

CLIENT

HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO ROUTES CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



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Welcome to Routes Connecting Communities!

Routes Connecting Communities is a York Region community based not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping people since 1989. We improve access to basic needs, enhance community engagement, and improve social connections. We provide safe, affordable, compassionate, and timely transportation, food delivery, referrals to community programs, friendly phone calls, and opportunities for social connection.

We help those who are experiencing social, physical, mental, and financial limitations to using common transportation and are there in times of need for members of our communities. We created this handbook to provide you with information about our programs.

About Us

Mission: We provide social connections, support services and transportation for people in York Region, helping them to lead fulfilling lives, and maintain their well-being and independence. By removing barriers and fostering meaningful connections, we enable people to thrive, participate fully, and contribute to a vibrant, inclusive community where everyone feels valued and supported.

Vision: A York Region where every person thrives in a community of belonging, connection, and opportunity.

Values:



Inclusivity and
Belonging



Compassionate
Support



Collective Impact



Power of
Community

Inclusivity & Belonging: We continually strive to create a truly inclusive community where clients, volunteers, and staff feel valued, connected, and supported.

Compassionate Support: We deliver high-quality, compassionate services that foster meaningful relationships, through emotional connections and consistent support.

Collective Impact: We believe that lasting change is achieved when communities come together. Through volunteerism, purposeful action and strategic partnerships, we empower each other to create meaningful, sustainable impact.

Power of Community: We are dedicated to being a strong voice for those we serve, championing their needs and leading collaborative efforts to create a York Region where everyone experiences community, belonging, and independence.



Our Office

20849 Dalton Road, P.O. Box 160
Sutton West, ON, L0E 1R0
Phone: (905) 722-4616
Email: info@routescc.org
Fax: 905-722-6098

Our Staff: Please see a list of our staff and their contact details here:

www.routescc.org/our-team

Hours of Operation: Our office is open Monday to Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, with staff available remotely on Fridays. We are closed on statutory holidays and may close without notice. Transportation services may be available outside these hours and on weekends, depending on volunteer availability.

Transportation Programs

Volunteer Transportation

Our volunteer drivers provide affordable, compassionate transportation to residents across York Region facing barriers to transportation. They use their own vehicles and get reimbursed for their mileage. More details, policies, and procedures follow. More information: www.routescc.org/transportation-program

Food Delivery Program

Our volunteers deliver food hampers and meals from community food banks, organizations and churches to York Region residents that face transportation barriers and otherwise could not utilize these food supports. Referral required for enrollment. More information is available here: www.routescc.org/food-delivery-program

Accessible Vehicle Transportation

Routes has an accessible van to support clients who cannot utilize traditional vehicles. This van can accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, and more. We have 1 (one) accessible van that is operated by a staff driver. The fee for this service is based on round-trip mileage. More information: www.routescc.org/accessibility-vehicle

Please Note: For the safety of our drivers and the limitations of our vehicle equipment, we are unable to accommodate bariatric individuals or those using wheelchairs wider than 28 inches.

Quest Bus Service & Rentals

The Quest Bus goes on weekly and monthly trips to shopping centers, theatres, and exciting social events. There are also regular trips to the Georgina Food Pantry, Good Food Collective Community Lunch, and Keswick Walmart to support food security in Georgina. The Quest Bus is wheelchair accessible and can seat up to 20 individuals (16 including 1 wheelchair) – our bus is available for private charters for personal, work or family events. More information on charter services and upcoming bus trips here:

www.questbus.ca

Transportation Policies & Procedures

Eligibility *Updated 2026

We only serve residents **living in York Region who face a social, mental, physical or financial barrier**, which makes it difficult to use taxis or other publicly funded transportation services.

Must be at least one of the following:

- 55+ years old
- Living in a group home, domiciliary or housing with support
- Living with a physical disability or mental health condition
- Income at or below the most recent Low-Income Measure (LIM) for your family size, as outlined by Stats Canada. Clients may be asked to provide proof of income. For the current cutoff, please contact our office.

Intake *Updated 2026

An intake is required to access our services. You may request an intake from our staff, and we will be happy to schedule an Intake Meeting via phone or in person within five business days. No referral is needed, start the process on our website:

www.routescc.org/intake

Requesting a Ride *Updated 2026



Please submit all ride requests by the **end of the day on Wednesday of the week prior** to your ride, as dispatching for the following week occurs on Thursday. Late requests will be met where possible, based on volunteer availability.

You can request a ride by calling our office or by visiting our website at www.routescc.org/book. When requesting a ride, please include all relevant details such as the date, time, length of appointment, exact destination address, additional passengers, and mobility devices. **Transportation services are not guaranteed, and lifesaving medical treatments and specialist appointments are prioritized.**

NEW: Appointments that are flexible in nature will be treated as flexible in timing (shopping, walk-ins, etc.). This means that your drop-off time may change to fit our driver's schedules and availability. We will accommodate preferred drop-off times as is possible.

If we cannot find a driver for your ride, a staff member will contact you two full business days before your ride whenever possible, giving you time to arrange alternative transportation.

Ride Reminder Notifications *NEW 2026

Effective May 1, 2026, we will only be notifying clients of ride fulfillment through automated notifications via SMS/text message or email. If you haven't done so, please provide the office with the best method for us to notify you.

Cancellations and No-Shows *Updated 2026

You must speak directly to a staff member to cancel or reschedule a ride. Please call 905-722-4616 x 1.

A cancellation is considered late if it is reported after 4:00 PM on the business day before your scheduled ride. Weekends, holidays, and other office closures are not counted as business days.

If you cancel late without notifying a Routes staff member, you will need to pay a **100% cancellation fee at the cost of the original fare**, and the incident will be noted in your file. You will not be able to request any rides until the fee is paid.



A No-Show is reported to our office by the driver if you are not present at the scheduled pick-up time and location. If you are not present at the scheduled pick-up time and location, the driver will wait ten minutes and then leave. This counts as a late cancel and a full fee will apply.

Frequent cancellations and no-shows may escalate to our disciplinary policy.

Payment Options

Cash: You pay the driver directly at the beginning of the ride.

Invoiced: We can invoice a third-party organization (ODSP, OPGT, etc.)

Part-Subsidized: You pay a discounted rate for your transportation, if you qualify.

Fee For Service *Updated 2026

We now ask that clients pay the driver at the beginning of the trip instead of the end to ensure they have sufficient funds and to avoid forgetting payment.

Costs are based on round-trip mileage. For our most current rates, please visit our website (www.routescc.org/transportation) or call our office. All rates include a return trip and up to a two-hour wait at your destination (only if needed).

Drivers are reimbursed for their expenses. We do not encourage gratuities. Rates are reviewed annually and subject to change.

Additional Stops *Updated 2026

You may book **up to 2 additional stops** on any ride, and each additional stop **costs \$2**. Additional stops may increase the mileage and in-turn, increase the flat rate of the ride. Any additional stops must be requested prior to a ride and approved by the office.

No extra stops may be arranged while on a trip with a driver.

If your ride is funded by an agency, like ODSP, any additional stops that are not approved by the funder cannot be visited on that trip. You must book personal stops as a separate, self-funded trip and whenever possible we will attach this to an agency funded ride you already have.

Fee Subsidy Assistance Program

We provide fee subsidy assistance to clients who are in financial need and meet our eligibility. You will need to complete an application with staff. You may ask a staff member for more details.

Destination Limitations *Updated 2026

Rides may be provided to destinations both within and outside of York Region for medical, financial, and other activities of daily living. If your driver is scheduled for your return trip, you may not leave the destination without letting them know.

NEW: If a closer location of your requested destination is available, Routes reserves the right to redirect your trip to that location. You will be advised if this applies. For routine services such as pharmacies and grocery stores, trips involving unreasonable travel distances may be declined and redirected to a closer location.

Medical appointments will typically not be redirected; however, Routes reserves the right to assess ongoing requests for distant medical travel and may require clients to access closer providers where reasonable alternatives exist.

Curb-to-Curb

We offer a curb-to-curb service. Drivers will **not** be expected to provide any level of physical assistance, enter homes and apartment buildings, or go inside for a medical appointment to assist a client. If you require greater support, you are responsible for bringing a support person, worker, or caregiver.

If you require assistance beyond curb-to-curb service and do not have a support person to help, the driver has the right to refuse your ride.

Driver Credentials

All of our volunteer drivers use their own cars to transport you. Their screenings include a satisfactory Police Vulnerable Sector Check, a 3-year Statement of Driving Record, visual car inspection, proof of insurance and driver's license. The drivers receive orientation and ongoing training.

Contact With Your Driver

Your driver will call you the day before your scheduled ride to confirm your pickup time. During your trip, you will be given a Driver Information Card with their contact details in case you are ready for pickup earlier than planned.

You may only contact your driver in the following situations:

- To cancel a ride after the office has closed
- To request an earlier pickup time

Under no circumstances are you permitted to contact any of our volunteers outside of an assigned ride to request services, assistance, or personal favours. Our volunteers dedicate significant time and energy to this program. Respecting their personal time and boundaries is mandatory. Violating this policy is a severe breach and will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

Accessibility

We strive to ensure that our service delivery supports the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. Staff and volunteers receive appropriate training on the AODA, its Customer Service Standard, and the knowledge to effectively serve all clients.

Staff and volunteers are trained and effectively prepared to:

- Allow clients with disabilities to use assistive devices to access our services and provide other measures wherever possible and when needed.
- Welcome guide dogs or other certified service animals to accompany clients in any area of the premises open to the public.
- Encourage anyone with a disability to have their support person accompany them on their transportation.
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that considers the person's disability, including alternate forms of communication (verbal, written, digital) based on individual need.

Companion / Support Person

You may bring a support person at no additional cost only where assistance is required (e.g., mobility, communication, supervision needs, or other accessibility support).

All companions must be declared at the time of booking. Companions must travel with you to and from the destination and remain for the duration of the trip.

Unapproved additional riders are not permitted. If you attempt to bring an undeclared rider, the driver may refuse service.

Pets

You can only take pets when the pet is in a carrier or crate and when previously approved by our office. If you wish to travel with a service animal, please mention this to our staff when booking rides.

Belongings

You must be able to carry your own belongings. If you want to take large items, you must tell the office when booking a ride to ensure the item will fit in the driver's car. The driver will not assist with lifting, moving, or carrying any of your belongings aside from a mobility aid.

Transferring Passengers and Mobility Aids

Clients must be able to transfer in and out of the vehicle independently or with a mobility aid. For accessible vehicle services, staff will assist with ramp access and securement only. Assistance beyond the curb at your home or destination is not provided.

All mobility needs must be disclosed at the time of booking. You are required to inform our office of any changes, including the use of wheelchairs, scooters, or walkers.

Smoking

You cannot smoke while you are on a ride. This includes the use of vape electronic cigarettes and cannabis. If you attempt to smoke in the vehicle, the driver may refuse to drive you.

Food and Drinks

You cannot bring food or drinks in the car, other than groceries. An exception will be made for dialysis clients who need ice chips. If you bring unauthorized food or drink in the vehicle, the driver may refuse to drive you.

Seatbelts

You must always wear your seatbelt. If you choose not to wear a seatbelt, the driver may refuse to drive you.

Car Seats

When taking a child, you are responsible for bringing the right car seat that is legal for use in Canada. It needs to have a National Safety Mark label attached to the seat, and it cannot be used past the expiry or useful life date. It is your responsibility to install the car seat in the driver's vehicle.

Parking *Updated 2026

Parking costs are the responsibility of the client. If your trip requires the driver to park in a paid lot, you are required to cover the full cost of parking. Drivers are not permitted to use a client's accessible parking permit in their personal vehicle.

For most Toronto hospitals, a mandatory parking fee will be applied to your fare.

This includes but is not limited to: University Health Network Locations (Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Western Hospital, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, etc.), Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Mount Sinai Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, Michael Garron Hospital, Women's College Hospital and North York General.

Parking fees will be for the **current daily max parking rate**, and you may inquire about the cost by calling our office. Refusal to pay required parking fees may result in the trip being declined or discontinued.

Waiting Times

Our drivers will wait for the duration of your appointment, and your fare does not change if your appointment concludes **within 2 hours of the scheduled drop-off**. If the waiting time is more than 2 hours, you will be charged double your original fare, less the admin fee.

If you book a ride for a set amount of time, for example one hour, and later request additional time at your destination, the driver may decline the request.

Weather Policy *Updated 2026

Safety is our top priority. If a driver feels uncomfortable operating the vehicle due to weather conditions, they have the right to cancel the ride. Drivers may cancel trips at any time if weather, visibility conditions, or other factors make driving unsafe.



If a driver cancels your ride for any reason, Routes will not reimburse any costs associated with alternative transportation or appointment cancellation. As our service relies on volunteers, all rides are subject to availability and are not guaranteed.

Clients may cancel a ride without a late cancellation fee when The Weather Network issues an **orange** or **red weather warning** for either their pickup area or their destination **that will affect the safety of transportation** (i.e. blizzards, tornado warnings, freezing rain, heavy or extreme snowfall, flash freezing, high winds).

Yellow Warning: Service continues if the driver is comfortable. Client may not cancel without penalty.

Orange Warning: Service continues if the driver is comfortable. Clients may cancel without penalty.

Red Warning: Service continues if the driver is comfortable. Clients may cancel without penalty. Any transportation may be automatically cancelled at Routes' discretion.

For any situation above, if the client fails to cancel before the driver is on route, the late cancellation fee will still apply.

Incidents and Accidents

Our drivers are trained to call 911 in case of emergency situations and unusual or unsafe client behavior.

Compliments or Complaints

If you would like to provide us with a compliment or want to make a complaint about your service, please speak to any staff member. If you would like to escalate a concern, please ask to speak with the staff member's supervisor. If you would like to submit a complaint or compliment online, please visit: www.routescc.org/feedback

Your Privacy

We only collect, use and share the personal information you give us to:

- Provide quality programs and services
- Contact you to evaluate our services
- Review your records to ensure high quality of service and documentation
- Share personal information with your consent (for example, giving your phone number to our volunteer driver to confirm your ride) or as required by law

We may summarize information from personal information for statistical purposes. No individual can be identified through this information.

The personal information you give us is kept private and secure in our dispatch database, our ride database, electronic client files and in paper records. We have security, passwords, and policies in place to make sure your information stays private. If you don't want your information in this database, you can let our office know.

We record information you provide including:

- How to contact you (for example, your name, address, phone number)
- Information regarding your ride (pick up address, destination, waiting time)
- A description of who you are (for example, your age, or mobility aids)
- Information about transportation related issues you are facing

Anything you discuss with our staff or volunteers is kept private and confidential. The employee whom you booked the ride with or did the intake with may talk to their colleagues or supervisor to help ensure the highest quality service. There are times when we are required or permitted by law to release information about you without your consent. We release information if:

- We believe someone is in danger of immediate harm, and information we have might prevent it
- A child under the age of 16 is at risk of or has been abused or neglected
- We have been subpoenaed by a court of law
- We have to obey a summons, warrant or similar order
- Permitted or required by law You have rights regarding your records.

You can:

- See your records

- Ask for a copy of your records
- Ask us to help you understand what is written in your records
- Ask us to make corrections to inaccurate or incomplete information
- Refuse to give Routes consent to share or use your information
- Change your mind if you have already given us permission to use or share your information

We are required to keep your records for seven years. After seven years, your records will be shredded. If you want to discuss or see your records, talk to our office. If you have questions or concerns or want more information about how your personal information has been collected or used, you can contact the Executive Director.

Your Rights as a Client

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Not be discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, language, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, disability, economic status or any other ground listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Receive safe and reliable transportation in a clean car that is in good operating condition
- Have a driver that does not smoke, eat or drink during the ride
- Have a driver that does not use any illicit drugs or alcohol and is not incapacitated as a result of misuse of these substances
- Be accompanied by a guardian or care giver
- Have your personal information be dealt with in a confidential manner
- You must pay for the parking fees if you want the driver to park in a paid lot
- Refuse or discontinue services
- Access your personal health information
- Have a fair and reasonable complaint process

Your Responsibilities as a Client

- Treating staff, drivers and others who use Routes' services with respect
- Providing accurate and complete information as required for providing transportation services

- Cancelling or rescheduling appointments no later than 4 PM the business day prior to your ride.
- Arriving on time for your ride and wearing your seatbelt in the car.
- Having respect for the safety of all drivers, staff, clients and visitors of Routes
- Refraining from taking food or drinks in the car (other than groceries)
- Refraining from smoking in the car
- Refraining from using any illicit drugs or alcohol in a driver's car or visiting the Routes office while incapacitated as a result of misuse of these substances
- Refraining from calling volunteers outside of canceling or calling an early pick up.
- Only taking pets in a carrier or crate when previously approved by the office
- If bringing a child: providing and installing an appropriate car seat that is legal for use in Canada
- Carrying your own belongings

Disciplinary Policy

To ensure a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all participants, this policy outlines the progressive disciplinary measures for inappropriate client behavior, as well as zero-tolerance infractions that may result in immediate removal from our program.

1. Verbal Warning

For minor infractions, a verbal warning will be issued.

- **Purpose:** To inform the client of the inappropriate behavior and outline the expected correction.
- **Examples of Minor Infractions:**
 - Repeated tardiness for scheduled pick-ups.
 - Minor disruptive behavior (e.g., excessive noise, littering in vehicles).
- **Action:** Routes staff will document the verbal warning in the client's file for future reference.

2. Written Warning

For repeated minor infractions or moderate behavior violations, a formal written warning will be issued.

- **Purpose:** To document the behavior and outline consequences if the issue continues.
- **Examples of Moderate Infractions:**
 - Failure to comply with transportation program policies after a verbal warning.
 - Disrespectful or rude behavior toward staff or other passengers.
- **Action:**
 - A written warning will be provided to the client, specifying the infraction, corrective actions required, and potential consequences.

3. Banning or Removal from the Program

If the behavior persists despite warnings, or if the client commits a zero-tolerance infraction, they will be permanently removed from the transportation program.

- **Zero-Tolerance Infractions:**
 - Violence or threats of violence toward drivers, staff, or other passengers.
 - Illegal activity during transportation services (e.g., possession of prohibited substances, theft).
 - Harassment, discrimination, or severe disrespect toward drivers or staff.
- **Action:**
 - Immediate suspension from the program while the situation is reviewed.
 - Permanent removal from the transportation program if the behavior is confirmed.

Zero-Tolerance Policy Enforcement

Zero-tolerance infractions result in immediate removal from the transportation program without prior warnings. In cases of illegal activity, law enforcement may be notified.

Appeals Process

Clients may appeal disciplinary actions by submitting a written request within 7 days of receiving notice. Appeals will be reviewed by program management, and a decision

will be communicated within 14 days. By adhering to this policy, we aim to create a safe and respectful environment for all participants and staff.

Social Programs

Friendly Calls

Part of our Routes Connecting Communities mandate, our Friendly Calls program is a great opportunity for anyone looking for more social connection. Engage in friendly conversation with a volunteer friendly caller on a regular basis. Check in, share stories and build a friendship! More information is available here:

www.routescc.org/friendlycalls

Pen Pals

Keep the art of writing alive! Share letters, artwork, postcards, and more with a member of the community. Build a new friendship, share stories, advice and be more socially connected. More information is available here: www.routescc.org/pen-pals

Brain Games Booklet

A free booklet full of word games and puzzles to stimulate cognition and promote mental well-being. Booklets can be picked up in the office or mailed out while supplies last. More information is available here: www.routescc.org/brain-games-booklet

Good Food Collective

The Good Food Collective was created to provide support to residents in a collaborative catering venture. The Good Food Collective was started as a collaboration between the [Georgina Community Food Pantry](#), [Community Living Georgina](#), and [Routes Connecting Communities](#). The collective has three pillars:

Community Lunch

Every Wednesday at The Link in Sutton we hold a pay-what-you-can community lunch. Featuring a different ethnic flavour every week, there is always something new to try as we break bread with our neighbours. More information is available here:

www.goodfoodcollective.ca

World of Flavours Catering

The World Flavours Catering is available for hire! Fill out the form and someone will be in touch: www.goodfoodcollective.ca or email info@goodfoodcollective.ca

Community Engagement Programs

Community Action Tables

Northern Georgina Community Action Table (NGCAT)

The Northern Georgina Community Action Table (NGCAT) is a collaborative planning table, created as part of the York Region Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (www.linkinggeorgina.ca/reports) to address unique local issues and identify solutions for targeted geographic locations within Georgina. The Northern Georgina CAT is comprised of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and partners, including resident ambassadors, community agencies, service providers, local municipalities, school boards, faith-based groups and York Regional Police. NGCAT priority focus is on Mental Well-Being and Economic Stability. More information here:

www.linkinggeorgina.ca/georgina-cat/

For a calendar of upcoming events, visit: www.linkinggeorgina.ca/event-directory/

Central Newmarket Community Action Table (CNCAT)

The Central Newmarket Community Action Table (CNCAT) is a collaborative planning table, created as part of the York Region Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (www.linkingnewmarket.ca/reports) to address unique local issues and identify solutions for targeted geographic locations within Newmarket. The CNCAT is comprised of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and partners, including residents, community ambassadors, community agencies, service providers, local municipalities, school boards, faith-based groups and York Regional Police. CNCAT priority focus is on Mental Well Being and Housing Supports. More information here:

www.linkingnewmarket.ca/cncat

For a calendar of upcoming events, visit: www.linkingnewmarket.ca/event-directory/

Quick Action Grants (QAGs)

Available in both Northern Georgina and Central Newmarket, each year, through a partnership with United Way GTA we offer several opportunities to apply for a community project. Resident-led and agency-led grants are available each year for events and projects that address local community priorities. For Northern Georgina, this includes Economic Stability Generation, and Mental Well-being. For Central Newmarket, this includes Housing Stability and Mental Well-being.

For Georgina QAGs, visit: www.linkingeorgina.ca/quick-action-grant/

For Newmarket QAGs, visit: www.linkingnewmarket.ca/quick-action-grant/

Traumatic Incident Response Protocol

The Traumatic Incident Response Protocol (TIRP) aims to promptly offer coordinated support to communities affected by violent and traumatic incidents in the York Region (Georgina / Newmarket and Richmond Hill / Vaughan). TIRP aims to boost community mobilization to ensure residents feel safe after a traumatic local event, thereby enhancing community safety and well-being. More info: www.routescc.org/TIRP

The Learning Café

A workforce development program led by Routes that supports underemployed youth in Georgina to gain practical job skills, certifications, and hands-on experience in a supportive learning environment. The program combines structured training with real world learning opportunities that help participants build confidence, develop employability skills, and prepare for meaningful employment.

The program also provides opportunities for youth to apply their learning through community-based activities such as preparing and serving meals, assisting with community events, and supporting local programming. By connecting youth to training, mentorship, and community engagement opportunities, the Learning Café helps young people build skills, gain experience, and strengthen pathways to employment while contributing positively to the Georgina community.