

# Transit and Commuter Assistance Grant Application Manual

For Public Transportation and Commuter Assistance Programs  
**Blue Book**

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*Application Guidance for Fiscal Year 2024*

**July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024**

CONNECTED BY DRPT

**MERIT**  
Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit



CONNECTED BY DRPT

**COMMUTER  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM**

CONNECTED BY DRPT

**TRIP**  
Transit Ridership Incentive Program

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# Introduction and Overview

This document is one of several resources available to grant applicants to assist with DRPT's grant application and post-award project management process. Other resources include DRPT's [Grant Administration Procedures](#) (policies and procedures for grant recipients following the award of a grant), technical guidance, and DRPT's grant workshops held in the spring and fall. These workshops provide potential applicants with information on grant application and management processes and requirements. In addition, DRPT's staff is available anytime during the year to provide technical assistance and answer questions regarding specific grant programs.

## Overview of Grant Programs Administered by DRPT

State and Federal grant funds administered by DRPT provide financial assistance to support Public Transportation and Commuter Assistance services throughout the state and support DRPT's core mission:

*"To facilitate and improve the mobility of people in Virginia and to promote the efficient movement of goods and people in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner. The agency works with rail and public transportation stakeholders to provide service to people throughout Virginia and promotes transportation options to the general public, businesses, and community decision makers. As an agency entrusted with public dollars, we seek the highest possible return on investment to maximize funding and strive to implement best practice management tools and techniques."*

DRPT offers two overarching state programs for transit and commuter assistance funding: MERIT (Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit) and CAP (Commuter Assistance Program). The MERIT program includes five individually-administered grant programs that provide funding for transit capital purchases, operations, planning studies, new and innovative transit services, and workforce development. The CAP includes two individually-administered grant programs that provide funding for commuter assistance program operations, projects that increase vanpooling, employer services, marketing, and other transportation demand management projects.

In addition, DRPT administers and distributes funding through four federal grant programs to public transportation and CAP operators throughout the state.

The following grant programs are administered by DRPT:

### **MERIT State Aid Grant Programs**

Operating Assistance

Capital Assistance

Technical Assistance

Demonstration Project Assistance

Public Transportation Workforce Development Program

### **CAP State Aid Grant Programs**

Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating Assistance

Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Project Assistance

### **FTA Grant Programs**

Metropolitan Planning – FTA Section 5303

Small Urban Areas Program – FTA Section 5307

Rural Areas – FTA Section 5311

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities – FTA Section 5310

Tables 1, 2, and 3 summarize the grant programs administered by DRPT and include a brief description of each program, eligible recipients, and match requirements. More details regarding each grant program are provided in the subsequent sections of this document.

Unless otherwise noted, eligible expenditures for all grant programs are paid on a reimbursement basis. A general synopsis of eligible expenses for each grant program is provided in each grant program section. Instructions and requirements for submitting reimbursement requests are provided in DRPT's [Grant Administration Procedures](#) (Purple Book) in OLGA.

Applications for funding are not officially approved until the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approves DRPT's Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP), usually at the CTB's June meeting. The funding for approved programs and projects will be available on July 1. However, some federal funding may not be available until October 1.

**Table 1. MERIT – DRPT Administered State Aid Grant Programs**

MERIT Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
<b>Operating Assistance</b>	Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for operating related public transportation expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Governments</li> <li>Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>Public Service Corporations</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 30% of operating budget *</p> <p><b>Federal Funding:</b> 5311 recipients only, up to 50% of net operating expenses</p> <p>* NOTE: DRPT follows a sizing and performance-based methodology for allocating operating assistance funds</p>
<b>Capital Assistance</b>	<p>Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for public transportation capital projects</p> <p>Program consists of 3 project types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of Good Repair (SGR)</li> <li>Minor Enhancements (MIN)</li> <li>Major Expansions (MAJ)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and State Government</li> <li>Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>Public Service Corporations</li> <li>Federally Recognized Indian Tribes</li> </ul>	<p><b>State:</b> Varies by project type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SGR: up to 68% of eligible expenses</li> <li>MIN: up to 68%</li> <li>MAJ: up to 50%</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Match:</b> Minimum of 4%;</p> <p>For projects supported by FTA discretionary grant funding, local match can be reduced</p> <p><b>*Federal:</b> Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT</p>

MERIT Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
<b>Demonstration Project Assistance</b>	<p>Supports innovative investments in all functional areas of public transportation</p> <p>Program consists of 2 project types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Service (traditional transit services)</li> <li>• Technology and Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government</li> <li>• Planning District Commissions</li> <li>• Metropolitan or Transportation Planning Organizations</li> <li>• Transit Agencies that Receive State Operating Assistance from the Mass Transit Fund</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 80% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 20%</p> <p><b>*Federal:</b> Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT; however, a minimum 4% local match is required</p>
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	<p>Supports planning or technical assistance to help improve or initiate public transportation or TDM-related services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and State Government</li> <li>• Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>• Public Service Corporations</li> <li>• Planning District Commissions and Regional Planning Commissions</li> <li>• Human Service Agencies Involved in Rural Public Transportation</li> <li>• Transportation Management Associations</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 50% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 50%</p> <p><b>*Federal:</b> Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT; however, a minimum 4% local match is required</p>
<b>Public Transportation Workforce Development Program</b>	<p>Supports apprenticeships for careers in public transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and State Government</li> <li>• Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>• Public Service Corporations</li> <li>• Planning District Commissions</li> <li>• Human Service Agencies Involved in Rural Public Transportation</li> <li>• Commuter Assistance Program Operators</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 80% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 20%</p>



**Table 2. Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) – DRPT Administered State Aid Grant Programs**

CAP Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
<p><b>CAP Operating Assistance</b></p>	<p>Supports the operation of existing commuter assistance programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and State Government</li> <li>• Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>• Planning District Commissions</li> <li>• Transportation Management Associations</li> <li>• Transit Service Operators</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 80% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 20%</p>
<p><b>CAP Project Assistance</b></p>	<p>Supports employer trip reduction, vanpool formation and assistance, travel mode options and mode choice behavior change marketing, transit marketing, and other trip reduction projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and State Government</li> <li>• Regional Commissions</li> <li>• Transit Service Operators</li> <li>• Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>• Public Service Corporations</li> <li>• Planning District Commissions</li> <li>• Transportation Management Associations</li> <li>• Vanpool Operators/Providers</li> </ul>	<p><b>State Funding:</b> Up to 80% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 20%</p>

**Table 3. DRPT Administered FTA Grant Programs**

FTA Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
<p><b>FTA Section 5303 – Metropolitan Planning</b></p>	<p>Supports public transportation related planning expenses included in approved UPWPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Federal Funding:</b> Up to 80% of eligible expenses</p> <p><b>State Funding:</b> 10%</p> <p><b>Local Match:</b> 10%</p>
<p><b>FTA Section 5307 – Formula Grants for Small Urban Areas</b></p>	<p>Supports operating and capital costs of transit operators in small urban areas</p>	<p>The following entities located in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and State Government</li> <li>Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>Public Service Corporations, Planning District Commissions in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000</li> </ul>	<p>Allocated based on annual FTA Federal Register and net operating expenses. Can be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used to support up to 50% of net operating expenses</li> <li>Can be used to support up to 80% of eligible capital expenses</li> </ul>
<p><b>FTA Section 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities</b></p>	<p>Supports capital (including vehicles and equipment) and operating costs of transportation services and transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (includes activities previously eligible under the FTA 5317 New Freedom Program)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and State Government (e.g. AAAs and CSBs)</li> <li>Private non-profit operators of transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Federal Funding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating: Up to 50% of net operating expenses</li> <li>Capital/ Mobility Management Projects: Up to 80% of eligible capital and Mobility Management expenses</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Match:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating: 10%</li> <li>Non-vehicle Capital: 4%</li> <li>Vehicle Capital: 20%</li> </ul>

FTA Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
<b>FTA Section 5311 – Formula Grants for Rural Areas</b>	Supports operating and capital costs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and State Government</li> <li>• Transportation District Commissions</li> <li>• Public Service Corporations</li> <li>• Private Non-Profit Organizations</li> <li>• Federally Recognized Indian Tribes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Federal Funding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating: Up to 50% of net operating expenses</li> <li>• Capital: Up to 80% of eligible capital expenses</li> </ul> <p><b>State Funding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating: Up to 30% of net operating expenses, based on formula</li> <li>• Capital: Up to 68%, depending on project type (SGR, MIN, or MAJ)</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Match:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating: 50%</li> <li>• Capital: 4%</li> </ul>

**\*Note for Federal Applications**

All grantees applying for federal funds are required to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with an assigned Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). DRPT has to provide the UEI to the FTA on an annual basis, so programs should ensure that their registration remains active and provide DRPT with the UEI on an annual basis.

**State and Federal Grant Program Schedule**

Each year, the application and award process for DRPT administered grant programs takes place between December 1<sup>st</sup>, when the application period opens, and early June, when the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) releases the final Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) that contains all approved grants. In order to qualify for these funding programs, potential applicants must complete a series of requirements during and outside of the open application period.

Table 4 highlights the major process steps, grantee requirements, and informational opportunities in DRPT’s annual grant application and award process. Note that deadlines referring to the first day of the month (e.g. December 1, February 1, and April 1) are to be interpreted as the **first business day of the month**.

**Table 4: State and Federal Grant Program Application and Award Schedule**

FY24 Schedule	Process Step	Step Type	Responsible Party
<p><b>September 2022 – January 2023</b></p> <p><b>FTA 5303: October 2022 – April 2023</b></p>	<p>Application Assistance Available:</p> <p>DRPT offers assistance developing applications to potential state and federal grant applicants</p>	Informational	Grant Applicant
<b>November 2022</b>	<p>Grant Application Workshops:</p> <p>Provides applicants with information on the upcoming grant application process</p>	Informational	Grant Applicant
<b>December 1, 2022– February 1, 2023</b>	<p>FY23 State and Federal Grant Application Period:</p> <p>The grant application is open for all grant programs except the FTA 5303 program (MPO Assistance) in the OLGA portal</p>	Process	Grant Applicant
<b>January 14, 2023</b>	<p>TransAM Data Update #1:</p> <p>All assets in the statewide asset management system – <a href="#">TransAM</a> – must be updated in order to qualify for capital assistance</p>	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>January 14, 2023</b>	<p>Transit Development Plan (TDP)/Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) Update Letters:</p> <p>All transit agencies must submit TDP/TSP Update letters</p>	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>February 14, 2023</b>	<p>5-year Capital Budgets Due:</p> <p>Grantees that administer transit service are required to submit 5-year capital budgets at the time of grant application submittal through the OLGA portal</p>	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>February – March, 2023</b>	<p>DRPT Evaluates Grant Applications:</p> <p>Staff review grant applications, evaluate and score projects, and make funding recommendations</p>	Process	DRPT
<b>February, 2023</b>	<p>DRPT Provides FTA 5303 Funding Estimates:</p> <p>Staff provide FTA 5303 estimate to Metropolitan Planning Organizations so they may develop their Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP)</p>	Process	DRPT

FY24 Schedule	Process Step	Step Type	Responsible Party
<b>February – April, 2023</b>	DRPT Develops the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP):  DRPT develops the draft SYIP which contains all state and federal grants that have been awarded	Process	DRPT
<b>April, 2023</b>	Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Review:  Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) releases draft SYIP to the public for review and comment	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
<b>April – May, 2023</b>	Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Hearings:  CTB holds public hearings to gather input on the draft SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
<b>May, 2023</b>	Applications for FTA Section 5303 are Due:  Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must submit FTA 5303 grant applications to DRPT	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>June, 2023</b>	Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Adopted:  CTB Approves final SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
<b>June – October, 2023</b>	DRPT Develops and Executes Grant Agreements:  DRPT staff develop contracts and work with grantees to execute them	Process	DRPT
<b>June, 2023</b>	Grant Administration Workshops (Grants Management):  Provides grantees with information on how to manage the grant funds that they have been awarded	Informational	Grant Applicant
<b>July 1, 2023</b>	FY24 Grant Funds Available:  Grantees may start spending awarded grant funds	Process	DRPT
<b>July 15, 2023</b>	TransAM Data Update #2:  All assets in the statewide asset management system – TransAM – must be updated	Requirement	Grant Applicant

## Application Submission Procedures

Applications for funding for all of DRPT’s grant programs must be submitted through DRPT’s Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)). DRPT will not accept applications in any other manner than through OLGA.

Organizations eligible to receive funding must set up an account and designate a Master User prior to submitting an application. An OLGA account can be set up at any time of the year, and it is recommended that new applicants set up an OLGA account prior to the start of the grant application period.

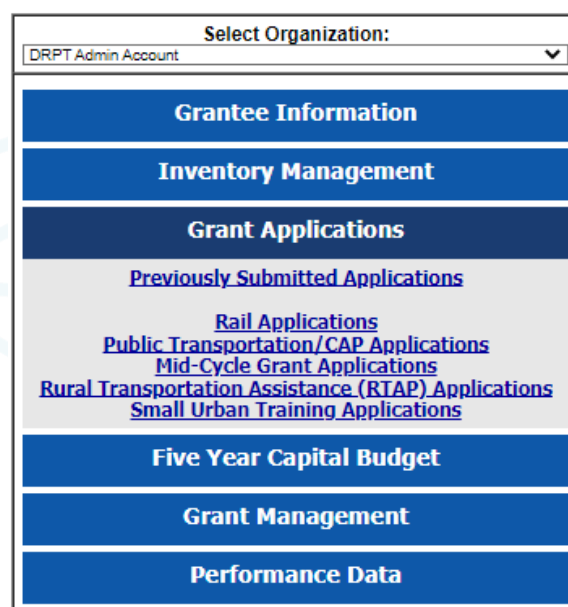
### How to Set Up an OLGA Account

To set up an OLGA account, go to the [OLGA](#) website (<https://olga.drpt.virginia.gov>) and select **Getting Started** from the menu. Follow the instructions to submit a request for an OLGA account. DRPT will notify the Master User designee when the OLGA account has been established. The Master User can then log in to OLGA and complete the account set-up, enter agency contact information, add additional users, and set user access and roles. The agency Master User can make changes to the account, add/delete/edit users, and edit contact information at any time. Instructions on managing the account can be found in the Help section on the website ([OLGA – Help](#)).

### The Basics of Grant Applications in OLGA

Start an application by first logging in to your OLGA account. After a successful login, the **Main Menu** of OLGA will appear. There are several options on the Main Menu page for managing an OLGA account, entering performance data, and other options. Select the **Grant Applications** option to continue with the application process.

Select **Public Transportation/CAP Applications** to continue with the application process. The next page to appear will be a table of all of the grant program applications. Select the appropriate application to start a new application. You may need to scroll down to find the grant program application you need. Be sure to save your work frequently. Saved applications can be edited at any time prior to the end of the grant submission period. **Applications cannot be edited once submitted.**



Contact your DRPT Program Manager if you have questions regarding the application process or if you need to edit a submitted application.

## Application Review Process

During the application review period, DRPT staff will follow up with applicants to obtain additional data and explanation as needed. Applicants are advised to provide as much detail, supporting information, and data as possible in the application. Please note the backup and supporting documentation requirements for each grant program. If requested documentation is not provided, a project application may be deemed ineligible. The evaluation process includes multiple stages of formal review. After Program Managers make recommendations, they are reviewed by team managers, Division Chiefs, and ultimately DRPT's Executive team. This multi-layer recommendation review process ensures a thorough and objective process.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, DRPT includes the recommended applications and allocation in the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approves the release of the draft SYIP to the public for comment in April and following receipt of public comments, the CTB approves the final SYIP in June. Once the CTB approves the final SYIP, it will be available on the DRPT [Open Data Portal](#).

# CHAPTER 1

## State Aid Grant Programs: MERIT

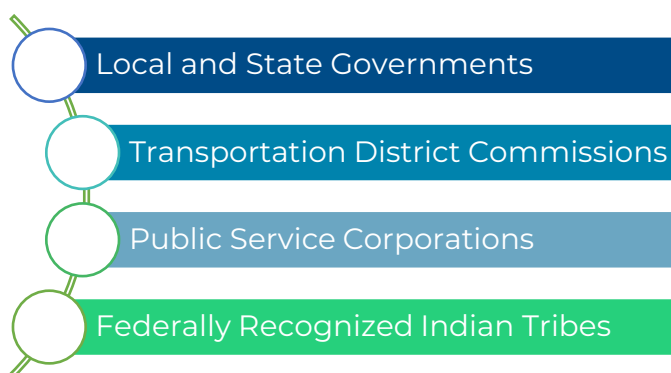


## Section 1.1 Operating Assistance Program

The Operating Assistance Program section provides a general overview of the State Aid Operating Assistance grant program for transit service, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

### Eligible Applicants

State operating assistance is awarded to existing providers of public transportation service in Virginia. Eligible grant recipients include public transportation services operated by:



### Program Description

The Operating Assistance program provides funding for operating expenses for many types of transit services, including fixed route and commuter bus service, demand response, bus rapid transit, ferry, commuter and light rail service. Operating Assistance supports transit operations, maintenance, repairs and administrative costs.

### Program Goal

The goal of the Operating Assistance program is to improve the quality and efficiency of public transportation services.

### Operating Assistance Funding Model

State operating assistance is distributed among all eligible public transportation service providers utilizing a performance-based funding methodology. This methodology is based on several different service delivery factors, including sizing and performance metrics. The sizing factors represent an agency's relative size to other agencies across the Commonwealth, whereas the performance factors represent an agency's performance trend for a given metric relative to statewide trends for all agencies. Additional information on the funding model is available in the [Operating Assistance – Technical Documentation](#).

## Eligible Operating Expenses

Prospective applicants are required to submit audited financial statements to support all operating expenses. The following eligible expenses may be submitted:

### **Public transportation general administrative expenses borne by the service provider.**

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Accounting and payroll
- Advertising and promotional media
- Business-related education and training for transit employees
- Business-related travel expenses of transit employees
- Clerical
- Communication services – cost of communications including phones, fax, postage, etc.
- Contract management fees
- Facilities and equipment lease, rental and maintenance contracts (note: not eligible if funded through a capital grant)
- Data processing supplies
- Indirect costs – these costs can only be included if the indirect cost plans have been pre-approved by DRPT. If applicants do not have a pre-approved plan and wish to submit one to DRPT, it should be done as soon as possible. DRPT may not be able to pre-approve a plan that is submitted during the application period (December 1 – February 1). Indirect costs funded through a capital grant are not eligible.
- Insurance and bonding – cost of insurance, or payments to a self-insurance reserve, on property or against specific or general liabilities of the transit entity
- Office supplies, materials and equipment
- Other fixed charges – dues and subscriptions, taxes, licenses, etc.
- Printing and reproduction
- Professional services – retainer fees and expenses paid to professionals, not employees of the specific transit entity for their special expertise. Includes accounting, legal, architectural, engineering, management, and marketing services.
- Public Transportation Association dues (excluding any portion of the dues that are for state lobbying activities)

### ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- General Administration Expenses
- Vehicle Fuels, Lubricants, Tires
- Maintenance Parts and Supplies

- Uniforms
- Utilities – heat, lights, power, water and sewer expenses

**Public transportation expenses borne by the service provider for fuels, lubricants, tires, maintenance parts and supplies.**

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Preventative maintenance
- Cleaning supplies
- Maintenance parts, supplies, tools and equipment
- \*Vehicle supplies and materials (tangible maintenance and operating resources for use and preservation of motor vehicles, not included in capital costs)
- \*Motor fuels and materials
- \*Oil
- \*Tires and Tubes
- \*Parts

\* Note: Items eligible only if consumed. Items purchased for inventory are not eligible.

**Ineligible Operating Expenses**

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The following expenses are ineligible for consideration:

- Expenses not directly attributed to the operation of public transportation services
- Expenses already funded through another state grant
- Expenses related to state lobbying activities
- Wages or expenses reimbursed through another program (Employer Outreach, Commuter Services, etc.)
- Capital Reserves
- Charter Service expenses

**Operating Revenues**

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In order to determine eligibility for funding, DRPT requires the provider to submit all operating revenues and revenue sources along with their application, which includes farebox revenue and Federal, State and Local revenues. Federal revenues are defined as financial assistance from any federal government program that supports the operation of public transportation. State revenues are financial assistance from any state government program other than DRPT's Operating Assistance program. Local revenues are defined as financial assistance that support the operation of the transit

system that are not from state or federal funds. Local revenues include, but are not limited to:

- Tax levies – Specified amount from local levies that is dedicated to supporting public transit system operating costs.
- General funds – Transfers from the general fund of local governments to cover the Local Share portion of the transit system budget.
- Donations – Donations from individuals or organizations to help cover the costs of providing transit service but which are not related to specific passengers or trips.
- Advertising revenues from non-taxpayer entities
- Contract revenue from non-taxpayer entities.

Funds received from MPOs for planning activities (i.e., pass-through of 5303 funds MPOs receive).

## Application Evaluation Process

Applicants must ensure that expenses and revenues (as described above) are properly reported on their application. DRPT evaluates Operating Assistance applications by validating the expenses and revenue sources submitted on the application and determining the eligibility of listed expenses based upon the

criteria noted above. Additional data or clarification from applicants will be requested if necessary. The finance staff at DRPT is responsible for validation and will begin the process in the fall prior to the application opening date. The validation process will include reviewing data submitted by the applicant for the previous year and verifying against the applicant's audited financial statements.

The transit staff at DRPT is responsible for reviewing budget and expenditure data, as well as validation of performance data submitted as part of the application. The validation process will include reviewing data submitted by the applicant for the previous year and verifying against the applicant's records, as appropriate.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, DRPT includes the recommended applications and allocation in the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The CTB approves the release of the draft program to the public for comment and

### AUDITED FINANCIALS

Audited financial statements must be submitted by all eligible recipients to DRPT each year and are required for verification of operating expenses and revenues.

following receipt of public comments, the CTB approves the final SYIP. Once the CTB approves the final SYIP, it will be available on the DRPT [Open Data Portal](#).

## Application Requirements

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

Required data include:

- Previous year's audited operating expenses and revenues.
- A detailed crosswalk of the audited operating expenses.
- Operating expense budget for upcoming fiscal year.
- Total amount of state aid from all other programs anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year. Anticipated state aid for the upcoming fiscal year DOES NOT include the amount of operating assistance anticipated from the Operating Assistance program.
- Total amount of local funds anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year. Local funds used as match should **not** be reported in the Operating Application.
- Total amount of federal aid from the FTA Section 5307 program anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year that will be used to support expenses in the proposed operating budget.
- Calculated total amount of federal aid from the FTA Section 5311 – Rural Areas application submitted during the upcoming fiscal year that will be used to support expenses in the proposed operating budget
- Total amount of federal aid from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year that will be used to support your proposed operating budget
- Total amount and source(s) of state and federal aid from any other programs anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year that will be used to support expenses in your proposed operating budget. These sources will be recorded on the application as deductions.

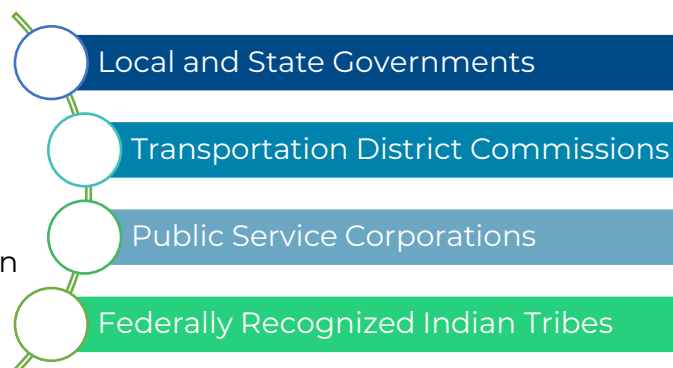
## Section 1.2 Capital Assistance

This section provides a general overview of the Capital Assistance grant program for transit, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

### Eligible Applicants

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Funds from the State Aid Capital Assistance Program may be awarded to existing and prospective new providers of public transportation service in Virginia. Eligible grant recipients include public transportation capital improvements sponsored by:



### Program Description

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The Capital Assistance grant program supports public transportation capital projects necessary to maintain, improve or expand public transportation services. The capital assistance program provides funding for transit assets such as vehicles, transit facilities, maintenance equipment, machinery, and heavy equipment.

### Program Goals

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The goals of the Capital Assistance program are to maintain a state of good repair for public transportation capital assets and to improve or expand public transportation services in a fiscally responsible way that improves transit service for Virginians.

### Eligible Projects

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Eligible capital expenses include, but are not limited to, items such as the purchase or lease of new vehicles and equipment, the rehabilitation of vehicles and equipment, the improvement or construction of transit maintenance and operations facilities, the purchase and installation of bus stop signs and shelters, the cost of debt service for major capital projects, real estate/ right-of-way acquisition, and safety and security equipment.



Most projects eligible for capital assistance under [FTA guidelines](#) will be eligible for state aid capital assistance. There are several FTA grants available to support capital projects, and all the grant programs are explained on the FTA [website](#).

This program specifically excludes operating expenditures such as depreciation costs and preventive maintenance expenses.

## **Prioritization Process**

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The Capital Assistance program is guided by a prioritization process for capital needs that allows DRPT to allocate and assign limited resources into projects and investments identified as the most critical. The prioritization process determines which projects achieve policy objectives of maintaining a state-of-good-repair of existing assets, and determines which projects receive funding for new investment.

Under the Capital Assistance program, projects are classified, scored, and prioritized separately in the following categories:

**STATE OF GOOD REPAIR (SGR):** Capital projects or programs to replace or rehabilitate an existing asset, excluding major capital construction projects with a total cost over \$3 million. (State Match: Up to 68%)

**MINOR ENHANCEMENTS (MIN):** Capital projects or programs that add capacity or include the purchase of new assets meeting the following criteria: Total project cost of less than \$3 million, or for expansion vehicles, an increase of 5 vehicles or less or 5% or less of the fleet size, whichever is greater, or all projects for engineering and design. (State Match: Up to 68%)

**MAJOR EXPANSIONS (MAJ):** Capital projects or programs to add, expand, or improve transit services or facilities, with a total cost exceeding \$3 million, or for expansion vehicles, an increase of greater than 5 vehicles or 5% of fleet size, whichever is greater, or all projects that include the replacement of an entire existing facility. (State Match: Up to 50%)

The *Transit Capital Assistance Prioritization – Technical Documentation* contains detailed information about scoring and prioritization for state of good repair, minor enhancement, and major expansion projects. Once posted, the FY24 Technical Documentation will be available [here](#). Table 1 provides examples of projects that fall into each of the three prioritization categories.

**Table 1: Project Types for SGR, Minor Enhancement, and Major Expansion Categories**

<p><b>State of Good Repair (SGR)</b></p>	<p><b>Replacement/Rehabilitation of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicles/rolling stock (buses, vans, rail cars, support vehicles, etc.)</li> <li>• Administrative/maintenance facilities</li> <li>• Customer amenities (parking facilities, bus shelters, benches, signage)</li> <li>• Any other specific existing pieces of equipment and/or technology that <u>do not</u> fall into <b>Special Asset Categories**</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Minor Enhancements (MIN)</b></p>	<p><b>New Investments in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fleet expansion (less than 5 vehicles or 5% of fleet)</li> <li>• Customer amenities (parking facilities, bus shelters, benches, accessibility improvements, signage)</li> <li>• New equipment and technology</li> <li>• Small real estate acquisition</li> <li>• Capital project development less than \$2 Million (engineering and design, construction management)</li> <li>• All assets, new and replacements, that fall into <b>Special Asset Categories**</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Major Expansion (MAJ)</b></p>	<p><b>New Investments in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of fixed guideway corridor (heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit)</li> <li>• Construction of new administrative/maintenance facility</li> <li>• Construction of new transit center, transfer center, or parking facility (more than \$2 Million)</li> <li>• Major fleet expansion (more than 5 vehicles or 5% of fleet)</li> </ul>

**\*\* Special Asset Categories:**

**Tools:** all tools needed to provide maintenance services (i.e. new/replacement tools, tool cabinets, etc.)

**Maintenance Equipment:** all equipment needed to maintain vehicles, infrastructure, and/or other assets (i.e. bus lift, tire mounting device, forklifts)

**Spare Vehicle/Rail Parts:** alternators, transmissions, engines, rail track, seats, windows, gas tanks, etc.

**Building/Facility Items and Fixtures:** all individual, small facility parts and fixtures that are being replaced outside of a larger rehabilitation project (i.e. concrete floors, stairs, escalators, hand dryers, fans, lighting systems, etc.)



**Grouped Assets/Programs of Projects (less than \$2 million):** includes large groups of assets that cannot be broken down into subcomponents (i.e. general “SGR” purchase of parts or track)

**DOES NOT INCLUDE:** Grouped or Program of Project for vehicle rehab or replacement

**Other Financial Tools:** includes funds for needed capital investments that cannot be scored as a replacement/rehabilitation (i.e. capital cost of contracting, track lease payments, debt service on previously approved projects)

**Scoring Methodology for State of Good Repair (SGR), Minor Enhancement (MIN), and Major Expansion (MAJ) Projects**

**State of Good Repair (SGR) and Minor Enhancements (MIN)**

SGR projects are evaluated considering asset condition (60 points), service impact (40 points), and incentive scoring (up to 10 points). Minor enhancement projects will be prioritized based on service impact considerations (40 points) and incentive scoring (up to 10 points).

**Major Expansion Projects**

Major Expansion projects will be evaluated based upon the following factor areas identified in 33.2-214.4 of the *Code of Virginia*: congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and land use. The factors specified in 33.2-214.4 of the *Code of Virginia* will be measured and weighted according to the following metrics:

Criteria	Objective
Congestion Mitigation	Reduce delay, improve transportation system reliability, and encourage transit use
Economic Development	Support existing economies and enhance opportunity for economic development
Accessibility	Enhance worker and overall household access to jobs and other opportunities, and provide multiple and connected modal choices
Safety	Address multimodal safety concerns and improve transit safety and security
Environmental Quality	Reduce emissions and energy consumption by providing modal choices, and minimize natural resources impacts
Land Use	Improve consistency of the connection between local comprehensive plans and land use policies with transit investments

Candidate Major Expansion projects will be scored based on the factors identified above, the cost of the project, and information included in the project application. The final score for Major Expansion projects will be determined by calculating the anticipated benefits relative to the amount of funding requested pursuant to 33.2-1526.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

## Funding Parameters

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To ensure equitable funding with limited resources, DRPT will fund as follows:

Trolley Packages: If a locality chooses to procure trolleys, DRPT will participate in the funding of the vehicle up to the market price of the vehicle without the trolley package. This is assuming that DRPT approves the application for a vehicle purchase. Additional costs must be borne by the locality.

LEED Silver: DRPT will not fund infrastructure above the LEED Silver certification. If DRPT approves the facility and the recipient wishes to seek above the LEED certification, DRPT will only participate in the items that will achieve LEED Silver. Additional costs must be borne by the locality.

**A project that has been selected for transit capital funding (state of good repair, minor enhancement, or major expansion) must be rescored and the funding decision reevaluated if there are significant changes to either the scope or cost of the project. This includes changes to specific vehicles approved for replacement. If there are changes to a project post award, the grantee must submit a scope change and/or budget change request, and that request must be approved prior to reimbursement of funds.**

## Rehabilitation of Existing Assets

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Projects that include the rehabilitation of existing assets (i.e. vehicles, administrative and maintenance facilities, customer facilities, etc.) are eligible under the MERIT - Capital Assistance program. “Rehabilitation” is used throughout this guide as a general term to refer to significant mid-life work performed on an asset to maintain it in a state of good repair.

For the rehabilitation of rolling stock, this could allow the asset to either reach or extend its estimated service life (ESL) depending on the extent of the work performed. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and DRPT have more detailed definitions of eligible vehicle rehabilitation projects outlined below, including the impacts that each type of project has on the ESL of assets.

**Rolling Stock Overhaul:** Rolling stock overhauls include a package of repairs and maintenance procedures aimed at keeping rolling stock in a state of good repair. Overhauls are usually done to make sure rolling stock reaches its useful life. An overhaul does not extend the ESL of rolling stock. For rolling stock to be overhauled, it must have accumulated at least 40 percent of its useful life for age or mileage to be eligible for DRPT and FTA funding.

**Rolling Stock Rebuild:** Rebuild refers to a capital activity associated with rolling stock that occurs at, or near, the end of a unit of rolling stock's useful life. Rebuilds must extend the asset's ESL with the extent of the rebuilding.

- **Bus Rebuilds:** a major mid-life rehabilitation to revenue vehicles that includes all of the following: 1) engine, 2) transmission, 3) air conditioner, and 4) wheelchair lift replacements. Rebuilds must extend the vehicle's ESL by four years, or miles equivalent to four years (125,000 miles).
- **Railcar Rebuilds:** a major mid-life rehabilitation to rail cars. Rebuilds must extend the railcar's ESL by a minimum of 10 years.

**Rolling Stock Repower:** Rolling stock repowering involves replacing a vehicle's propulsion system with a propulsion system of a different type (e.g., replacing a diesel engine with an electric battery propulsion system). Rolling stock repowering is permitted for buses that have met at least 40 percent of their useful life; in which case, it must be designed to permit the bus to meet its useful life requirements. Rolling stock repowering is also permitted as part of a rebuild; in which case, it must extend the useful life by at least 4 years (or 125,000 miles).

## **Alternative Propulsion Vehicles**

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DRPT will consider requests for alternative propulsion vehicles (i.e. electric, hydrogen, hybrid, propane, compressed natural gas) based on several factors, including: local or federal funding being leveraged; inclusion of alternative fuel vehicles in the Transit Development Plan (TDP), Transit Strategic Plan (TSP), or other plans; approved funding for necessary infrastructure alterations; or the clear intention of migrating a significant portion of the fleet to alternative fuels.

## **Application Evaluation Process**

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In addition to the Capital Prioritization process spelled out above, applications for Capital Assistance will also be evaluated by DRPT using the following criteria:

- Project Justification – Explanation of the need/problem that the project will address for all capital replacement requests must include the age of the capital equipment to be replaced

- Planning – Documentation that sufficient planning has been conducted to execute the project
- Project Scope – Approach to addressing the need/problem
- Project Readiness – Ability to initiate and advance the project within the fiscal year that the funds are applied for. Detailed milestones dates must be included in the request by the grantee
- Project Budget – Ability to execute the project scope within the project budget. Provide documentation on the cost of the capital (draft quote from a vendor copy of a state contract). Please note that applications should clearly indicate how project budgets are calculated by providing backup and supporting documentation that clearly indicates cost estimates. If requested backup documentation is not provided, the project may be deemed ineligible.
- Project Schedule – Ability to execute the project scope within the project schedule
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – Applicant's approach to measuring performance and evaluating the results of the requested capital project(s)

**Capital Infrastructure Projects** – DRPT provides funding for capital infrastructure projects including: new facilities, renovation of existing facilities, fixed guideway transit systems or extensions, etc. Many of these projects receive funding from a variety of sources in order to progress to completion.

For new large capital infrastructure projects, funding may be requested for preliminary design studies (up to 30% engineering and design plans) as a Minor Enhancement to determine project feasibility and develop engineering level cost estimates. Once a project has progressed to 30% design plans, the applicant must provide a comprehensive financial plan for the project. The financial plan will include the total estimated cost of the project, the total amount of state capital funds needed (by fiscal year), and other planned/committed sources of funding being used for the same purpose. Applicants should not apply for funds with the intent to replace other committed funding sources.

**It is DRPT's intent to put capital infrastructure projects under multi-year agreements at the time that the project is approved for funding.** This approach is intended to provide a level of certainty for both the applicant and DRPT about the financial viability and commitment associated with the project.

## **Important Data to include in Application**

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The data that is required to evaluate and prioritize capital assistance requests varies depending on the project type and specific characteristics of the project. There are certain categories of information that are needed for all capital assistance project types, and others that are specific to State of Good Repair (SGR), Minor Enhancement (MIN), and Major Expansion (MAJ) projects.

Shelter projects, or projects with a shelter component (including the replacement of existing shelters), that will be supported with DRPT controlled 5311 funds must complete and submit a supplemental environmental and historic asset screening form with their application. All applicants can use the form to document shelter locations and provide additional relevant information that may be requested by FTA during the federal grant review process.

The Shelter Project Form and supplemental instructions can be found [here](#) under Application Resources.

### **Information Needed for State of Good Repair (SGR) Projects**

Within the SGR project category, there are two project types with different data requirements:

**SGR Type 1:** Replacement of specific itemized assets, each with an in-service date. For projects in this category, each item must be listed individually in the OLGA portal application.

This includes the replacement or rehabilitation of specific vehicles, shelters, facilities, technology, etc. with a documented in-service date. Note: This excludes all Special Asset Categories listed below in the SGR Type 2 section.

#### **SGR Type 1 Data Needed:**

- Specific Item Description – A brief description of the SGR asset being requested
- *Examples: 40-foot bus, Support Vehicle – SUV, Laptop, Accounting Software*
- TransAM ID (if applicable) – If this asset is currently listed in the TransAM asset management database, the asset ID must be included here.
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) (if applicable) – If the asset that is being requested for replacement is a vehicle, the VIN must be provided.
- In-Service Date – a documented in-service date must be provided for each individual asset

- Replacement Cost/Rehabilitation Cost – a replacement or rehabilitation cost for each individual asset must be provided
- Service Impact Information:
  - Documentation on whether the project will provide real-time arrival information
  - Documentation on whether the project will include onboard technology to improve passenger safety
  - Documentation on whether the project will include improved lighting or other crime prevention features
  - Documentation on whether the project will include pedestrian safety improvements

**SGR Type 2:** Includes all SGR purchases to replace unspecified assets as needed in the future, grouped programs of projects that cannot be disaggregated, and all projects that fall into Special Asset Categories listed below (even if they have a document in-service date).

*\*Special Asset Categories include ALL requests for: 1. Tools, 2. Maintenance Equipment, 3. Spare Parts, 4. Building/Facility Items and Fixtures, 5. Grouped Vehicle Rehabilitation Projects, and 6. Other Financing Tools, such as Capital Cost of Contracting, Debt Service on Previously Approved Items, and Track Lease Payments.*

**SGR Type 2 Data Needed:**

- Project Name – A brief descriptive name must be provided
- Quantity of items to be purchased
- Cost per item
- Service Impact Information:
  - Documentation on whether the project will provide real-time arrival information
  - Documentation on whether the project will include onboard technology to improve passenger safety
  - Documentation on whether the project will include improved lighting or other crime prevention features
  - Documentation on whether the project will include pedestrian safety improvements

**Information Needed for Minor Enhancement (MIN) Projects**

All requests for Minor Enhancement (MIN) project funding must include the following:

- Project Name – A brief descriptive name must be provided



- Quantity of items to be purchased
- Cost per item
- Service Impact Information:
  - Documentation on whether the project will provide real-time arrival information
  - Documentation on whether the project will include onboard technology to improve passenger safety
  - Documentation on whether the project will include improved lighting or other crime prevention features
  - Documentation on whether the project will include pedestrian safety improvements

### **Information Needed for Major Expansion (MAJ) Projects**

Each Major Expansion project request must be submitted with a fillable PDF datasheet that asks for the following information:

- Project Name, Agency, and Primary Contact information
- Location Description with attached project map (preferably in a file compatible with ArcGIS or google earth)
- Designation of “Project Type” (i.e. fixed guideway, major fleet expansion, customer facility – station improvement, new operations facility, etc.)
- Ridership estimates attributable to the implementation of the project
  - Existing Ridership (daily and peak period)
  - Forecast Ridership (daily and peak period)
  - Percent of Ridership in Project Segment (Projects affecting a Segment of the Route or a Portion of Riders at a Station Only)
  - For fleet expansions: number of expansion vehicles, average number of daily passengers per available vehicle, average number of peak period passengers per vehicle
  - For Park-and-Ride Facilities: number of new or additional parking spaces to be installed, estimated utilization rate of the parking facility during peak period
- Economic Development documents:
  - Planning documents that include the project
  - Adopted transit-supportive policies expressed in planning or policy documents
  - Documentation of supportive zoning near public transportation
- Accessibility Estimates:

- Estimate of the time-savings or reliability benefits that are attributable to the project, and description of how the estimate was made
- Safety Information:
  - Documentation of asset-condition related safety impacts of the project
  - Documentation of technology-related safety impacts of the project
  - Documentation of customer facility related safety impacts of the project
  - Documentation of impacts of the project on safety or emergency response
- Trip Length Data:
  - Average projected trip length
  - Average system-wide trip length
- Environmental Quality Estimations:
  - Estimated change in vehicle miles traveled due to the implementation of the project, or
  - The percentage of ridership that is expected to shift from auto to transit due to the project AND average auto occupancy of the region where the project is located

### **Information Needed for ALL Capital Assistance Project Types**

**Project Description:** Enter a brief, but detailed summary of the capital item and what it will be used for. At a minimum, the following should be provided:

- Project Scope and Deliverables
  - Scope: The specific work that needs to be accomplished to deliver a product, service, or result with the specified features and functions.
  - Project deliverables: The deliverables are a set of specified outputs and should correspond to Project Milestones.
- Detailed description of the Capital Item that is the end result of the project (for example, buses or a maintenance facility as an end result of bus procurement or facility construction above).
- For rolling stock rehabilitation projects, the project description must also reflect the impacts that the project will have on the estimated service life (ESL) of the assets to be rehabilitated. If the project will not extend the vehicle's ESL, this should also be stated here.



**Federal Funds:** If you are anticipating funding this project with FTA federal funds, select the Federal source of funds you are expecting to apply to this project using the drop-down menu.

State controlled FTA federal funds (Section 5339) are limited and will be prioritized for programming. Applicants should ensure that there is sufficient locally controlled funding available to provide the required match in the event that state controlled federal funds are not available.

For approved applications, state match to the federal funds will also be provided, depending on the federal funding program and state regulations. Also enter the fiscal year of the federal funds you are expecting to use. If the item is not eligible for federal funds, indicate this by checking the appropriate box; otherwise, federal funds may be applied.

**Note:** For information on particular Federal funding programs, their requirements and eligibility please refer to Program Application Guidance that can be found under Grant Applications menu.

**Project Schedule:** Using the calendar icon, enter the proposed Start Date and End Date of the project or manually enter the start date in the field in the format *MM/DD/YYYY*.

**Note:** The Start Date is the first Milestone of the project for which you will be held accountable. The Start Date should be within the Fiscal Year for which funds will be allocated, but is not the same as the beginning of the fiscal year

**Milestones/Events:** Project Milestones are scheduled events used to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project. At least one Milestone must be entered. You are encouraged to enter multiple Milestones to correspond to project deliverables. The milestones will be accessible and updatable once the project is executed and open to charges. Recipients can review and update milestones using the Project Oversight report on OLGA. Milestones will be reviewed and edited with the Program Manager through the life of the grant.

The estimated dates of milestones must fall between the project's beginning and end dates.

To enter the first milestone, select a project milestone using the drop-down menu or manually enter the milestone date in the field in the format *MM/DD/YYYY*. If "other" is selected, a description **MUST** be entered into the text field provided.

To enter additional milestones, you must click the "Save" button on the bottom of the page. The system will take you to the capital assistance application screen, showing the line item that has just been saved. Click the notepad icon under "Modify", and you will be taken to the line item detail screen again. At this point, you can enter additional milestones on the bottom of the page. Click "Save" after entering each one.

*Example:* For a bus purchase: milestone #1 – issue PO from state contract; #2 – receive first vehicle; #3 – receive last vehicle; #4 install security equipment; #5 complete acceptance testing; #6 last billing.

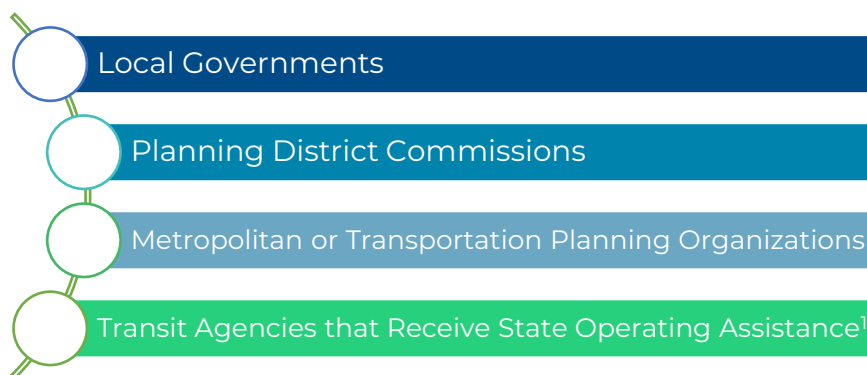
**Revenue Vehicles - Required Milestone:** All capital applications for Revenue Vehicles must include a milestone indicating the estimated vehicle order date.

## Section 1.3 Demonstration Project Assistance

This section provides a general overview of the Demonstration Project Assistance grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements. Funding for this program comes from the Special Projects program, which also funds DRPT’s Technical Assistance, Public Transportation Workforce Development Program, CAP Operating Assistance, and CAP Project Assistance.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible Demonstration Project Assistance grant applicants include:



Private corporations and Transportation Management Associations (TMA's) may participate in projects through contractual arrangements with eligible recipients. Funds may be passed through to the regional and community level in the form of grants or used by DRPT directly.

### Program Description

The Demonstration Project Assistance program is a competitive grant program that intends to support local efforts to improve transit reliability, access and connections to housing and employment centers, and transit mobility options. Demonstration projects also serve as models and opportunities for learning and replication for other transportation agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> Transit Agencies that Receive State Operating Assistance from the Mass Transit Trust Fund, as established in § 58.1-638(A)(4)(b)(2) of the Code of Virginia

The types of projects eligible for this program fall under two categories:

- **TYPE 1 – NEW SERVICE**
- **TYPE 2 – TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

## Program Goals

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The Demonstration Project Assistance grant program aims to incentivize the implementation of new transit services and test innovative and non-traditional public transportation solutions by reducing the financial risks assumed at the local level. This program is designed to fill funding gaps for projects and activities that may not be directly suited for other State and Federal formula-based capital and operating grant programs.

This program seeks to fund innovative technologies and non-traditional projects, as well as new, traditional transit services. Projects that fall into each category should aim to accomplish the following goals, respectively:

### Type 1 – New Service Goals:

- Improve the efficiency of public transportation providers in all functional areas.
- Offer creative approaches to identify and penetrate travel markets for public transportation systems.
- Increase private sector involvement in all areas of public transportation.
- Raise the utilization and productivity of existing public transportation services.
- Improve public transportation services for people with disabilities.

### Type 2 – Technology and Innovation Goals:

- Develop resources to help public transportation providers understand the benefits of emerging transit technology and innovation.
- Produce research on emerging transit technologies and innovations and potential applications in Virginia.
- Provides technical assistance to find customized approaches for areas in need

All candidate Demonstration projects must identify performance measures that will assess progress and effectiveness of the project once implemented. These measures should be unique to each project and be clearly articulated in the application for funding. For Type 2 – Technology and Innovation projects, applicants must provide an additional deliverable of a white paper or report on the outcome of the project to provide information for other public transportation providers in the Commonwealth on similar efforts. Assistance developing performance measures is available through DRPT and the [Virginia Transportation Research Council](#) (VTRC) upon request.

## Eligible Projects

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Due to the nature of demonstration projects that are meant to test a proof of concept or emerging technology, the eligibility requirements of the program are flexible in order to support projects that achieve the stated program goals.

Eligible projects for both demonstration Type 1 and Type 2 project categories must provide:

1. Evidence of the need for the service to be provided
2. Support for long-term funding solutions
3. A high level of readiness to move forward if funding is awarded

**Demonstration Assistance Type 1** – New Service projects should follow the following eligibility criteria:

- The new service should provide public transportation services to an area or market not currently served by public transportation, or provide additional connections to areas that are currently served.
- The new service should be supported by a feasibility study or other suitable planning document with a proposed operations schedule, forecast patronage (ridership), and a long-term funding plan at a minimum.
- The new service requested cannot simply be to replace routes that were discontinued due to local funding or operations decisions.
- Traditional public transit services eligible for funding through other state and federal programs are not suitable for this program.
- Example projects include, but are not limited to:
  - Implementing a new public transportation service in an area not currently served
  - Implementing a new route in an existing system that provides service to an area not currently served
  - Implementing a new route or service that provides connections that are not currently provided in an area that is currently served (i.e. a new intercity commuter route)

**Demonstration Assistance Type 2** – Technology and Innovation projects should follow the following eligibility criteria:

- The proposed project should be designed to test “proof of concept” for new technologies used in the provision of public transportation services.

- The proposed project may be deployed in both areas that are currently served by public transportation and not served.
- Technological solutions that have been deployed for many years and have proven their usefulness in the provision of transit service (i.e. automatic vehicle locator systems, automatic passenger count systems, and devices providing real-time arrival information) are not eligible for funding through the Demonstration grant program.
- Example projects include, but are not limited to:
  - The deployment and/or testing of autonomous vehicle technology
  - The deployment of micro-transit demand response systems
  - The creation of mobile applications that could improve the delivery of public transportation services

For traditional transit services and proven technologies stated above that are ineligible for funding through the Demonstration grant program, DRPT staff encourage applicants to apply for funding through the Capital and Operating Assistance grant programs.

To ensure that Demonstration Assistance projects have “a high level of readiness” for implementation, DRPT staff may direct potential applicants to the Technical Assistance grant program to complete a feasibility study, research, or conceptual design plans to evaluate the projected efficacy of a project.

Example projects funded in past grant cycles include, but are not limited to:

- Specialized transportation services for targeted populations such as low-income, elderly, minority, or those with disabilities
- Test of a new type of operating service in a suburban/rural jurisdiction with no existing transit service
- New transportation options in areas with no transit service through partnerships with transportation network companies (TNCs)
- Partnerships with private sector transportation service providers
- Testing autonomous transit vehicles for safety and operations in existing transit service and traffic patterns

## **Eligible Expenses**

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Revenues generated by any approved Demonstration Project will be offset against expenses to derive the net project cost. Only the net project cost is eligible for reimbursement by grant funds. The following non-exhaustive list illustrates types of eligible expenses:

- Administrative costs (research, before-and-after analysis, personnel, office supplies, travel, advertising, etc.)
- Operating costs (wages, supplies, maintenance, purchased services, etc.)
- Capital costs (facilities and equipment)

Capital rolling stock costs are only funded in extraordinary circumstances. Leasing of rolling stock is recommended for Demonstration Projects due to the rapid nature of evolving technology and accommodating fluctuating schedules for implementation of new technologies. The total project costs net of any federal aid received are eligible for reimbursement by grant funds.

### **Duration of Projects**

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Approved projects may begin on the first day of the fiscal year (July 1). Demonstration projects should be designed to conclude within approximately one to two years of the initiation of service. Under justifiable circumstances, funding for demonstration projects can be provided for up to three years.

### **Grant Match Requirements**

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The Demonstration Project Assistance Program provides state funding up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible expenses. The grant applicant must provide up to twenty percent (20%) match from non-state or federal funds.

The governing board of an applicant agency, or agencies, must commit to providing the local matching funds. This is usually done by providing a signed commitment letter or through the adoption of a resolution that commits the agency to the local match. A signed letter or adopted resolution that demonstrates commitment to funding the local match to the application should be attached to the application in [OLGA](#).

### **Application Evaluation & Criteria**

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Demonstration Assistance applications will be reviewed against the goals of the program based on level of planning and project readiness, local and regional support, financial commitment, and the project's applicability for similar entities. A scoring rubric will be used to evaluate and compare grant applications and the number of applications dependent on available funds for the grant program (see table below).



## Demonstration Assistance Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Scope	15
Performance Measures	10
Project Readiness and Eligibility	5
Technical Capacity	15
Local and Regional Support	5
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>50</b>

## Applicant/Recipient Responsibilities

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The approved applicant is responsible for the following:

- Conduct sufficient level of planning to identify project need, project purpose, and establish performance measures and thresholds.
- Develop goals, objectives, criteria, and performance measures to define success and failure.
- Demonstrate intent and financial commitment to continue the project beyond the demonstration phase if it is found to be successful
- Provide continuous administrative direction and project management.
- Provide directly, or by contract, adequate technical inspection and supervision of qualified personnel of all work in progress.
- Ensure compliance with plans, specifications, contract requirements, applicable codes, ordinances, and safety standards.
- Meet requirements outlined in the project contract and master agreement, if applicable.
- Close out projects on a timely basis.
- Conduct before-and-after analysis for wider dissemination.

## Applicant Requirements

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

**Project Description:** Please include a brief, but informative summary of the project. All projects must be in the local transit system's Transit Development Plan (TDP), Transit Strategic Plan (TSP), or Transportation Demand Management (TDM) agency's TDM plan.



Project description must include:

- Reasonable and verifiable project scope that reflects activities needed to meet the identified need
- Project schedule
- Estimated project cost and funding request
- Expected product or service, or result with the specified features and functions

**Project Justification:** Most applicants will need to complete a planning study to develop project justification and prepare a plan for project implementation. Please use the planning work and ensure that, at a minimum, the following is included in the application:

- Clear and demonstrable unmet need that will be met by the project
- Description of how the completion of the project mitigates the need or problem
- For Type 1 – New Service projects: An operations schedule, forecast patronage (ridership), and a long-term funding plan.

**Technical Capacity:** Enter the name, position title, phone number, email address, and describe the qualifications of the person responsible for the completion of this project, who will serve as DRPT's point of contact as technical questions arise.

**Financial Capacity:** Applicant must demonstrate intent and financial commitment to continue the project beyond the demonstration phase if it is found to be successful.

**Performance Measures and Thresholds:** Applicant must clearly establish criteria for success. Applicant must outline anticipated performance measures, associated performance thresholds, and collect the required data to evaluate results of the project or activities against performance goals.

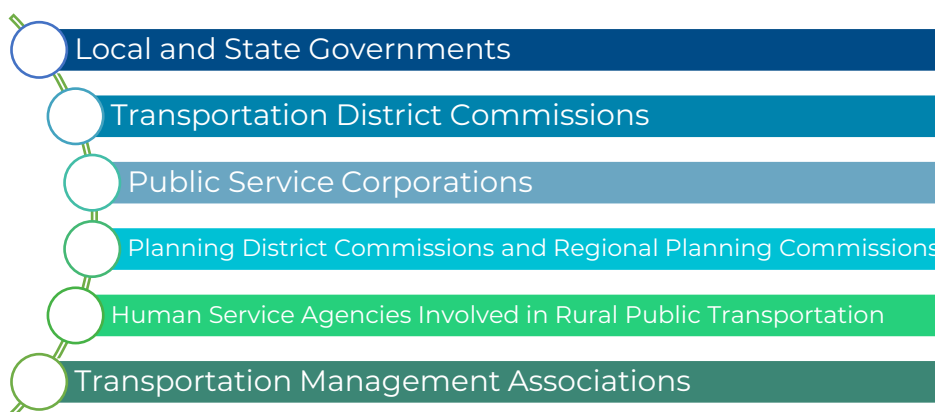
**Local and Regional Support:** Applicant must demonstrate local and regional support and/or financial commitment of the project or activities will directly or indirectly impact other entities or jurisdictions.

## Section 1.4 Technical Assistance

This section provides a general overview of the Technical Assistance grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements. Funding for this program comes from the Special Projects program, which includes funding for DRPT’s Demonstration Assistance, Public Transportation Workforce Development Program, CAP Operating Assistance, and CAP Project Assistance.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible Technical Assistance grant applicants include:



### Program Description

The Technical Assistance grant program supports studies, plans, research, data collection, and evaluation projects to help improve, justify, and evaluate public transportation or commuter assistance services. This program may be used to conduct a wide range of planning and technical analysis that is needed as input into a decision-making or evaluation process that relate to providing public transportation.

The aim of the program is to provide funding that helps grantees answer questions related to the provision of public transportation services and commuter assistance programs. This includes, but is not limited to, providing technical analysis and guidance on operations, service delivery, customer service, expansions of service, and program delivery.

### Program Goal

The goal of the Technical Assistance program is to help improve public transportation and TDM/commuter assistance services. This grant program supports projects that

obtain data and analysis that are used to improve the quality, performance and efficiency of public transportation and TDM/commuter assistance services.

Applicants are expected to provide enough information in their application for DRPT to assess the applicant's readiness and commitment to carry out the technical assistance project. Applicants should think about including a clear scope of work or task order that demonstrates project tasks, deliverables, outcomes and expected project costs. Further, applicants need to demonstrate a clear need for the technical assistance being requested and how it would lead to improved transportation outcomes. Applicants should provide a clear picture of the steps that would follow after the technical assistance project ends (i.e. implementation through the demonstration grant program, or an application for funding under the capital assistance program).

## **Eligible Projects**

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Eligible expenses include the cost of preparing technical studies including:

- Capital and/or Operating Financial Plans
- Commuter Assistance Program Feasibility Studies
- Commuter Assistance Program Operations Analysis
- Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plans
- Comprehensive Operations Analysis
- Cost Allocation Plans
- Feasibility studies for proposed major expansion projects
- First Mile/Last Mile Feasibility Studies
- Industry Peer Reviews
- Integrated Mobility efforts (Mobility as a Service, Mobility on Demand, etc.)
- ITS/APTS Feasibility Studies
- Management and Performance Evaluations
- Marketing and Promotional Plans
- Procurement Assistance
- State Bus Rodeo
- Technology Research and Plans
- Transit Development Plans
- Transit Strategic Plans
- Transportation Demand Management Research and Evaluation
- Transit Service Feasibility Studies
- Vanpool Program Feasibility Studies
- Site Selection Studies
- Capital Assistance and SMART SCALE project development assistance

If an applicant is not a transit agency but is requesting funds to carry out a transit study they must provide a signed letter of support from any relevant transit agencies that would be within the scope or impacted by recommendations from the study. Further, any requests for local planning efforts must clearly demonstrate a linkage to transit and provide a detailed breakdown on what components of the study would be funded with Technical Assistance funds. Local Comprehensive Plans and other generic transportation studies are generally ineligible for Technical Assistance funding.

### **Grant Match Requirements**

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The Technical Assistance program provides state funding up to fifty percent (50%) of eligible project expenses. The grant applicant must provide a fifty percent (50%) match from non-state funds. If the applicant is using agency-controlled federal funds as a match, they must provide a minimum of 4% local match (non-state, non-federal dollars).

FTA 5303 funds may be used as a match as long as the grantee demonstrates that the following conditions are met:

- 5303 funds may only be used for up to 46% of the project cost. There is a 4% minimum that must come from local funding sources and must not be matching funds for other state or federal grants i.e. the 4% cannot come from an MPO's local match contribution to their 5303 funds.
- Any projects using 5303 funds must be included in an MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as either a task or sub-task.
- If the applicant is not an MPO, the applicant must provide a letter from the MPO stating that the funds are available to be used as a match.

### **Application Evaluation Criteria & Process**

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Technical Assistance applications will be evaluated by DRPT using the following criteria:

- Project Justification – explanation of the need/problem that the project will address (reference to plan, other study, or mandate calling for the project)
- Planning – documentation that sufficient planning has been conducted to execute the project (not necessary if the application is for conducting a plan)
- Project Scope – approach to addressing the need/problem (provide a clear understanding for the project and desired outcomes)
- Technical Capacity – identification of project management team and ability to execute the project

- Project Budget – ability to execute the project scope within the proposed project budget
- Project Schedule and Readiness – ability to start and execute the project scope within the project schedule and fiscal year
- Implementation Timeline – Identify a timeline for implementing the program identified in the Technical Assistance Study, if applicable.

DRPT encourages local entities to involve DRPT in any transit system planning efforts. DRPT also has staff and bench consultant resources available to help manage transit system planning studies on behalf of local entities.

### Technical Assistance Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Justification and Planning	5
Scope	10
Technical Capacity	3
Budget	4
Schedule and Timeline	3
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>25</b>

### Application Requirements

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

To submit an application for Technical Assistance, OLGA account users must log into OLGA and select Grant Applications from the menu, then select Public Transportation/TDM Applications, and finally select the Technical Assistance application.

Technical Assistance grants are for one year (12 month) grant programs beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Expenses and program components provided in the application shall be for a duration of a maximum of one year.

### Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Online Portion of the Application

#### Program Information

- Project Name – Enter the name of the project or program, as it will be referred to in the grant agreement and reporting.
- Project Description – Enter a description that details the components of the program or project, how it will be implemented, how the funds will be spent, and the expected outcomes and results. Be as detailed as possible.
- Project Justification – Enter the purpose of the program or project, why it is needed, what need or problem it will solve. Be sure to demonstrate how it is connected with other planning documents or studies (Long Range Transportation Plans, Transit Development Plans, locality Comprehensive Plans, etc.)
- Project Manager – Enter the name, title and contact information for the main project contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.

### Program Budget

- Funding Sources – Enter funding sources other than the Technical Assistance Grant that will be used to fund the program or project. This includes, but is not limited to, other state funds from any state or other agency, federal funds, and donations. **DO NOT enter funds that will be used for the local match.**
- Operating Budget – Enter all expense line items to detail what the funding will be used. Avoid using the “Other” category. There is only one expense line item for consultant services. It is for consultant staff wages. All tasks performed by consultants must be put in individual expense line items. Consult with your DRPT Programs Manager for appropriate expense line items.

### Project Schedule

- Project Schedule/Milestones – Enter a detailed schedule, including a start and end date (cannot be longer than two years), and detailed milestones. Include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, training, workshops and conferences, completion of reports, surveys, etc.

In order to ensure that local matching funds have been identified and committed, attach a resolution from the governing board or certification from the Chief Executive Officer stating local funds are committed for the program or project. If the local match certification is not available at the time the application is due, send the certification or signed resolution to the DRPT Program Manager when it is available.

### Additional Requirements

Attach a detailed scope of work and budget to the application prior to submitting. Failure to do so may result in the application being screened out.



## Section 1.5 Public Transportation Workforce Development Program

This section provides a general overview of the Public Transportation Workforce Development grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements. Funding for this program comes from the Special Projects program, which also funds DRPT’s Demonstration Assistance, Technical Assistance, CAP Operating Assistance, and CAP Project Assistance.

### Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible for the Public Transportation Workforce Development Program:

- Local and State Governments
- Transportation District Commissions
- Public Service Corporations
- Planning District Commissions and Regional Planning Commissions
- Human Service Agencies Involved in Rural Public Transportation
- Public Transportation System Operators
- Commuter Assistance Program Operators

### Program Description

The Public Transportation Workforce Development Program supports the hiring of apprentices who are interested in pursuing careers in public transportation. It intends to increase awareness of public transportation as a career choice for aspiring managers, maintenance and operations staff, marketing employees, and other specializations within public transportation and commuter assistance agencies. The grant program enables qualified individuals to gain experience in all facets of public transportation operations through hands-on work.

Post-collegiate internships and pre-graduate training are both eligible for program funding. Applicants are responsible for conducting an open recruitment process and selecting a qualified individual that fulfills the purpose and intent of the program. Applicants are permitted to apply for funding for existing apprenticeship programs, as well as new ones.



***This program is not intended for staff augmentation, and such applications will not be considered for funding. This includes applications for full-time and part-time staff positions with duties or responsibilities not held by existing non-apprentice staff.***

## **Program Goal**

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The goal of the Public Transportation Workforce Development program is to promote and develop careers in public transportation and TDM/commuter assistance by providing apprentices with hands-on experience in as many aspects of public transportation or commuter assistance program operations as possible. The ultimate intent is to develop the next generation of the public transportation workforce.

## **Eligible Expenses**

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Wages, fringe benefits, training, and travel for the apprentice are eligible expenses. Eligible training expenses may include, but are not limited to, an apprentice's pursuit of a commercial driver's license (CDL), shop mechanic certification for transit and support vehicle maintenance, and training around emerging technologies, such as battery-electric or hydrogen fuel cell propulsion vehicles. Apprentice salaries are based upon a set hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours the apprentice is expected to work within one year. While applicants may propose a hiring rate based on their employment markets, DRPT funds Workforce Development Programs using a rate of \$20 per hour. Applicants who wish to use a different rate must contact their assigned DRPT Program Manager prior to submitting an application.

## **Grant Match Requirements**

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The Workforce Development program provides state funding up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible expenses. The applicant is required to provide a twenty percent (20%) match using local funding sources that are not state or federal funds.

## **Application Evaluation Criteria & Process**

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Applicants are not permitted to submit a Workforce Development application if they already have an outstanding Workforce Development grant that will continue for more than 3 months into the next fiscal year. Applications will be evaluated by DRPT using the criteria outlined below.

## Workforce Development Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Scope	5
Apprentice Work Plan	10
Technical Capacity	5
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	5
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>25</b>

- **Project Scope** – Describe the apprenticeship program, project budget, and project schedule. Identify the desired apprentice qualifications and a proposed hiring schedule. Include a draft of the hiring announcement.
- **Apprentice Work Plan** – Describe how the apprenticeship program will be completed within the program year. A detailed explanation of work to be performed and learned, a timeline of tasks, and section rotation schedule should each be included within this category.
- **Technical Capacity** – Identify an Apprenticeship Coordinator who will be responsible for supervising the apprentice and executing the Apprentice Work Plan. Provide their contact information and job description.
- **Monitor and Evaluation Plan** – Describe the approach to measuring performance and evaluating results of the apprenticeship.

This is a competitive grant program. Requests will be prioritized based upon the application submitted by the applicant and anticipated program outcomes. *Prior experience with managing apprentices and apprentice placement within the agency or other transportation-related agencies will be considered.*

## Reporting Requirements

At least quarterly, a report must be provided to the agency's assigned DRPT Program Manager along with reimbursement requests. The report should contain the following:

- A summary of work, written by the apprentice, describing the work performed to date, skills acquired, and observations.
- A summary of activities, written by the Apprenticeship Coordinator, describing the apprentice's work, opportunities for program improvement, and preliminary apprentice evaluation. The Apprentice Coordinator should also describe what work will take place during the next period.

**At the conclusion of the apprenticeship, the apprentice must provide a written report to the DRPT Program Manager assigned to the agency documenting their experience.** The report should document the following:

- Description of the agency and the services it provides
- Description of each function performed during the apprenticeship, lessons learned, and results achieved
- Recommendations for program improvement
- Likelihood of entering the field of Transportation as a result of the apprenticeship experience

Agencies should submit the Apprenticeship Report to DRPT following the conclusion of the apprenticeship. ***The report will be used in consideration of future Workforce Development Program funding.***

### **Application Requirements and Responsibilities**

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

***All data within the evaluation rubric above must be included for application consideration.***

# CHAPTER 2

## State Aid Grant Programs: Transit Ridership Incentive Program

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) provides funding to transit agencies for the purpose of improving the regional connectivity of urbanized areas and increasing statewide transit ridership by supporting the deployment of zero and reduced fare pilot programs. This set of guidelines provides a general overview of both TRIP Regional Connectivity and TRIP Zero Fare and Low Income.

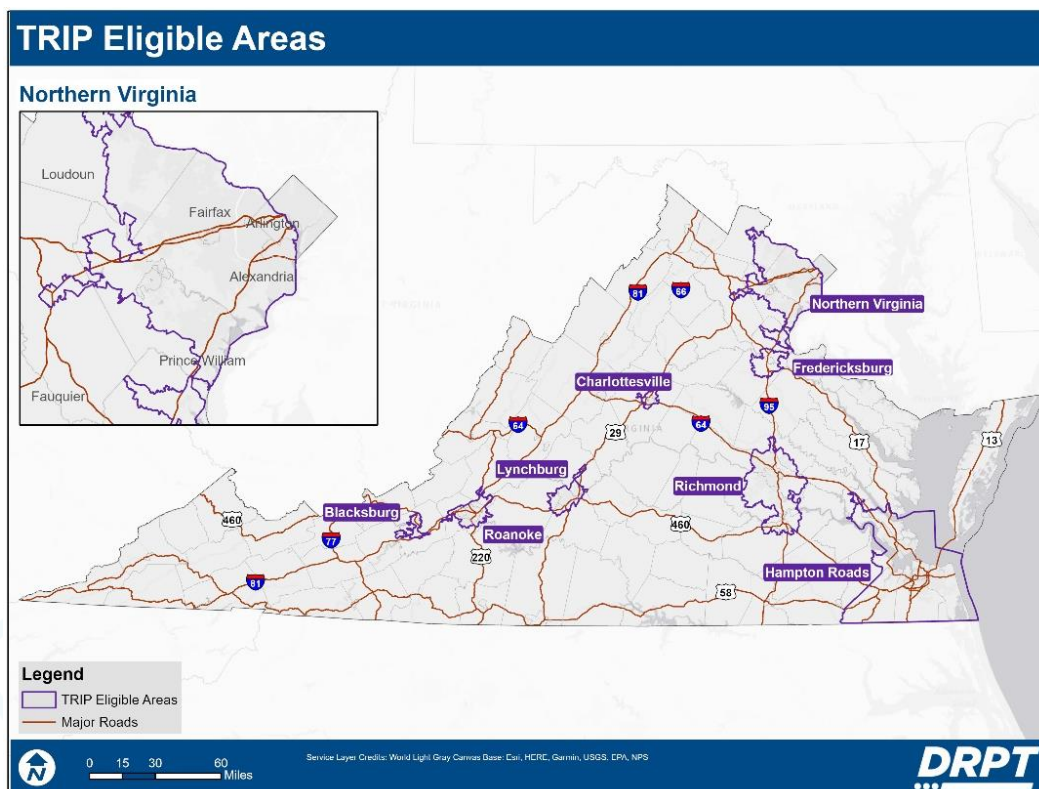
For more information on TRIP please visit the DRPT TRIP [website](#).

## Section 2.1 TRIP Regional Connectivity

### Eligible Applicants

TRIP assistance is awarded to existing providers of public transportation service in Virginia. Eligible recipients include but are not limited to public transportation service operated by:

- Large Urban or Small Urban public service corporations that serve urbanized areas with populations in excess of 100,000 – See the map below for eligible regions
- Transportation District Commissions that serve eligible urbanized areas
- Local governments of localities within the eligible urbanized areas
- Private nonprofit transit providers operating within eligible urbanized areas



## Program Description

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TRIP supports the regional connectivity of urbanized areas by designating state funding to a variety of strategies aimed at mitigating congestion, reducing emissions, and decreasing single vehicle trips. The following terms and metrics should guide applicants and will be utilized in project prioritization and selection:

**USEFUL SERVICE:** Regional transit provides opportunities for long-distancing commuting, accessing regional employment centers, and connecting riders with other modes of transportation. For regional connectivity projects, useful service will connect riders to regional needs in a quick and efficient manner that deters community members from relying on single vehicle trips.

**REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:** For the purpose of this program, to be considered regionally significant, transit routes must facilitate intra-regional travel within urbanized areas with populations over 100,000. Regionally significant routes fill a gap between corridors of statewide significance that serve statewide objectives and urban development areas (UDAs) which serve local objectives. Projects developed through regional collaboration, or through partnership with the urbanized area's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), will receive additional consideration in project evaluation.

## Program Goals

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To heighten regional connectivity and mitigate congestion in urban areas with population excess of 100,000 through the provision of regional public transportation improvements.

## Eligible Projects

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The following project types are eligible for TRIP regional connectivity and will be considered for funding:

- The improvement or development of routes with regional significance
- The development and implementation of regional subsidy financing models
- The addition of bus-only lanes and prioritized lighting on routes of regional significance
- The implementation of integrated fare collection

## Grant Match Requirements

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TRIP Regional Connectivity is a multi-year program. Applicants can apply for up to 5 years of funding. Multi-year grantees must participate in a funding step-down,

meaning local funding will increase as the project develops, while the state share will decrease. This structure promotes heightened applicant commitment and increases the likelihood of operations continuing after the conclusion of the TRIP grant. The below table outlines the maximum state contribution for each year of operations.

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year
Up to 80% of eligible project costs	Up to 60% of eligible project costs	Up to 30% of eligible project costs	Up to 20% of eligible project costs	Up to 10% of eligible project costs

### Application Evaluation Criteria & Process

Prospective applicants are required to submit an application package to be considered for funding. TRIP regional connectivity projects will be prioritized based on their project score.

In general, priority will be given to projects that score well, are quickly implementable, included in locally administered or statewide corridor studies, and have fully considered the financial capacity for project continuation after grant expiration. Scoring criteria and weights for TRIP Regional Connectivity Projects (Regional Routes, Bus Lanes, and Integrated Fare Collection) listed in the table below.

### TRIP Regional Connectivity Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Congestion Mitigation and Ridership	60
Projected Impact on Ridership	30
Projected Impact on Peak Period Ridership	30
Regional Connectivity and Regional Collaboration	30
Cost per Passenger	10
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100</b>

### Congestion Mitigation and Ridership

Derived from the [Code of Virginia § 33.2-1526.3](#), all TRIP regional connectivity projects should have a positive impact on regional congestion, contributing to a reduction in a community’s SOV trips and emissions. To gauge this initiative, DRPT established that



congestion mitigation and ridership will have the largest impact on a project's final score and will be divided into two different criterion: projected impact on system-wide ridership and projected impact on peak period ridership.

For FY24, all applicants applying for TRIP funding must consider the project's impact on their system wide transit ridership utilizing 2027 as a comparison date. Applicants should provide detail on how they arrived at their projected ridership increase, either through modeling, surveying, or other means. When necessary, impact on ridership will be evaluated proportionally in a manner that considers community population. Projected impact on peak period transit ridership measures the concentration of projected ridership during peak period travel times. Peak periods of ridership represents the time of greatest congestion and commuter needs. A project will be scored based on its ability to mitigate congestion during these peak times. Applicants should provide an hourly breakdown of their ridership to further describe the potential for mitigation during times of high congestion.

### **Regional Connectivity and Collaboration**

This scoring criteria speaks to the regional access of the project and the regional development of the application. Because regional projects are aimed at increasing regional connectivity, projects should be developed through collaboration of involved localities and their regional authority when appropriate. This component will not only speak to regional collaboration but will also speak to the potential benefit to the region. Regional routes should provide access to vital community services, diverse modes of transportation, and other key destinations.

### **Cost per Passenger**

To ensure the most efficient use of TRIP funds, cost per passenger will be used to gauge the regional benefit of the project's use of funds. Research should be performed prior to the submission of an application that speaks to the affordability of the project in regards to the anticipated ridership. This component will allow DRPT to further evaluate applications ability to benefit the community with consideration of limited funding.

*\* The development and implementation of regional subsidy financing models will be scored independently from this scoring criteria, if interested in applying for this project type please email [TRIP@drpt.virginia.gov](mailto:TRIP@drpt.virginia.gov).*

## **Application Requirements**

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**Project Description** – a brief yet informative summary of the project that includes:

- Reasonable and explanatory project scope

- Brief project schedule
- Project objective
- Confirmation of ability to provide data and evidence of project's success on a quarterly basis

**Project Justification** – The project justification must provide a clear and demonstrable unmet need that will be met by the project and a thorough description on the mitigation of the implementation plan.

**Project Objective** – The following objectives are applicable to regional connectivity projects: ridership projection, emissions reduction, decrease in SOV trips and congestion mitigation. These objectives should be paired with a measurable target which yields available data that speaks to the project's success in meeting the defined objective on a quarterly basis.

**Required Data** – Current route ridership (if applicable), projected route ridership after project implementation (2027), current route peak period ridership (if applicable), and projected route peak period ridership after project implementation (2027).

**Project Schedule and Readiness** – What, if anything, needs to be done prior to project deployment (e.g. vehicle purchase, bus stop improvement, road or signal enhancement, software/hardware installation, etc.)

**Financial Detail and Maintenance of Effort** – Provide details on project cost, financial duration, and plans to continue service funding after TRIP funding phases out.

**Local and Regional Support** – For bus lanes and traffic signal projects, applicants must get a letter of support/approval from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) or the local government that is responsible for maintenance (Cities, Towns). For routes of regional significance, transit agencies or sponsoring jurisdiction must get board approval from all jurisdictions in which route operates prior to application submission.

**Congestion Mitigation** – Applicants must provide explanation on how this project will reduce traffic congestion through heightening the investment in transit.

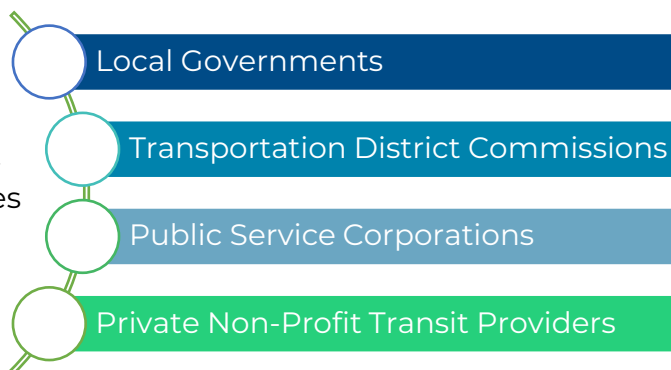
**Technical Capacity/Oversight** – Enter the name, title, phone number, email address and qualifications of the person responsible for the completion of this project, who will also serve as DRPT's point of contact for the project.

## Section 2.2 TRIP Zero Fare and Low Income

### Eligible Applicants

TRIP assistance is awarded to existing providers of public transportation service in Virginia. Projects that are framed through partnerships with community based or human resource organization are encouraged. **This source of funding does not have a size nor population requirement.**

Eligible recipients include but are not limited to public transportation services operated by:



### Program Description

TRIP provides funding to transit agencies for the purpose of supporting the deployment of zero fare and/or reduced fare pilot programs designed to support low income communities. These programs will aim at increasing a system’s ridership and accessibility.

The following terms and metrics should guide applicants and will be utilized in project ranking and selection:

**QUALITY SERVICE:** Quality transit service reflects the unique needs of the system’s riders. To be considered “quality service” a transit route must have appropriate coverage that provides residents access to social services, educational and employment opportunities, and healthcare. These routes should have representative hours of service that effectively meet the needs of commuting residents. Additionally infrastructure impacts quality service, for systems with sidewalks and appropriate multimodal infrastructure ensure safe and comfortable last mile connections.

**LOW-INCOME:** The Department of Rail and Public Transportation recognizes that “low-income” can take many shapes in different communities. To ensure the creation of a locally developed threshold that accurately represents the needs of the community, this application will permit multiple metrics of low-income. Applicants will select the most suitable metric for their system and provide their rationale.

## Program Goals

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To reduce barriers to transit use in communities through the creation and implementation of zero or reduced fare pilot programs

## Eligible Projects

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The following project types will be considered for TRIP Zero Fare and Low Income funding:

- The provision of subsidized or fully free passes to low-income populations
- The elimination of fares on high-capacity corridors, establishing 'zero fare zones'
- The deployment of an entirely zero fare system

*\*projects will be reimbursed based on net fare collection*

## Grant Match Requirements

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Similar to TRIP Regional Connectivity, TRIP Zero Fare and Low Income is a multi-year program. Applicants can apply for up to 3 years of funding. Multi-year grantees must participate in a funding step-down, meaning local funding will increase as the project develops, while the state share will decrease. This structure promotes heightened applicant commitment and increases the likelihood of operations continuing after the conclusion of the TRIP grant. The below table outlines the maximum state contribution for each year of operations.

First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Up to 80% of eligible project costs	Up to 60% of eligible project costs	Up to 30% of eligible project costs

*\*to ensure the success of these projects, all **system-wide zero fare applicants** must commit to an additional 4<sup>th</sup> year of operations where the grantee provides one hundred percent (100%) of project expenses with continued DRPT oversight*

## Application Evaluation Criteria & Process

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The table below outlines the scoring criterion and associated weights for the TRIP Zero Fare Grant.

## TRIP Zero Fare Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Impact on Ridership	30
Applicant Commitment	30
Implications for Equity and Accessibility	30
Project Schedule and Readiness	10
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100</b>

### Impact on Ridership

All applicants applying for TRIP funding must consider the project’s impact on transit ridership. The predicted increase in ridership will be vital in project evaluation. Applicants should provide detail on how they arrived at their projected 2027 ridership increase, either through modeling, surveying, or other means. Impact on ridership will be evaluated proportionally in a manner that considers current ridership and community population.

### Applicant Commitment

TRIP was designed to contribute to meaningful and sustainable investment in transit ridership. It is imperative that selected grantees will not only commit to the project during the grant cycle, but will continue forward with successful projects upon the expiration of TRIP funds. The following components will speak to applicant commitment: identifying community partnerships, letters of support, options for continued funding, duration of funding, and willingness to participate in a funding step down.

### Implications for Equity and Accessibility

TRIP was developed to increase equitable access to transit. All projects applying for zero fare or low income funding should consider the proposed project’s impact on low income or marginalized community members. To depict a project’s impact on equity, applicants should conduct a thorough analysis that relies on quantifiable data.

### Project Schedule and Readiness

To ensure the most efficient use of TRIP funds, DRPT will be prioritizing projects that are near ready for implementation. Applicants should include details on their implementation schedule in their provided project timeline. DRPT is specifically

interested in projects that can be implemented within three months with relatively low startup costs.

## Application Requirements

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The TRIP zero fare and low income application will touch on the following components:

**Project Description** – a brief yet informative summary of the project that includes:

- Reasonable and explanatory project scope
- Predicted impact on ridership
- Brief project schedule
- Estimated project cost, funding request, and duration of funding
- For zero fare zones, a visual component (Google map, GIS map) of the proposed route should be attached to the application.

**Project Justification** – Prior to submitting an application, applicants will have conducted a study or performed research to develop project justification and prepare an implementation plan. The project justification must provide a clear and demonstrable unmet need that will be met by the project and a thorough description on the implementation plan

**Project Objective** – Each applicant should provide a measurable target for increasing ridership. That objective can focus on system-wide ridership or a specific community/population (with an equity approach).

**Project Schedule and Readiness** – What, if anything, needs to be done for pilot deployment (e.g. vehicle purchase, bus stop improvement, road or signal improvement, software/hardware installation, etc.)

**Financial Detail and Maintenance of Effort** – Provide details on project cost, financial duration and plans to continue implementation after TRIP funding phases out.

**Technical Capacity/Oversight** – Provide the name, title, phone number, email address and qualifications of the person responsible for the completion of this project, who will serve as DRPT's point of contact for the project.

**Partnerships with Community Organizations** – Zero fare /low income pilot programs strongly rely on community support to target the most appropriate audience and perform expansive community outreach. Applicants are strongly encouraged to build relationships with social services or non-profit organizations for the deployment of this pilot. Applicants should identify partner organizations, if applicable.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **State Aid Grant Programs: Commuter Assistance Program**



## Section 3.1 Overview

Using the same principles of the MERIT program – making efficient, responsible investments – the Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) seeks to make sound investments in programs and projects that are both efficient and effective at mitigating congestion by reducing single occupant vehicle trips, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and increasing the use of transit, vanpool, and carpool.

The programs and projects eligible for CAP funding are transportation demand management (TDM) strategies. However, TDM covers a broad range of projects and strategies, too numerous to all be funded by available budgets. Therefore, CAP provides funding for a targeted set of TDM programs and projects that mitigate congestion by moving more people rather than vehicles. Examples of programs and projects that can be funded by CAP are:

- Ridematching programs
- Providing commute options information to the public
- Employer trip reduction projects
- Guaranteed/Emergency Ride Home (GRH/ERH) programs
- Commuter assistance websites
- Carpool and vanpool formation projects
- Marketing that results in an increase in transit ridership, an increase in vanpool ridership, an increase in carpooling, and an increase in bicycle commuting
- Marketing and promotion of GRH/ERH programs, commuter benefits, and existing rewards and incentives for transit riders, vanpoolers, and carpoolers

The CAP consists of two grant programs:

- **CAP Operating Assistance**
- **CAP Project Assistance**

Grant eligibility requirements, application procedures, grant match requirements, and application evaluation criteria are explained in the following sections of this chapter.

## Section 3.2 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating Assistance

This section provides a general overview of the CAP Operating Assistance grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of programs qualify for funding, states the goal of the grant program, specifies application requirements, and details application evaluation criteria. Funding for this program comes from the Special Projects program, which also funds DRPT's Demonstration, Technical Assistance, Workforce Development Program, and CAP Project Assistance grant programs.

### Program Description

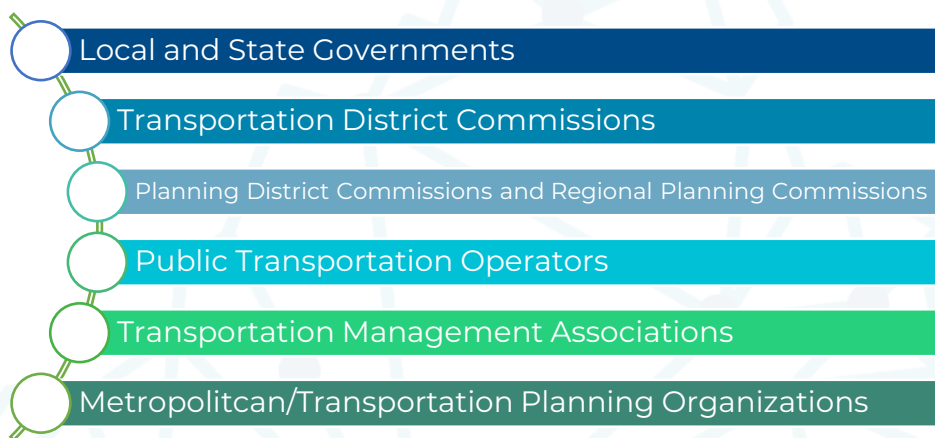
The CAP Operating Assistance grant program provides funding to support the operation of regional and local commuter assistance programs that serve the public, by providing ridematching services and commute options information, leading to a measurable reduction in single occupant vehicle trips (SOV), vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and an increase in carpool, vanpool, and transit use.

The benefits of CAP Operating Assistance programs are moving more people through the heavily-traveled corridors without increasing the number of vehicles in those corridors, reducing pollution, conserving fuel, and helping the public save money on commuting.

### Eligible Applicants

Only existing operators of commuter assistance programs in Virginia are eligible to apply for state CAP Operating Assistance.

Eligible applicants include commuter assistance programs operated by:



Organizations seeking to establish a new commuter assistance program should contact a DRPT Program Manager to discuss the requirements of establishing a commuter assistance program *before* applying for grant funding.

Prior award of funding under this grant program does not guarantee the continuous or future award of funds.

## **Program Goal**

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The goal of the CAP Operating Assistance grant program is to mitigate traffic congestion through the elimination of SOV auto trips and reducing VMT, by shifting SOV trips to carpool, vanpool, transit, and bicycle.

To achieve the goal, CAP Operating Assistance funded programs must convince commuters to seek commute options through the state approved Commuter Connections and Commute!VA ridematching systems.

Applicants must demonstrate that their program achieves an increase in the number of commuters in the ridematching systems and measurable SOV and VMT reductions.

## **Eligible Operating Expenses**

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CAP Operating Assistance funds the day-to-day operations of a commuter assistance program, including ridematching services and marketing and promotion of ridematching and non-SOV travel modes. All expenses should focus on achieving measurable results of an increase in the number of commuters seeking ridematching, reduction in SOVs and VMT, and increase carpool, vanpool, and transit use. Operating expenses should reflect an efficient program that achieves maximum results with minimum costs.

As a rule, all expenses should be necessary for the overall operation and implementation of the commuter assistance program, be both reasonable in their nature and amount, and contribute to achieving the goal of the CAP Operating grant program.

It is incumbent upon the grant applicant to check with their DRPT Program Manager to determine if an expense is eligible prior to including it in a grant application and prior to incurring that expense.

Components of commuter assistance programs operations that are eligible for funding by the CAP Operating Assistance grant program are:

- Ridematching services
- Commuter assistance websites and phone numbers

- Marketing and promotion of carpooling, vanpooling, and transit
- Guaranteed/Emergency Ride Home Programs

Additional guidance on eligible expenses:

- Marketing should **not** focus solely on one mode and must include marketing of carpooling and the ridematching service.
- Promotional items must have a per unit cost of \$5 or less. Costs and quantities of promotional items should be kept to a minimum and must be justified for need and use in the application. Justification must include the number of planned events, the number of people expected to visit the applicant's event table or booth, and the number of promotional items expected to be provided to the public at each event.
- Dues and subscriptions must be justified in the grant application with an explanation of how memberships and subscription services will be used to improve the program and achieve an increase in ridematching requests and SOV reduction.
- Education and training must be for primary program operations staff only. The grant application must include information regarding how training and education are used to benefit the program and reduce SOVs.
- Travel expenses should be limited to primary program operations staff for program-related travel, and must comply with all federal, state, and DRPT regulations. More information on travel regulations can be found in DRPT's [Grant Administration Procedures](#) (Purple Book) in OLGA.
- Incentives and Rewards: Existing Commuter Connections and DRPT's Commute!VA incentives and rewards must be considered before requesting new ones. If requesting funding for new incentives and rewards, the applicant must justify why those provided through Commuter Connections and Commute!VA will not achieve the desired objectives of the CAP grant program and explain how and why the proposed incentives or rewards will achieve better results.
- Staff expenses are eligible only for the work necessary for the operations of the commuter assistance program. Eligible work tasks are: grant administration, providing direct assistance to the public for the purpose of providing commute options information and convincing the public to use non-SOV modes and seek ridematching services, follow up with those that requested ridematching and commute options information, marketing, and reporting of data, program activities and results to DRPT.

## Ineligible Expenses

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It is incumbent upon the grant applicant to check with their DRPT Program Manager to determine if an expense is eligible prior to including it in a grant application and prior to incurring that expense. DRPT reserves the right to remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses from the application during the review and evaluation of the application.

The following expenses are ineligible for the CAP Operating Assistance program. This is not an all-inclusive list.

- **Employer trip reduction programs – use CAP Project Assistance grant application**
- **Vanpool projects – use CAP Project Assistance grant application**
- Transit schedule design, production, printing, distribution, and marketing
- Public notices and announcements for transit service and fare changes
- Capital expenses (computers, printers, mobile phones, copiers, plotters, tablets, furniture, bicycles, bike racks, bike lockers, bike repair stations, vehicles, construction or leasing of park-and-ride lots, etc.)
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Commuter stores
- Capital and operating expenses for transit, vanpool, or other transportation services
- Promotion of bicycling for recreation or non-commute purposes
- Meals, food, and beverages
- Transit or other transportation service fare discounts or buy-downs
- Expenses related to state or federal lobbying activities
- Capital and operating expenses of a bike share program or service
- Research, studies, and plans (use the Technical Assistance grant program)
- Salaries, wages, fringe, indirect costs or other expenses associated with the operation, administration or management of other programs and projects, including those funded with federal or state funds

## Revenues and Other Funding

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In order to determine the proper funding amount, DRPT requires the applicant to report all revenues and other sources of funding with their application. Revenues and funding include, but are not limited to:

- Revenue generated by the sale of promotional items
- Advertising or sponsorship revenue
- Fees received from hosting events, meetings, or other activities
- Revenue from the sale of transit passes or other items

- Donations from individuals or organizations
- Funding from other state agencies
- Funding from federal sources or other entities
- Funding from counties or cities (other than what is used for local match)
- Proffers
- Membership dues received

**IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT include local match as revenue in the Other Funding Sources section of the application.**

### **Grant Match Requirements**

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The CAP Operating Assistance program provides state funding up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible expenses. Grant applicants must provide a twenty percent (20%) local cash match. State and federal funds may not be used for local match. The use of in-kind is not allowable as a match for this grant program.

The governing board of an applicant agency must commit to providing the local matching funds. This is usually done through adoption or signing of a resolution that commits the agency to the local match. Attach the signed or adopted resolutions that commit to funding the local match to the application in OLGA.

### **Application Requirements**

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are made online through DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)). To submit an application for CAP Operating Assistance, OLGA account users must log into OLGA and select Grant Applications from the menu, then select Public Transportation/CAP Applications, and finally select the CAP Operating Assistance application.

CAP Operating Assistance is a one-year (12 month) grant program beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Expenses and program components provided in the application shall be for a duration of a maximum of one year.

There are two parts to the CAP Operating Assistance application. The first part is to complete the online application in OLGA and the second part is to download the CAP Operating Assistance Supplemental Application, complete it in its entirety and attach it to the online application.

The OLGA application provides for only the basics of the program. Therefore, the Supplemental Application is necessary to obtain the full details of the program for which funding is being requested. A CAP application is not complete without a completed Supplemental Application.



## Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Online Portion of the Application

The following are the application sections in OLGA and descriptions of what information to enter in each section.

### Program Information

- Program Name – Enter the name of the commuter assistance program, as it is promoted to the public.
- Program Description – Enter a description that details the operations of the commuter assistance program for which the grant funds will be used. Include specifics on what services are provided, how the public receives the services, what ridematching system is used and how it is used, how the public learns about the program, and any other grant funded components of the program.
- Program Justification – Enter a detailed explanation of the purpose of the program, why it is needed or what problem it will solve. Also explain how the program is connected with agency or regional plans.
- Program Manager – Enter the name, title and contact information for the main program contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.

### Program Budget

- Federal and Other Funding Sources – Enter funding sources, other than the CAP Operating Assistance grant, that will be used to fund the commuter assistance program. This includes, but not limited to, state funds from any state or other agency, federal funds, and donations. **DO NOT enter the local match amount.**
- Revenues – Enter any revenue generated from the operation of the program. All revenue generated must be put back into the program. Revenue includes money or fees generated from the sale of merchandise, transit passes and E-Z Passes, advertising revenue, fees collected for events, etc.
- Operating Expenses – Review the Expense Item Help Document in OLGA. This document explains how each Expense Item category is to be used and what needs to be included in the detailed explanation of the expenses. Enter all Expense Items from the dropdown list to show all operating expenses for the commuter assistance program. Avoid using the “Other” category. If you do not see the expense item you need in the dropdown list, contact your DRPT Programs Manager.



Enter the budget amounts for each Expense Item category. Enter details of the expenses for the Expense Item category. List every expense. An explanation of which expense categories to use and eligible expenses for each category can be found in the Expense Item Help Document in OLGA. Please review the document before entering Expense Items.

### **Program Schedules**

CAP Operating Assistance is a one-year grant beginning on the first day of the Commonwealth's fiscal year.

- Program Schedule – Enter July 1 as the start date and June 30 of the following year as the end date.
- Milestones/Events – Enter dates of operational milestones and events. Include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, promotions, advertising, marketing campaigns, planned and expected promotional events, and all major program components listed in the Supplemental Application. Milestones are a critical tool for DRPT staff to manage grants. Therefore, it is important that applicants account for all activities and components of their program in this section.

### **Attachments**

Attach all documents that will provide for a better and complete application. The Supplemental Application is a required attachment. In addition, attach a signed or adopted resolution from the governing board or certification from the Chief Executive Officer stating local cash funds are committed for the program. If the local match resolution or certification is not available at the time the application is due, send it to the DRPT Program Manager when it is available.

### **Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Supplemental Application**

Download the CAP Operating Assistance Supplemental Application form from OLGA and complete all sections of the form. **Use the current Supplemental Application only. Each year changes are made to the Supplemental Application and using a prior year's application may not provide the information needed for DRPT to properly evaluate the application.** Attach the completed Supplemental Application to the online application in OLGA before submitting the application. The Supplemental Application must remain in Adobe Forms format.

The Supplemental Application asks for more details about the program, including expenditure details, staffing, program components, expected results/outcomes, how

the results/outcomes will be measured, and how the program will achieve the results/outcomes.

Commuter conditions have changed over the past year and commuter assistance programs have to adapt to the changes in commuting patterns and trends. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the Supplemental Application is not just a cut and paste from a previous application.

### **Application Evaluation Criteria**

Applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT. DRPT evaluates CAP Operating Assistance applications based on if the application is a smart investment for the Commonwealth. Applications are evaluated based on the realistic expected results and outcomes and meeting the goal of the CAP. DRPT reserves the right to remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses during application review and evaluation. As a result, DRPT may recommend approval of an application at a different funding level than requested by the applicant.

Applications are evaluated using the following scoring criteria:

Category	Points
Is Program Part of an Adopted Plan	5
Program Description	10
Marketing and Audience Description	10
Measurement of Marketing Success	10
Strategy for Increasing Ridematch Requests	10
Milestone/Event Descriptions	10
Staff Level and Work Tasks	10
Budget Detail	10
Cost Effectiveness	10
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>85</b>

**Is the Program Part of an Adopted Plan** – It is imperative that commuter assistance program activities and services be backed by thorough planning, which will increase the likelihood of success of the program.

**Program Description** – Evaluation and scoring will depend on whether the description of the program is complete and clearly shows how/on what the funds will be spent, what services are provided, what activities will occur, how the program serves the public, operational systems used and how they are used, etc.

**Marketing and Audience Description** – Scoring will depend on how well the audiences for marketing are defined and the details of the expected marketing activities, including outreach activities, advertising mediums, advertising placements and timeline.

**Measurement of Marketing Success** – Successful marketing relies on the ability to measure if each marketing campaign or advertisement achieved the desired results and which ad did better than others. Scoring will depend on if the application provides a well detailed description, purpose, description of what and how marketing will be measured, what results are deemed success, and how the results will be used to improve the effectiveness of marketing.

**Strategy for Increasing Ridematch Requests** – Convincing the public to use the ridematching system to seek commute options is the key to the measurable success of a commuter assistance program. Scoring will depend on how well the program will increase the number of commuters seeking ridematching, if and how ridematching applicants are followed up with, how the commuter database will be maintained, and the trend of ridematching requests.

**Milestone/Event Descriptions** – The application should contain detailed milestones, events, or other activities important to the operation of the program. The more details provided, the better the score.

**Staff Level & Work Tasks** – Proper staffing and staff work tasks are vital to the success and cost effectiveness of the program. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on staffing charges and the work tasks of all staff charged to the program.

**Budget Detail** – A well-detailed description of all expenses is crucial to the evaluation and scoring of an application. Scoring in this category depends on the proper use of expense categories and the details of each and every expense within the expense categories.

**Cost Effectiveness** – Cost effectiveness reflects an efficient program that achieves maximum results with minimum costs. Ridematching requests, SOVs reduced, VMT reduced, and the program cost to achieve those results will be considered in the Cost Effectiveness score.

In addition to the scoring criteria, DRPT will use the following information to evaluate the application and the applicant's ability to successfully administer the grant, should

it be awarded, and the ability to achieve the necessary results to make the program a good investment for the Commonwealth:

- The trend of the number of ridematching requests
- The trend of SOV reductions
- The trend of VMT reductions
- The cost effectiveness trend to achieve SOV and VMT reductions, and ridematch requests
- The recent history of the applicant's ability to administer grants, which includes timeliness of reimbursement requests, current open and executed grants, and timeliness and accuracy of reporting to DRPT

## Section 3.3 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Project Assistance

This section provides a general overview of the CAP Project Assistance grant program. It identifies who can apply, describes what types of programs and projects qualify for funding, specifies application requirements, and details application evaluation criteria. This is a competitive grant program. Funding for CAP Project Assistance comes from the Special Projects program funding, which also funds DRPT's Demonstration, Technical Assistance, Workforce Development Program and CAP Operating Assistance grant programs.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible CAP Project Assistance grant applicants are:

- Local and State Governments
- Metropolitan/Transportation Planning Organizations
- Planning District Commissions and Regional Planning Commissions
- Public Transportation Operators
- Transportation Management Associations
- Vanpool Operators/Providers

### Program Description

The CAP Project Assistance grant program is a competitive program that supports employer trip reduction, vanpooling, marketing, and other trip reduction projects that mitigate congestion and reduce single occupant vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled.

### Program Goal

CAP Project Assistance is a result/outcome focused grant program. Applicants must demonstrate that their program/project will achieve measurable congestion mitigation by reducing single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through the elimination of SOV trips, and shifting SOV trips to carpool, vanpool, transit, and bicycle.

## Eligible Projects

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Prior award of funding under this grant program does not guarantee the continuous or future award of funds. Projects that are eligible for the CAP Project Assistance grant program are those that reduce single occupant vehicle travel including, but not limited to the following:

**Employer Trip Reduction Projects** – Eligible Employer Trip Reduction projects are those that are directed at private sector employers to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- Increase the number of private sector employers providing commuter benefits for employees that use transit and vanpool to get to work
- Increase the number of private sector employers regularly providing assistance to employees for the purpose of having more employees use transit, carpool, and vanpool
- Increase the number of private sector employees using transit, carpool, and vanpool

Allowable project staff expenses for an employer trip reduction project are limited to sales efforts for the purpose of establishing new commuter benefits programs, employer sponsored vanpools, designated parking for carpools and vanpools at employer sites, employer dissemination of commute options and services information to employees, and employers' encouragement of employees to use non-SOV commute modes.

A DRPT approved Customer Relations Management (CRM) system must be used to track employer activities and services provided, and report all the required metrics that are listed in DRPT's [Grant Administration Procedures](#) (Purple Book) in OLGA.

Employer activities have to be categorized as shown in the Employer Participation Levels document that can be found in OLGA as part of the application documents.

Applicants receiving funding for employer services from VDOT must detail their expenses using the VDOT funding and total amount received in their Supplemental Application.

**Vanpool Projects** – Eligible Vanpool projects are those that increase vanpooling in the Commonwealth by doing one or more of the following.

- Form new vanpools leading to the increase in the total number of vanpools
- Increase vanpool ridership

- Provide assistance to start new vanpools and to help vanpools that need riders

Applicants are encouraged to partner with DRPT and use the statewide Vanpool!VA brand and website.

Priority will be given to vanpool projects that are of a “pay-for-performance” nature or use the vanpool data collected through the project to generate additional federal funds for vanpooling and transit. These types of vanpool projects have proven to be the most cost effective and sustainable of vanpool projects, which make them a good investment for the Commonwealth.

#### *Pay-for-Performance Vanpool Project*

A “Pay-for-Performance” vanpool project is a performance-based project where the applicant is incentivized and rewarded for achieving results. An example of a pay-for-performance vanpool project could be where DRPT agrees to pay the applicant a fixed monthly payment over a defined period for each new vanpool started by the applicant, where the majority of riders have not been in a vanpool. Another example could be where DRPT pays a certain amount to the applicant for each new vanpool rider.

#### *Vanpool Data Collection and Reporting Project*

In most cases, vanpool data can be reported in the National Transit Database (NTD). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) uses NTD data to apportion funding to urbanized and rural areas in the United States. If the applicant’s area is already reporting transit data in the NTD, the addition of vanpool data will increase the amount of the region’s FTA funding apportionment.

A vanpool project that results in the collection of vanpool data, entering that data in NTD and using the additional FTA funds, or an equal amount of funding from another source, to sustain the vanpool project is eligible for CAP Project Assistance funding.

A typical vanpool data collection and NTD reporting project includes:

- Monthly stipends to a vanpool provider in return for NTD eligible vanpool data.
- A NTD reporting agency (typically a transit agency that is currently reporting transit data in the NTD) enters the vanpool data into the NTD.
- Tracking of monthly stipend payments for each vanpool.
- A plan, with partnering agency approval, to continue the monthly stipend payments after the FTA federal funds are realized from vanpool reporting.

There is about a 24-month lag between when a vanpool's data is reported in NTD to when federal funds from the vanpool data reporting is received. DRPT does not have the funds to provide grants to provide a monthly vanpool stipend in perpetuity.



Therefore, a plan needs to address the use of the additional federal funds, and how the monthly stipends will be continued after 24 months.

Letters of support and participation, contracts with vanpool providers, memorandums of understanding from project partners, including the NTD reporting agency, will help DRTP assess the project application.

**Transit Marketing Projects** – Marketing of bus service for the purpose of increasing ridership is an eligible project for CAP Project Assistance funding. Marketing may be to increase ridership on a single route, multiple routes, specific service areas, or an entire bus system. Use and customizing of DRPT produced advertising is encouraged, but not required. However, using DRPT advertising could save on production costs, and the savings could be used to increase ad placements and run times.

Ridership must be measured on the routes promoted and ridership must be reported monthly to DRPT through OLGA.

Eligible transit marketing expenses include staff or consultant work to create advertisements, place ads, and marketing through social media postings, and “try it” incentives or rewards.

Ineligible expenses include printing and posting of schedules, mandated or required public notices, hiring notices and advertising, and fare buy-downs.

**Other Projects** – Other TDM projects may qualify for CAP Project Assistance as long as they are designed to reduce SOV trips, increase transit ridership, increase vanpool ridership, or increase carpooling, and the results can be measured. Check with a DRPT Program Manager for eligibility of other TDM projects.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Employer, vanpool, transit marketing and other projects must be submitted as separate applications. Separate applications are needed to ensure proper measurement of results and tracking of funding.

## **Eligible Expenses**

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CAP Project Assistance funds projects described in the Eligible Projects section. All expenses should focus on obtaining results that meet the goal of mitigating traffic congestion by reducing SOVs. Expenses should reflect an efficient project that achieves maximum results with minimum costs.

As a rule, all expenses should be necessary for the overall operation and implementation of the commuter assistance program, be both reasonable in their nature and amount, and contribute to the goal of measurable congestion mitigation.

**It is incumbent upon the grant applicant to check with their DRPT Program Manager to determine if an expense is eligible prior to including it in a grant application and prior to incurring that expense.**

Additional guidance on eligible expenses:

- Salaries, wages, fringe, and indirect costs associated with the operation, administration, and meeting DRPT's reporting requirements of the project are eligible.
- Incentives and Rewards: Existing Commuter Connections and DRPT's Commute!VA incentives and rewards must be considered before requesting new ones. If requesting funding for new incentives and rewards, the applicant must justify why those provided through Commuter Connections and Commute!VA will not achieve the desired SOV reduction and explain why the proposed incentives or rewards will achieve better results. The applicant must track who received the incentive or reward and determine if a long-term behavior change was made to a non-SOV mode or other desired outcome.
- Travel expenses should be limited to primary project staff for project related travel, and must comply with all federal, state, and DRPT regulations. More information on travel regulations can be found in DRPT's [Grant Administration Procedures](#) (Purple Book) in OLGA.

## Ineligible Expenses

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It is incumbent upon the grant applicant to check with their DRPT Program Manager to determine if an expense is eligible prior to including it in a grant application and prior to incurring that expense.

The following expenses are ineligible for the CAP Project Assistance grant program. This is not an all-inclusive list.

- Expenses already funded through a state or federal grant or other funding sources
- Transit schedule design, production, printing, and distribution
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Meals, food, and beverages
- Transit or other transportation service capital or operations
- Transit or other transportation service fare discounts or buy-downs
- Lobbying activities

- Capital expenses (computers, printers, mobile phones, copiers, plotters, other day-to-day electronic equipment, furniture, bicycles, bike racks, bike lockers, bike repair stations, vehicles, construction or leasing of park-and-ride lots, etc.)
- Research, studies, and plans (use the Technical Assistance grant program)
- Salaries, wages, fringe, indirect costs or other expenses associated with the operation, administration or management of other programs and projects, including those funded with federal or state funds.

## Revenues and Other Funding

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In order to determine the proper funding amount, DRPT requires the applicant to submit all operating revenues along with their application. Revenues include, but are not limited to:

- Revenue generated by the sale of promotional items
- Advertising or sponsorship revenue
- Fees received from hosting events, meetings, or other activities
- Revenue from the sale of transit passes or other items
- Donations from individuals or organizations
- Funding from other state agencies
- Funding from federal or other sources
- Funding from counties or cities other than what is used for local match
- Membership dues received
- Proffers

**IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT include local match as revenue in the Other Funding Sources section of the application.**

## Grant Match Requirements

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The CAP Projects grant program provides state funding up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible expenses. Grant applicants must provide a twenty percent (20%) local cash match. State and federal funds may not be used for local match. The use of in-kind match is not allowable. In some cases, vanpool fares collected may be used for local match. Check with a DRPT Program Manager for local match eligibility.

The governing board of an applicant agency must commit to providing the local matching funds. This is usually done through adoption or signing of a resolution that commits the agency to the local match. Attach the signed or adopted resolutions that commit to funding the local match to the application in OLGA.

## Application Requirements

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online on DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)). To submit an application for CAP Project Assistance, OLGA account users must log into OLGA and select Grant Applications from the menu, then select Public Transportation/CAP Applications, and finally select the CAP Project Assistance application.

Applicants should review all help documents in OLGA prior to submitting an application. There are two parts to the CAP Project Assistance application. The first part is to complete the online application in OLGA and the second part is to download the appropriate CAP Project Assistance Supplemental Application, complete it in its entirety and attach it to the online application. There is a specific Supplemental Application for Employer Trip Reduction and Vanpool projects.

The online application provides a general description of the project. However, the budget should be very detailed, and so should the justification and schedule.

### Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Online Portion of the Application

**Submit separate applications for Employer Trip Reduction and Vanpool programs.** The following are the application sections in OLGA and descriptions of what information to enter in each section.

#### Program Information

- Program Name – Enter the name of the program/project, as it is promoted to the public.
- Program Description – Enter a description that details the operations of the project. The description should show, in detail, what the grant funds will be used for and products or services will be developed and implemented. Include specifics on what services are provided, how the public receives services, what technologies are used and how they are used (if applicable), how the public learns about the program, and any other components of the program.
- Program Justification – Enter a detailed explanation justifying the purpose of the project, why it is needed or what problem it will solve. Also, explain how the project is connected with agency or regional plans.
- Program Manager – Enter the name, title and contact information for the main program contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.

## Program Budget

- Federal and Other Funding Sources – Enter funding sources, other than the CAP Projects grant, that will be used to fund the project. This includes, but is not limited to, state funds from any state or other agency, federal funds, and donations. **DO NOT enter the local match amount.**
- Revenues – Enter any revenue generated from the operation of the project. All revenue generated must be put back into the project. Revenue includes money or fees generated from the sale of merchandise, transit passes and E-Z Passes, advertising revenue, fees collected for events, etc.
- Operating Expenses – Enter the budget amounts for each Expense Item category. Enter details of the expenses for the Expense Item category. List every expense. An explanation of which expenses categories to use and eligible expenses for each category can be found in the Expense Item Help Document in OLGA. Please review the document before entering Expense Items. Avoid using the “Other” category. If you do not see the expense item you need in the dropdown list on the OLGA application, contact your DRPT Program Manager.

## Program Schedules

The maximum project length for CAP Project Assistance is two years. The project length may be less than twelve months.

- Program Schedule – Enter the start and end date that the grant will be used. The start date must be July 1 or later. The end date may be twelve to no more than 24 months from the start date. The end date may be less than twelve months.
- Milestones/Events – Enter dates of all project milestones and events. Include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, and major promotions, advertising, marketing campaigns, planned and expected promotional events, and all major program components listed in the Supplemental Application. Milestones are a critical tool for DRPT staff to manage grants and it is important that grantees account for all components of their project in this section.

## Attachments

Attach all documents that will provide for a better and complete application. The Supplemental Application is a required attachment. In addition, attach a signed or adopted resolution from the governing board or certification from the Chief Executive Officer stating local cash funds are

committed for the program. If the local match resolution or certification is not available at the time the application is due, send it to the DRPT Program Manager when it is available.

### **Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Supplemental Application**

Download the appropriate CAP Project Supplemental Application form from OLGA and complete all sections of the form. Attach the completed Supplemental Application to the online application in OLGA before submitting the application. The Supplemental Application must remain in Adobe Forms format. A CAP application is not complete without a completed Supplemental Application.

The Supplemental Application asks for more details about the project, including expenditure details, staffing, project components, expected results/outcomes, how the results/outcomes will be measured, and how the program will achieve the results/outcomes.

### **Application Evaluation Criteria**

Applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT. DRPT evaluates CAP Project Assistance applications based on if the project is a smart investment for the Commonwealth. Applications for funding are evaluated based on the realistic expected results and outcomes and meeting the goal of the CAP. DRPT reserves the right to remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses during application review and evaluation. As a result, DRPT may recommend approval of an application at a different funding level than requested by the applicant.

### **Employer Trip Reduction Projects Scoring Criteria**

Category	Points
Project Description	5
Project Justification/Purpose	5
Goals and Objectives	10
Sales Operations	10
Performance Measurement and Reporting	10
Staff Level and Work Tasks	10
Budget Detail	10
Cost Effectiveness	10



<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>70</b>
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**Project Description** - Evaluation and scoring will depend on whether the description of the program is complete and clearly shows how/on what the funds will be spent, what and how sales activities are implemented, and how sales activities and results will be tracked.

**Project Justification/Purpose** - Points will be awarded in this category based on how well the purpose, reason, or problem to be addressed is explained.

**Goals** – Realistic and well defined sales goals are an important aspect of the application. Well-defined sales goals include, but should not be limited to, the number of new employer funded transit/commuter benefit programs established through the project, and new employer participation as categorized in the Employer Participation Levels document.

**Sales Operations** – A good sales plan is vital to the success of an employer services project. Scoring will depend on the applicant’s detailed explanation of their sales operations, what it does, how it does it, how an employer’s decision makers are reached, how they will convince employers to establish a commuter benefits program or other TDM program eligible under this grant program.

**Performance Measurement Reporting** – The CAP is a results oriented grant program. Therefore, applicants must show how sales activity and results will be tracked and reported to DRPT.

**Staff Level & Work Tasks** - Proper staffing and staff work tasks are vital to the success and cost effectiveness of the project. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on staffing charges and work tasks of all staff charged to the program.

**Budget Detail** - The application must have a well-defined, detailed budget which explains how each Expense Item category is to be used and includes a detailed explanation of the expenses. A well-detailed description of all expenses is crucial to the evaluation and scoring of an application. Scoring in this category depends on the proper use of expense categories and the details of each and every expense within the expense categories.

**Cost Effectiveness** – Cost effectiveness reflects an efficient project that achieves maximum results with minimum costs. Costs to achieve results, such as, new commuter benefits programs, will be considered in the Cost Effectiveness score.



## Vanpool Projects Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Description	10
Financial Assistance and Incentives (if applicable)	10
Performance Measurement and Reporting	10
Staff Level and Work Tasks (if applicable)	10
Budget Detail	10
Cost Effectiveness	10
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>60</b>

**Project Description** - Evaluation and scoring will depend on whether the description of the project is complete and clearly shows how/on what the funds will be spent, what services are provided, and what activities will occur.

**Financial Assistance & Incentives (if applicable)** - Scoring will depend on the detail of the financial assistance and incentives that will be provided through this project, who will receive the financial assistance, how they will learn the financial assistance is available, eligibility requirements and rules to receive financial assistance or incentives, and assurances there is no “double-dipping” of financial assistance or incentives.

**Performance Measurement & Reporting** – The CAP is a results oriented grant program. Therefore, applicants must show how results will be tracked and reported to DRPT.

**Staff Level & Work Tasks (if applicable)** - Proper staffing and staff work tasks are vital to the success and cost effectiveness of the project. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on staffing charges and the work tasks of all staff charged to the project.

**Budget Detail** - The application must have a well-defined budget which explains how each Expense Item category is to be used and includes a detailed explanation of the expenses. A well-detailed description of all expenses is crucial to the evaluation and scoring of an application. Scoring in this category depends on the proper use of expense categories and the details of each and every expense within the expense categories.

**Cost Effectiveness** – Cost effectiveness reflects an efficient program that achieves maximum results with minimum costs. The number of new vanpools formed, new riders, and the number of vanpools “saved” and the cost to achieve those results will be considered in the Cost Effectiveness score.

**Transit Marketing and Other Projects Scoring Criteria**

Category	Points
Project Description	10
Project Description/Purpose	10
Marketing and Audience Description (if applicable)	10
Measurement of Marketing (if applicable)	10
Milestone/Event Descriptions	10
Staff Level and Work Tasks (if applicable)	10
Budget Detail	10
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>70</b>

**Project Description** - Evaluation and scoring will depend on whether the description of the program is complete and clearly shows how/on what the funds will be spent, what services will be provided, what activities will occur, how the project serves the public, and operational systems and technology used and how it is used.

**Project Justification/Purpose** - Points will be awarded in this category based on how well the purpose, reason, or problem to be addressed is explained.

**Marketing & Audience Description (if applicable)** – Scoring will depend on how well the audiences for marketing are defined and the details of the expected marketing activities, including outreach activities, advertising mediums, advertising placements and timeline.

**Measurement of Marketing Success (if applicable)** – Successful marketing relies on the ability to measure if each marketing campaign or advertisement achieved the desired results and which ad did better than others. Scoring will depend on if the application provides a well detailed description, purpose, description of what and how marketing will be measured, what results are deemed success, and how the results will be used to improve the effectiveness of marketing.

**Milestone/Event Descriptions** – The application should contain detailed milestones, events, or other activities important to the operation of the program. The more details provided, the better the score.

**Staff Level & Work Tasks (if applicable)** - Proper staffing and staff work tasks are vital to the success and cost effectiveness of the program. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on staffing charges and the work tasks of all staff charged to the program.

**Budget Detail** – A well-detailed description of all expenses is crucial to the evaluation and scoring of an application. Scoring in this category depends on the proper use of expense categories and the details of each and every expense within the expense categories.

In addition to the scoring criteria, DRPT will use the following information to evaluate all types of CAP Project Assistance applications and determine the applicant's ability to successfully administer the grant, should it be awarded, and the ability to achieve the necessary results to make the program a good investment for the Commonwealth.

- The results of similar projects administered by the applicant
- The recent history of the applicant's ability to administer grants, which includes timeliness of reimbursement requests, current open and executed grants, and timeliness and accuracy of reporting to DRPT

# CHAPTER 4

## FTA Grant Programs

## **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

The United States Congress establishes funding for the FTA Programs through authorizing legislation that amends Chapter 53 of Title 49 of the U.S. Code. On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides \$109 billion in transit funding over fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

### **IIJA – Designated Recipients; Applications to DRPT**

Under IIJA, funds are apportioned based on each state's share of the targeted populations. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and other entities are allowed, under IIJA, to be designated recipients in large urbanized areas (over 200,000).

There is no application for funding under the Small Urban Areas Program FTA Section 5307 program. FTA allocates Section 5307 funding using a population-based formula to be dispensed by the Governor. This Governor's Apportionment of Section 5307 funds is dispensed by DRPT. DRPT allocates the Section 5307 funds based on the FTA Federal Register that issues the apportionment each year. FTA Section 5307 funding listed for Kingsport is allocated to the remaining small urban recipients based on the latest audited operating costs because Kingsport does not operate transit in Virginia. If the FTA Federal Register is not published before the final Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is made available for approval, DRPT will use the latest best estimate to estimate funding for the next fiscal year.

## **FTA Grant Program Common Application Requirements**

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Application requirements vary across the Federal Aid Grant Programs administered by DRPT. Specifics are detailed in each grant program's individual section. However, all FTA Grant Program applications must include execution of the FTA's certifications and assurances.

### **Certifications and Assurances**

There are currently twenty-one categories of certifications and assurances:

1. Certifications and Assurances Required of Every Applicant
2. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans
3. Tax Liability and Felony Convictions
4. Lobbying

5. Private Sector Protections
6. Transit Asset Management Plan
7. Rolling Stock Buy America Reviews and Bus Testing
8. Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program
9. Formula Grants for Rural Areas
10. Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants and the Expedited Project Delivery for Capital Investment Grants Pilot Program
11. Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities and Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Grant Programs
12. Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Programs
13. State of Good Repair Grants
14. Infrastructure Finance Programs
15. Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing
16. Rail Safety Training and Oversight
17. Demand Responsive Service
18. Interest and Financing Costs
19. Construction Hiring Preferences
20. Cybersecurity Certification for Rail Rolling Stock and Operations
21. Tribal Transit Programs

FTA's annual certifications and assurances permit the applicant to submit a single certification to cover all of the programs for which it anticipates submitting an application. When available, the certification and assurances form will be included on the application screen in OLGA. Compliance with applicable certifications and assurances and circular provisions is required as a condition of FTA funding. Electronic signature of the certifications and assurances will be enabled in OLGA when the effective edition of the document becomes available from the FTA.

### **SAM.gov Registration**

All grantees applying for federal funds are required to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with an assigned Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). DRPT has to provide the UEI to the FTA on an annual basis, so programs should ensure that their registration remains active and provide DRPT with the UEI on an annual basis.

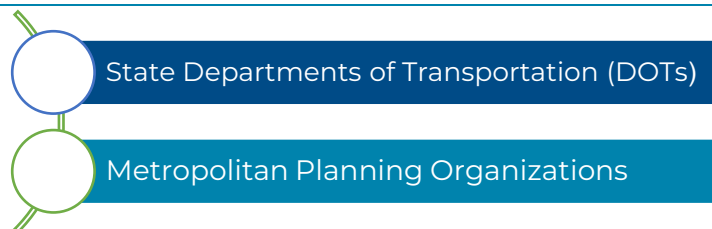
## Section 4.1 Metropolitan Planning (FTA Section 5303)

This section provides a general overview of the FTA Section 5303 program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

Statutory References: [49 USC §5303 – Metropolitan Planning](#)

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for FTA Section 5303 funds include State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), where federal planning funds are first apportioned to State DOTs by a formula.



In Virginia, DRPT serves as a state DOT for the purposes of apportioning FTA Section 5303 funds. Funding is further allocated to the MPOs based on a formula approved by the FTA and FHWA.

### Program Description

FTA Section 5303 – Metropolitan Transportation Planning is a formula based funding program that provides funding and procedural requirements for multimodal transportation planning in metropolitan areas and states. Planning needs to follow the 3C approach: cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive, resulting in long-range plans and short-range programs reflecting transportation investment priorities.

### Program Goals

The goals of the Section 5303 program are to foster regional cooperation in the planning process to develop multimodal short-range and long-range plans that: (1) encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of public transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and between States and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation related fuel consumption and air pollution through metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes; and (2) encourage the continued improvement and evolution of the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes by metropolitan planning organizations, state departments of transportation, and public transit operators.



It is anticipated that MPOs will utilize 5303 funding to support the development of Urban Transit Agency Strategic Plans, required by § 33.2-286 of the *Code of Virginia*. DRPT also encourages MPOs to consult with transit agencies on the identification of studies and plans that will be incorporated into their Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

## Eligible Projects

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Eligible activities for Section 5303 funding include planning activities that:

- A. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- B. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- C. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- D. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- E. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- F. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
- G. Promote efficient system management and operation
- H. Emphasize preservation of existing transportation system

## Grant Match Requirements

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The federal share is not to exceed eighty percent (80%) of the eligible expenses of the projects funded under the program. The Commonwealth, through DRPT, provides state funding match of ten percent (10%) and the applicant must provide the remaining ten percent (10%) local match share from local funding sources. Other state or federal funds cannot be used as local match.

## Application Selection Process

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DRPT will review applications to ensure they include the required information and documents, and that the total expense amount in the application and the UPWP match the amount provided by DRPT. The projects and expense items in the application must match those in the UPWP.

## Application Requirements

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Applications for FTA 5303 planning and state match are made online on DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

At the time of application submission, applicants must sign their certifications and assurances as required by the FTA annually. See the **Federal Aid Grant Program Common Application Requirements** section under Federal Aid Grant Programs at the beginning of this chapter for more information.

The application must include a copy of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP defines staff responsibilities, partner agencies, and consultant work activities in support of the MPO's planning process. It identifies other federally-funded transportation planning studies and passes funding to local governments, transit agencies, and others for transportation studies and activities. UPWPs follow a fiscal year format (July 1 – June 30) and require a strict schedule for development in order to receive funding from partner agencies.

The FTA authorizes 5303 funding on an annual basis. However, some projects may carry over to the next year and continue with funds from the prior year. In such instances, **carryover funds are not to be included or calculated in the current fiscal year's grant application request and must be clearly documented as separate expenditures in the annual budget section of the UPWP.**

DRPT, as a partner agency to MPOs, will review draft and final UPWPs before acceptance of the document as evidence of fulfillment of the objectives of the MPO's work program. Approval of the UPWP does not constitute endorsement or state approval of any recommended improvements or projects, nor does it constitute approval of location and design or a commitment to fund any such improvements.

The sequence of events for UPWP development should include:

1. Identification and documentation of planning priorities and a review of partner agency requirements. This includes review of new planning and programming regulations and requirements of the IIJA or current federal legislation.
2. A review by the MPO of initial staff time allocations, work assignments, work tasks, and cost information for the UPWP.
3. A request for input for proposed work tasks from various committees including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), and other special committees such as Elderly and Disability Advisory Committees if active.
4. A review of proposed staff work tasks and budgets with the TAC.
5. Submission of the draft UPWP to partner agencies for review on proposed work tasks and budgets.

6. Presentation and action by the MPO Policy Board to adopt the UPWP.
7. Amendment of an adopted UPWP per MPO action to reflect updates to time allocations, work activities, PL transfer and FTA Section 5303 carryover funds and schedules
8. MPO action to authorize filing of grant applications and execution of contracts.
9. FTA approval of UPWPs.

### Typical Application Cycle Milestones

Different MPOs have different processes and timelines for approvals of their UPWPs. Milestones noted below are for reference only.

February – DRPT will provide Section 5303 funding estimates in February. If the Federal Register containing federal 5303 funding apportionments has been released by February, then the funding amount provided by DRPT will be the actual FTA funding amount. Otherwise, DRPT will provide an estimate based on the prior year funding. The UPWP should be developed based on the amount provided by DRPT.

January – April: The draft UPWP is submitted by the MPO to DRPT. It shall include details on the initial staff time allocations, work assignments, work tasks, and cost information for the MPO's work program and activities. DRPT will also review details on projects involving the agency due to 5303 funding, an anticipated partnership, or stakeholder relationship. Depending on the development schedule for the MPO, DRPT will provide feedback on the UPWP.

March – April: MPO adopts UPWP that should incorporate comments received by partner agencies. The approval action must be completed prior to June 30 of the year.

May: MPO applications are due in OLGA. MPOs should also have an analytic basis in place for certifying their compliance with Title VI, in accordance with [FTA Circular C 4702.1B Title VI and Title VI – Dependent Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients](#). MPOs should report on their Title VI procedures (consistent with Chapter II part 4 of Circular C 4702.1B) annually during DRPT's 5303 application review process. In the case where an MPO has not finalized its UPWP, a draft UPWP is sufficient for application submission and review for FTA 5303 funds. A final, approved copy must be provided before the application can be approved.

June – July: After the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), DRPT will publish the SYIP and will work with MPOs to ensure that the approved funding for 5303 is incorporated where required.

June – September: DRPT applies for Section 5303 funding from the FTA and will prepare a federal project agreement and state project agreement for matching funds once approved. FTA letter of approval of UPWPs needed for application.

October 1: The funds become available and agreements are available for approval.

## Section 4.2 Small Urban Areas Program (FTA Section 5307)

This section provides a general overview of the FTA Section 5307 Small Urban Areas Program, explains how funding is allocated, what agencies receive the funding, describes what types of projects qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

The FTA Section 5307 program is authorized under the IIJA passed on November 15, 2021 (Statutory Reference: 49 U.S.C. Section 5307).

Please refer to FTA's [website](#) and [Circular](#) for specific compliance information and a more comprehensive FTA Section 5307 program guidance.

### Designated Recipients & Subrecipients

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DRPT allocates the FTA Section 5307 program as the designated recipient, to Direct Recipients in the following areas in Virginia:

- Small Urbanized Areas / UZAs (population between 50,000 and 200,000 people)

Federal guidelines allow DRPT to award FTA 5307 funds to qualifying Direct Recipients.

Eligible Direct Recipients include:

- Public transportation operators, including Transit Authorities and Transit Companies
- Cities and Planning District Commissions that operate public transportation

Direct Recipient eligibility is maintained by complying with grant requirements. Failure to comply with grant requirements, including mismanagement of grant funding, can result in the termination of the grant, refund of full or partial grant proceeds, and ineligibility for future grant opportunities with DRPT.

### Program Description

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**FTA Section 5307 is not an application-based funding program. It is a federal formula based funding program where DRPT distributes funds to Direct Recipients.**

This program makes federal resources available to urbanized areas and to Governors for transit capital, operating assistance, job access, reverse commute projects, and transportation-related planning. (Note: This can include expenses formerly supported

through the Section 5316 JARC grant program). An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more that is designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. The 5307 program is a federal formula-based funding program.

## **Program Goals**

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The goals of the FTA Section 5307 program are to improve and maintain transit service in the urbanized areas.

## **Eligible Projects**

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Each of the small urban recipients apply for 5307 funding directly from the FTA. The 5307 funding may be used to cover up to 50% of a recipient's operating deficit, as well as any eligible other expenses. Note that while DRPT does not match expenses for preventive maintenance, the FTA recognizes preventive maintenance as a capital expense.

Projects and funding must be in the applicable Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) before small urban recipients can apply for funding with the FTA.

## **Grant Match Requirements**

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The federal share is not to exceed eighty percent (80%) of the net project cost for capital expenditures. The federal share may be ninety percent (90%) for the cost of vehicle-related equipment attributable to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Clean Air Act. The federal share may not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the net project cost of operating assistance. The sub-recipient is required to provide the necessary match amount.

## **Allocation of Funds**

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**Recipients do not submit an application for the FTA 5307 program.** DRPT allocates funding by applying the federal apportionments in the Federal Register. The recipient will then apply to the FTA for the amount of funding allocated in the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP).

The FTA allocates 5307 funding using a population-based formula to be dispensed by the Governor. This Governor's Apportionment of 5307 funds is dispensed by DRPT. DRPT allocates the 5307 funds based on the FTA Federal Register that issues the apportionment each year. FTA 5307 funding listed for Kingsport is allocated to the

remaining small urban recipients based on the latest audited operating costs because Kingsport does not operate transit in Virginia. If the FTA Federal Register is not published before the final SYIP is made available for approval, DRPT will use the latest best estimate. DRPT makes adjustments as needed for apportionments to urbanized areas that do not provide transit or for multiple providers within an urbanized area (based upon MPO approved split letters). DRPT will provide a letter to the FTA approving the allocation of the Governor's Apportionment of 5307 funds.



## Section 4.3 Rural Areas Program (FTA Section 5311)

This section provides a general overview of the FTA Section 5311 program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

The FTA Section 5311 program is authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed on November 15, 2021 (Statutory Reference: 49 U.S.C. Section 5311). The rural formula program generally maintains the structure of the “non-urbanized” formula grant program under the previous authorizing laws, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act and Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. On November 24, 2014, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published FTA Circular FTA C 9040.1G; this is the latest circular available for this program.

Please refer to FTA’s [website](#) and [Circular](#) for specific compliance information and a more comprehensive FTA Section 5311 program guidance.

### Designated Recipient & Eligible Applicants

DRPT is the designated recipient for Virginia’s FTA Section 5311 program. Federal guidelines allow DRPT to offer FTA 5311 funds to eligible sub-recipients. Eligible sub-recipients may submit applications to DRPT for evaluation and selection. Eligible sub-recipients include:

- Local and State Governments
- Transportation District Commissions
- Public Service Corporations
- Private Nonprofit Organizations
- Federally Recognized Indian Tribes

### Program Description

Section 5311 is a FTA Formula Grants for Rural Areas program that provides capital and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. DRPT is the designated recipient for Virginia’s FTA Section 5311 program. Eligible applicants may submit applications to DRPT for evaluation and selection.

Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, and nonprofit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and operators of public transportation services.

Funding is apportioned by a statutory formula that is based on the latest U.S. Census figures of areas with a population under 50,000. The amount that Virginia may use for state administration, planning, and technical assistance is limited to ten percent (10%) of the annual apportionment. Virginia must spend at least 15 percent (15%) of the apportionment to support rural intercity bus service unless the Governor certifies that the intercity bus needs of the state are adequately met. In 2017, DRPT started a daily intercity bus program called the Virginia Breeze. The route connects Blacksburg with Union Station in Washington D.C. with stops on the I-81 corridor. Expansion of the Virginia Breeze service will be the primary use of 5311(f) funding in the future. An Operational Analysis and Expansion Study was completed in 2019 with service expansion implemented in 2020.

## **Program Goals**

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The purpose of the FTA Section 5311 program is to support the maintenance of existing public transportation services and the expansion of those services through the following program goals:

- A. Enhancing access in rural areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation
- B. Assisting in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural areas
- C. Encouraging and facilitating the most efficient use of all transportation funds used to provide passenger transportation in rural areas through the coordination of programs and services
- D. Providing financial assistance to help carry out national goals related to mobility for all, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals
- E. Increasing availability of transportation options through investments in intercity bus services
- F. Assisting in the development and support of intercity bus transportation
- G. Encouraging mobility management, employment-related transportation alternatives, joint development practices, and transit-oriented development
- H. Providing for the participation of private transportation providers in rural public transportation

## Eligible Projects

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Eligible operating expenses include items such as fuel, oil, replacement tires, replacement parts, maintenance and repairs, driver and mechanic salaries and fringe benefits, dispatcher salaries and fringe benefits, and licenses. Eligible administrative expenses include items such as transit manager's salary, secretary and bookkeeper salaries, marketing expenses, office supplies, vehicle insurance, and facility and equipment rental.

Net operating expenses are those expenses that remain after operating revenues are subtracted from eligible operating expenses. At a minimum, operating revenues must include farebox revenues. Operating revenues are all revenues accrued to the benefit of the project including farebox revenue (passenger fares), and contract revenues. Farebox revenues include fares paid by passengers who are later reimbursed by a human service agency, or other user-side subsidy arrangements, but do not include payments made directly to the transit provider by human service agencies.

Eligible capital expenses include items such as buses, vans, associated capital maintenance items, communications equipment, construction or rehabilitation of transit facilities. Commuter Bus service is not an eligible expense under Virginia's FTA Section 5311 program.

## Grant Match Requirements

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DRPT typically funds applications at the maximum federal participation ratio of fifty percent (50%) of operating expenses net farebox revenues and up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible capital expenses.

## Application Evaluation Process

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Applicants may apply for operating assistance, capital assistance or both. Below is a description of the evaluation process for operating assistance and capital assistance.

### Operating Assistance

For State Operating assistance, the 2018 General Assembly passed House Bill 1539, which requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to allocate operating assistance solely on the basis of performance metrics beginning in FY2020. Refer to Section 1.1, Operating Assistance, for more information.

For FTA Section 5311 Operating grants, DRPT validates operating expenses and revenue sources submitted on the application. DRPT determines the eligibility of

listed expenses based upon the criteria noted above, requests additional data or clarification from applicants if necessary, and reviews data submitted by the applicant for the previous year and any audited financial statements. The FTA 5311 operating grant is based on total budgeted expenses less budgeted fares divided by 2 on the application.

Under FTA Section 5311 operating assistance, funds are available for operating expenses for new systems and new service for existing systems. However, any proposal to develop a new transit system or start a new service for an existing system must begin with proper planning. Local entities must develop a plan prior to requesting any FTA Section 5311 funds from DRPT. Planning funds may be applied for through DRPT's Technical Assistance Program. DRPT encourages local entities to involve DRPT in any transit system planning efforts. DRPT also has staff and consultant resources available to help manage transit system planning studies on behalf of local entities.

Transit feasibility studies are acceptable planning documents for new transit systems. Existing systems must have a completed and adopted Transit Development Plan in order to request FTA Section 5311 for new service. **Transit Development Plan requirements** are available on the DRPT [website](#). Transit Development Plans must be submitted with an existing system's FTA Section 5311 application.

Specifically, proposals should demonstrate how they have addressed the topics defined in Sections 1.2-1.7 of the guidelines:

- Examining all of the options
- Planning for success
- Framing the purpose and need
- Land use considerations
- Service area and transit network design
- Other important considerations (including capital and operating costs)

### **Capital Assistance**

FTA Section 5311 applications requesting capital assistance will be evaluated by DRPT using the capital prioritization process required by the General Assembly in House Bill 1539. Refer to Section 1.2 Capital Assistance, for details.

### **Application Requirements**

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Applications for all programs are made online on DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

At the time of application submittal, applicants must sign their certifications and assurances as required by the FTA annually. See the **FTA Grant Program Common Application Requirements** section under FTA Grant Programs at the beginning of this chapter for more information. Applicants must also sign their FTA 5311 Special Section 13 (c) Warranty agreement as required by the FTA annually.

Required application data includes:

- Contact information
- Total operating expenses for previous fiscal year
- Operating budget detailed by expense item, amount and classification
- Operating revenues:
  - Revenue estimates detailed by passenger revenues and non-passenger revenues
  - Capital budget detailed by budget item, quantity, unit cost, source of federal and state funds
- Certifications and resolutions (in OLGA)
- Special Section 13 (c) Warranty
- Title VI Information Update (attach a copy of agency's signed and approved (or draft) Title VI plan to the OLGA application)
- Insurance Information (vehicle, facility, and equipment)
- FTA Annual Certifications and Assurances
- Resolution Authorizing the Application for State Aid for Public Transportation
- **12-month training schedule**

## Section 4.4 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA Section 5310)

Beginning in fiscal year 2022, application requirements and guidance for FTA Section 5310 are located in a separate document. This guidance can be found on the DRPT [website](#) and on DRPT's Online Grant Administration website ([OLGA](#)).

# APPENDIX

## Glossary of Terms



Acronym/Term	Definition/Explanation
<b>ATL</b>	Average Trip Length. The average distance ridden for an unlinked passenger trip (UPT) by time period (weekday, Saturday, Sunday) computed as passenger miles (PM) divided by unlinked passenger trips (UPT).
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit
<b>CTB</b>	Commonwealth Transportation Board
<b>CR</b>	Commuter Rail. A transit mode that is an electric or diesel propelled railway for urban passenger train service consisting of local short distance travel operating between a central city and adjacent suburbs.
<b>DEIS</b>	Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Federally required study that is precursor to all major transportation projects and their ability to receive federal funding. Examines potential environmental, community, and other major impacts a proposed transportation project may have.
<b>DR</b>	Demand Response. A transit mode comprised of passenger cars, vans or small buses operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations.
<b>FEIS</b>	Final Environmental Impact Statement. The final part of the DEIS process which reflects the extensive review and public comments of a DEIS.
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration
<b>FTA</b>	Federal Transit Administration
<b>HSR</b>	High Speed Rail
<b>ITB</b>	Inside the Beltway. The portion of I-66 east of I-495 (Capital Beltway). A certain portion of revenues from the tolling of this corridor will be dedicated to transit projects in this corridor
<b>MERIT</b>	Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit – is the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) statewide public transportation grants program
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization, required in any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000
<b>MSC</b>	Metro Safety Commission. Organization that will provide federal mandated state safety oversight of WMATA on behalf of Virginia, Maryland, and D.C.
<b>NVTC</b>	Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. Regional governance body allocating local, state, and federal funding to transit providers in Arlington and Fairfax Counties, and the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church. Co-owner of VRE.

<b>OIPI</b>	Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment. Office will cooperatively coordinate the planning and execution of the SMART SCALE program and SYIP as it relates to both DRPT and VDOT.
<b>OLGA</b>	DRPT's online system to submit grant applications and administer awarded grants, including signing of grant agreements, submission of reimbursement, and close out and de-obligation of funds.
<b>OTB</b>	Outside the Beltway. The portion of I-66 west of I-495 (Capital Beltway). A certain portion of revenues from the tolling of this corridor will be dedicated to transit projects in this corridor.
<b>PE</b>	Preliminary Engineering. Significant phase of project planning and development
<b>PM</b>	Passenger Miles. The cumulative sum of the distances ridden by each passenger
<b>RAB</b>	Revenue Advisory Board. The 7 member panel created by HB1359 to investigate and report to the General Assembly impacts and recommendations regarding the forthcoming loss of capital bonds that fund the DRPT transit capital program.
<b>SSO</b>	State Safety Oversight. Federal law requires states to provide safety oversight of rail transit agencies within their jurisdiction. In Virginia, this is limited to WMATA and HRT only
<b>SOV</b>	Single Occupant Vehicle
<b>TAM</b>	Transit Asset Management- a requirement for transit providers receiving funding under 46 U.S.C Chapter 53 and own, operate, or manage capital assets used in the provision of public transportation to plan for the inventory and longevity of assets.
<b>TDM</b>	Transportation/Travel Demand Management. Policies and activities designed to reduce the use of SOV (single occupancy vehicle) trips and increase the use of multi-modal transportation options.
<b>TransAM</b>	DRPT's online transportation asset management systems. All recipients of state capital assistance funding are required to enter asset inventory information for vehicles and facilities/infrastructure.
<b>TSDAC</b>	Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee. 7 member panel of transit grantees and DRPT staff tasked with technical and policy assessments of the delivery of DRPT transit capital and operating programs.
<b>UPT</b>	Unlinked Passenger Trips. The number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.
<b>VAN</b>	Vehicle Area Network
<b>VMT</b>	Vehicle Miles Traveled

<b>VRH</b>	Vehicle Revenue Hours. The hours that vehicles are scheduled to or actually travel while in revenue service.
<b>VRM</b>	Vehicle Revenue Miles. The miles that vehicles are scheduled to or actually travel while in revenue service.
<b>VOMS</b>	Vehicles Operated in Annual Maximum Service. The number of revenue vehicles operated to meet the annual maximum service requirement. This is the revenue vehicle count during the peak season of the year, on the week and day that maximum service is provided.
<b>WMATA</b>	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or “Metro”