The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), located in downtown Chicago, is currently accepting letters of interest from those wishing to serve as a **Community Representative on the RTA’s Paratransit Certification Formal Appeals Program Eligibility Review Board (ERB).**

**Background**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires public transit agencies to provide ADA complementary paratransit service for customers whose disability or health condition prevents them from using fixed route bus and rail services for some or all of their trips. In this region, Pace operates ADA Paratransit service on behalf of CTA and Pace; as a commuter rail provider, the ADA does not require Metra to provide ADA Paratransit service.

ADA Paratransit service is only to be provided for eligible trips an individual cannot make using fixed route service. It is important to note that having a disability does not automatically qualify an individual for ADA Paratransit services. Each ADA Paratransit eligibility decision is based on an individual’s ability to use accessible fixed route bus and/or rail service for some or all of his/her trips.

To become eligible for ADA Paratransit service, potential riders must apply to and be certified by the RTA ADA Paratransit Certification Program. The eligibility decision is based on information provided by the applicant, an in-person interview, functional assessments necessary to help evaluate the applicant’s abilities, and, if needed, information provided by professionals familiar with the applicant. If an applicant disagrees with a decision of “Not Eligible” or “Conditionally Eligible for Some Trips,” he or she may appeal that decision.

ADA Paratransit eligibility appeals are heard by the RTA Eligibility Review Board (ERB), which is an independent panel of three individuals, including one Community Representative, who were not involved in the initial certification decision.

**ERB Community Members Qualifications and Duties**

All potential ERB members must meet the minimum requirements and be available to perform the duties as described below.

* Prefer individuals who have a disability and/or are professionally affiliated with an organization that supports/promotes independent living for people with disabilities.
* Have first-hand knowledge of public transportation in the RTA region (i.e., riders of fixed route bus and rail and/or ADA Paratransit).
* Possess a basic understanding of the ADA as it relates to public transportation and ADA Paratransit eligibility (additional training specific to appeals will be provided).
* Must be able to separate eligibility/regulatory requirements from personal opinions/experiences.
* Must maintain strict confidentiality of appellants and discussions among ERB members (including handling written case materials).
* Must be prepared at all hearings having fully reviewed all submitted appeal materials (written application, interview and assessment notes, and professional verification) and drafted questions for the appellants to be asked during the hearings.
* For each appeal, be prepared to hear and discuss complex medical and other evidence, ask questions of the appellant and make determinations based upon the evidence presented.
* Must be punctual and arrive promptly at all hearings.
* Be available to serve for a minimum two-year term.
* Be able to travel to RTA offices at 175 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago (the RTA does not reimburse for transportation-related costs).
* Be available to participate in formal hearings on an as-needed basis (scheduled several weeks in advance, approximately six times per year. Typically 3 appeal hearings are heard back-to-back from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. on a single weekday.
* Must participate in introductory and periodic refresher training (typically 1 to 2 days annually).

**Compensation**

* Members will be compensated $100 for each completed appeal hearing and $200 for each day of training.
* Members will be compensated $50 for each appeal in instances where the member has prepared and appeared for the appeal hearing but the scheduled appeal hearing does not proceed for any reason other than fault of the member. Members will also be compensated $50 for each hearing that is cancelled two business days or less in advance of the hearing.

Please submit a letter of interest that includes the following information:

* Explains why you are interested in the position;
* Explains your relationship to the disability community;
* Explain your availability; and
* Explains your understanding of the ADA as it relates to public transit.

**Letters of interest should be submitted by November 11, 2016 to:**

**Regional Transportation Authority**

**Legal and Compliance Department – Attn. Sophia Parr**

**175 W. Jackson, Suite 1650**

**Chicago, IL 60604**

**parrs@rtachicago.org**

**If you have any questions or need a reasonable accommodation,**

**please contact Sophia Parr at**

**(312) 913-3200 or parrs@rtachicago.org.**