



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA BOARD APPROVES \$44 MILLION FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH FIRM THAT OVERSEES TRANSIT SERVICES FOR DISABLED COMMUNITY

Demonstrating again its commitment to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and fulfilling a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the MTA Board today approved a \$43.9 million, one-year funding agreement with a Los Angeles County nonprofit paratransit brokerage agency.

Access Services Inc. (ASI) administers the annual transport of 1.5 million people within a 1,500 square mile service area by arranging transportation for persons with disabilities who cannot ride fixed route public transit.

According to ASI Executive Director Richard DeRock, more than 50 percent of the 6,000 daily requests for rides on the 390 mini-vans and 1,100 taxies, operated by independent contractors, is for travel to seek medical care.

As part of the fiscal year 2000 funding agreement with ASI, MTA and ASI staff will work together on a multi-year business plan that includes specific actions for operating the ADA paratransit service in a more cost effective manner — demand for service is increasing 30 percent per year — while maintaining the quality of service.

The business plan, to be presented this January to the boards of both organizations, will also address ways of gauging performance levels. In addition it will recommend better ways to leverage the ability of the MTA and the other 42 fixed route and 80 demand responsive operators in the county to cost effectively meet the mobility needs of persons with disabilities.

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ASI, an independent nonprofit public benefit corporation, has been funded by the MTA since it was created in 1994 and is one of the largest providers of paratransit services in the United States. A recent audit of ASI found that the firm had effectively met the region's ADA paratransit obligations and had substantially reduced passenger costs.

For more information regarding eligibility, call ASI at (800) 827-0829. The hearing impaired can reach ASI at (800) 827-1359, a special telephone line for the deaf (TDD). Inquiries concerning accessibility on MTA buses and trains should be directed to (800) 621-7828.

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