



5311 Rural Areas Program

FACT SHEET

APPLICATION INFORMATION

The following are key eligibility guidelines for organizations applying for 5311 Rural Areas Transportation Program funds (frequently referred to as the Rural General Public Transportation Program) and some specific program compliance requirements. The primary program goal is to improve general public access to employment, healthcare, education, social service, shopping and recreation destinations for persons living in rural areas through the coordination of resources.

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

- ☒ Title VI Civil Rights Program
- ☒ An approved FTA – Drug & Alcohol Test Policy and Testing Program for safety sensitivity employees
- ☒ Americans with Disabilities Act policies and procedures
- ☒ Approval MDOT Vehicles Maintenance Program
- ☒ Approved MDOT Capital Asset Acquisitions Mgmt. Program (CAAMP)
- ☒ Hazards/Safety Mitigation Plan
- ☒ Program oversight visits at a minimum of once yearly
- ☒ Yearly Audits/ Financial Statements

1. The Section 5311 Rural Areas Program supports public transportation projects that encompass areas with populations of **less than 50,000**. Consistent with the primary goal of enhancing mobility of persons living in rural areas, services may include transportation to and from urban areas.
2. Eligible applicants for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Rural Areas Program include state and local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and public transit operators or intercity bus service.
3. Routinely grant applications are competitively solicited yearly via advertisement in newspapers of general circulation throughout the state. Applications may be accepted and considered more frequently due to certain extenuating circumstances such as emergency declarations or to respond to urgent needs for public transportation services.
4. Program funds may be used for planning, capital, operating, job access and reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation services.
5. The federal share of all projects administrative, planning and capital expenditures shall not exceed eighty percent (80%) of net costs, including the application of all revenues used to offset costs. As a result of temporary federal guidance, **under the CARES Act, the federal share may be up to 100% based on the availability of federal funds in response to the national COVID 19 emergency.** *
6. The federal share of operating expenditures shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of net operating costs, including the application of program income (e.g. fare box and other operating revenues, including the sale of advertising and concessions) and excess local/ match revenues. As a result of temporary federal guidance, **under the CARES Act, the federal share may be up to 100% based on the availability of federal funds in response to the national COVID 19 emergency.** *
7. Projects selected for funding under the Section 5311 program are to be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. **Consequently**, participation in the regional planning efforts must be documented in the grant application. There are six (6) regional planning groups within the state.
8. The applicants' service delivery plan must address coordination of resources to assure not only availability of services, but also general public accessibility and cost-effectiveness as major factors.
9. The applicant must demonstrate positive steps to market the availability of the services to the general public, which may include, but are not limited to public hearings, the publication or dissemination, at periodic intervals, of information about project services.
10. The applicant must demonstrate local involvement in and support of the proposed project.
11. If the applicant will be charging fares, documentation must be submitted about the proposed project's policy for charging fares to the general public and for contracting transportation services to other agencies. In the absence of fares, comparable revenue to off-set project cost must be documented. **Fare free service is allowable in response to declared emergencies (e.g. natural disasters and the national COVID 19 emergency).**
12. The applicant's proposal must clearly commit to making all FTA funded vehicles open for public use. Cost incurred by vehicles that are not operated as "open door for public use" will not be allowable. **In response to the COVID-19 emergency, restricted vehicle use and cost incurred for essential service needs (i.e. healthcare, food) targeting elderly and persons with disabilities is allowable.**
13. The applicant's level of service to the public should be based upon variables such as; travel demand, accessibility, service availability and public comments; a procedure for receiving public comments should also be demonstrated.
14. The applicant must demonstrate administrative and financial capabilities and provide documentation of adequate managerial capacity (e.g. staffing plan) to manage the federal program.
15. The applicant must demonstrate the requisite authority and commitment to comply with all federal and state regulation, law, administrative guidance by executing all required certifications & assurances.
16. Application must include evidence substantiating the availability of services to the general public.
17. Applicants must provide a copy of the organizations most current audit if federal funds in the amount of \$750,000 was received or audited financial statements as documentation of the financial capacity to administer federal funds.

***NOTE: The program match beyond CARES Act funds is 20% administrative, planning and capital expenditures; 50% operating expenditures.**