

# 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 2025*

**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025**

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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 connect and improve the quality of life for all Virginians with innovative transportation solutions. 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

### **TRIP State Aid Grant Programs**

Transit Ridership Incentive (TRIP) Regional Connectivity

Transit Ridership Incentive (TRIP) Zero and Reduced Fare

Transit Ridership Incentive (TRIP) Passenger Amenities

Transit Ridership Incentive (TRIP) Public Safety

### **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).

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> <li>•</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**

FY25 Schedule	Process Step	Step Type	Responsible Party
<b>September 2023 – January 2024</b>  <b>FTA 5303:</b> <b>October 2022 – April 2023</b>	<b>Application Assistance Available:</b> DRPT offers assistance developing applications to potential state and federal grant applicants	Informational	Grant Applicant
<b>November 2023</b>	<b>Grant Application Workshops:</b> Provides applicants with information on the upcoming grant application process	Informational	Grant Applicant
<b>December 1, 2023 – February 1, 2024</b>	<b>FY25 State and Federal Grant Application Period:</b> The grant application is open for all grant programs except the FTA 5303 program (MPO Assistance) in the Webgrants portal	Process	Grant Applicant
<b>January 14, 2024</b>	<b>TransAM Data Update #1:</b> All assets in the statewide asset management system – <a href="#">TransAM</a> – must be updated in order to qualify for capital assistance	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>January 14, 2024</b>	<b>Transit Development Plan (TDP)/Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) Update Letters:</b> All transit agencies must submit TDP/TSP Update letters	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>February 14, 2024</b>	<b>5-year Capital Budgets Due:</b> Grantees that administer transit service are required to submit 5-year capital budgets at the time of grant application submittal through the Webgrants portal	Requirement	Grant Applicant
<b>February – March, 2024</b>	<b>DRPT Evaluates Grant Applications:</b> Staff review grant applications, evaluate and score projects, and make funding recommendations	Process	DRPT
<b>February, 2024</b>	<b>DRPT Provides FTA 5303 Funding Estimates:</b> Staff provide FTA 5303 estimate to Metropolitan Planning Organizations so they may develop their Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP)	Process	DRPT

FY25 Schedule	Process Step	Step Type	Responsible Party
February – April, 2024	<b>DRPT Develops the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP):</b> DRPT develops the draft SYIP which contains all state and federal grants that have been awarded	Process	DRPT
April, 2024	<b>Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Review:</b> Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) releases draft SYIP to the public for review and comment	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
April – May, 2024	<b>Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Hearings:</b> CTB holds public hearings to gather input on the draft SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
May, 2024	<b>Applications for FTA Section 5303 are Due:</b> Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must submit FTA 5303 grant applications to DRPT	Requirement	Grant Applicant
June, 2024	<b>Six Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Adopted:</b> CTB Approves final SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
June – October, 2024	<b>DRPT Develops and Executes Grant Agreements:</b> DRPT staff develop contracts and work with grantees to execute them	Process	DRPT
June, 2024	<b>Grant Administration Workshops (Grants Management):</b> Provides grantees with information on how to manage the grant funds that they have been awarded	Informational	Grant Applicant
July 1, 2024	<b>FY25 Grant Funds Available:</b> Grantees may start spending awarded grant funds	Process	DRPT
July 15, 2024	<b>TransAM Data Update #2:</b> All assets in the statewide asset management system – TransAM – must be updated	Requirement	Grant Applicant

## 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

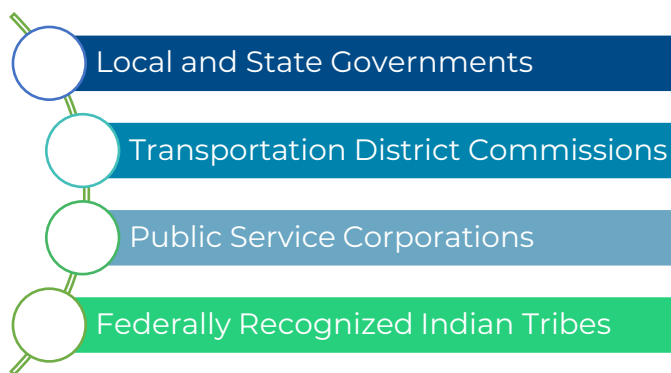
## Section 1.1 Operating Assistance Program

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

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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

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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

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

### Operating Assistance Funding Model

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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

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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.

### **ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

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



- Public Transportation Association dues (excluding any portion of the dues that are for state lobbying activities)
- 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.

### **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.

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 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 ([Webgrants](#)).

Required data include:

- Previous year's audited operating expenses and revenues.
- 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.

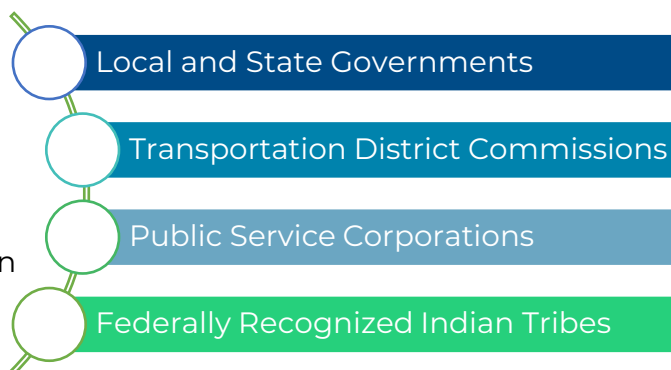
## Section 1.2 Capital Assistance

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 FY25 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>• All capital project development projects</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 \$3 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 \$3 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)

## **Major Expansion - Capital Construction Projects**

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The complex nature of Major Expansion (MAJ) - capital construction projects necessitate additional planning, design, and financial estimation steps prior to approval of MERIT - Capital Assistance funding. This section outlines the construction pre-application process and requirements, readiness criteria, DRPT’s approach to funding, and a description of technical assistance available to applicants.

The additional readiness and eligibility requirements that apply to these projects are meant to provide a higher level of certainty that initial allocations of Major Expansion (MAJ) - construction funds are as close to the projected needs as possible. The pre-application requirement has been implemented to provide DRPT staff with sufficient time to review project details, and to work with agencies to ensure that cost projections are realistic using up-to-date engineering cost estimation techniques to account for inflation and other contingencies.

The requirements specified herein only apply to Major Expansion (MAJ) projects as defined below.

### **MERIT Major Expansion (MAJ) - Capital Construction Projects with a total cost of \$3 million or greater, including:**

- The construction of new facilities and infrastructure, enhancements or renovations to existing facilities and infrastructure, or a combination of new construction and enhancements to existing structures
- The replacement of an entire existing facilities or structures

*Note: The pre-application requirement does not apply to MERIT Major Expansion projects that do not include capital construction, such as vehicle expansion projects or the purchase of other capital equipment with a total project cost of \$3 million or more.*

## **Pre-Application Process and Requirements**

Beginning with applications for Fiscal Year 2025 MERIT – Capital Assistance funding, all MAJ - construction projects will be required to submit a pre-application by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the year before the application is due (i.e. for FY25 funding, MAJ construction pre-apps are due on December 1, 2023). The pre-application will provide information that DRPT staff can use to help applicants develop complete and competitive applications by the due date of final applications at the beginning of February.

### **MAJ Construction Pre-application Timeline:**

1. **Pre-Application Due Date: December 1<sup>st</sup> each year**
2. Within 2 weeks of the Pre-application deadline, DRPT staff will correspond with applicant staff contacts to address the following items:
  - Any outstanding questions regarding the project
  - Completion of a DRPT construction phase checklist
  - Review of engineering cost estimates and completion of DRPT engineering cost tables
3. DRPT staff will work with staff contacts to address any outstanding items in the two-month period prior to submission of a full application.
4. Full application due date: February 1<sup>st</sup> each year

### **MERIT Major Expansion Readiness Criteria [Full Application]**

To ensure that the applicant has prepared for implementation, construction projects have additional readiness criteria that must be met prior to being awarded MERIT – Capital Assistance funding. The readiness criteria will be reviewed in detail upon the submission of a full application on February 1 each year. The pre-application document contains a checklist which asks each applicant to indicate the status of each criteria area.

#### **Readiness Criteria:**

1. **Planning Study:** A project should have a planning level study complete prior to being awarded funds for engineering and design or construction. This can include a feasibility study, needs assessment, or other similar study document that may be unique to each project.

- Feasibility studies, needs assessments, and other planning level studies are eligible for funding through the MERIT – Technical Assistance program.
  - In circumstances where a project has advanced to more detailed stages of engineering and design prior to seeking any DRPT funding, the planning study requirement may be waived.
2. **Property Ownership or Lease:** The land on which a construction project will be built should be owned by the applicant prior to the award of construction funds. If the land will be leased, evidence of the pending lease agreement will be requested.
- Property purchases are eligible for MERIT - Capital Assistance funding and will be supported as a Minor Enhancement Project. If the property to be purchased is worth greater than \$3 million, please reach out to DRPT for additional information.
  - At a minimum, DRPT will review the application to ensure that due diligence regarding parcels needed to implement a project has been completed.
  - For fixed guideway projects: DRPT recognizes that the acquisition of multiple parcels of land may be needed to construct the project and may take much longer than the acquisition of property for a facility. In these cases, DRPT will review the property acquisition schedule on a case-by-case basis to determine “readiness.”
  - For projects that intend to lease land where a project will be built, the applicant should indicate this intent as well as include any information on the availability of land for lease and the pending lease agreement in the application for funding.
  - DRPT also recognizes that property purchases may come before or after initial design plans for a facility are drafted.
3. **Engineering and Design:** A construction project must have at least 30% design plans completed prior to being awarded DRPT construction funds. This applies to construction projects of all sizes and scales and ensures that DRPT can review engineering cost estimates when making funding determinations.
- Engineering and Design projects, that would help an applicant prepare for future construction project funding, are eligible for MERIT – Capital Assistance funding as Minor Enhancement projects.

- Sufficient Level of Design – all applications for MAJ construction funding will be screened for having a sufficient level of design work completed. In general a minimum of 30% design plans are a requirement for construction funding awards, but there may be circumstances where a project will reach this milestone between application and when funds become available. DRPT will review these applications on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility.
- For Design/Bid/Build projects: 100% design plans should be complete prior to requesting DRPT construction funds.

**4. Environmental Review:** A construction project should have completed environmental reviews (i.e., NEPA, VDEQ, SERP) or categorical exceptions approved prior to being awarded DRPT construction funds.

- Environmental review projects are eligible for funding through the MERIT – Technical Assistance program.
- DRPT understands that the timing of environmental review processes for large construction projects can be complicated, so staff will review compliance with this readiness criteria on a case-by-case basis. If your agency will not have environmental reviews completed at the time of application, please coordinate with DRPT staff to determine the best path forward.

**5. Engineering Cost Estimates for A/E and Construction Management:** The applicant should provide costs estimates for construction projects that have been developed by an engineer or other technical staff or contractors that outline costs associated with the subject project.

- DRPT staff will work with applicants once a pre-application is submitted to ensure that all cost estimates provided are sufficient for review. (See: Pre-application section above)
- DRPT review of costs estimates will follow the federal framework provided in the [FTA Standard Cost Categories for Capital Projects](#).
- DRPT recognizes that smaller construction projects may not have associated cost estimates provided by an engineer or other third-party contractor. Cost estimates for these projects can be developed in-house but will be subject to the same review by DRPT staff.

**6. Comprehensive Financial Plan:** Construction projects should include a complete financial plan that includes: 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.

- DRPT recognizes that for large construction projects, it takes years to acquire funding from multiple sources to support implementation, and that many of these sources are discretionary in nature. With this in mind, the financial plan should outline all planned sources of funding at the time of application.
7. **Other Critical Contingencies:** All additional critical contingencies necessary to implement the project (i.e. zoning changes, land use approvals, approvals from elected bodies or administrative boards, etc.) should be met prior to being awarded DRPT construction funds.
- DRPT understands that large construction projects are complex and involve many approvals prior to implementation. If critical contingencies are not met prior to submission of an application, the applicant should demonstrate the plan in place to meet all outstanding contingencies.

## **Approach to Funding MERIT - Major Expansion Construction Projects**

### **Initial Allocations:**

It is DRPT's goal to ensure that the initial allocation of Major Expansion (MAJ) - construction funds is as close to the projected needs as possible. DRPT staff will work with agencies between the submission of a pre-application and the full application deadline to ensure that cost projections are realistic using up-to-date engineering cost estimation techniques to account for inflation and other contingencies.

**For large Major Expansion (MAJ) construction projects, it is DRPT's intent to allocate funding 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. This means that DRPT will distribute the state capital funds in increments over a time period that makes sense for the implementation of the project.

### **Funding Increases:**

DRPT understands that complex construction projects experience unforeseen cost increases throughout the planning, design, and implementation phases. To address these cost increases, DRPT will review requests for additional construction funds after an initial allocation on a case-by-case basis and award additional funds for construction in extraordinary circumstances. To apply for a funding increase, the

applicant will be asked to provide a brief narrative explanation addressing why additional state capital funds will be needed to implement the project. It is anticipated that funding increases will only be awarded one time for one project.

## **DRPT Engineering Assistance Available for Construction Projects**

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DRPT's engineering department offers additional technical assistance to help eligible applicants advance construction projects throughout the state. This includes the following services:

- Project and Construction Management
- Cost estimate development and review
- Design readiness review
- Environmental readiness review
- Feasibility Studies
- Project Management Plans

If you are interested in learning more about how the DRPT Engineering Team can help your agency develop plans for construction projects, please contact your DRPT Program Manager.

## **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 Webgrants 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 on Webgrants. 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.

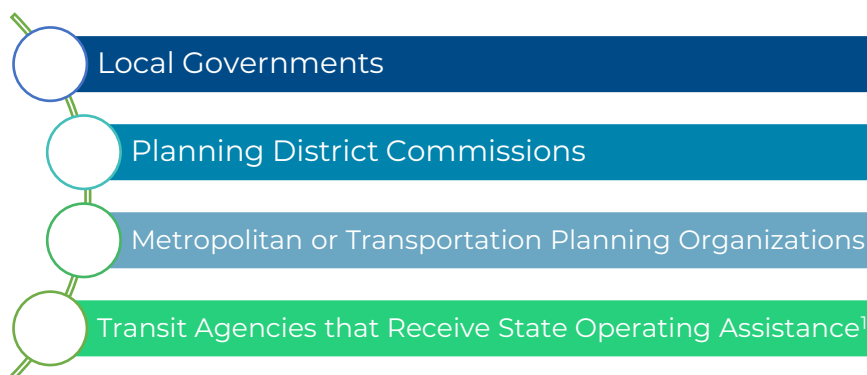
**Revenue Vehicles - Required Milestone:** All capital applications for Revenue Vehicles must include a milestone indicating the estimated vehicle order date.

## 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.

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

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

<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

## 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 must be attached to the application in [Webgrants](#).

### **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>

- 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. The project may also be identified in a local comprehensive plan, regional transportation plan, or an equivalent planning study.

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.

## **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.

## **Application Requirements**

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's online grant administration website ([Webgrants](#)).

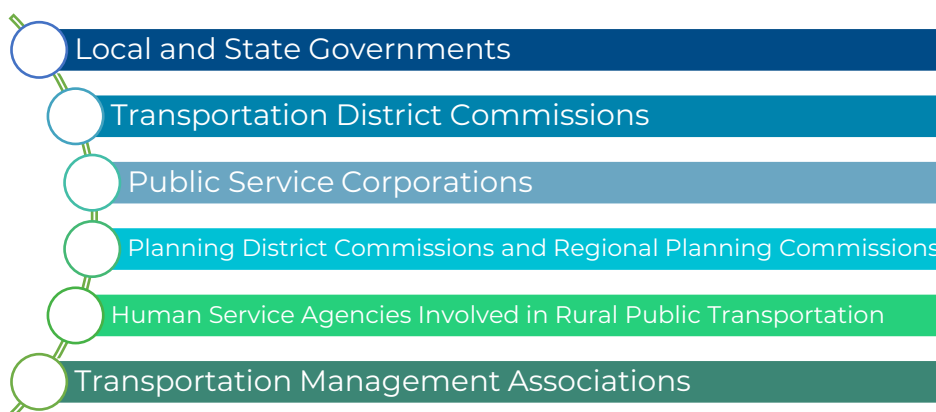
## Section 1.4 Technical Assistance

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

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Eligible Technical Assistance grant applicants include:



### Program Description

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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

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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 if 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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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 applications will be evaluated by DRPT using the following criteria:

## 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>

- **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.

## Application Requirements

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's online grant administration website ([Webgrants](#)).

To submit an application for Technical Assistance, Webgrants account users must log into Webgrants 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 Application

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### 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**

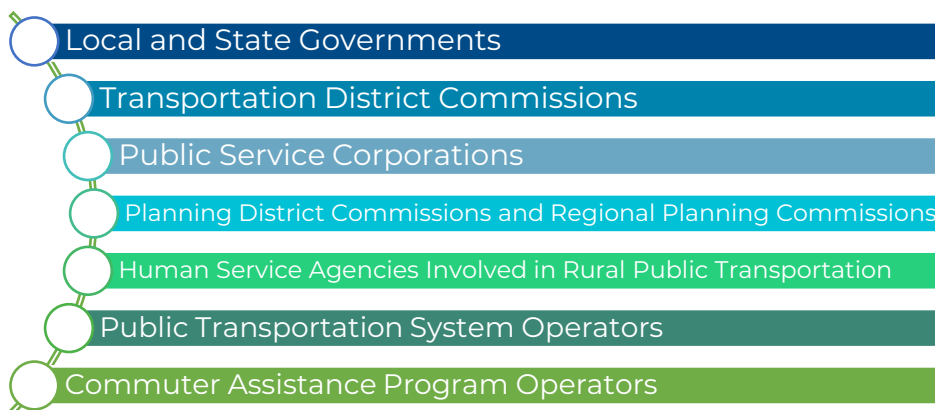
Attach a detailed scope of work and budget to the application prior to submitting. Failure to do so may result in the application being screened out.

## 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:



### 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.

Skilled trade apprentices, post-collegiate internships, and pre-graduate training are eligible for program funding. Applicants are responsible for conducting an open recruitment process or establish a partnership with a post-secondary educational institution 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 and establish skill pipelines in the communities' agencies serve.

## **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 application submittal.

## **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
Expanding Partnerships	5
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>30</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.
- **Expanding Partnerships** – Describe how your agency is expanding partnerships with post-secondary education institutions to solve short and/or long-term agency skills gaps that may exist.

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.*

### Application Requirements

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's online grant administration website ([Webgrants](#)).

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

## Reporting Requirements

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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, at a minimum, 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.
- Overview of program experience's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.
- Personal takeaways of the transportation industry and after their experiences and how it impacted their career path.

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.***

# CHAPTER 2

## State Aid Grant Programs: Transit Ridership Incentive Program

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) administers the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) which provides funding to transit agencies and governing bodies for the purpose of creating more accessible, safe, and regionally significant transit networks.

TRIP originally funded two project categories: Zero and Reduced Fare, and Regional Connectivity. In 2023, the Virginia General Assembly approved [HB 2338/SB 1326](#) identifying two new eligible project categories: TRIP Public Safety and TRIP Passenger Amenities.

*Applicants seeking TRIP funding for capital projects under any of the four project categories should expect application requirements and match rates to generally mirror those of the [MERIT Capital Program](#).*

*Applicants seeking TRIP funding for planning projects under any of the four project categories should expect application requirements and match rates to generally mirror those of the [MERIT Technical Assistance Program](#).*

You will find guidance on each of these project categories in this Chapter, and information on application scoring and evaluation for each project type in the section below.

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

## Application Scoring and Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated using a methodological approach that considers four key criteria that reflect TRIP goals with up to 10 points awarded under each criterion. **The criteria are divided into two overall categories: service-related criteria and non service-related criteria.** The maximum points available for any project type is 40.



More information on scoring and the different criteria can be found in the below sections:

## Service-Related Criteria

The level of impact (high, medium, low, and no impact) is determined based on the ability of each project type to address the defined TRIP goals. For service-related criteria, projects will receive a default score, which has been determined based on the potential for each project type to address the TRIP goals. The default scores are depicted in the table below. The scores awarded for each project type can be found in the detailed scoring matrix.

Impact Level	Default Score
High Impact	10
Medium Impact	7
Low Impact	3
No Impact	0

Additionally, definitions of the service-related criteria can be found below.

Service-Related Criteria	Components
<i>Impact on Ridership</i>	Project types were awarded the default 'Impact Level' points based on the project type's ability to increase local ridership and reduce congestion through the strengthening of transit service.
<i>Impact on Accessibility</i>	Project types were awarded the default 'Impact Level' points based on the project type's ability to increase the accessibility of the transit system and/or provide heightened access to community resources.
<i>Impact on Customer Experience</i>	Project types were awarded 'Impact Level' points based on the project type's ability to improve the customer experience, thus increasing the desirability of transit use.



## Non Service-Related Criteria

The non service-related criteria will be evaluated through a review of supporting documentation that outlines the project scope, as well as an assessment of the quality and completeness of the application submitted. TRIP was designed to support positive, long-term improvements to transit service. Therefore, a project is considered ready for funding when there is a strong, demonstrated local commitment *and* when the appropriate level of planning has been completed. In contrast to the service-related criteria, non service-related criteria will be evaluated based on the quality of information provided, not the predetermined ‘impact’ score.

Non Service-Related Criteria	Components
<p><i>Project Readiness and Scope</i></p>	<p>Project readiness can be demonstrated through signed letters of support- from primary funding bodies, the localities served by the project, and other local or regional planning organizations. Additionally, applicants can demonstrate commitment through proposing a multi-year funding plan, where the local share increases, as the state share decreases year-to-year throughout the duration of the project.</p> <p>Applicants can further show readiness by providing technical analysis or existing performance data illustrating the need for or the impacts of the proposed project. Points awarded for project scope will reflect the level of the identified need and the project’s ability to increase ridership, improve system or community accessibility, or enhance the customer experience. For projects that have an operational impact, additional consideration will be given to applications that demonstrate that work is prepared to begin, with minimal startup costs and delays. Lastly, this criterion will capture the quality and completeness of the applications submitted.</p> <p>Applicants seeking funding within the Regional Connectivity category will receive additional consideration if they have previously received Demonstration funding and have satisfied the requirements of the program.</p>

The detailed scoring matrix outlined below depicts the total potential points slated for each project type. The service-related criteria depend on the project type, while the non service-related criteria depends on the application itself.

### Detailed Scoring Matrix

TRIP Project Category	Eligible Project Type	Service-Related Criteria				Total Service-Related Points	Non Service-Related Criteria	Total Possible Points (max)
		Impact on Ridership	Impact on Accessibility	Impact on Customer Experience	Project Readiness and Scope			
Regional Connectivity	New Regional Route	High	High	High	30	0 – 10 points	40	
	Improvements to Existing Regional Route	High	High	Medium	27	0 – 10 points	37	
	Integrated Fare Collection	Low	Medium	High	20	0 – 10 points	30	
	Financing Subsidy Model	Low	None	Medium	10	0 – 10 points	20	
Zero and Reduced Fare	Systemwide Zero Fare Project	High	High	High	30	0 – 10 points	40	
	Development or Improvement of Zero Fare Zone	Medium	High	Medium	24	0 – 10 points	34	
	Zero Fare Passes	Medium	High	Medium	24	0 – 10 points	34	
	Reduced Fare Passes	Medium	High	Low	20	0 – 10 points	30	
	Fare Evaluation and Transition Planning	Medium	Medium	Low	17	0 – 10 points	27	

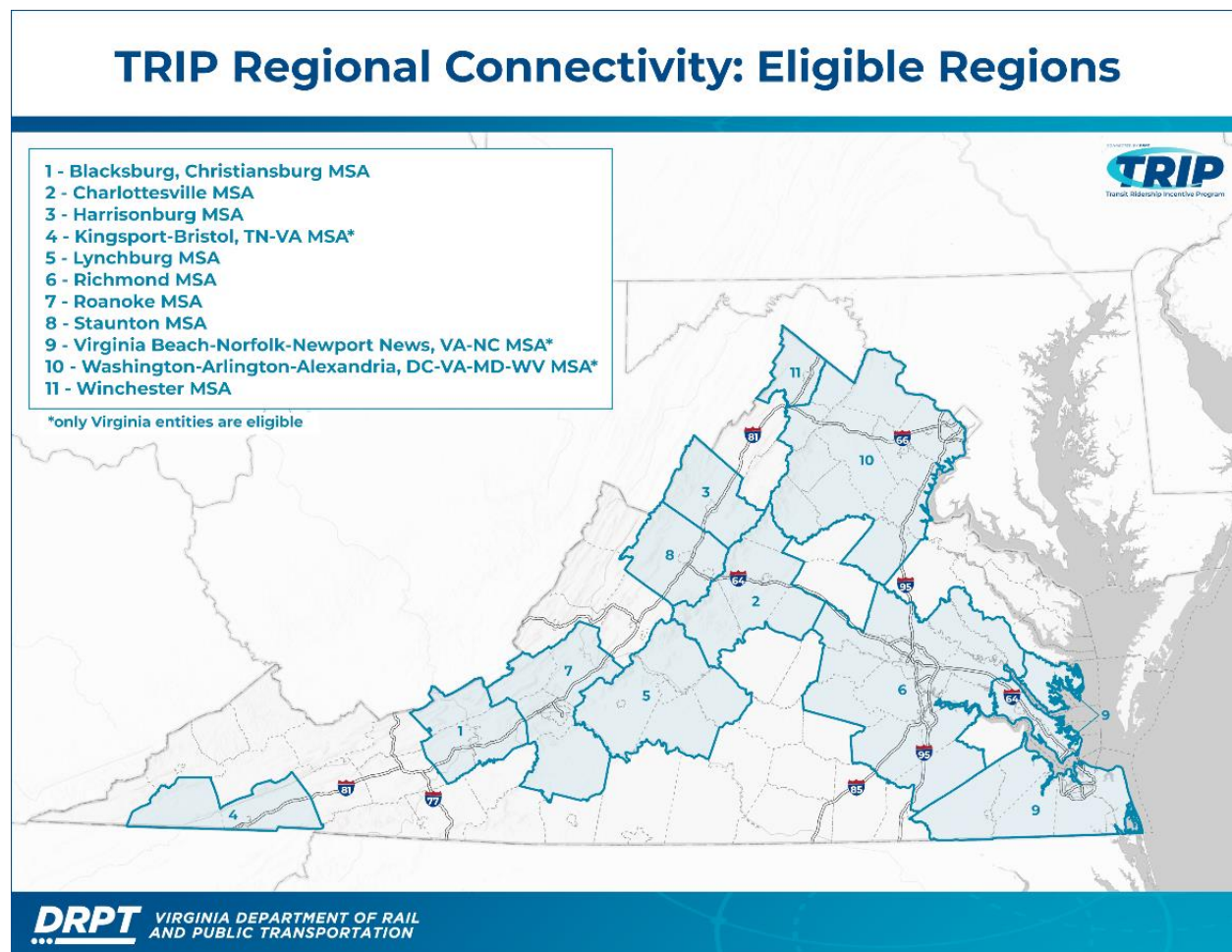
<b>Public Safety</b>	Safety Equipment	Medium	Medium	High	<b>24</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>34</b>
	Safety Programming and Training	Low	Medium	High	<b>20</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>30</b>
	Safety Planning	Low	Low	Medium	<b>13</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>23</b>
<b>Passenger Amenities and Facilities</b>	Improvements to Existing Bus Stops	Medium	High	High	<b>27</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>37</b>
	Improvements to Other Passenger Facilities	Medium	High	High	<b>27</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>37</b>
	Addition of New Bus Stops	Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>21</b>	0 – 10 points	<b>31</b>
	Passenger Facility Planning	Low	Medium	Low	<b>13</b>	0 - 10 points	<b>23</b>

## 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



## Eligible Projects

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The following project types are deemed eligible for TRIP Regional Connectivity funding:

- The improvement and expansion of routes with regional significance
- The implementation of integrated fare collection
- The development and implementation of regional subsidy allocation models
- The establishment of bus-only lanes on routes of regional significance

The following definitions are helpful in determining the eligibility of projects:

**Regionally significant service:** Transit must facilitate intra-regional travel within the urbanized area. These routes will be deemed significant based on their connections to employment, education, recreation, health care, and other vital community services.

**Integrated fare collection:** Investments that help integrate the fare collection process among multiple transit agencies throughout a region. This can include the development or improvement of regionally significant mobile apps, fare cards, and other efforts that improve the inoperability of fare collection processes.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** Consists of one or more counties that contain a city of 50,000 or more inhabitants or contain a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area (UA) and have a total population of at least 100,000.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.

## 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

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<sup>1</sup> "The General Concept of a Metropolitan Area (MA)." n.d.  
<https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/GARM/Ch13GARM.pdf>.

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.

For *new regional route* applicants, it is encouraged to explore the [DRPT Demonstration Project Assistance Program](#). This program can support new transit route projects for up to 18 months at 80% state funding. Applicants who have received Demonstration funding and have satisfied the requirements of the program will receive additional consideration within the project readiness category of TRIP Regional Connectivity scoring.

### Application Requirements

**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.

**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.

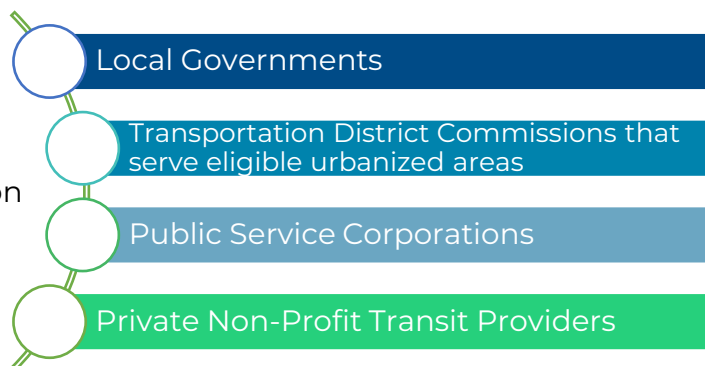
## Section 2.2 TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare

### 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:

**Reduced Fare projects for low-income individuals:** 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

---

The following project types are deemed eligible for TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare 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\*
- Fare policy planning

## Grant Match Requirements

---

Similar to TRIP Regional Connectivity, TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare 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 Requirements

---

The TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare 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 and/or reducing barriers to accessing quality transit service in their community. 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 and reduced fare 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.

## Section 2.3 TRIP Public Safety

### Eligible Applicants

---

**This source of funding does not have a size nor population requirement.** The following entities are eligible for TRIP Public Safety funding:

- Public transit providers that receive State Operating Assistance pursuant to 33.2-1526.1 D 1 **OR**;
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Planning District Commissions (PDCs), and statewide bodies

### Program Goals

---

The safety of transit riders, operators, and employees is a priority of the state of Virginia. To improve safety on and accessing transit for riders, and to improve safety for the transit workforce in delivering transit service, TRIP funds public safety equipment, infrastructure, as well as public safety initiatives/planning.

### Eligible Projects

---

The following project types are deemed eligible for TRIP Public Safety funding:

- Public Safety Equipment
- Public Safety Planning
- Public Safety Programming and Training
- 

#### **Public safety equipment includes, but is not limited to:**

- Purchase and installation of lighting
- Purchase and installation of cameras
- Purchase and installation of emergency help buttons and call boxes
- Implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) designed to improve the safety of the transit system, and
- Purchase of other equipment that directly improves the perception of safety among riders, operators, and other transit employees

#### **Public safety programming and training includes, but is not limited to:**

- Staff salaries for personnel exclusively involved with security (including fare enforcement officers)
- Costs associated with training operators and other transit staff around emerging driver assistance and passenger safety technologies

Any training efforts that are intended to increase the safety and security of transit riders, operators, and staff (*ex: National Transit Institute's Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators, first responder training for thermal events involving transit vehicles and facilities*).

## Grant Match Requirements

TRIP Public Safety projects are anticipated to be supported with one year of funding; however, in special circumstances, applicants may apply for multiple years if necessary. Due to the nature of these projects, the step down noted in previous sections does not apply for this project category. **A non-state match is required.**

The below table outlines the anticipated state contribution for each project type.\*

Capital Projects with a state ask <\$3 million	Capital Projects with a state ask >\$3 million*	Planning Projects	Training Programs
Up to 68% of eligible project costs	Up to 50% of eligible project costs	Up to 50% of eligible project costs	Up to 80% of program cost (one year only)

*\*Projects with a state ask that is greater than \$3 million may receive TRIP funding, but must be submitted through the MERIT Capital Program as Major Expansion projects and will be evaluated under that program. DRPT staff will decide which program to fund each project based on eligibility and available funding.*

## Application Requirements

The TRIP Public Safety 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 rider and transit workforce safety
- Brief project schedule
- Independent cost estimates, funding request, and duration of funding
- Any applicable planning and design documentation, or training program curricula

## Section 2.4 TRIP Passenger Amenities and Facilities

### Eligible Applicants

---

**This source of funding does not have a size nor population requirement.** The following entities are eligible for TRIP Passenger Amenities funding:

- Public transit providers that receive State Operating Assistance pursuant to 33.2-1526.1 D 1 **OR**;
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Planning District Commissions (PDCs), and statewide bodies

### Program Goals

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Passenger amenities and facilities greatly improve the transit rider experience and increase the accessibility of the system. TRIP supports the addition and improvement of passenger related infrastructure.

### Eligible Projects

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The following project types are deemed eligible for TRIP Passenger Amenities funding:

- Improvements to existing bus stops
- Addition of new bus stops
- Improvements to other passenger facilities
- Bus stop or facility planning

**Improvements to existing bus stops and other passenger facilities include, but are not limited to:**

- Installation of amenities such as lighting, seating, trash receptacles, off-board ticketing machines, or customer restrooms where appropriate
- Installation, replacement, or improvement to bus stop shelters
- Installation of bike racks and other multi-modal infrastructure
- Improving signage or installation of real-time information equipment
- ADA accessibility improvements such as installation of ramps, audio messaging, or vibro-tactile devices
- Renovations to transit stations or transfer centers

## Grant Match Requirements

TRIP Passenger Amenities projects are anticipated to be supported with one year of funding; however, in special circumstances, applicants may apply for multiple years if necessary. Due to the nature of these projects, the step down noted in previous sections does not apply for this project category. **A non-state match is required.**

The below table outlines the anticipated state contribution for each project type.\*

Capital projects with a state ask <\$3 million	Capital projects with a state ask >\$3 million*	Planning Projects
Up to 68% of eligible project costs	Up to 50% of eligible project costs	Up to 50% of eligible project costs

*\*Projects with a state ask that is greater than \$3 million may receive TRIP funding, but must be submitted through the MERIT Capital Program as Major Expansion projects and will be evaluated under that program. DRPT staff will decide which program to fund each project based on eligibility and available funding.*

## Application Requirements

The TRIP Passenger Amenities 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 rider and transit workforce safety
- Brief project schedule
- Independent cost estimates, funding request, and duration of funding
- Any applicable planning and design documentation, or training program curricula

# CHAPTER 3

## State Aid Grant Programs: Commuter Assistance Program

## Section 3.1 Overview

Using the 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 increasing ridership on transit and vanpools, and increasing carpooling, leading to mitigating traffic congestion, reducing single occupant vehicle trips, reducing vehicle miles traveled, reducing air pollution, and reducing fuel costs for Virginians.

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 focus on moving more people rather than vehicles.

The CAP grant program consists of two funding opportunities:

- 1. CAP OPERATING**
- 2. CAP PROJECT ASSISTANCE**

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



## Section 3.2 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating

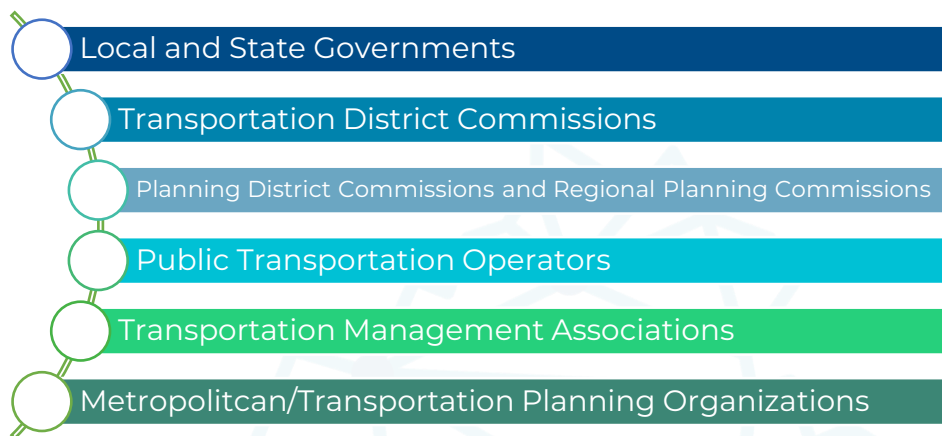
This section provides a general overview of the CAP Operating grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of programs qualify for funding, states the goal of the grant program, specifies application requirements, and details application evaluation criteria. Funding for this program 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 grant program provides funding to support the operation of regional and local commuter assistance programs that serve the public by directly engaging the public to encourage the use of transit, carpools, and vanpools, and by providing multimodal ridematching services and travel mode options information. Programs funded under the CAP Operating grant program must achieve a measurable increase in the use of ridematching services, and an increase in use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and/or bicycle commuting.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible grant 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 Objective**

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The primary objective of the CAP Operating grant program is to achieve a year-to-year increase in the number of people using the DRPT approved ridematching systems to obtain travel and commute mode options information.

Applicants must demonstrate that their program achieves an increase in the number of people using the ridematching system to obtain ridematching and mode options information.

## **Eligible and 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.

CAP Operating funds the day-to-day operations of a commuter assistance program. Components of commuter assistance program that are eligible for funding are:

- Ridematching services
- Contacting the public to encourage the use of the ridematching service, transit, carpools, and vanpools
- Commuter assistance websites and phone numbers
- Marketing, outreach, and promotion of carpooling, vanpooling, and transit
- Guaranteed/emergency/ride home service

All expenses should be necessary for the operation of the commuter assistance program, be both reasonable in nature and amount, and contribute to achieving and increase in the number of new ridematch requests.

Costs of administering the grant should not exceed or be close to the costs of operating the commuter assistance program. To keep costs down, grant recipients should ensure efficient administration and management of the grant.

Staff and consultant expenses shall be only for the operation of the commuter assistance program and the necessary costs of administering the grant. 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.

Promotional items must have a per unit cost of \$5 or less.

Conferences, training, and overnight travel may be eligible only for primary program operations staff that spend a minimum of 50% of their total job duties on the operation of the commuter assistance program.

The following expenses are **ineligible** for CAP Operating funding. This is not an all-inclusive list:

- Transit schedule design, production, printing, and distribution
- 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.)
- Capital and operating expenses for a bike share program or service
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Commuter store operations
- Capital and operating expenses for transit, vanpool, bikeshare, or other transportation service
- Expenses related to marketing, promotion, and events for bicycling for recreation or non-commute purposes
- Meals, food, and beverages
- Design and production of maps
- Transit or other transportation service fare discounts or buy-downs
- Expenses related to state or federal lobbying activities
- Expenses related to fundraising
- Research, studies, and plans (use the Technical Assistance grant program)
- Travel and staff time for inventory, review, or counts for VDOT park-and-ride lots
- 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

## **Grant Match Requirements**

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The CAP Operating 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 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 or letter from the agency head that commits the agency to the local match. Attach the signed or adopted resolution or letter that commits to funding the local match to the application in Webgrants.

## Application Requirements

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Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs, including CAP Operating, are made online through DRPT's online grant administration website ([Webgrants](#)).

CAP Operating is a one-year (12 month) grant 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 Application

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The following section outlines guidance and requirements for completing the CAP Operating application. Applicants should Save Form frequently to save information entered. Select Mark as Complete only when finished with that section. The application should be completed and submitted by someone within the applicant's agency, not a contractor.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- *Application Title* - Enter a brief title that describes what the application is for and include your agency name.

### DESCRIPTION

- *Commuter Assistance Program Name* - Select the name of your commuter assistance program from the dropdown list.
- *Program Manager* - Enter the name, title and contact information for the main CAP program contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.
- *Project 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, how it is used, how the public learns about the program, and any other grant funded components of the program.

### DETAILS

- *Operating Costs* - Add a Budget Category for each line-item budget expense. Contact a DRPT Program Manager if you are unsure which Budget Category to use. Provide as much detail as possible in the List of Expenses field. List every expense that will be charged to the Budget Category. The Requested Amount

is the total cost of the budget category. **DO NOT enter a Match Amount.** The match amount will be automatically calculated in the Budget Summary.

- *Other Funding Sources* - Enter funding sources used for this program, other than the CAP Operating 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 revenues generated by the activities and expenses charged to this grant. Revenues include, but are not limited to:
  - Revenue generated by the sale of promotional items
  - Advertising or sponsorship revenue
  - Fees received from events, meetings, or other activities
  - Revenue from the sale of transit passes, E-Z Pass 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
- *Budget Summary* - **DO NOT edit the Budget Summary section.** Information in this section is automatically calculated. Contact a DRPT Program Manager if you have questions or see problems with the Budget Summary information.
- *Staff* - The Staff component of the application is for entering details on the number of staff and work performed that is intended to be charged to the grant. There is also a section to describe the work that a contractor will perform that is intended to be charged to the grant. Provide a lot of detail on what work tasks performed by staff and a contractor, if applicable, will be charged to the grant. DRPT will use the details in the creation of the project contract. Tasks that do not get listed in the contract will not be allowed to be charged to the grant.
- *Marketing and Promotional Events* - List and describe the marketing efforts, and the messaging, advertising and promotional events that will be conducted, including the marketing partnerships with DRPT and other agencies.
  - Include start and end dates of campaigns and events in Milestones section. If promotional items will be purchased, justify the amount of the items in this section.

## SCHEDULES

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

### **BUDGET**

- *Total Project Cost* - Enter the total cost of the project. This amount is the total amount of all expenses listed in the Details component of the application.
- *Application Certification* - The Applications Certification section must be completed in order to submit the application.
- *Attachments* - Attach all documents that will provide for a better and complete application. 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.

### **Application Evaluation Criteria**

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Applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT. DRPT evaluates CAP Operating 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 objective of the CAP Operating grant program. DRPT reserves the right to remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses during application review and evaluation. As a result, DRPT may recommend an award at a lower funding amount than requested by the applicant.

Applications are evaluated and ranked using the scoring criteria below. Low ranked applications may not be funded or funded at a lower amount than requested.

#### **Commuter Assistance Operating Scoring Criteria**

Category	Points
Project Description	10
Marketing and Promotion	10

Milestone/Event Descriptions	10
Staff Level and Work Tasks	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 Project Description component of the application is completed 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 Promotion** – Scoring will depend on how well the marketing and promotional activities are defined in the Marketing and Promotional Events component of the application.
- **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 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. Included in the evaluation and scoring will be the amount of funds dedicated to grant administration and program operations.
- **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 listing 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 ridematching requests, and the program cost to achieve those results will be considered in the Cost Effectiveness score.

In addition to the application information, 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 cost effectiveness trend to obtain 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

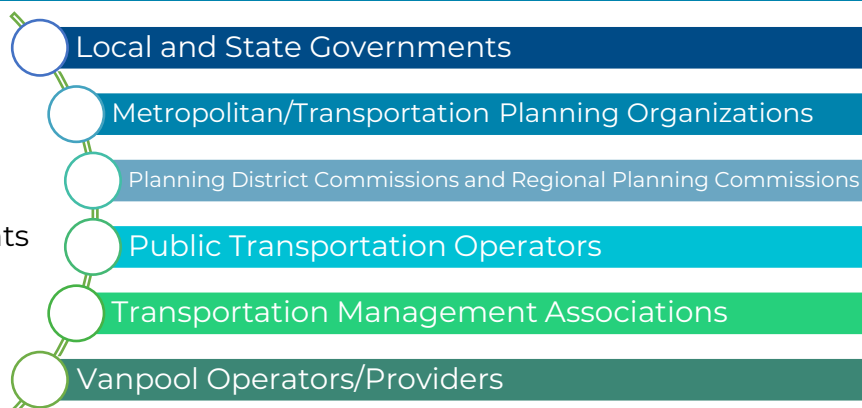


## Section 3.3 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Project Assistance

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 grant programs.

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible CAP Project Assistance grant applicants are:



### Program Description

The CAP Project Assistance grant program supports transportation demand management projects, such as, employer trip reduction, vanpool assistance, and transit marketing projects. Other types of transportation demand management projects that meet the grant program objectives and requirements are eligible. Projects must achieve a measurable increase in the public's use of carpools, vanpools, transit, and/or bicycle commuting to work.

### Program Goal

CAP Project Assistance is a result/outcome focused grant program. Applicants must demonstrate that their project will achieve measurable results, such as, an increase in transit ridership, an increase in vanpool ridership, or an increase in carpooling.

## 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 include, but not limited to the following:

**EMPLOYER TRIP REDUCTION PROJECTS** – Eligible Employer Trip Reduction projects are those that are directed at private sector employers and 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).

Employer activities must be categorized as shown in the Employer Participation Levels below.

### **Level 1 – Bronze**

Likely range of trip reduction: 0% to 1%

- Expresses interest in telework, commuter benefits, or other TDM strategy
- Conducts an employee commute survey
- Distributes commute options information to employees
- Posts commute options information on employee bulletin board, intranet sites, newsletter or e-mail

### **Level 2 – Silver**

Likely range of trip reduction:

- 0% to 3% without telework/compressed work schedules
- 0% to 9% with telework/compressed work schedules

Implements two or more of the following strategies:

- Installs a permanent display or brochure holders and stock with commute options information
- Installs electronic screens or desktop feed of real-time travel information for transit and/or other mode availability
- Provides preferential parking for carpools and vanpools
- Telework program with 1-20% of employees participating
- Facilitates car/vanpool formation meetings
- Hosts/sponsors a commute options day or transportation fair
- Flextime or staggered work schedule
- Compressed workweek for 1-20% of employees
- Installs bicycle racks or lockers
- Installs shower facilities for bicyclists and walkers
- Establishes an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) who regularly provides commute options information to employees
- Provides on-site ridematching
- Supplements GRH program with payment for additional trips or own program

### **Level 3 – Gold**

Likely range of trip reduction:

- 2% to 5% without financial incentive/disincentive, telework/compressed work schedules
- 5% to 20% with financial incentive/disincentive, telework/compressed work schedules

Implements at least one of the following (in addition to the two or more Level 2 strategies):

- Telework program with more than 20% of employees participating
- compressed work week for 21%+ of employees
- Transit/vanpool benefit or parking "cash out" program

- Carpool/bicycle/walk benefit
- Provides free or significantly reduced fee parking for carpools and vanpools (valid only for companies where employees pay for parking)
- Parking fee (valid only for companies that previously did not charge for parking)
- Provides employee shuttle service to transit stations
- Provides company vanpools for employees' commute to work
- Comprehensive bicycle/walking program (includes installation of showers bicycle racks/lockers, and financial incentives for bicycling and/or walking to work)

#### **Level 4 – Platinum**

Likely range of trip reduction:

- 2% to 8% without financial incentive, telework/compressed work schedules
- 5% to 30% with financial incentive, telework/compressed work schedules

Implements two or more of the Level 3 TDM programs (in addition to the 2 or more Level 2 strategies) and actively promotes these programs and non-single occupant vehicle commuting

**IMPORTANT NOTE: 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

Eligible vanpool projects include but are not limited to the following:

#### **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 DRPT 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 used 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.

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 prior to submitting an application.

**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 and 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.

All expenses should be necessary for the operation of the commuter assistance program, be both reasonable in nature and amount, and contribute to achieving and increase in the number of new ridematch requests.

Costs of administering the grant should not exceed or be close to the costs of operating the commuter assistance program. To keep costs down, grant recipients should ensure efficient administration and management of the grant.

The following expenses are **ineligible** for CAP Operating funding. This is not an all-inclusive list:

- Expenses already funded through a state or federal grant or other funding sources
- Conferences and out-of-state travel
- Transit schedule design, production, printing, and distribution
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Meals, food, and beverages
- Capital and operating expenses for transit, vanpool, bikeshare, or other transportation service
- Transit or other transportation service fare discounts or buy-downs
- Public notices and announcements for transit service and fare changes

- Commuter store operations
- Expenses related to the marketing, promotion, and events for bicycling for recreation or non-commuting purposes
- Lobbying and fundraising 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.

## **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 or letter from the agency head that commits the agency to the local match. Attach the signed or adopted resolution or letter that commit to funding the local match to the application in Webgrants.

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

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The following section outlines guidance and requirements for completing the CAP Project Assistance application. Applicants should Save Form frequently to save information entered. Select Mark as Complete only when finished with that section. The application should be completed and submitted by someone within the applicant's agency, not a contractor.

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted through Webgrants.

**Separate applications must be submitted for each project. Projects cannot be combined on one application.**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- *Application Title* - Enter a brief title that describes what the application is for and include your agency name.

## TYPE

- *Project Type* - Select the project type from the dropdown menu. The type of project selected will determine the application questions required to complete the application.
- *Project Description/Use of Funds* - 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.
- The questions for *Service Area, Project Manager Contact Information, Project Purpose, Project Results, and Measurement of Results* are required questions. Providing a lot of detail in the answers to these questions will help DRPT evaluate your application. Additional questions are required depending on the project type.

Contact a DRPT Program Manager if you have questions on how to answer the application questions.

## DETAILS

- *Operating Costs* - Add a Budget Category for each line-item budget expense. Contact a DRPT Program Manager if you are unsure which Budget Category to use. Provide as much detail as possible in the List of Expenses field. List every expense that will be charged to the Budget Category. The Requested Amount is the total cost of the budget category. **DO NOT enter a Match Amount.** The match amount will be automatically calculated in the Budget Summary.
- *Other Funding Sources* - Enter funding sources used for this program, other than the CAP Operating 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 revenues generated by the activities and expenses charged to this grant. Revenues include, but are not limited to:
  - Revenue generated by the sale of promotional items
  - Advertising or sponsorship revenue
  - Fees received from events, meetings, or other activities
  - Revenue from the sale of transit passes, E-Z Pass 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
- *Budget Summary* - **DO NOT edit the Budget Summary section.** Information in this section is automatically calculated. Contact a DRPT Program Manager if you have questions or see problems with the Budget Summary information.
- *Staff* - The Staff component of the application is, if applicable to the project, for entering details on the number of staff and work performed that is intended to be charged to the grant. There is also a section to describe the work that a contractor will perform that is intended to be charged to the grant. Provide a lot of detail on what work tasks performed by staff and a contractor, if applicable, will be charged to the grant. DRPT will use the details in the creation of the project contract. Tasks that do not get listed in the contract will not be allowed to be charged to the grant.
- *Marketing and Promotional Events* - If applicable to the project, list and describe the marketing efforts, and the messaging, advertising and promotional events that will be conducted, including the marketing partnerships with DRPT and other agencies.
  - Include start and end dates of campaigns and events in Milestones section. If promotional items will be purchased, justify the amount of the items in this section.

## **SCHEDULES**

- *Program Schedule* - Enter start and end date of the project.
- *Milestones/Events* - Enter details and the start and end dates of operational milestones, activities, and events. Include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, promotions, advertising, marketing campaigns, planned and expected promotional events, and all major program activities. Milestones are a critical tool for DRPT staff to manage grants. Therefore, it is important that applicants account for all activities of their program in this section.

## **BUDGET**

- *Total Project Cost* - Enter the total cost of the project. This amount is the total amount of all expenses listed in the Details component of the application.
- *Application Certification* - The Application Certification section must be completed in order to submit the application.

- *Attachments* - Attach all documents that will provide for a better and complete application. 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.

## 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 Project Assistance grant program. DRPT reserves the right to remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses during application review and evaluation. As a result, DRPT may recommend an award at a lower funding amount than requested by the applicant.

Applications are evaluated and ranked using the scoring criteria below. Low ranked applications may not be funded or funded at a lower amount than requested.

### CAP Project Assistance Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Description/Use of Funds	10
Project Purpose	10
Expected Results	10
Measurement of Results	10
Milestone/Event Descriptions	10
Cost Effectiveness to Achieve Results	10
Budget Detail	10
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>70</b>

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).

See Section 4.2 for more information.

## **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 Webgrants. 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 Webgrants 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 ([Webgrants](#)).

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 Webgrants. 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 allotted by the Governor. This Governor's Apportionment of 5307 funds is distributed 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:



### 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 Bus Lines. This service consists of four routes. The Valley Flyer connects the I-81 corridor from Blacksburg to Union Station in Washington D.C. Also along the I-81 corridor is the Highlands Rhythm route which runs from Bristol, VA to Union Station in Washington, D.C. The Piedmont Express services the U.S. 29 corridor from Danville to Washington, D.C., and the Capital Connector route originates in Martinsville and has stops that include Richmond and Union Station in Washington, D.C. Expansion of the Virginia Breeze service will be the primary use of 5311(f) funding in the future. Operational Analysis and Expansion Studies have been completed in 2019, and 2021. An expansion study is scheduled to begin in Fall 2023 focusing on service East to West along I-64.

## **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 additional information.

## Application Requirements

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Applications for all programs are made online on DRPT's online grant administration website ([Webgrants](#)).

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 Webgrants)
- 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 Webgrants 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](#).

# 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>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>Webgrants</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>WMATA</b>	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or "Metro"