to 5 laundry bags. Bags must be enclosed and must not weigh more than 25 lbs. each. PCA's and travel companions are responsible to load and unload their own bags.
- You **MUST** stay secured at all times while the bus is in motion.
- **DO NOT** interfere with the driver while he/she is operating the bus.
- WHEELS is a public transit program servicing multiple passengers to multiple destinations. Please allow adequate time for traffic conditions/weather delays to reach your destination.
- Treat your fellow passengers kindly - Disruptive or illegal behavior (intoxication, selling drugs, abusive or threatening remarks, or obscene language or actions) will not be tolerated and may result in arrest, suspension or refusal of trip.
- WHEELS passengers may not request or refuse specific drivers, specific other riders or specific vehicles, unless the vehicle sent is not accessible for your registered mobility device.
- If you are in a power wheelchair, you must turn off the power while on the lift and during transport.

- WHEELS passengers are responsible to properly care, maintain, and upkeep their mobility device.
- WHEELS passengers are responsible for keeping their walkway and ramps in good repair and sufficiently clear of snow and ice so as to be safe for the WHEELS driver and passenger to use.
- Non-Service Animals in the home or yard must be controlled as not to approach the WHEELS driver.
- Smoking, eating and drinking are strictly prohibited on WHEELS vehicles.
- Respect others – no soliciting or panhandling allowed. DO NOT Litter.
- No literature may be given out while on the bus.
- DO NOT abuse or damage WHEELS property or equipment, including graffiti or vandalizing fixtures. This could result in prosecution and suspension of service.
- Proper attire, including shirts, shoes or appropriate footwear, is required on the bus.
- Personal music devices are allowed with headphones, as long as the sound is not audible to other passengers.
- If you have questions about your ride we ask that you call the WHEELS dispatcher at (859) 233-3433 as the driver does not have detailed information and may not use the radio to discuss specifics.

## ***Responsibilities of WHEELS Drivers***

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### **WHEELS DRIVERS MUST ALWAYS:**

- Be courteous and professional at all times.
- Drive safely. Wear a seat belt. NO CELL PHONES while driving.
- Make a good-faith effort to locate the rider at the threshold of a residence or the lobby of a business.
- Lend a steady arm if you need assistance.
- Provide directions or act as a sight guide to/from bus if you are visually impaired. If you feel you need this type of assistance, please notify the driver.
- Maneuver your manual wheelchair if you need assistance.
- Secure all mobility devices and fasten passenger's seat belts and/or safety harness.

### ***Drivers are Not Allowed to:***

- Operate or push your electric mobility device.
- Operate or push your equipment or shopping cart up or down more than 1 step.
- Cross residential thresholds.
- Lift or carry riders.
- Walk so far away that they lose sight of the bus.
- Please understand that paratransit operators are not caregivers. Operators are there to safely transport you from your origin to your destination.

## ***Lost and Found***

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If you believe you left something on the WHEELS bus, contact WHEELS dispatch at (859) 233-3433. Please provide your name, the date and time of the trip, and a detailed description of the lost item.

## ***WHEELS Advisory Committee***

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The WHEELS Advisory Committee is an advisory group that meets quarterly. The advisory committee provides feedback about WHEELS services. Members of this committee represent riders, guardians, and community centers that are an important part of the ongoing service improvement process.



## ***LEXTRAN Fixed Route Service***

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As an eligible-paratransit user, you also have the opportunity to utilize the regular Lextran fixed-route system for free. If interested, just follow these easy steps:

- **Call Mary Kate Gray-Lextran Community Relations Manager at 859-255-7756 to make an appointment to receive Lextran ID.**
- **Provide necessary contact information.**
- **Go to scheduled appointment @ Transit Center---Scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. (200 E. Vine St---You must arrange your own transportation).**
- **Receive Lextran ID.**
- **Show Lextran ID on ALL rides to be allowed free fare.**

You will receive your first Lextran ID free of charge. (Replacements are \$5 each). Please note that ONLY paratransit-eligible riders are able to receive this offer. Your information must be confirmed through the paratransit database before receiving your free ID and free access on Lextran buses.

If eligibility is temporary, free fixed-route service is only available until you are fully recovered from your temporary disability.

If you are new to the Lextran system and have any type of uncertainty for how the process works, you may inquire to Mary Kate Gray about travel training.

A Lextran employee can help familiarize you with the fixed-route service and answer any questions you have.

[www.lextran.com](http://www.lextran.com)

## ***Title VI Beneficiary Notice to the Public***

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### **The American Red Cross Wheels**

1. The American Red Cross Wheels operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI was amended by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-259), effective March 22, 1988, which added Section 606, expanding the definition of the terms "programs or activities" to include all of the operations of an educational institution, governmental entity, or private employer that receives federal funds if any one operation receives federal funds.
2. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with American Red Cross Wheels through direct mail, electronic mail, and by telephone. For more information on the American Red Cross Wheels policy on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact 859-255-1280, email [wheelsinfo@redcross.org](mailto:wheelsinfo@redcross.org) or visit our administrative office at 1450 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40511.
3. A complainant may file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.

## **Customer Complaints, Commendations and Feedback**

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In order to continually improve our services, WHEELS welcomes comments, questions and commendations from our riders. Call the WHEELS “How’s My Driving?” line at (859) 255-1280 or email us at [wheelsinfo@redcross.org](mailto:wheelsinfo@redcross.org).

You may also send written correspondence to:

Rhonda Snow  
Director of Wheels  
1450 Newtown Pike  
Lexington, KY 40511

## **WHEELS Transportation Program Contacts**

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The WHEELS Transportation program is operated by the Bluegrass Chapter of the American Red Cross and funded by Lextran. For more information please contact:

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**American Red Cross**  
Bluegrass Chapter