Commuter Assistance Program Grant Workshop

FY25 CAP Grant Opportunities Overview

December 12, 2023

DRPT
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL
AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Agenda

1. Funding Opportunities
2. Special Projects Grants for TDM
   - Workforce Development
   - Technical Assistance
   - Demonstration
3. Commuter Assistance Program Overview
4. CAP Operating
   - Objective
   - Eligible staff work; travel
   - Application evaluation and scoring
5. CAP Project Assistance
   - Objective
   - Eligible staff work; travel
   - Application evaluation and scoring
6. WebGrants CAP Applications Demonstration
7. Key Dates
8. Recap and Resources

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Grant Opportunities, Descriptions, Eligibility, Requirements, Application Procedures, Etc.
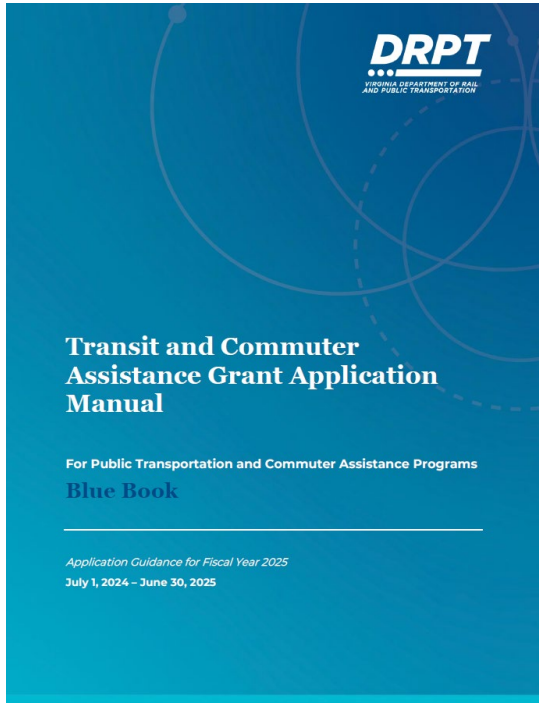
More detailed information is provided in the *Transit and Commuter Assistance Grant Application Manual* (Blue Book) located on the DRPT website.

Key Dates

Date	Event
Date	**Event**
December 1	Applications open in WebGrants
February 1	**Last day to submit applications** (May 1 for 5303)
February – April	Application review and SYIP development
April	Draft SYIP presented to CTB
April/May	SYIP Public hearings
June	Final SYIP approved by CTB
June/July	DRPT develops and executes grant agreements
July 1	FY25 begins, grant funding awarded becomes available

Funding

- CAP funding is part of the Special Projects funding from 2.5% of the Mass Transit Fund.

- Special Projects include three other grant programs that may be used for TDM projects.
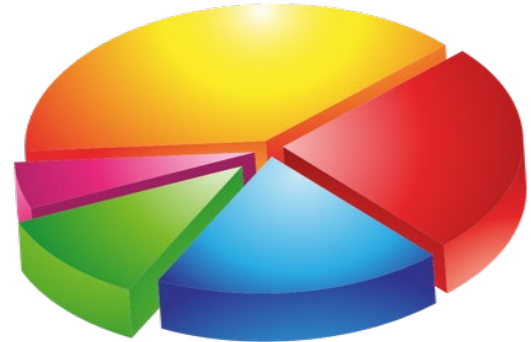
Special Projects Grants Overview

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Special Projects

1. Workforce Development Grant Program
2. Technical Assistance
3. Demonstration Project Assistance

More details of these Special Projects will be provided in the upcoming Transit Grant Workshop

Workforce Development Grant Program

- Supports the hiring of apprentices who are interested in pursuing careers in public transportation and TDM/commuter assistance.

- Goal: 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.

- Goal: Develop the next generation of the public transportation/TDM/commuter assistance workforce and establish skill pipelines in the communities' agencies serve.

- Match Rates: 80% State and 20% Local match

Technical Assistance

CHAPTER 2
System Performance and Operations Analysis
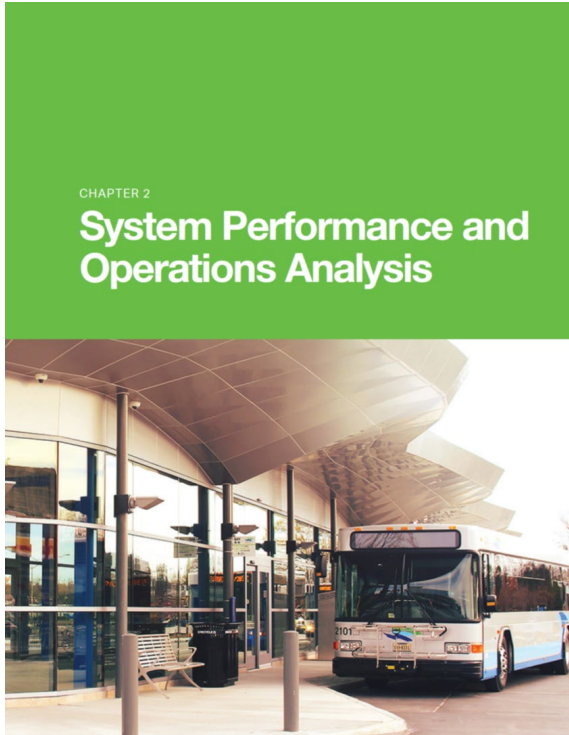
- Supports a variety of planning related activities
  - Studies, plans, research, data collection, and evaluation projects
  - Feasibility studies
  - Support of federal requirements (i.e. TAM and PTASP)
  - CAPSP and TSP/TDP plans
- Goal: Improve, justify, and evaluate public transportation or commuter assistance services
- Match Rates: 50% State and 50% Local match

Demonstration Project Assistance

- Support and incentivize implementation of new transit services and test innovative and non-traditional public transportation solutions

- Reduce financial risk and fill funding gaps for projects and activities not directly suited for other State and Federal funding programs

- Match Rates: 80% State and 20% Local match

Commuter Assistance Program Overview

CAP Grant Program Overview

CAP consists of two funding opportunities

- *CAP Operating*
- *CAP Project Assistance*

Funding & Match Ratios: State 80%; Local Match: 20%

CAP Grant Program Purpose

To make sound investments in programs and projects that are both efficient and effective at:

- Increasing the use of transit, vanpool, and carpool

- Increasing the number of ridematch requests

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled

- Mitigating traffic congestion

- Reducing air pollution

- Saving fuel

Changes for FY25

- Applications submitted through WebGrants.

- NO Supplemental Applications.
- Change to eligiblity for conferences and out-of-state travel.
- Change to eligiblity of expenses for park-and-ride lot counts.
- Attention to staff expenses.
- Attention to grant administrationan expenses.
- Application scoring.

General Application Review and Scoring

- All applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT.
- There is specific scoring for each funding opportunity.
- Is this a smart investment for the Commonwealth?
- Are the expected results and outcomes realistic and meets the goals of DRPT and the CAP program?
- Can the results be accurately measured?
- DRPT Program Manager will contact you if more information or clarification is needed regarding your application.

CAP Operating

Eligible Applicants
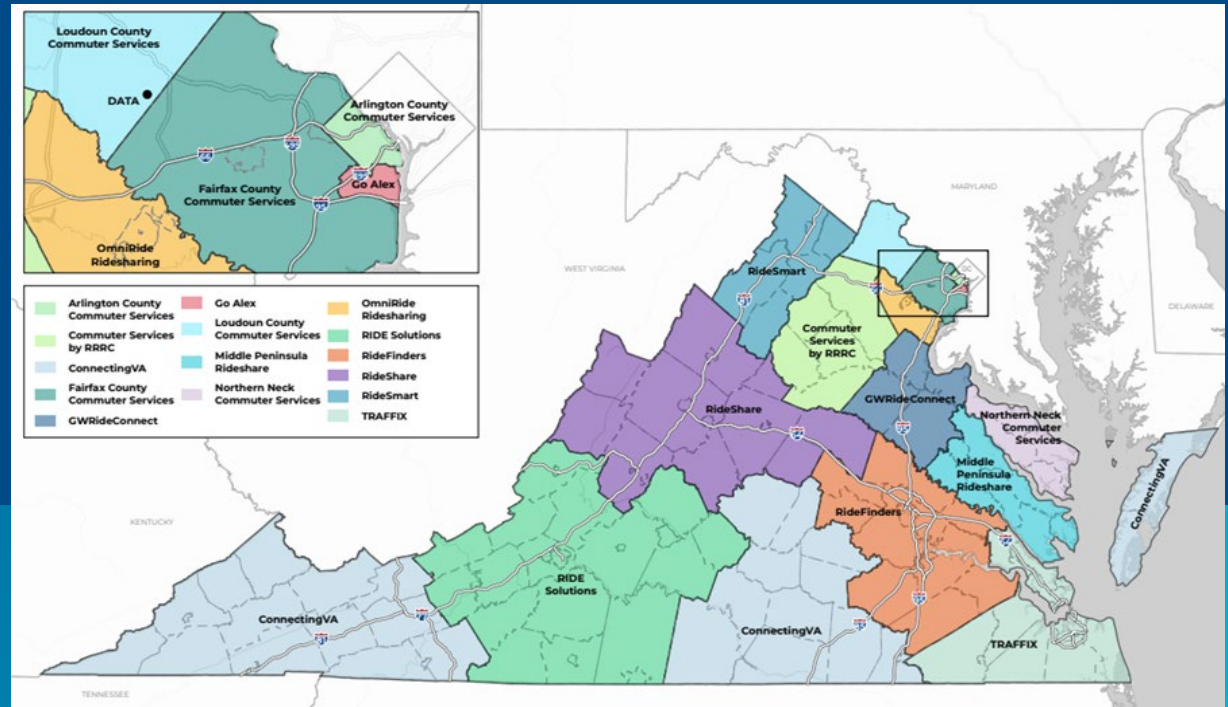
- Agencies that operate existing commuter assistance programs.
- Organizations seeking to establish a new commuter assistance program should contact a DRPT Program Manager to discuss the requirements of establishing a commuter assistance program before applying for grant funding.

CAP Operating Assistance - Overview

Program Objectives

- Achieve a measurable year-to-year increase in the number of people using a DRPT approved ridematching system to obtain travel and commute mode options information.

- Achieve a measurable increase in the use of carpool, vanpool, and transit.

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CAP Operating - Overview

<u>Eligible Expenses</u>

- Commuter Assistance Program day-to day operations

- Approved ridematching services

- Contacting the public to encourage the use of the ridematching service, transit, carpools, and vanpools

- Commuter assistance website and phone numbers

- Guaranteed/Emergency Ride Home programs

- Marketing, outreach, and promotion of carpooling, vanpooling and transit

Staff Expenses Eligibility

Staff and consultant expenses are only for work necessary for the operations of the CAP program and the necessary costs of administering the grant.

Eligible tasks include grant administration, providing direct assistance to the public for the purpose of providing commute options information and convincing the public to use carpool, vanpool, and transit modes, follow-up with those that requested ridematching and commute options information, marketing and reporting of data, program activities and results to DRPT.

Grant administration costs should be much less than the costs to implement activities that get people to request a ridematch and use transit, carpool and vanpool.

Staff Expenses Eligibility/Ineligibility

Eligible

- Conferences, training, out-of-state, 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.

Ineligible

- 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. This includes working/planning any events/conferences.

CAP Operating Application Guidance

Program Description

A description that *details the operations of the commuter assistance program for which the grant funds will be used*.

Include specifics on what services are provided, how the public receives the services, what ridematching system is used and how it is used, how the public learns about the program, and any other grant funded components of the program.

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CAP Operating Application Guidance

Program Description (Example)

This grant will be used to provide ridematching services to the public through DRPT's mobile app and ridematching system and telephone support number, contact commuters to form carpools and vanpools, develop advertising and place ads to promote carpool, vanpool, transit, and encourage the use of ridematching and rewards services, conduct several table events at various employers sites and public fairs, collaborate with DRPT on transit and carpool/vanpool promotions and contests to encourage the use of the ridematching system and mobile app...

CAP Operating Costs

Operating Costs - Multi-List

[✓ Mark as Complete] [+ Add Entry]

Budget Category	List of Expenses	Requested Amount	Match Amount
2110 Salaries and Wages	Staff members will serve as the coordinators for overseeing advertising, social media, branding coordination with state promotions and campaigns, employer outreach, and reporting. A second staff member will be responsible for accounts payable, fiscal grant financial reporting, and financial record-keeping.	$40,000.00	$0.00
2120 Fringe Benefits	Applied for two staff positions.	$6,000.00	$0.00
2130 Education & Training	Conference registration for Virginia Transit Association.	$200.00	$0.00
2380 Dues & Subscriptions	Annual membership fees for the Association of Commuter Transportation ($675) and Virginia Transit Association ($600).	$1,275.00	$0.00
2460 Indirect Costs	indirect rate of 21.56% as applied to salaries and fringe benefits.	$6,000.00	$0.00
2310 Travel	Travel costs include travel and accommodation to the Virginia Transit Association annual meeting, location unknown as of this application deadline and the Association for Commuter Transportation conference.	$4,000.00	$0.00
2340 Printing & Reproduction	Printing of promotional materials to promote the program.	$1,500.00	$0.00
2360 Advertising & Promotion Media	1) print and digital advertisements in two local lifestyle magazines, 1/2 page advertisements & digital leaderboards ($8,000) 2) bus wraps on Bay Transit buses ($20000) 3) Digital advertising on two local newspapers' websites ($12000)	$40,000.00	$0.00
2710 Promotional Items		$1,025.00	$0.00
		$100,000.00	$0.00

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Milestones/Events

Enter details of operational milestone, activities, and events including start and end dates. Milestones are a critical tool for DRPT staff to manage grants.

☰ **Milestones/Events** - Multi-List				**+ Add Entry**
Include the start and end dates of marketing campaigns, promotional events, issuing RFPs, hiring of vendors, hiring of project staff, data collection, etc.				
Milestone	**Description**		**Start Date**	**End Date**
Social media facebook page maintenance	Positive amplification of DRPT's 'Discover Transit', and ridesharing campaigns		09/01/2024	10/31/2024
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CAP Operating Application Evaluation

Applications are evaluated based on the realistic expected results and outcomes and meeting the objective of the CAP Operating grant.

DRPT reserves the right to:

- Remove ineligible and unnecessary expenses during application review and evaluation, and

- Recommend an award at a lower funding amount than requested by the applicant.

CAP Operating Application Scoring

Application Scoring

- New scoring rubric
- Scoring to emphasize results and cost effectiveness
- Low ranked applications may not be funded or funded at a lower amount than requested

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
Total Points Possible	**60**

CAP Operating Application Evaluation

In addition to the scoring, DRPT staff evaluates 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 a smart 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.

CAP Project Assistance

CAP Project Assistance

Overview

- 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.

CAP Project Assistance

Eligible Applicants

- Local governments
- Planning District Commissions
- Regional Commissions
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Transportation Management Associations
- Public transit agencies
- **Vanpool providers**

CAP Project Guidance

There are different WebGrant applications for each type of CAP Project. Be sure to use the correct application.

Projects must be well thought out with details - not just an idea, but a fully scoped project.

CAP Project Assistance Eligible Project Types

Eligible projects <u>are not</u> limited to the following.

- Employer Trip Reduction
- Vanpool
- Transit Marketing Projects
- Other Projects

Employer Trip Reduction Projects

Supports projects that actively work with private sector employers.

Employer Trip Reduction Project 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 providing assistance to employees for carpool and vanpool

- A measurable increase the number of private sector employees using transit, carpool, and vanpool

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Points of Emphasis

- This is a sales focused project
- Proactive outreach to employers and their contacts required
- Primary objective is to convince employers to implement some kind of transit and/or vanpool benefit
- Moving Level 1 & 2 employers to 3 & 4 (Northern Virginia)
- Must use an approved Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to track employer activities
- Reporting on activity metrics must be submitted regularly. Full listing of metrics can be found in our Purple Book

Vanpool Projects

Supports vanpool projects that increase vanpooling.

Vanpool Project Objectives

- Form new vanpools leading to the increase in the total number of vanpools in Virginia

- Increase vanpool ridership

- Provide assistance to start new vanpool

- Provide assistance to help existing vanpool that need riders

- Vanpool data collection and NTD reporting

Eligible/Ineligible

Eligible

- Financial assistance to vanpools that suddenly lose multiple riders
- Monthly stipends in return for vanpool data that is entered in NTD
- Short-term incentives for new riders

Ineligible

- Vanpool operations costs (fuel, tires, maintenance, office supplied, rent, etc.)

Transit Marketing Project

Supports marketing of bus service for the purpose of increasing ridership.

Transit Marketing Project Objectives

- Marketing may be used to increase ridership on a single route, multiple routes, specific service areas, or an entire bus system

- Ridership **must be** measured on the routes promoted and ridership must be reported monthly to DRPT

- The focus of the project must be increasing ridership

Expenses

- **Eligible Expenses**
  - Staff or consultant work
  - Advertisement placement
  - Marketing through social media postings
  - Incentives or rewards
- **Ineligible Expenses**
  - Printing and posting of schedules
  - Mandated or required public notices
  - Advertising notices and advertising
  - Fare buy-downs

Other Projects

Other TDM projects may qualify for CAP Project Assistance as long as they are designed to increase transit ridership, increase vanpool ridership, or increase carpooling, and the results can be measured.

Purpose of the Project

- What is the purpose and why?
  - Explain the purpose of the project and what result(s) the project will have
- Qualitative/quantitative evidence needs to be used to help illustrate the problem
- Referencing local and/or regional plans, studies, or mandates calling for solution to the problem is ideal
- Unique Solutions to the problem
  - Due diligence should be done to make sure no duplicative efforts are being done

CAP Project Application Scoring

Application Evaluation

- Is program an efficient, effective investment for the Commonwealth?

- Does the proposed project satisfy the goal of the grant

- Existing grants need to be up to date

- Reimbursement requests are up to date

- Low ranked applications may not be funded

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
Total Points Possible	**70**

WebGrants Application Demonstration

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Grant Program & WebGrants Information

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WebGrants Information and Grant Application Documents

Select Language

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About Us ▾   Our Grant Programs ▾   Work We're Doing   Studies & Reports   Resources ▾

WebGrants
Online Grants Management System

What is WebGrants?

WebGrants is DRPT's online grants management system. Applications for funding for all DRPT grant programs must be submitted through WebGrants. WebGrants has replaced OLGA for all grants administration functions.

DRPT will not accept applications in any other manner than through WebGrants. Organizations eligible to receive funding must set up an account prior to submitting an application. If your organization is a current recipient of DRPT funding, then the organization's account was transferred from OLGA and is in the WebGrants system. If your organization is applying for the first time or did not have an open grant, one person from your organization will register as both a user and the organization before starting an application.

WebGrants Login

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Recap and Resources

Recap of a Good Application

- Create a good and detailed Project Description detailing on what/how the grant funds will be spent.
- Include budget details.
- Low administration costs.
- Salaries/staff are focused on getting more ridemaching requests, and increase in use of transit, carpool and vanpool.
- Include a lot of Milestones.
- Efficiency of costs to results.
- High score!
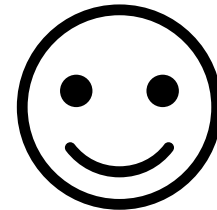
Resources and Guidance

- Transit and Commuter Assistance Grant Application Manual (Blue Book) – read this!

- Your DRPT Program Manager.

- WebGrants email help: webgrants@drpt.virginia.gov

- WebGrants help office hours: noon to 1pm

Resources and Guidance

Contact your DRPT program manager:

- **Gabe Ortiz**: Commuter Programs Manager – Northern Virginia, 703-995-0531, gabriel.ortiz@drpt.virginia.gov

- **Kathy Molin**: Commuter Programs Manager – Central, Hampton Roads, Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck, Southwest, 804-786-7780, katherine.molin@drpt.virginia.gov

- **Christopher Arabia**: Manager of Statewide Commuter Programs, 804-786-1059, christopher.arabia@drpt.virginia.gov

Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Grant Workshop

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