



# **MILWAUKEE COUNTY**

**Department of Health and Human Services  
Aging & Disabilities Services**

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## **Older Adult Transportation Service (OATS) Service Guide**

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# Introduction

Milwaukee County Aging and Disabilities Services – Older Adult Transportation Service (OATS) is happy to help connect you to some of the places you need to go through our transportation provider. This Service Guide is intended to help you understand OATS, including who can use it, where you can go, and how to schedule rides. We hope this guide will help you to make the most of the transportation service and improve your experience getting around Milwaukee County.

## Quick Reference Contact Information

- New rider?** Call the Milwaukee County Aging and Disability Resource Center to enroll at **(414) 289-6874**.
- Already enrolled?** Call First Transit at **(414) 847-2744** to schedule your rides, cancel a ride, or get updates on a scheduled ride.
- Have a complaint?** Call the Transportation Coordinator at **(414) 289-6547**.

## Eligibility

- Riders must live in Milwaukee County.
- Riders must be age 60 years or older.
- Riders must not have easy access to other means of transportation (for example, driving your own vehicle or regularly/easily using the bus).
- Riders must not be enrolled in Family Care, IRIS, Partnership, or PACE.
- Riders who are enrolled in Wisconsin Medicaid are not eligible for healthcare and dental rides through OATS.

## Enrollment

To enroll in OATS, call the Milwaukee County **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** at **(414) 289-6874**. Information and Assistance professionals will ask you some questions and let you know if you are able to use the service.

If you are eligible, the Information and Assistance workers will send your information to the transportation provider. After that, you will be able to schedule your rides (see *Scheduling* section on page 6).

If any of your information changes (address, phone number, service needs, etc.), please contact the Milwaukee County ADRC to keep your information up to date.

### Did you know?

The Milwaukee County **ADRC** can help connect you to a wide range of programs and services for older adults including: Long Term Care, Dementia Care, Meals on Wheels, Adult Protective Services, Information & Assistance, Benefits Specialists, Senior Centers, Wellness Programs, Senior Dining, counseling, social support, legal services, and more.

## Hours

- Service is available Monday through Friday, from 7:30am to 5:30pm.
- No rides are currently available on Milwaukee County major holidays (New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day).

## Additional Assistance

- Drivers will assist riders in boarding and leaving vehicles and escorting riders to an entrance or from an exit of their residence or destination.
- Drivers will assist riders when needed, such as navigating stairs from their house to the vehicle, or into a building.
- Riders who use mobility devices should notify the Aging and Disability Resource Center during the enrollment process, or if their mobility preferences change after enrollment. Lift equipped vehicles will be provided when needed, and drivers will assist riders to and from the vehicle.
- Drivers will assist riders with carrying their grocery bags (up to 40lbs) to their residence.

## Caregivers

Riders are allowed one caregiver to accompany them to and from an eligible healthcare appointment. The caregiver does not need to be a family member, nor be age 60 or older, but must be accompanying the rider as a caregiver or companion for the rider's healthcare appointment. Trip fares are waived for caregivers. Riders should let First Transit know about an accompanying caregiver when scheduling their healthcare appointment rides.

# Where You Can Go

This section includes the places in Milwaukee County served by OATS.

## Healthcare and Dental Appointments

Medical, dental, mental health, and therapeutic appointments, including dialysis. For healthcare and dental appointments, trips must start in Milwaukee County, but may be to a healthcare facility within 5.5 miles of the Milwaukee County border or return from such a facility. First Transit can help determine if your ride request is within the geographic boundary.

## Food

Grocery stores, weekday farmers markets (including farmer's market voucher distribution sites), Hunger Task Force Senior Stockbox distribution sites, and Milwaukee County sponsored senior dining sites. Contact the ADRC for eligible dining sites.

OATS provides regular service to grocery stores for groups of residents of participating senior residential apartments. Call the Transportation Coordinator at (414) 289-6547 to learn more.

Grocery trips must start in Milwaukee County, but may be to a grocery store outside of Milwaukee County if the total trip distance is 5.5 miles or less. Unless waived by the Transportation Coordinator, the grocery store must be within a 5 mile radius of the participant's residence. First Transit can help determine if your ride request is within the geographic boundary.

## Senior Centers for social and recreational programming

- Clinton and Bernice Rose Senior Center
- Kelly Senior Center
- McGovern Park Senior Center
- Washington Park Senior Center
- Wilson Park Senior Center
- United Community Center Senior Center
- Asian-American Community Center
- All Nations Senior Center
- Greater Galilee Senior Center
- Other centers, as availability allows

## Civic and Cultural Sites (Milwaukee County owned or sponsored)

- Boerner Botanical Gardens
- Charles Allis Art Museum
- Milwaukee Art Museum
- MLK Community Center
- Kosciuszko Community Center
- Henry Meier Festival Park
- Milwaukee County Historical Society
- Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
- Noyes Pool
- Milwaukee Public Museum
- Mitchell Park Conservatory (Domes)
- Pulaski Pool
- Milwaukee County Sports Complex
- Veterans Park
- Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum
- Milwaukee County War Memorial
- Wilson Park Recreational Center
- Milwaukee County Zoo
- Wehr Nature Center

## Evidence-Based Wellness Workshops

Milwaukee County Aging and Disabilities Services sponsors wellness workshops. Contact the ADRC for more information on offerings.

## Voting

Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicle locations for photo ID, voting registration sites, early voting sites, ballot drop boxes, and polling places.

## Public Health Emergency Related

Heating, cooling, or natural disaster shelters.

## Transportation to other supportive services

Organization	Services
Family Caregiver Support Program	Respite Care
Alzheimer's Association of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc.	Respite Care Family Caregiver Support Alzheimer's Disease Direct Services Alzheimer's Counseling Community Support Services
Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc.	Elder Benefit Specialist/Legal Services
Milwaukee Christian Center, Inc.	Community Outreach & Access Services
Hmong/American Friendship Association, Inc.	Community Outreach & Access Services
Life Navigators	Family Support Services
Jewish Family Services	Late Life Counseling Services
Milwaukee LGBT Community Center	Outreach & Services
Social Development Commission	Medicare Savings Program Prescription Drug Assistance Program Senior Companions Foster Grandparent Services
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources	Senior Employment Services

# How to Use the Service

## Scheduling

To schedule, change, or cancel rides, call First Transit at (414) 847-2744. Please reserve rides a minimum of three business weekdays in advance. Rides can be scheduled up to 14 days in advance.

Regular rides can be set up in advance for reoccurring appointments, such as weekly visits to Senior Centers or regular medical appointments.

## Pick-Up Tips

Riders are encouraged to be ready for their rides at the scheduled time and should wait in a visible location, such as the entry way, when possible. Drivers may arrive within a 30 minute window after a scheduled pick-up time and a 1 hour window of “will call” return ride, which has not been scheduled for a specific time in advance.

**Home pick-ups:** If riders are not ready for pick-ups at the scheduled time, the transportation provider will attempt to contact the rider by phone. If there is no answer, the driver will wait 5 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, prior to canceling the trip.

**Healthcare pick-ups:** When scheduling return rides, riders will confirm the pick-up location and type of vehicle needed. In some instances, for example after surgical procedures, it may be necessary to change to a lift van. If the rider is not readily visible, the driver will go to the entryway, announce their arrival and assist the rider to the van. Drivers will wait no more than 5 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time for a rider to be ready for the return trip.

**Grocery pick-ups:** If a driver arrives at a grocery store and the rider is not readily visible, the driver will go to the entryway, announce their arrival, and assist the rider to the van. Drivers will wait no more than 5 minutes after a scheduled pick-up time for a rider to be ready for the return trip.

**Voting:** Drivers bring riders to polling places, wait, and bring riders back home, if there is no line. If there is a line, drivers will drop riders off, and riders must call the transportation provider to get a return ride. Hours of service may vary.

## Trip Fares

The cost for healthcare and dental appointment rides is \$3 each way. Riders must pay with cash and exact change is required. Drivers do not carry change. For all other rides, voluntary contributions of \$3 per trip to support the service are encouraged. Healthcare appointment fares must be paid to the drivers, who must account for fares at the end of each day. Fare collection boxes are located on the transit vans for voluntary contributions. Drivers are not allowed to accept tips.



## Safety

**Drivers:** All OATS drivers are thoroughly screened upon hire, possess good safety records, and receive required safety and passenger assistance training. Drivers also maintain current and valid City of Milwaukee Public Passenger Vehicle Driver's Licenses.

**Vehicles:** All provider vehicles used by OATS are inspected and certified as Human Services Vehicles through the Wisconsin State Patrol.

**Public health protections:** OATS maintains public health protocols to protect drivers and riders during public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Protocols include Federal Transportation Administration and Centers for Disease Control guidelines for protective measures such as masking and health screening, as well as sanitation guidelines for vehicles. During a pandemic, individual rides, or rides where individuals can be safely distanced within the vehicle, will be provided. During a pandemic, group rides may be suspended.

If you are sick, please refrain from using OATS. Riders that have COVID-19 or have been exposed are eligible to use the Aging and Disabilities Services COVID-19 transportation service, by calling the ADRC at (414) 289-6874.

**Severe Weather:** Services may be reduced or delayed during severe weather conditions. Call First Transit at (414) 847-2744 to check the status of your ride or to reschedule your ride.

## Other Policies

OATS does not allow a rider to be stranded. If your ride has not shown up, please call First Transit at (414) 847-2744.

Riders carrying bedbugs are not allowed to board OATS vehicles.

## Filing a Complaint

OATS riders can file a complaint about the transportation service whenever issues arise. To file a complaint, riders should contact the Transportation Coordinator at (414) 289-6547 or at [OATS@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:OATS@milwaukeecountywi.gov).

Required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, riders may also request to file a complaint based on a violation of their civil rights. This request can also be made by contacting the above Transportation Coordinator (above).

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

## **How do I know an OATS driver is here to pick me up?**

OATS transit vehicles are marked with a Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services - Aging & Disabilities Services sign. When they arrive, drivers will park near the building entry and ask for the passenger at the building entry.

## **What happens if I don't have \$3.00 in cash for a healthcare or dental ride?**

Drivers do not carry change. If you do not have the correct fare, they may not be able to transport you from your home, however OATS will not strand a rider away from home.

## **Should I tip the driver?**

No, however, all transit vans have fare collection boxes for voluntary contributions to the service.

## **Can I bring my oxygen tank on the van with me?**

Yes.

## **Are the drivers trained to properly secure my wheelchair in the vehicle?**

Yes. All drivers complete Passenger Assistance training, which includes the securing of mobility devices.

## **Can I grocery shop wherever I want, as long as it is in the County?**

To maintain service efficiency, grocery trips are limited to 5 miles from your home.

## **Can I take a friend with me to grocery shop?**

No, riders are allowed one caregiver to accompany them to and from healthcare appointments only. Riders should let First Transit know about an accompanying caregiver when scheduling their ride. See 'Caregivers' section on page 3 for details.

## **How long will my ride last?**

OATS makes every effort to be efficient and all rides should be less than an hour.

## **Will the driver pick up anyone else?**

OATS is a shared ride service. In order to be the most time and cost efficient, trips may be shared with multiple riders.

## **My local senior center is sponsoring a trip to a show. Can I use OATS to get there?**

All allowable locations within Milwaukee County can be found in the 'Where You Can Go' section on pages 4 and 5.

## Other Transportation Options

**Eras Senior Network Volunteer Drivers** are available for eligible Milwaukee County residents 60 years or older. ERAS provides rides to meet basic needs, such as to the doctor or dentist appointments, or trips to the pharmacy, grocery store, or bank. Rides are free and must be scheduled 7 days in advance. Call (414) 488-6500 for more information.

**Disabled American Veterans** offers rides to and from the Milwaukee VA Medical Center for veterans. Rides are free and must be scheduled two weeks before your appointment. Call (414) 384-2000 ext. 45715 for more information.

**MCTS GO Pass** is available for financially eligible seniors or persons with disabilities. MCTS buses can take you throughout the county. The pass provides unlimited rides on MCTS buses for \$2 per day. Call (414) 289-5800 for more information.

**MCTS Reduced Fare Card** is available for financially eligible individuals 65 years or older and persons with disabilities. MCTS buses can take you throughout the county. This pass reduces the MCTS bus fare to \$1.10 per bus ride. Call (414) 937-3218 for more information.

**MCTS Transit Plus** is available for individuals with a physical or cognitive disability that prevents them from using public transit. Transit Plus vans provide accessible transportation to any location in Milwaukee County. Rides through Transit Plus cost \$4 each way and must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. Call (414) 343-1700 for more information.

**VEYO** provides Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) for Wisconsin Medicaid (including IRIS) and BadgerCare Plus members. Rides are free or reimbursed and must be scheduled 2 business days in advance. Call 1-866-907-1493 for more information.

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| Have a complaint? | Call the Transportation Coordinator at (414) 289-6547 to file a complaint.                                      |



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
& HUMAN SERVICES

**AGING & DISABILITIES  
SERVICES**



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