DRPT
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Transit and Commuter Assistance Grant Application Manual

For Public Transportation and Commuter Assistance Programs

Blue Book

Application Guidance for Fiscal Year 2028

July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028

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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 applications, the management processes and administrative requirements. In addition to this document, DRPT's staff is always available throughout the year to provide technical assistance and answer questions regarding specific grant programs.

Changes for FY2028

Several changes have occurred to this grant document for the FY2028 grant cycle. Though not exhaustive, the following list outlines several changes to DRPT programs or program policies for the upcoming fiscal year:

- **State and Federal Grant Program Schedule**
  - Developed a printable calendar for guarantees
- **MERIT Operating Assistance**
  - Added a list of the applicants that are currently eligible to apply for MERIT Operating Assistance
- **MERIT Capital Assistance**
  - Included Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) project category description, along with information on project eligibility, scoring approach, and data needs for this subset of Major Construction Projects
  - Expanded the Major Expansion Pre-Application criteria to include Major State of Good Repair projects
- **MERIT Demonstration Project Assistance**
  - Changes to application requirements for WebGrants
  - Clarification of local and/or regional commitment documentation as a required element of application
- **MERIT Technical Assistance**
  - Changes to Eligible Applicants to align with TRIP
- **MERIT Public Transportation Workforce Development**
  - Changes to Eligible Expenses and Reporting/Billing Requirements
  - Addition of "Partnerships" section

  - Clarification of leadership development eligible activities and reporting requirements
  - Simplification of mentorship program definition, eligible activities and expenses
  - Changes to Eligible Applicants to align with TRIP and Technical Assistance
- **Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)**
  - Additions to eligible applicants and projects including New Enhanced Mobility Innovation category
  - Established program definitions for Regional Significance, Low-Income Populations, Micromobility, and Specialized Transportation
  - Standardized score criteria to a 100-point scale
  - Describes streamlined application process for capital and planning projects
- **Commuter Assistance Program (CAP)**
  - Enhanced guidance for scope of work, marketing, eligible staff work, conferences, and training
  - Changed required commuter follow up to 10 business days
  - Changes to Project Assistance application scoring
  - Redefined Employer Trip Reduction project eligibility to focus on expanding employer provided commuter benefits
  - Added vanpool formation VanStart guidance and requirements
- **Training Scholarship Programs**
  - Added the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) and Urban Training (UT) Scholarship Programs including full eligibility and application requirements

Overview of Grant Programs Administered by DRPT

State and Federal grant funds administered by DRPT provide financial assistance to support Public Transportation, Human Service Transportation, and Commuter Assistance services throughout the state that 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 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 three overarching state-funded programs for transit and commuter assistance funding described in the Blue Book:

1. **MERIT (Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit)** includes five individually administered grant programs that provide funding for transit operations, capital purchases, planning studies, new and innovative transit services, and workforce development. See Chapter 1 for more details.
2. **TRIP (Transit Ridership Incentive Program)** includes four grant programs that provide funding for transit services with regional significance, reduced fare programs, innovations in specialized services, and bus passenger facility improvements. See Chapter 2 for more details.
3. **CAP (Commuter Assistance Program)** 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. See Chapter 3 for more details.

Additional grant programs that DRPT administers include the I-66 Outside the Beltway Program, Interstate Operations and Enhancement Program (IOEP), the I-95 HOT Lanes Program and the I-495 NeXT Grant Program. These grant funding opportunities are geographically restricted. If you have questions about these programs, please contact your DRPT Program Manager.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) administers the I-66 and I-395/95 Commuter Choice Programs. For more information on Commuter Choice, please visit **https://novatransit.org/programs/commuterchoice/**.

DRPT also administers and distributes funding through four federal grant programs (FTA Grants). See Chapter 4 for more details.

MERIT State Aid Grant Programs

- Operating Assistance
- Capital Assistance
- Demonstration Project Assistance

TRIP State Aid Grant Programs

- Public Transportation Workforce Development
- Regional Connectivity
- Zero and Reduced Fare
- Enhanced Mobility Innovation
- Passenger Amenities and Safety

CAP State Aid Grant Programs

- Operating Assistance
- 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

Training Scholarship Programs

Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Scholarship Program

Urban Training Scholarship Program

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). The state fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30th. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1 – September 30th.

A list of proposed projects and programs to receive funding is published by DRPT and presented in April to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Applications for funding are not officially approved until the CTB approves DRPT's Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP), usually at its 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.

Tables 1 – 5 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.

Table 1. MERIT – DRPT Administered State Aid Grant Programs

Operating Assistance	
Description	Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for operating related public transportation expenses
Eligible Recipients	• Local Governments • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Federally Recognized Indian Tribes • Nonprofit organizations providing public transportation services Note: eligible applicants to this program need to pre-qualify. Please reach out to DRPT.
Funding and Match Ratios	**State Funding:** Up to 30% of eligible expenses in the most recently audited fiscal year* **Federal Funding:** 5311 recipients only, up to 50% of net operating expenses *NOTE: DRPT uses a sizing and performance-based formula for allocating state
Capital Assistance	
Description	Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for public transportation capital projects Program consists of 3 project types: • State of Good Repair (SGR) • Minor Enhancements (MIN) • Major Expansions (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR)
Eligible Recipients	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Federally Recognized Indian Tribes • Nonprofit organizations providing public transportation services
Funding and Match Ratios	**State Funding:** Varies by project type • SGR: up to 68% of eligible expenses • MIN: up to 68% • MAJ/MAJ-SGR: up to 50% **Local Match:** Minimum of 4%;

	For projects supported by FTA discretionary grant funding, local match can be reduced ***Federal:** Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT

MERIT Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
Operating Assistance	Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for operating related public transportation expenses	•	operating assistance funds
Capital Assistance	Supports costs borne by eligible recipients for public transportation capital projects Program consists of 3 project types: • State of Good Repair (SGR) • Minor Enhancements (MIN) • Major Expansions (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR)	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Federally Recognized Indian Tribes • Nonprofit organizations providing public transportation services	**State Funding:** Varies by project type • SGR: up to 68% of eligible expenses • MIN: up to 68% • MAJ/MAJ-SGR: up to 50% **Local Match:** Minimum of 4%; For projects supported by FTA discretionary grant funding, local match can be reduced ***Federal:** Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT

MERIT Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
Demonstration Project Assistance	Supports innovative investments in all functional areas of public transportation Program consists of 2 project types: • New Service (traditional transit services) • Technology and Innovation	• Local Government • Planning District Commissions • Metropolitan or Transportation Planning Organizations • Transit Agencies that Receive State Operating Assistance from the Mass Transit Fund	**State Funding**: Up to 80% of eligible expenses **Local Match**: 20% ***Federal:** Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT; however, a minimum 4% local match is required
Technical Assistance	Supports planning or technical assistance to help improve or initiate public transportation or TDM-related services	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Planning District Commissions and Regional Planning Commissions • Other Statewide or Regional Bodies n • Transportation Management Associations	**State Funding:** Up to 50% of eligible expenses **Local Match:** 50% ***Federal:** Recipients can augment state funds with federal funds not controlled by DRPT; however, a minimum 4% local match is required
Public Transportation Workforce Development	Supports internships, mentorships, apprenticeships, and professional development for careers in public transportation	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Planning District Commissions	**State Funding:** Up to 80% of eligible expenses **Local Match:** 20%

		• Other Statewide or Regional Bodies • Commuter Assistance Program Operators	

Table 2. Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) – DRPT-Administered State Assistance

TRIP Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	State Match
Regional Connectivity	Identify, establish, or improve routes of regional significance	• Transit providers that receive MERIT Operating Assistance • Metropolitan Planning Organizations • Planning District Commissions • Local Governments • Tribes with State or Federal Recognition • Other Statewide or Regional Bodies	Operating Projects: 5-year state stepdown of 80% 60%, 30%, 20%, 10%. Capital Projects: Up to 68% for projects >$3M, up to 50% for projects <$3M Planning: Up to 50%
Zero & Reduced Fare	Establish programs to reduce the impact of fares on low-income individuals		3-year state stepdown of 80% 60%, 30%. A fourth year with no TRIP support is required for Zero Fare Systems. Planning: Up to 50%
Enhanced Mobility Innovation	Encourage innovative approaches to micromobility, paratransit, and specialized transportation.		Up to 80% of eligible expenses for up to 2 years.

Passenger Amenities & Safety	Improve the accessibility and safety of transit bus passenger facilities.		Capital Projects: Up to 68% for projects >$3M, up to 50% for projects <$3M Safety Programming: Up to 80% Planning: Up to 50%

Table 3. Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) – DRPT Administered State Aid Grant Programs

CAP Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
CAP Operating Assistance	Supports the operation of existing commuter assistance programs	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Planning District Commissions • Transportation Management Associations • Transit Service Operators	**State Funding:** Up to 80% of eligible expenses **Local Match:** 20%

CAP Project Assistance	Supports projects for employer commuter benefit programs, vanpool formation, marketing of transit, and projects that increase the use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and the use of bicycles to commute to work.	• Local and State Government • Regional Commissions • Transit Service Operators • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Planning District Commissions • Transportation Management Associations • Vanpool Operators/Providers	**State Funding:** Up to 80% of eligible expenses **Local Match:** 20%

Table 4. DRPT Administered FTA Grant Programs

FTA Grant Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios
FTA Section 5303 – Metropolitan Planning	Supports public transportation related planning expenses included in approved UPWPs	• Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)	**Federal Funding:** Up to 80% of eligible expenses **State Funding:** 10% **Local Match:** 10%

FTA Section 5307 – Formula Grants for Small Urban Areas	Supports operating and capital costs of transit operators in small urban areas	The following entities located in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000: • Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations, Planning District Commissions in urban areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000	Allocated based on annual FTA Federal Register and net operating expenses. Can be used for the following: • Can be used to support up to 50% of net operating expenses • Can be used to support up to 80% of eligible capital expenses
FTA Section 5311 – Formula Grants for Rural Areas	Supports operating and capital costs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas	• Local and State Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Private Non-Profit Organizations • Federally Recognized Indian Tribes	**Federal Funding:** • Operating: Up to 50% of net operating expenses • Capital: Up to 80% of eligible capital expenses **State Funding:** • Operating: Up to 30% of net operating expenses, based on formula • Capital: Up to 68%, depending on project type (SGR, MIN, or MAJ) **Local Match:** • Operating: Minimum 50% • Capital: 4%

Table 5. Training Scholarship Program

Scholarship Program	Program Description	Eligible Recipients	Funding & Match Ratios

Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Scholarship Program	Supports training and professional development for rural and specialized transportation providers.	The following entities located in areas with populations less than 50,000: • Local Government • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Private Non-Profit Organizations • Federally Recognized Indian Tribes	**Federal Funding:** Up to 100% of eligible expenses
Urban Training Scholarship Program	Supports training and professional development for urban transit and specialized transportation providers.	• Local Government • Regional Commissions • Transit Service Operators • Transportation District Commissions • Public Service Corporations • Planning District Commissions	**State Funding:** Up to 80% of eligible expenses **Local Match:** 20%

***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 must 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 1st, when the application period opens, and early June, when the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) adopts the final Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) that contains all approved grants. To qualify for these funding programs, potential applicants must complete a series of requirements during and outside of the open application period.

Table 5 highlights the major process steps, grantee requirements, and informational opportunities in DRPT's annual grant application and award process. Grantees can now see DRPT 2027 Grantee Calendar.docx. **Note: that first day of the month deadline (e.g. December 1, February 1, and April 1) are set as the actual deadline regardless if it is a business day or not.**

Table 5: State and Federal Grant Program Application and Award Schedule

FY28 Schedule	Process Step	Step Type	Responsible Party
September 2026 – January 2027 FTA 5303: October 2026 – April 2027	**Application Assistance Available:** DRPT offers assistance developing applications to potential state and federal grant applicants	Informational	Grant Applicant
November 2026	**Grant Application Workshops:** Provides applicants with information on the upcoming grant application process	Informational	Grant Applicant
December 1, 2026	**Pre-Application for Major Expansion Projects Due**	Requirement	Grant Applicant
December 1, 2026 – February 1, 2027	**FY27 State and Federal Grant Application Period:** The grant application is open for all grant programs except the FTA 5303 program (MPO Assistance) in the WebGrants portal	Process	Grant Applicant
FY28 Schedule	**Process Step**	**Step Type**	**Responsible Party**
January 15, 2027	**Complete Enhanced Quarterly Review with DRPT Staff:** All transit agencies must complete an enhanced quarterly meeting with DRPT by this date	Requirement	Grant Applicant

February – March 2027	**DRPT Evaluates Grant Applications:** Staff review grant applications, evaluate, and score projects, and make funding recommendations	Process	DRPT
February 2027	**DRPT Provides FTA 5303 Funding Estimates:** Upon release of the FTA apportionment tables, staff provides FTA 5303 estimates to Metropolitan Planning Organizations so they may develop their Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP)	Process	DRPT
February – April 2027	**DRPT Develops the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP):** DRPT develops the draft SYIP which contains all state and federal grants that have been awarded	Process	DRPT
April 2027	**Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Review:** Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) releases draft SYIP to the public for review and comment	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
April – May 2027	**Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Public Hearings:** CTB holds public hearings to gather input on the draft SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
May 2027	**5-year Capital Budgets Due:** Grantees that administer transit service are required to submit 5-year capital budgets	Requirement	Grant Applicant
May 2027	**Applications for FTA Section 5303 are Due:** Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must submit FTA 5303 grant applications to DRPT	Requirement	Grant Applicant
June 2027	**Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) Adopted:** CTB Approves final SYIP	Process	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)
FY28 Schedule	**Process Step**	**Step Type**	**Responsible Party**
June – October 2027	**DRPT Develops and Executes Grant Agreements:** DRPT staff develop contracts and work with grantees to execute them	Process	DRPT

June 2027	**Grant Administration Workshops (Grants Management):** Provides grantees with information on how to manage the grant funds that they have been awarded	Informational	Grant Applicant
July 1, 2027	**FY27 Grant Funds Available:** Grantees may start spending awarded grant funds	Process	DRPT
January 15, 2027	**Asset Inventory Data Update:** All assets in the statewide asset management system – WebGrants Asset Inventory – 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 allocations in the Draft Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) approves the release of the draft SYIP to the public for comment in April and following receipt of public comments, the CTB approves the final SYIP in June. Once the CTB approves the final SYIP, it will be available on the DRPT **Open Data Portal**.

CHAPTER 1

State Aid Grant Programs: MERIT

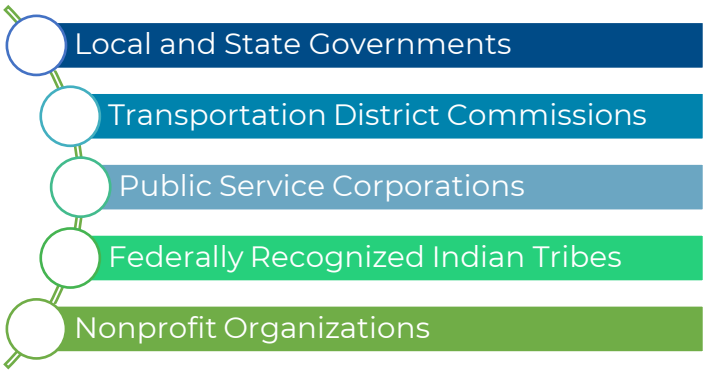
Section 1.1 Operating Assistance Program

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

Eligible Applicants

State operating assistance is awarded to existing providers of public transportation service in Virginia. Eligible applicants under this program must be pre-approved by DRPT to apply.

Current eligible grant recipients include public transportation services operated by:



MERIT – Operating Assistance: Eligible Agencies	
Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens	Town of Blackstone
City of Bristol	Unified Human Services Transp Sys Inc.
District III Governmental Cooperative	Virginia Regional Transit
Mountain Empire Older Citizens Inc	County of Loudoun
Town of Bluefield	NVTC - Arlington County
City of Charlottesville	NVTC - City of Alexandria
City of Fredericksburg	NVTC - City of Fairfax
Accomack Northampton TDC - Star Transit	NVTC - Fairfax County
City of Suffolk	Potomac Rappahannock Transp. Commission
Greensville County	City of Petersburg
Town of Chincoteague Inc	Greater Richmond Transit Company
Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads	City of Radford
Williamsburg Area Transit Authority	Greater Roanoke Transit Company
City of Danville	New River Valley Senior Services, Inc.
Greater Lynchburg Transit Company	Town of Bedford
Town of Altavista	Town of Blacksburg
Town of Farmville	Central Shenandoah PDC
Bay Aging, Inc.	City of Harrisonburg

JAUNT Inc	City of Winchester
Lake Country Area Agency on Aging	

Program Description

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

Program Goal

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

Operating Assistance Funding Model

State operating assistance is distributed among all eligible public transportation service providers utilizing a performance-based funding formula. This formula 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 latest Operating Assistance – Technical Documentation on the **MERIT page** of the DRPT website.

Federal operating funding allocations for rural transit service providers are also determined through the state operating assistance application and review process. Each year, DRPT staff will review the applicant's projected budget for the coming fiscal year and provide up to 50% of the projected, eligible expenses. The actual match rate is determined based on funding availability. Please see Section 4.3 Rural Areas Program (FTA Section 5311) below for more information.

Eligible Operating Expenses

Prospective applicants are required to submit audited financial statements to support all operating expenses for the last audited fiscal year (for FY28 this should be FY26 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 Services
- Communication services – cost of communications including phones, fax, postage, etc.
- Contract management fees
- Facilities and equipment lease, rental and maintenance contracts (note: not eligible if funded through a capital grant)
- Data processing supplies
- Indirect costs – these costs can only be included if the indirect cost plans have been pre-approved by DRPT. If applicants do not have a pre-approved plan and wish to submit one to DRPT, it should be done as soon as possible. DRPT may not be able to pre-approve a plan that is submitted during the application period (December 1 – February 1). Indirect costs funded through a capital grant are not eligible.
- Insurance and bonding – cost of insurance, or payments to a self-insurance reserve, on property or against specific or general liabilities of the transit entity
- Office supplies, materials, and equipment
- Other fixed charges – dues and subscriptions, taxes, licenses, etc.
- Printing and reproduction
- Professional services – retainer fees and expenses paid to professionals, not employees of the specific transit entity for their special expertise. Includes accounting, legal, architectural, engineering, management, and marketing services.
- Public Transportation Association dues (excluding any portion of the dues that are for state lobbying activities)
- 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

The following expenses are ineligible for consideration:

- Expenses not directly attributed to the operation of public transportation services
- Most expenses already funded through another state grant
    - Note: if an agency has received a TRIP or Demonstration Assistance grant that supports operations of a new route or service, these expenses are considered eligible.
- 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

To determine eligibility for funding, DRPT requires the transit provider to submit all operating revenues and revenue sources along with their application for the last audited fiscal year, 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

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.

Applicants must ensure that expenses and revenues (as described above) are properly reported on their application. DRPT evaluates Operating Assistance applications by validating the audited 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 team 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 previously audited fiscal year and verifying this against the applicant's audited financial statements.

The transit staff at DRPT is responsible for reviewing budget data, as well as validation of performance data submitted throughout the fiscal year that is used to calculate the formula-based allocations. 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 state operating assistance 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**.

For rural transit service providers, recommended allocations of federal rural operating funds using FTA 5311 and ADTAP formula funds are also made though the evaluation of the state operating assistance allocation. To determine the recommended federal rural operating funding allocation for each agency, DRPT transit and finance staff review the applicant's projected budget for the coming fiscal year and provide up to 50% of the projected, eligible expenses. The actual match rate is determined based on funding availability. Please see Section 4.3 Rural Areas Program (FTA Section 5311) below for more information.

Application Requirements

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.
- Budgeted 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 for other state aid grants 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.

Additional Application Requirements for Rural Transit Agencies:

- **Cost Allocation:** Transit agencies that receive both rural (5311) and urban (5307) federal funding are required to submit a cost allocation methodology annually. This methodology will be captured as an attachment in the agency's operating application.
- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs are eligible for FTA Section 5311 funding but must meet specific requirements and be approved by DRPT for funding. Applicants that intend to request support for indirect costs must provide either (1) a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a federal agency, (2) an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP) if the agency receives most of its federal funding from FTA, or (3) use the de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) (2 CFR 200.68). MTDC for the purposes of these grants includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials, and supplies, and up to the first $25,000 of each sub award. Equipment and other capital expenses are not included in MTDC.

  If awarded support for indirect costs, the applicant cannot request reimbursement for any direct costs listed in the indirect cost plan. For example, if an applicant elects to request 15% of modified total direct costs to cover financial and administrative support, it may not request reimbursement for direct financial or administrative staff time.

  Expenses that are eligible for indirect support include:

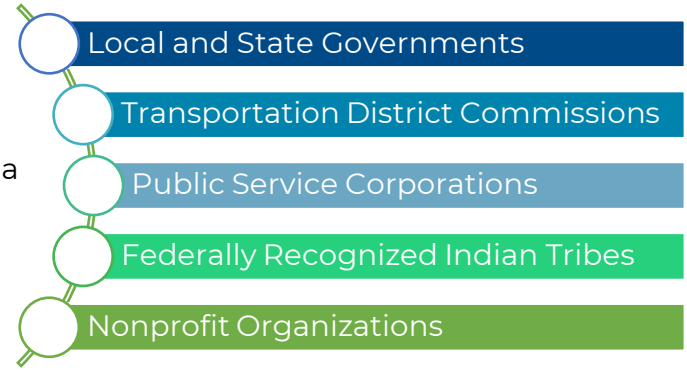
  - Rent, mortgage, and other expenses associated with the cost of using office space
  - Utilities
  - Administrative, clerical, and office maintenance and cleaning staff salaries and benefits
  - Executive staff salaries

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

Funds from the Capital Assistance Program may be awarded to existing and prospective new providers of public transportation service in Virginia including:



Program Description

The Capital Assistance grant program supports 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

The goals of the Capital Assistance program are to maintain a state of good repair for capital assets used to provide public transportation services, and to support the improvement and expansion of these services throughout the state.

Eligible Projects

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, land acquisition, and equipment that supports safety and security.

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, all of which are explained in more detail on the FTA **website**.

If a grant recipient proposes to complete eligible capital project work using its own workforce rather than an external contractor ("Force Account" under FTA requirements), the recipient must identify the proposed Force Account work in its application and coordinate with its DRPT Program Manager regarding the required scope, cost estimate, justification, and supporting documentation. Force Account work may include, among other eligible activities, design, construction, inspection, overhaul, and construction-management. Additional FTA requirements may apply based on the value and nature of the proposed Force Account work. Force Account for the purposes of DRPT programs does not include project administration/overhead, preventive maintenance, mobility management, or other nontraditional capital project types.

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

Transit capital projects in Northern Virginia should align with DMVMoves goals.

Prioritization Process

The Capital Assistance program is guided by a prioritization process for capital needs that allows DRPT to allocate and assign limited resources to projects and investments identified as the most critical. The prioritization process is designed to favor projects that achieve the statewide policy objective to first maintain a state-of-good-repair of existing services and assets, and secondarily to support the improvement and expansion of transit services statewide

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 all vehicle expansion projects; or all projects for engineering and design. (State Match: Up to 68%)
- **Major Expansions (MAJ)/Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR):** Capital projects or programs to add, expand, or improve transit services or

facilities, with a total cost exceeding $3 million; or (for MAJ-SGR) all projects that include the replacement of an entire existing facility. (State Match: Up to 50%)

The *Transit Capital Assistance Prioritization – Technical Documentation* posted on the **MERIT page** of the DRPT website contains detailed information about scoring and prioritization for state of good repair, minor enhancement, and major expansion projects. 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

State of Good Repair (SGR)	**Replacement/Rehabilitation of:** • Vehicles/rolling stock (buses, vans, rail cars, support vehicles, etc.) • Replacement of specific items in an existing facility with a document in-service date • Customer amenities with a documented in-service date (parking facilities, bus shelters, benches, signage) • Any other specific existing pieces of and/or technology equipment with a document in-service date that do not fall into ***Special Asset Categories*****
Minor Enhancements (MIN)	**New Investments in:** • Fleet expansion (less than 5 vehicles or 5% of fleet) • New customer amenities (parking facilities, bus shelters, benches, accessibility improvements, signage) • New equipment and technology • Real estate acquisition • All applications for engineering and design support • All assets, new and replacements, that fall into ***Special Asset Categories*****

Major Expansion (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR)	**New Investments in:** • Construction of new or expanded fixed guideway corridor (heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit) • MAJ: Construction of new administrative/maintenance facility, • MAJ-SGR: Replacement of an entire existing facility (more than $3 Million) • MAJ: Construction of new transit center, transfer center, or parking facility • MAJ-SGR: Replacement of an entire existing facility (more than $3 Million)

**** Special Asset Categories - ALL APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AND REPLACEMENT ITEMS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AS MINOR ENHANCEMENT (MIN) PROJECTS:**

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

Scoring Methodology for State of Good Repair (SGR), Minor Enhancement (MIN), and Major Expansion (MAJ)/Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) 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 traffic, improve transportation system reliability, and encourage transit use
Economic Development	Support existing economies and enhance opportunities 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 that minimize impacts to natural resources
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*.

Major State of Good Repair Projects

Major State of Good Repair projects will be evaluated based on asset condition score, service impact score, and incentive scoring that is applied to State of Good Repair projects, in addition to the estimated ridership impacted by the project, the cost of the project, and other information included in the project application

Funding Parameters

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.

Note: If there are significant changes to either the scope or cost of the project that has been selected for transit capital funding (e.g. state of good repair, minor enhancement, major expansion) the project must be rescored and the funding decision reevaluated. 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

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 for 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

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

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 and Need** – 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. DRPT will take into consideration the

applicant's ability to draw down existing capital grants when confirming funding need.

- **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 project (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.
- **[For Construction Projects Only] Project Cost Estimates** – Ability to execute the project scope within the project cost estimate (both allocated and requested funding). Applications should clearly indicate how project estimates are developed by providing backup (i.e. detailed construction items, quantities and unit costs) and supporting documentation. Project Cost Estimates should be as realistic as possible, account for applicable allowances, risks, and contingencies based on the size, complexity, and level of design of the project, and consider the project development and delivery schedule. Cost estimates are recommended to adhere to the procedures outlined in the latest version of the VDOT Cost Estimating Manual. The application may be deemed incomplete if the applicant does not provide a detailed cost estimate and DRPT's Project Estimate Summary Sheet. The DRPT FY28 Project Estimate Summary sheet can be found on the **MERIT page** of the DRPT Website.
- **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)

Pre-Application for Major Expansion and Major State of Good Repair Projects

This section outlines the Major Expansion (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) 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

and Major State of Good Repair - 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 cost estimation techniques to account for inflation and other contingencies.

Beginning in FY2027, applicants for all Major Expansion (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) project types, including capital construction and other capital equipment, are required to submit a pre-application in WebGrants. However, most of the readiness questions are only applicable to Major Capital Construction Projects, which are defined as:

Pre-Application Process and Requirements

Applicants for all Major Expansion (MAJ) project types, including capital construction, expansion vehicles, and other capital equipment, are required to submit a pre-application by December 1st of the year before the application is due (i.e. for FY27 funding, MAJ construction pre-apps are due on December 1, 2026). 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.

Please note that many of the "readiness" questions in the pre-application only apply to construction projects. If questions are not applicable to your project, please indicate that it is not applicable in the appropriate field.

MAJ/MAJ-SGR Pre-Application Timeline

1. **Pre-Application Due Date: December 1st each year**
2. Within 2 weeks of the pre-application deadline, DRPT staff will correspond with applicant contacts to address the following items as needed:
    - Any outstanding questions regarding the project
    - Review of construction project cost estimates: DRPT staff will work with applicant contacts to address any outstanding items in the two-month period prior to submission of a full application.
3. **Full application Due Date: February 1st each year**

MERIT Major Expansion/Major State of Good Repair 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:

- **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.

- **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.

- **Engineering and Design (A-E):** 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 construction project 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 and a completed NEPA evaluation are requirements for construction funding awards. There may be circumstances where a project will reach these milestones between application submission and the availability of funds; in these cases, DRPT will review the 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.

- **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, or as a combination Engineering/Design and Environmental Review project through the MERIT – Capital Assistance - Minor Enhancement sub-program area
    - 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.

4. **Construction Project Cost Estimates:** Cost Estimates should be as realistic as possible. It should account for applicable allowances, risks, and contingencies based on the size, complexity, and level of design of the project. Cost estimates shall consider when construction is planned, inflation, escalation and other procedures outlined in the latest version of the VDOT Cost Estimating Manual including the latest version of the DRPT's Project Estimate Summary Sheet. The DRPT Project Estimate Summary sheet can be found on the **MERIT page** of the

DRPT website. More information on construction cost estimation can be found on VDOT's website **here**.

- 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 recognizes that smaller construction projects may not have associated cost estimates provided by an engineer or other third-party contractor. Project Estimate Summary Sheets for these projects can be developed in-house but will be subject to the same review by DRPT staff.

5. **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.

6. **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 and Major State of Good Repair Construction Projects

Initial Allocations

It is DRPT's goal to ensure that the initial allocation of Major Expansion (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) - construction funds are 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 construction project cost estimation techniques to account for inflation and other contingencies.

For large Major Expansion (MAJ) and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) 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 for Construction Projects

DRPT's engineering team 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 Capital Assistance Applications

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), an Major Expansion (MAJ), and Major State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) projects.

Information Needed for ALL Capital Assistance Project Types

- **Capital Asset Category** of the new assets being purchased – select from dropdown list of capital asset categories
- **Capital Budget Item** of the new assets being purchased – select from dropdown list of capital budget items
- **Project Location and Map** (if applicable)
- **Project Description/Justification:** 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: 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. This may include a description of the Capital Item(s) that will be purchased (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 impact 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 5311, ADTAP, 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 if state controlled federal funds are not available.
        - **Note:** For information on particular state-controlled federal funding programs, their requirements and eligibility please refer to the applicable section in this document below.
    - **Project Schedule:** 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.

  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.

  Capital Construction – Required Milestones: All capital applications for funds for construction projects, must provide the following milestones: Date RFB-IFB out for Bid, Date Contract Awarded, Date Construction Begins, Date Construction Completed, Date of Final Expenditure, Data of Project Completion – Project Closeout.

Information Needed for "MERIT – Capital Assistance – State of Good Repair (SGR) – Vehicles" Projects

This funding Opportunity should only include projects that:

- Replace Existing Revenue Vehicles
- Replace Existing Support Vehicles; or
- Rehabilitate Revenue or Support Vehicles

Data Needed:

- **Specific Item Name** for each asset to be replaced
  - Examples: 40-foot bus, Support Vehicle – SUV
- **WebGrants ID**: If this asset is currently listed in the asset management database, the asset ID must be included here.

- **Vehicle Identification Number (VIN):** Provide the VIN of each vehicle to be replaced or rehabilitated
- **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

Information Needed for "MERIT – Capital Assistance – State of Good Repair (SGR) – Other" Projects

This Funding Opportunity should only include projects that:

- Replace specific assets with known in-service dates that do not fall into a "Special Asset Category"

  **Special Asset Categories include ALL requests for: 1. Tools, 2. Maintenance Equipment, 3. Spare Parts, 4. Building/Facility Items and Fixtures, and 5. Capital Finance Strategies, such as Capital Cost of Contracting and Debt Service on Previously Approved Items. These should be submitted as Minor Enhancement (MIN) projects.*

Data Needed:

SGR Type 2 Data Needed:

- **Specific Item name** for each asset to be replaced
  - Examples: laptop, replacement radios, accounting software
- **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

Information Needed for Minor Enhancement (MIN) Projects

This funding Opportunity should only include projects that:

- Add capacity or include the purchase of new assets with a total cost of $3 million or less
- Include the purchase of 5 or less expansion vehicles OR expansion vehicles that are equal to 5% or less of overall fleet size (whichever is greater)
- Include the completion of Engineering and Design for a capital infrastructure construction project
- Include the replacement of assets that fall into the following 5 "Special Asset Categories":
  - Tools, 2. Maintenance Equipment, 3. Spare Parts, 4. Building or Facility Items and Fixtures (i.e. HVAC, Lighting, Lavatory Equipment, Security

Equipment, etc.), 5. Capital Financing Strategies (Capital Cost of Contracting or Debt Service)

Data Needed:

- Quantity of items to be purchased
- Cost per item
- Service Impact Information

Information Needed for Major Expansion (MAJ) Projects

Each Major Expansion project must provide the following information:

- **Location Description** with attached project map (preferably in a file compatible with ArcGIS or google earth such as a Shapefile or KML/KMZ)
- Designation of "**Project Type**" (i.e. fixed guideway, major fleet expansion, customer facility – station improvement, new operations facility, etc.)
- **Ridership estimates** are 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 Major Expansion State of Good Repair (MAJ-SGR) Projects

Each Major State of Good Repair project must provide the following information:

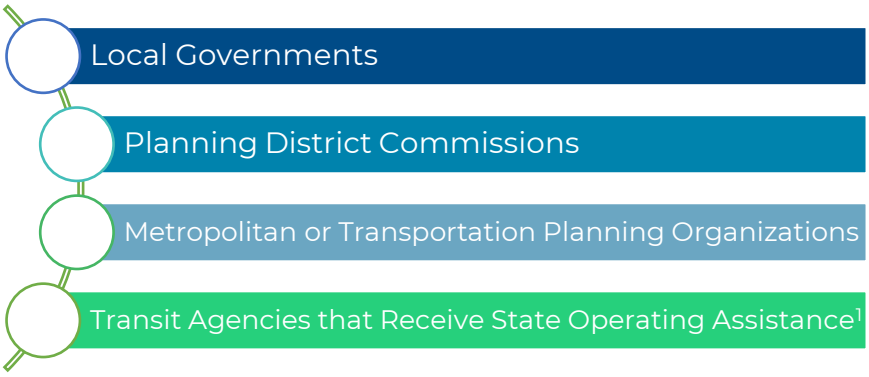
- **Location Description** with attached project map (preferably in a file compatible with ArcGIS or google earth such as a Shapefile or KML/KMZ)
- Designation of "**Project Type**" (i.e. Administrative/Maintenance Facility, Customer Facility, or System Infrastructure)
- **Ridership estimates** supported by the facility being replaced:
  - Total Annual Existing Ridership for the previous FY (agency-wide)
  - Existing Ridership supported by the facility being replaced
    - If the facility is utilized for the provision of service along all routes this will equal total annual existing ridership for the previous FY
    - If the facility is utilized for the provision of service along a subset of routes operated, this figure should include only the portion of ridership impacted by the facility (i.e. if a transfer center serve 3 of 10 routes, only include the ridership for the 3 routes that use it)
  -

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.

Demonstration projects in Northern Virginia should align with DMVMoves goals.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**

1 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

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. Applicants are required to submit on a quarterly basis the performance measure data for their project to gauge progress and evaluate the status of the project.

Applicants also 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 or public entities 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

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 transportation to 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

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.) Costs must be directly attributable to the demonstration project. As such, assumptions should be documented in the budget furnished with the application.
- Capital costs (facilities and equipment)

Leasing of capital 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

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

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

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	30
Performance Measures	20
Project Readiness and Eligibility	15
Technical Capacity	25
Local and Regional Support	10
Total Points Possible	**100**

Project Scope: Applicant must include a detailed approach to addressing the need/problem (provide a clear understanding of the project and desired outcomes)

Performance Measures: 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.

Project Readiness and Eligibility: Applicant must demonstrate the ability to start and execute the project scope within the project schedule and fiscal year.

Technical Capacity: Applicant must identify a qualified project management team and demonstrate the ability to execute the project

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

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

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs are submitted online using DRPT's online grant administration website (**WebGrants**).

To submit an application for a Demonstration grant, WebGrants account users must log into WebGrants and select Funding Opportunities from the menu on the left side of the screen, then select MERIT Special Programs – Demonstration for the appropriate fiscal year. Once the Funding Opportunity has been selected, a list of all current applications that you or other users in your organization have started will be displayed in addition to details on the Funding Opportunity. Applicants will need to click "Start New Application" to initiate a new application and follow the instructions for each element of the application. Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application.

Project Information

- *Project Name* – Enter the name of the project or program, as it will be referred to in the grant agreement and reporting.
- *Project Type* – Indicate whether the project is Type 1 or Type 2.
- *Program 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.

Program 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

- *Draft Scope of Work* - 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.
- *Project Eligibility and Readiness* – 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 operational service projects: An operations schedule, forecast patronage (ridership), and a long-term funding plan
- *Local and/or Regional Commitment* – Provide documentation of support from local and/or regional entities impacted by the project. This includes the intent and financial commitment to continue the project beyond the demonstration phase if it is found to be successful. *Lack of documentation of support from local and/or regional entities will result in an incomplete application.*
- *Detailed Project Budget* – Applicants must provide a line-item budget and schedule for all eligible project expenses. The budget should reflect the total project cost and provide any relevant information on the expense.
- *Project Manager* – Enter the name, title, and qualifications for the main project contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.

Budget Details

- *Line-Item Project Budget* – Enter all expense line items to detail what the funding will be used for. Any operating costs should include backup documentation on how costs are allocated to the grant, including details on how any cost per unit is calculated (cost per mile or hour).

- There is only one expense line item for consultant services: Professional Services. It includes consultant staff wages. Consult your DRPT Programs Manager for appropriate expense line items.
- *Funding Summary* – Enter total project cost, local cost and federal cost, if using. Total project cost should match total requested amount under Line-Item Project Budget.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

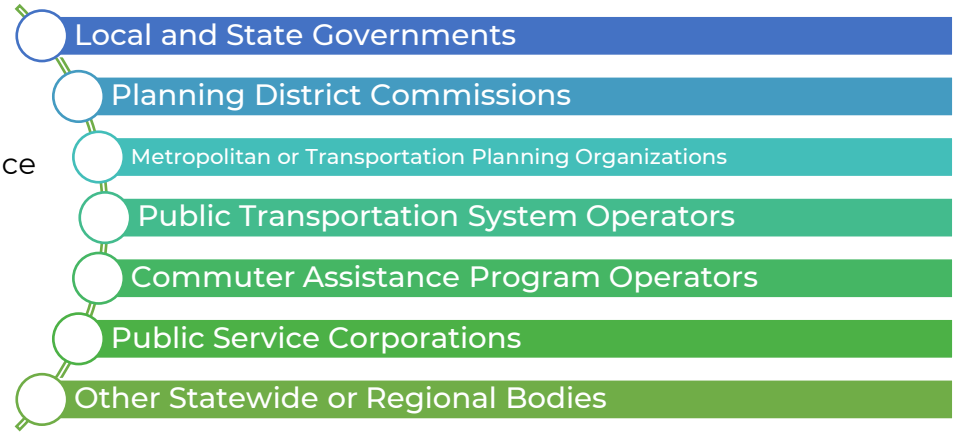
- *Project Schedule/Milestones* – Include start and end date (not to exceed two years), and additional detailed milestones. Additional milestones can include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, training, workshops and conferences, completion of reports, surveys, etc.

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

The following entities are eligible for the Technical Assistance Program:



Program Description

The Technical Assistance grant program supports studies, plans, research, data collection, and evaluation projects to help improve, justify, and evaluate public transportation or commuter assistance services. This program can be used to conduct a wide range of planning activities and technical analyses that inform decision-making or evaluation processes related to public transportation or other multimodal services. This includes, but is not limited to, providing technical analysis and guidance on operations, service delivery, customer service, expansions of service, and program delivery.

Program Goal

The goal of the Technical Assistance program is to improve the quality, performance, and efficiency of public transportation and/or other multimodal services. Localities, transit agencies, and other eligible applicants are encouraged to apply for the Technical Assistance grant program to help fund state-required studies and plans, including Transit Strategic Plans, or prior to pursuing a Demonstration Grant. For projects expected to utilize consultant services, applicants are encouraged to use our General Planning Consultant (GPC) bench prior to submitting applications to review scope feasibility and cost estimates.

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 include 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

Eligible projects under the program are included, but not limited to the following:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Assessments
- Capital Assistance and SMART SCALE project development assistance
- 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
- Marketing and Promotional Plans
- Micromobility Feasibility Studies
- Procurement Assistance
- Site Selection Studies
- State Bus Roadeo
- Technology Research and Plans
- Transit Development Plans
- Transit-Oriented Development Studies
- Transit Service Management and Performance Evaluations
- Transit Strategic Plans

- Transportation Demand Management Research and Evaluation
- Transit Service Feasibility Studies
- Vanpool Program Feasibility Studies

If an applicant is not a transit agency but is requesting funds to carry out a transit study, the applicant must provide a signed letter of support from any affected transit agencies 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

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

Eligible applicants are permitted to submit up to 3 Technical Assistance program applications for funding consideration. Upon award, DRPT encourages grantees to involve their DRPT Program Manager or Planner throughout the duration of the plan or study. DRPT also has staff and bench consultant resources available to help manage public transportation 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 Scope	30
Project Justification and Planning	25
Technical Capacity	15
Project Readiness and Eligibility	15
Budget Details	15
Total Points Possible	**100**

Project Scope: Applicant must clearly provide an approach to addressing the need/problem (provide a clear understanding for the project, desired outcomes and expected deliverables).

Project Justification and Planning: Applicant must provide a detailed explanation of the need/problem that the project will address, including reference to plans, other studies, or mandate calling for the project). Applicant must also provide documentation that sufficient planning has been conducted to execute the project (not necessary if the application is for conducting a plan).

Technical Capacity: Applicant must identify a qualified project management team and demonstrate the ability to execute the project.

Project Readiness and Eligibility: Applicant must demonstrate the ability to start and execute the project scope within the project schedule and fiscal year.

Budget Details: Applicant must demonstrate the ability to execute the project scope within the proposed project budget

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 a Technical Assistance grant, WebGrants account users must log into WebGrants and select Funding Opportunities from the menu on the left side of the screen, then select MERIT Special Programs – Technical Assistance for the appropriate fiscal year. Once the Funding Opportunity has been selected, a list of all current applications that you or other users in your organization have started will be displayed in addition to details on the Funding Opportunity. Applicants will need to click "Start New Application" to initiate a new application and follow the instructions for each element of the application.

Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application

Project 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* – Include a brief, but informative summary of the project. Summary should detail 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.
- *Draft Scope of Work* - 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.
- *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 and title for the main project contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.

Budget Details

- *Line-Item Project Budget* – Enter all expense line items to detail what the funding will be used for. There is only one expense line item for consultant services: **Professional Services.** It includes consultant staff wages. Consult with your DRPT Programs Manager for appropriate expense line items.
- *Funding Summary* – Enter total project cost, local cost and federal cost, if using. Total project cost should match total requested amount under Line-Item Project Budget.

Project Schedule

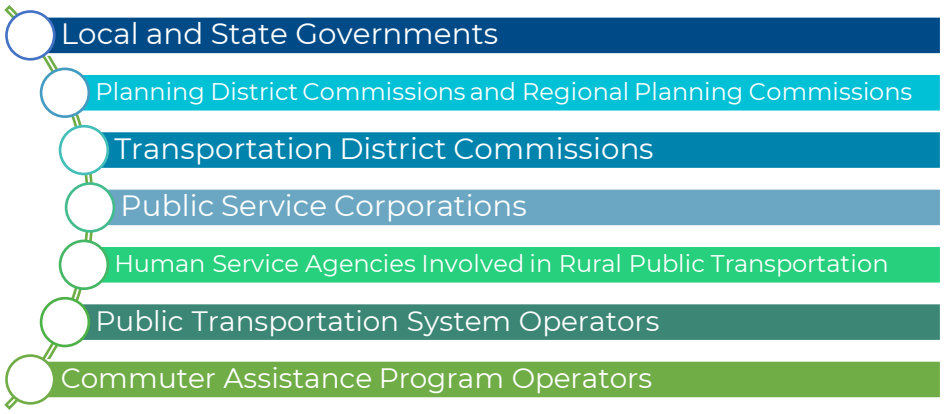
- *Project Schedule/Milestones* – Include start and end date (not to exceed two years), and additional detailed milestones. Additional milestones can include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, training, workshops and conferences, completion of reports, surveys, etc.

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 development of talent pipelines and the upskilling of an existing workforce. It intends to increase awareness of public transportation as a career choice and further develop skills for aspiring young professionals, management, maintenance and operations staff, 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 and professional development.

Skilled trade mentorships, pre- and post-graduate internships, registered apprenticeships, and agency trainings are eligible for program funding. Applicants are responsible for conducting an open recruitment process or establishing a partnership with a post-secondary educational institution in selecting a qualified individual who fulfills the purpose and intent of the program. Applicants are permitted to apply for funding for existing workforce development 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

The goal of the Public Transportation Workforce Development program is to promote and develop careers in public transportation and TDM/commuter assistance. By providing support in developing comprehensive apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, and internal staff development, it seeks to build talent pipelines and reinforce community investment. This program also seeks to inform, promote, and increase public awareness around career opportunities in the public transportation field and its related sectors.

Eligible Expenses

The following programs are eligible for funding:

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Mentorships
- Short-term (less than (3) months) and long-term (more than three (3) months but less than a year) internships
    - Long term internships subject to DRPT discernment to not
- Public transportation leadership development (ex. **APTA**)
- Acute workforce shortage trainings (ex. CDL, Mechanic Trainings/Certifications, etc.)
- State association partnerships focusing on public transportation or human service transportation in the Commonwealth

Wages, fringe benefits, training, and travel for participants 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/Intern salaries are based upon a set hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours the apprentice is expected to work during their participation. Mentorships are eligible for reimbursement for additional work performed by mentors, subject to $25 per hour rules and negotiated contracts, and additional training hosted by the transit agency. While applicants may propose a hiring rate based on their employment markets, DRPT funds Workforce Development Programs using a maximum fully loaded rate of

$25 per hour. Applicants who wish to use a different rate must contact their assigned DRPT Program Manager before application submittal.

State associations that focus on public transportation or human service transportation in the Commonwealth are eligible to apply for partnerships with DRPT under the Workforce Development grant program. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the DRPT Program Manager for Workforce Development for more information.

Grant Match Requirements

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. Applicants seeking to braid federal funding, please contact your DRPT program manager.

Application Evaluation Criteria & Process

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	25
Program Work Plan	30
Technical Capacity	15
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	15
Expanding Partnerships	15
Total Points Possible	**100**

Project Scope: Applicant must clearly provide their approach to the workforce development program, including but not limited to: draft position posting with desired qualifications, proposed program timeline including advertising, hiring, course of apprenticeship, and offboarding/final billing.

Program Work Plan: Applicant must describe the participant's work plan, including, but not limited to: the work to be performed and learned, including special projects,

a timeline of tasks and section rotation schedule, if applicable, planned trainings and certifications, and apprentice class time if applicable.

Technical Capacity: Applicant must identify a qualified participant coordinator and demonstrate the ability to execute the Program Work Plan. Applicants should also identify additional trainers as necessary within the work plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Applicant must clearly describe the approach to measuring performance and evaluating results of the participant(s). Include documentation such as points of evaluation, methods of evaluation, metrics used, and potential responses for non-satisfactory performance.

Expanding Partnerships: Applicant must describe how your agency is expanding partnerships with external institutions to solve short and/or long-term agency skill gaps. These can include K-12, post-secondary education, regional workforce boards, and other alternative employment pipelines.

Agencies interested in applying for a registered apprenticeship or mentorship program or acute training funding should contact the current Workforce Development Program Manager for further application guidance and requirements.

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 a workforce development program and a registered apprentice program within an 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**).To submit an application for a Workforce Development grant, WebGrants account users must log into WebGrants and select Funding Opportunities from the menu on the left side of the screen, then select MERIT Special Programs – Workforce Development for the appropriate fiscal year. Once the Funding Opportunity has been selected, a list of all current applications that you or other users in your organization have started will be displayed in addition to details on the Funding Opportunity. Applicants will need to click "Start New Application" to initiate a new application and follow the instructions for each element of the application.

Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application

Project Information

- *Program Description* – Summarize the scope of work by describing the apprenticeship program, project budget, and project schedule. Be as detailed as possible.
- *Project Milestones* – Describe the overall project schedule and proposed hiring schedule. Workforce grants are for one year.
- *Program Coordinator* – Enter the name and title of the main project contact. The contact should be the person responsible for supervising the apprentice and executing the Apprentice Work Plan. Additional trainers or primary staff should also be identified in the application.

Budget Details

- Total eligible cost for wages. Number of positions, total hours, rate (not to exceed $25.00)
- Agencies may pay in excess of the $25.00 fully loaded rate based on local market conditions, but DRPT will only fund 80% of up to $25.00 per hour
- Direct expenses (fees, training courses, etc.)

Reporting/Billing Requirements

At least quarterly, but no more than monthly, or at the conclusion of a training/conference event, a report must be provided to the agency's assigned DRPT Program Manager in conjunction with reimbursement requests. The report should contain the following:

Internship Programs

- A summary of work, written by the participant, describing the work performed to date, skills acquired, and observations during the billing period.
- A summary of activities, written by the Apprenticeship Coordinator, detailing the intern's progress on the work plan and expected progress during the next quarter.

Apprenticeship Programs

- A summary of work, written by the apprentice, describing the work performed to date, confidence in skills acquired, and observations.
- A summary of activities, written by the apprenticeship coordinator, mentor, or trainer, detailing the apprentice's progress on the work plan, and expected progress during the next quarter.

- A copy of other required reports as needed by other funding sources. E.g., DOL, DOT, and other state agencies.

Training Programs

- A summary of participants who participated in training, the training organization used (if applicable), skills learned, and successful completions/Certifications.

Leadership Development

- Participants must report a summary of skills learned or knowledge gained, including at least:
    - Their takeaways from the program and how it has benefited them in their current role.
    - How will they bring those skills/knowledge into their current position to better themselves or the agencies operations.
    - What is one thing they can do "tomorrow" to further the mission of their agency?
- A report from the program coordinator about how they see their agency has benefited from the conference/training and if their saw it as successful.

General Reporting

All grant recipients must report on the following workforce metrics to comply with Virginia Works Reporting Requirements:

- Job Placement
    - Individuals hired via any type of program (Interns, apprentices, full-time employees, etc.) regardless of retention.
- Individuals Trained
    - This includes all program participants that complete your WFD program (e.g., employees trained, successful interns, certified apprentices, etc.)
- Job Retention Rate
    - Includes individuals hired on during or at the conclusion of the program

For further clarification, please reach out to your assigned DRPT WFD grant program manager.

At the conclusion of your program, the participant and/or administrator must provide a report to the DRPT Program Manager assigned to the agency documenting their experience.

The report, at a minimum, should document the following:

Apprentices/Interns

- Description of the agency and the services it provides
- Description of each function performed during their experience, lessons learned, and results achieved
- Overview of program experience's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvements
- Personal takeaways of the transportation industry after their experiences and how it impacted their career path

Program administrators/managers:

- Overview of program experience, challenges, strengths, areas for improvement
- Their experience participating in the workforce development program
- Virginia Works Metrics (as stated under *General Reporting*)
    - Agencies shall submit the final reports to DRPT following the conclusion of their program(s), included in their final billing within **WebGrants**.Agencies shall submit the final reports to DRPT following the conclusion of their program(s), included in their final billing within **WebGrants**.

The report may be used in consideration of future Workforce Development Program funding.

CHAPTER 2

State Aid Grant Programs: Transit Ridership Incentive Program

Program Goals

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) administers the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) which provides funding to promote improved transit service across the Commonwealth providing state assistance for projects that increase ridership, enhance accessibility, and improve the passenger experience. TRIP was established as part of the 2020 Omnibus Transportation Bill (HB 1414/SB 890) and expanded in 2023 (HB 2338/SB 1326) and 2026 (HB200).

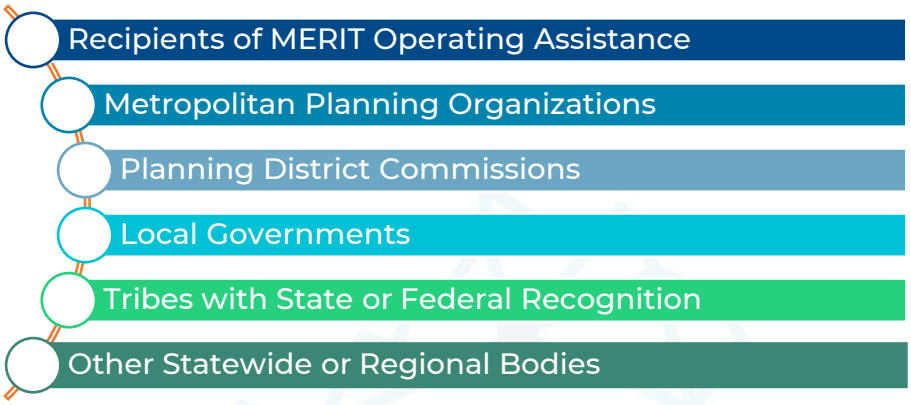
TRIP is organized into four program areas based on the enabling legislation:

1. Regional Connectivity
2. Zero & Reduced Fare
3. Enhanced Mobility Innovation
4. Passenger Amenities & Safety

All TRIP program areas share the same eligible applicants and evaluation process, however application requirements and match rates vary by project type – capital, operating, and planning. The following section provides guidance to TRIP as a whole followed by specific guidance for each program area.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible for TRIP:



Applicants that do not provide public transportation (i.e. are not recipients of MERIT Operating Assistance) are required to provide documentation showing support for the project by their jurisdiction's public transportation provider.

Nonprofit, human service, or other transportation providers may be eligible for TRIP under the entities included above.

TRIP applications for projects in Northern Virginia should align with DMVMoves goals.

Application Process

All applications received through the MERIT – Capital and Technical Assistance programs will be evaluated for TRIP and may receive an award based on eligibility and available funding.

TRIP includes four funding opportunities developed specifically for projects not eligible for other DRPT programs.

Table 2.1 outlines which application should be submitted for each eligible project. Requests for funding for capital-type projects like bus-only lanes, fare integration, and bus stop amenities should be submitted through the appropriate MERIT – Capital application while planning requests should be submitted through Technical Assistance.

Additional guidance for each TRIP application is included within each program area's section. Applicants should carefully review the guidance for each program area, as all applications, including supporting documentation, will be reviewed for quality and completeness.

Table 2.1: TRIP Eligible Project Type by Funding Opportunity

Area	Eligible Project	TRIP	MERIT Capital	Technical Assistance
Regional Connectivity	New/Improved Regional Route	✓		
	Bus-Only Lanes		✓	
	Enhanced Amenities		✓	
	Fare Integration		✓	
	Regional Route Planning			✓
Zero and Reduced Fare	Zero Fare System	✓		
	Zero Fare Service	✓		
	Fare Passes	✓		
	Fare Policy Planning			✓
Enhanced Mobility Innovation	Transportation Coordination	✓		
	Micromobility Connections	✓		
	Specialized Transportation	✓		
Passenger Amen	Bus Stop or Station Amenities		✓	
	Bus Facility or Public Safety Planning			✓

	Public Safety Equipment		✓	
	Public Safety Programming	✓		

Application Scoring and Evaluation

Applications are evaluated using a methodological approach that considers five key criteria that reflect the goal of TRIP, with up to 20 points awarded under each criterion for a maximum of 100 points.

Criteria include service and non-service criteria as described in Table 2.2. Applications receive a service criteria score based on the potential impact of each project type to address the service criteria, up to twenty (20) points per criteria. Non-service criteria scores are awarded based on the quality and completeness of the application and an evaluation of project readiness through a review of supporting documentation.

Projects are considered ready for funding when there is a strong, demonstrated local commitment and an appropriate level of planning or diligence has been completed. A detailed scoring matrix for each project type is provided in Table 2.3.

Table 2.2: TRIP Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Type	Components
Ridership	Service	Ability to increase transit ridership through service improvements, reduced fares, or improved passenger amenities.
Accessibility	Service	Ability to increase the accessibility of the transit system, access to destinations, and reduce barriers to travel.
Passenger Experience	Service	Ability to increase the desirability of transit use by improving the experience of transit riders at all stages of their trip.
Project Scope	Non-Service	Application quality and completeness, including a scope that identifies a need using performance data or a technical analysis, addresses each of the three service criteria, and requests the maximum award term. Joint or cooperative applications will receive additional consideration.
Project Readiness	Non-Service	Demonstrated through supporting documents that shows work is prepared to begin with minimal startup costs or delay and letters of support from funding, governing, or planning bodies. Successful projects from the Demonstration program will be given additional consideration.

Table 2.3: TRIP Scoring Matrix

Key ● High Impact ◒ Medium Impact ○ Low Impact	Service			Service Score	Non-Service		Max. Score
	Ridership	Accessibility	Passenger Experience		Scope	Readiness	
Regional Connectivity							
New Regional Route	●	●	●	60	Up to 20	Up to 20	100
Improved Regional Route	●	◒	●	54			94
Bus-Only Lanes	◒	●	●	54			94
Enhanced Amenities	◒	◒	●	48			88
Fare Integration	○	◒	●	40			80
Regional Route Planning	◒	◒	○	34			64
Zero & Reduced Fare							
Zero Fare System	◒	●	●	54	Up to 20	Up to 20	94
Zero Fare Service	◒	●	◒	48			88
Fare Passes	◒	●	○	48			88
Fare Policy Planning	◒	◒	○	34			74
Enhanced Mobility Innovation							
Transportation Coordination	◒	●	◒	48	Up to 20	Up to 20	88
Micromobility Connections	○	●	◒	40			80
Specialized Transportation	○	●	◒	40			80
Passenger Amenities & Safety							
Bus Stop or Station Amenities	◒	●	●	54	Up to 20	Up to 20	94
Bus Facility Planning	○	◒	○	26			66
Public Safety	○	○	◒	26			66

Section 2.1 TRIP Regional Connectivity

Program Description

TRIP Regional Connectivity encourages the identification, establishment, and improvement of regionally significant transit services by providing state assistance for eligible capital, operating, and planning projects. This program is for improvements and is not intended to subsidize unimproved services or projects to maintain a state of good repair.

Eligible Projects

The following project types are eligible for TRIP Regional Connectivity:

Operating Projects

- **New Regional Service:** Establishing a new transit service with regional significance. Services previously supported through the Demonstration program are considered new for the purposes of TRIP.
- **Improved Regional Service:** Increasing frequency, expanding service area, or extending service hours on a transit service with regional significance.

Capital Projects

- **Bus-Only Lanes**
- **Transit Signal Priority**
- **Integrated Fare Collection:** Investments that help integrate fare collection process among multiple transit agencies throughout a region. This can include the development or improvement of mobile apps, fare cards, and other efforts that improve the inoperability of fare collection processes across a region.
- **Enhanced Passenger Amenities:** Passenger amenities at bus stops or transit stations that support a regionally significant transit service.

Regional Route Planning

- Plans, studies (including feasibility studies), evaluations, research, or data collection to identify, establish, or improve a transit service with regional significance. Please refer to Section 1.4 Technical Assistance for a full description of requirements for plans and studies.

Program Definitions

Regional Significance: Regionally significant transit services are identified in a regional plan or study that includes the project as an approach to addressing a regional travel need. Relevant plans or studies may include Transit Development or

Strategic Plan, Multimodal Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, Safety Action Plan, or a dedicated project feasibility study.

Grant Match Requirements

Grant match requirements and state contributions vary according to the type of project, as shown in Table 2.4. TRIP Regional Connectivity will provide up to 80% of eligible costs for capital projects, up to 50% of eligible costs for plans or studies, and up to 5 years of funding with a stepdown to 10% for operating projects. The stepdown structure of multi-year awards increases local funding as the project develops, requiring heightened local commitment to ensure service continuation at the conclusion of the grant term.

Table 2.4: TRIP Regional Connectivity Maximum State Contributions

Maximum State Contributions Toward Total Project Costs					
	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**
Operating	80%	60%	30%	20%	10%
Capital >$3M*	68%				
Capital <$3M*	50%				
Planning*	50%				

** Capital and planning projects must be submitted through the MERIT Capital or Technical Assistance application, respectively, and will first be evaluated under that program. Eligible projects may receive TRIP based on eligibility and available funding.*

Application Requirements

*Note that the TRIP Regional Connectivity application is **only for requests for operating assistance for a new or improved transit service**. Requests for capital or planning projects must be submitted through the MERIT – Capital or Technical Assistance applications, respectively. Capital and planning projects will be screened into TRIP based on project eligibility.*

Project Title (250 characters): Include service name, its region, and the new or improved service.

Project Description (3000 ch): Provide a short description of the new or improved service project including scope, timeline, description of impact, and regional significance. What mode of service will be provided? What is changing in terms of frequency, service hours, distance, or area? What access to points of interest or connections to transit is improved? How are local support and regional significance demonstrated?

(Optional) **Service Area Map Upload**

Please provide before/after maps or graphics showing the improvement's context within the transit network. GIS shapefiles are also appreciated.

Project Schedule (1500 ch): Will the project be able to begin once funds are awarded? What milestones are involved with the project? 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.)?

Project Need (3000 ch): What regional travel need does this project address? Reference the planning document or study, or any rider surveys, comments, or feedback, that identified this need and the project as a solution to address it.

Evidence of Regional Significance Upload

Upload the regional plan or study that includes the new or improved service as an approach to addressing a regional travel need. Eligible plans or studies may include Transit Development or Strategic Plan, Multimodal Transportation Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, Safety Action Plan, Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan, or a project feasibility study.

(Optional) **Rider Feedback Upload**

Upload any rider surveys, comments, or feedback that supports this new or improved service.

Project Impact (3000 ch): What impact on ridership, access to housing, jobs or other destinations, service reliability, projected rider savings, congestion mitigation, emissions reduction, or other measures do you expect from this project and how was that impact calculated? What metrics will be collected to track these? What is the feasibility of the project continuing beyond the TRIP grant period?

Performance Evaluation (3000 ch): TRIP requires funded projects to be monitored and evaluated over the grant term. Provide 3 metrics that will be used to evaluate the performance of this project and describe how data will be collected. Metrics can be qualitative or quantitative but should relate to the project need. Provide a baseline for each of these from the most recent available fiscal year, as applicable.

Local and Regional Support (3000 ch): Provide evidence of local and regional support. How does this project align with the transit provider's service plan and strategic objectives? Does this project include partnerships with other service providers, localities, or community groups? Describe any partnerships to reach low-income or other transit-dependent riders for this service.

Transit Board Approval Upload

Upload a resolution, letter, or other documentation of support from the transit agency that will operate the new or improved service indicating their support for this project and its alignment with their strategic objectives.

(Optional) **Additional Support Upload**

Provide any other documentation of regional support, including but not limited to, a dedicated funding source for transit, transit-supportive policies in planning and policy documents, supportive zoning near public transportation, or sidewalk availability.

Budget: TRIP Regional Connectivity provides up to five years of state assistance with an annual stepdown of 80%, 60%, 30%, 20% 10%.

Total project cost must be the incremental operating cost of the new or improved transit service plus a reasonable percentage for indirect costs or marketing costs dedicated to the service. Applicants are encouraged to budget a portion of their total project costs toward marketing the service to increase awareness and develop community support.

Budget Table

FY	Total Project Cost	State Request	Local Share	Local Percentage
FY27				20%
FY28				40%
FY29				60%
FY30				80%

FY31				90%
Total				58%

Budget Support Upload

Provide a quote or cost estimate showing how project costs were calculated

Reporting Requirements

Grantees receiving TRIP Regional Connectivity funding are required to report project status quarterly as well as annual route- or service-level performance metrics as described in the application. Quarterly reporting is to be provided as documentation of support for reimbursement claims while annual performance reporting will be due to DRPT by August 1 for the prior fiscal year.

Section 2.2 TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare

Program Description

TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare supports the establishment of programs to reduce the impact of fares on low-income individuals by providing state assistance for zero fare programs, fare passes, and fare policy planning.

Eligible Projects

The following project types are eligible for TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare:

Zero Fare

- **Zero Fare System:** Eliminating fares across an entire public transportation system.
- **Zero Fare Service:** Eliminating fares on a route, zone, or high-capacity corridor.

Fare Passes

- Providing reduced or zero fare passes to transit dependent populations. Transit dependent populations can include, but are not limited to, low-income individuals, older adults, young adults, people with a disability, and people without a driver's license.

Fare Policy Planning

- Plans, studies (including feasibility studies), evaluations, research, or data collection to fare policy. Please refer to Section 1.4 Technical Assistance for a full description of requirements for plans and studies.

Program Definitions

Low-Income Individual: DRPT supports the creation of a locally developed threshold of low income that accurately reflects the conditions and needs of each transit agency's service area.

Grant Match Requirements

Grant match requirements and state contributions vary according to the type of project, as shown in Table 2.5. TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare is a multi-year program that provides three years of funding with a stepdown from 80% to 30% of eligible costs. To ensure local commitment, all zero fare system applicants must commit to a fourth

year of operations where the grantee provides 100% of project expenses with continued DRPT oversight.

Table 2.5: TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare Maximum State Contributions

Maximum State Contributions Toward Total Project Costs				
	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**
Zero Fare System	80%	60%	30%	0%
Zero Fare Service	80%	60%	30%	
Fare Passes	80%	60%	30%	
Fare Policy Planning*	50%			

** Planning projects must be submitted through the Technical Assistance application and will first be evaluated under that program. Eligible projects may receive TRIP based on eligibility and available funding.*

Application Requirements

*Note that the TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare application is **only for requests for zero fare systems, zero fare services, and fare passes**. Requests for planning projects must be submitted through the Technical Assistance application and will be screened into TRIP based on eligibility.*

Project Title (250 ch): Describe the type of project, who it benefits, or other distinctions.

Project Description (3000 ch): Provide a short description of the project including a brief scope, timeline, description of community impact and the scale of that impact. What services will be covered under the program and where do they operate?

(Optional) **Service Area Map Upload**

Please provide maps or graphics showing the zero fare route, zone, or system's geographic. GIS shapefiles are also appreciated.

Project Schedule (1500 ch): Will the project be able to begin once funds are awarded? What milestones are involved with the project? 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.)?

Project Need (3000 ch): Describe the need for the zero or reduced fare program. Reference a study or research that justifies this project application, including any fare policy evaluations, recommendations, and implementation approaches to address it through fare policy or passes.

Project Need Support Upload

Upload a plan or study that evaluates the need for a zero fare or fare pass program.

(Optional) **Rider Feedback Upload**

Upload any rider surveys, comments, or feedback that supports this new or improved service.

Project Impact (3000 ch): Describe how the project will reduce barriers to transit for low-income or other transit-dependent populations. What impact on ridership, projected rider savings, or other impacts to low-income or other transit-dependent people do you expect from this project and how was that impact estimated? What metrics will be collected to track these? What is the feasibility of the project continuing beyond the TRIP grant period?

Performance Evaluation (3000 ch): TRIP Regional Connectivity requires funded projects to be monitored and evaluated over the five-year grant period. TRIP requires funded projects to be monitored and evaluated over the grant term. Provide 3 metrics that will be used to evaluate the performance of this project and describe how data will be collected. Metrics can be qualitative or quantitative but should relate to the project need. Provide a baseline for each of these from the most recent available fiscal year, if applicable.

Example Metrics: Direct Riders Savings, Reduced Dwell Time. Participation Rate, Enrollment Rate, Distributed

Local and Regional Support (3000 ch): Zero and reduced fare pilot programs rely on strong community partnerships to maximize the benefits of public transportation. Describe any partnerships with social services or non-profit organizations to reach low-income or other transit-dependent riders and provide documentation of board approval for this application by the affected transit agency. Does this project include partnerships with other service providers, localities, or community groups?

(Optional) **Transit Board Approval Upload**

Upload a resolution, letter, or other documentation of support from the transit service provider that is affected by the project in this application.

(Optional) **Additional Support Upload:** Board_Approval.pdf

Provide any other documentation of regional support, including but not limited to the transit provider's service plan and strategic objectives, a dedicated funding source for transit, transit-supportive policies in planning and policy documents, supportive zoning near public transportation, or sidewalk availability.

Budget: TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare provides up to three years of state assistance with an annual stepdown of 80%, 60%, 30%. A fourth project year with 0% state match is required only for systemwide zero fare programs.

For zero fare system or services, total project cost must be the projected fare revenue for the next four fiscal years, plus any additional costs to implement the pilot program (e.g. farebox removal, marketing, monitoring & evaluation). For fare pass projects, total project cost must be actual cost of the fare passes being distributed, plus a reasonable percentage for marketing and overhead costs. Applicants are encouraged to budget a portion of their total project costs toward marketing the program to increase awareness and develop community support.

Budget Table

FY	Total Project Cost	State Request	Local Share	Local Percentage
FY27				20%
FY28				40%
FY29				60%
FY30*				0%
Total				40%

** A fourth fiscal year with no TRIP support is required only for zero fare system applicants.*

Budget Support Upload

Provide a quote or cost estimate showing how project costs were calculated

Reporting Requirements

Grantees receiving TRIP Zero and Reduced Fare funding are required to report on project status each quarterly as well as the annual performance metrics noted in the application. Quarterly reporting is to be provided as documentation of support for reimbursement claims while annual performance reporting will be due to DRPT by August 1 for the prior fiscal year.

Section 2.3 TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation

Program Description

TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation encourages innovative approaches to micromobility, paratransit, and other specialized transportation by providing state assistance for eligible projects that coordinate transportation, promote connections to micromobility, or serve targeted populations.

Eligible Projects

The following project types are eligible for TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation:

Transportation Coordination

- Innovative approaches to coordinating public transportation with specialized transportation services including human services transportation and ADA paratransit. Example projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Establishing a regional mobility hub

Micromobility Connections

- Innovative approaches to improving first- and last- mile connections to public transportation with micromobility. Example projects include, but are not limited to:
    - New methods of storing bicycles on transit vehicles
    - Introducing secure bicycle storage lockers to a transit system

Specialized Transportation

- Innovative approaches to specialized transportation that supports the mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, or other groups with special transportation needs. Example projects include, but are not limited to:
    - Implementing innovative financing for vehicle procurement
    - Procuring zero-emission specialized transportation vehicles

Program Definitions

Innovative Approach: Testing proof of concept or new technology.

Micromobility: Includes small, light-weight human-powered or electric vehicles operated at low speeds, including but not limited to bicycles and scooters.

Specialized Transportation: A restricted-eligibility transportation service for targeted populations including older adults and people with disabilities. Includes ADA paratransit

Grant Match Requirements

TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation provides state funding up to 80% of eligible expenses for up to 2 years as shown in Table 2.6. Refer to Section 1.3 Demonstration Project Assistance for a full description of eligible expenses and match requirements.

Table 2.6: TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation Maximum State Contributions

Maximum State Contributions Toward Total Project Costs		
	Year 1	**Year 2**
Transportation Coordination	80%	80%
Micromobility Connections	80%	80%
Specialized Transportation	80%	80%

Application Requirements

Project Title (250 ch): Describe the project and what it accomplishes.

Project Type: Indicate if this is a transportation coordination, micromobility connection, or specialized transportation project.

Project Description (3000 ch): Provide a short description of the project including a scope, timeline, description of impact, and any preparatory or planning activities that have been accomplished to date. What makes this project innovative?

(Optional) **Scope of Work Upload**

Upload a draft scope of work detailing activities in the proposed project.

Project Schedule (1500 ch): Will the project be able to begin once funds are awarded? What milestones are involved with the project? 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.)? Additional milestones can include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, training, workshops and conferences, completion of reports, surveys.

Project Need (3000 ch): What problem does this project address? Reference the planning document or study, or any rider surveys, comments, or feedback, that identified this need and the project as a solution to address it.

(Optional) **Evidence of Need Upload**

Upload a study that develops justification for the project and a plan to implement it.

(Optional) **Rider Feedback Upload**

Upload any rider surveys, comments, or feedback that supports this new or improved service.

Project Impact (3000 ch): What impact do you expect from this project and how was that impact estimated?

Performance Evaluation (3000 ch): TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation requires funded projects to be monitored and evaluated over the two-year grant period. Provide 3 metrics that will be used to evaluate the performance of this project and describe how data will be collected. Metrics can be qualitative or quantitative but should relate to the project need. Provide a baseline for each of these from the most recent available fiscal year, if applicable.

Local and Regional Support (3000 ch): Upload evidence of local and regional support. Does this project include partnerships with other service providers, localities, or community groups? Is there an intention of financial commitment to continue the project beyond the first phase?

(Optional) **Transit Board Approval Upload**

Upload a resolution, letter, or other documentation of support from the transit agency affected by this project.

(Optional) **Additional Support Upload**

Provide a letter, or other documentation of support from community-based organizations, local jurisdictions, or other stakeholders affected by the proposed project, as well as any other documentation of regional support, including but not limited to a dedicated funding source for transit, transit-supportive policies in planning and policy documents, supportive zoning near public transportation, sidewalk availability.

Budget: Applicants must provide a line-item budget and schedule for all project expenses. The budget should reflect the total project cost and provide any relevant information on the expense.

Budget Table

FY	Total Project Cost	State Request	Local Share	Local Percentage
FY27				80%
FY28				80%

Total				80%

Budget Support Upload

Provide a quote or cost estimate showing how project costs were calculated for each of the project line-item expenses

Reporting Requirements

Grantees receiving TRIP Enhanced Mobility Innovation funding are required to report on project status each quarterly as well as the annual performance metrics noted in the application. Quarterly reporting is to be provided as documentation of support for reimbursement claims while annual performance reporting will be due to DRPT by August 1 for the prior fiscal year.

Section 2.4 TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety

Program Description

TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety supports local, regional, and state entities in improving the accessibility and safety of transit bus passenger facilities by providing state assistance for eligible projects. **This program is for improvements and is not intended to support projects to maintain a state of good repair through in-kind replacement nor supplant wages paid by local revenues.**

Eligible Projects

The following project types are eligible for TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety:

Bus Stop or Station Amenities

- ADA accessibility improvements such as installation of pavement, ramps, audio messaging, or vibro-tractile devices at bus stops
- Installation of amenities such as lighting, seating, and other street furniture
- Installation, replacement, or improvement to bus stop signs or shelters
- Installation of bike racks and other multi-modal infrastructure
- Improving signage or installation of real-time information equipment
- Constructing or renovating a bus station, BRT station, or transit center

Bus Facility Planning

- Plans, studies (including feasibility studies), engineering or design services, predevelopment tasks, evaluations, research, or data collection to improve or install bus stops or other bus passenger facilities. Please refer to Section 1.4 Technical Assistance for a full description of requirements for plans and studies.

Public Safety

- **Public Safety Equipment:** Purchasing or installing equipment that supports the safety and security of bus stops or other bus passenger facilities. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    - Purchase and installation of lighting, cameras, warning annunciators, or emergency help buttons and call boxes.
    - Implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) designed to improve the safety of the transit system.
    - Purchase of other equipment that directly improves the perception of safety among riders, operators, and other transit employees

- **Public Safety Programming:** Operational efforts to improve safety when interacting with the transit system. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Additional litter pickup and bus stop cleaning programs
  - Efforts to slow down drivers or reduce vehicle crashes near bus stops
  - Crime prevention through environmental design, including lighting or public art to improve sense of safety
- **Public Safety Planning:** Plans, studies (including feasibility studies), evaluations, research, or data collection to improve the safety or security of bus transit passenger facilities. Please refer to Section 1.4 Technical Assistance for a full description of requirements for plans and studies.

Grant Match Requirements

Grant match requirements and state contributions vary according to the type of project, as shown in Table 2.6. TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety will provide one award for up to 68% of eligible costs. This program does not include a stepdown, however a non-state match is still required.

Table 2.7: TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety Maximum State Contributions

Maximum State Contributions Toward Total Project Costs	
	Year 1
Bus Stop or Station Amenities >$3M*	68%
Bus Stop or Station Amenities <$3M*	50%
Bus Facility or Public Safety Planning*	50%
Public Safety >$3M*	68%
Public Safety <$3M*	50%
Public Safety Programming	80%

** Capital and planning projects must be submitted through the MERIT Capital or Technical Assistance application, respectively, and will first be evaluated under that program. Eligible projects may receive TRIP based on eligibility and available funding.*

Application Requirements

*Note that the TRIP Passenger Amenities and Safety application is **only for public safety programming**. Requests for capital or planning projects must be submitted through the MERIT – Capital or Technical Assistance applications, respectively. Capital and planning projects will be screened into TRIP based on project eligibility.*

Project Title (250 characters): Describe the project and what it accomplishes.

Project Description (3000 ch): Provide a short description of the project including a scope, timeline, description of impact, and any preparatory or planning activities that have been accomplished to date.

(Optional) **Scope of Work Upload**

Upload a draft scope of work detailing activities in the proposed project.

Project Schedule (1500 ch): Will the project be able to begin once funds are awarded? What milestones are involved with the project? 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.)? Additional milestones can include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, training, workshops and conferences, completion of reports, surveys.

Project Need (3000 ch): What problem does this project address? Reference a document or study, or any rider surveys, comments, or feedback, that identified this need and the project as a solution to address it.

(Optional) **Project Need Support Upload**

Upload a study that develops justification for the public safety programming and a plan to implement it.

(Optional) **Rider Feedback Upload**

Upload any rider surveys, comments, or feedback that supports this new or improved service.

Project Impact (3000 ch): What impact on rider and transit worker safety do you expect from this project and how was that impact estimated?

Performance Evaluation (3000 ch): TRIP requires funded projects to be monitored and evaluated over the grant term. Provide 3 metrics that will be used to evaluate the performance of this project and describe how data will be collected. Metrics can be qualitative or quantitative but should relate to the project need. Provide a baseline for each of these from the most recent available fiscal year, as applicable.

Local and Regional Support (3000 ch): Provide evidence of local and regional support. How does this project align with the transit provider's service plan and strategic objectives? Does this project include partnerships with other service providers, localities, or community groups?

Transit Board Approval Upload

Upload a resolution, letter, or other documentation of support from the transit service provider affected by the project described in this application.

(Optional) **Letters of Support Upload**

Upload a resolution, letter, or other documentation of support from community-based organizations, local jurisdictions, or other stakeholders affected by the proposed project, as well as any other documentation of regional support, including but not limited to a dedicated funding source for transit, transit-supportive policies in planning and policy documents, supportive zoning near public transportation, sidewalk availability.

Budget: Applicants must provide a line-item budget and schedule for all project expenses. The budget should reflect the total project cost and provide any relevant information on the expense.

Budget Table

FY	Total Project Cost	State Request	Local Share	Local Percentage
FY27				80%
Total				---

Budget Support Upload

Applicants must provide a line-item budget and schedule for all project expenses. The budget should reflect the total project cost, source of funding, and provide relevant information on each expense.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees receiving TRIP Passenger Amenities and Public Safety funding are required to report on project status each quarterly as well as the annual performance metrics noted in the application. Quarterly reporting is to be provided as documentation of support for reimbursement claims while annual performance reporting will be due to DRPT by August 1 for the prior fiscal year.

CHAPTER 3

State Aid Grant Programs – Special 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 efficient and effective at increasing transit, vanpool, and carpooling ridership. The investments made through the CAP grant program reduce single occupant vehicle trips, improving air quality and traffic congestion. This improves the throughput of people, reduces fuel consumption and saves Virginians time and money.

Funding for the Commuter Assistance Program comes from DRPT's Special Programs fund which also funds DRPT's Demonstration, Technical Assistance, and Workforce Development grant programs. With limited funding available, the award of grant funding is competitive and based on which projects will achieve the best results. A prior award does not ensure a future award.

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 Assistance**
2. **CAP Project Assistance**

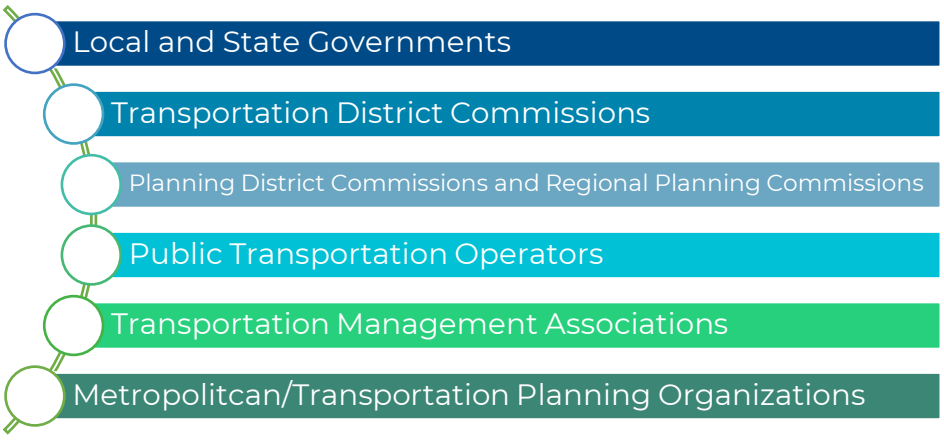
Grant eligibility, grant matching funds requirements, guidance on eligible and ineligible expenses, application procedures, and evaluation criteria are explained in the following sections of this chapter.

Section 3.2 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating Assistance

This section provides an overview of the CAP Operating Assistance grant program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of programs qualify for funding, states the goal of the grant program, specifies application requirements, and details application evaluation criteria.

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.

Program Description

The CAP Operating Assistance grant program provides funding to support the operation of regional and local commuter assistance programs that serve the public by 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 Assistance grant program must achieve a measurable increase in the use of DRPT approved ridematching services, leading to an increase in use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and/or bicycle commuting.

Program Goal

The goal of the CAP Operating Assistance grant program is to achieve a year-to-year increase in the number of people using DRPT approved ridematching systems

(Commuter Connections and ConnectingVA) to obtain travel and commute mode options information.

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

Required and Eligible Program Elements

Required elements must be included in the application and must be performed if the grant is awarded. Program elements may be performed by applicant agency staff or a contractor.

- **REQUIRED:** Provide direct assistance to the public for the purpose of providing commute options information and convincing the public to use transit, carpool, vanpool, commute to work by bicycle, and use the DRPT approved ridematching systems (Commuter Connections and ConnectingVA).
- **REQUIRED:** Follow up with those that requested ridematching and commute options information. Follow up should take place within ten (10) business days from the commuter's initial request for ridematching and commute options information that occurred through in-person meetings, events, the ConnectingVA app and website or Commuter Connections ridematching system.
- **REQUIRED:** Report required performance data, program activities and results to DRPT.
- **ELIGIBLE:** Participating in tabling events, including at employer sites, residential sites, fairs, and events, to promote and encourage the use of transit, carpool, vanpool, the ConnectingVA app, and/or Commuter Connections ridematching system.
- **ELIGIBLE:** Developing and placing marketing advertising.
- **ELIGIBLE:** Providing commute options information to employers and employees.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

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. DRPT will remove ineligible expenses from the project during the application review process, which may result in a decrease in the total project budget and grant award.

Eligible Expenses

CAP Operating Assistance funds the day-to-day operations of a commuter assistance program. Eligible expenses include:

- Ridematching services
- Staff or contractor time contacting and talking to the public and employers to encourage the use of the DRPT approved ridematching service websites and mobile apps, transit, carpools, and vanpools, for all travel purposes, and bicycle commuting to work
- Commuter assistance websites and phone numbers
- Marketing, outreach, and promotion of carpooling, vanpooling, transit, and/or bicycle commuting, and behavior change marketing
- Necessary staff and contractor support to implement the required and eligible program elements
- Necessary grant administration expenses (see details below)
- Promotional items with a unit cost of $5 or less that are justified necessary for the program
- Travel expenses that are necessary for promotions and meetings and lead to an increase in program performance and achieving the CAP goal

  Guidance Note: Conference attendance is limited to a maximum of two project staff. Only full-time staff that devote a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of their annual job duties to the project may attend a conference. Project staff that meet this requirement may attend the annual Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) conference.
- Registration and travel expenses for training, including workshops and conferences, for the purpose of project staff obtaining additional or enhanced skills needed to perform the duties associated with the project, may be eligible. **Applicants should first explore and apply to other funding programs such as Workforce Development, Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) and Urban Training grant programs prior to including those expenses in a CAP application. Check with a DRPT Program Manager for funding eligibility.**

Guidance Note: All expenses should be necessary and justified for the operation of the commuter assistance program, be reasonable in nature and amount, and contribute to an increase in the number of new ridematch requests.

Grant Administration Expenses: Costs of administering the grant should not exceed or be close to the costs of operating the commuter assistance program. Grant recipients should make every effort to keep administration costs down. Only staff that

actually perform administration tasks for the project may charge their time to the project.

Grant administration tasks charged to the project should be limited to direct costs for:

- Preparation and submission of project claims
- Review and signing of grant contract
- Processing and paying vendor or contractor invoices
- Ordering of project supplies
- Project budget set up in financial system and tracking of line-item budget expenses versus grant contract budget

Guidance Note: Consult with your DRPT Program Manager before submitting an application to discuss the eligibility of administration charges not listed above.

Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are **ineligible** for CAP Operating Assistance funding. This is not an all-inclusive list. Consult with your DRPT Program Manager before submitting an application to discuss the eligibility of expenses not listed below.

- Transit schedule design, production, printing, and distribution
- Public notices, announcements, and events for transit service and fare changes, new buses, electric buses, low/no emission buses, route changes, and other transit service operating or capital events
- Capital expenses (computers, printers, mobile phones, copiers, plotters, tablets, furniture, bicycles, bike racks, bike lockers, bike repair stations, vehicles, construction or leasing of park-and-ride lots, etc.)
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Commuter store operations
- Capital and operating expenses for transit, vanpool, bikeshare, or other transportation services
- Expenses related to marketing, promotion, and events for bicycling for recreation or non-commute purposes
- Expenses for safety projects, including bicycle safety
- Meals, food, snacks, 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
- Expenses included in Indirect Costs may not be charged separately, if charging Indirect Costs to the grant project
- Research, studies, and plans (use the Technical Assistance grant program)
- Staff time to work on grant applications

- Staff time and travel expenses to attend meetings that are not necessary for the implementation of the project or not approved by DRPT
- 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 grants, programs and projects, including those funded with federal or state funds

Grant Match Requirements

The CAP Operating Assistance 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 the applicant agency must commit to providing the local matching funds. This is usually done through adoption or signing of a board 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 Evaluation Criteria

Applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT. DRPT evaluates CAP Operating applications based on if the application is an effective and efficient 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 scored applications may not be funded or funded at a lower amount than requested.

Commuter Assistance Operating Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Description	5
Project Scope	10
Budget Details	15
Justification of Memberships & Systems	5
Staff and Contractor Work	10
Marketing and Promotions	10
Milestones/Events	5
Cost Effectiveness	15
Ridematch Requests Trend	25
Total Points Possible	**100**

Project Description – Scoring is determined by how well the applicant followed directions in the Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application section.

Project Scope – Scoring is determined by how well the scope describes how the funds will be used, what will be implemented, services provided, what activities will occur, and what will be done to increase the number of ridematch requests from the prior current fiscal years.

Marketing and Promotions – Scoring depends on how well the marketing and promotional activities are defined.

Milestone/Event Descriptions – Scoring is determined by how well all the activities and expenses from the Project Scope, Marketing and Promotions, and Budget Details sections of the application are represented in the Milestones section. The more milestones and details provided from those sections, the higher the score.

Staff and Contractor Work – Scoring is based on if staff and contractor levels are justified, appropriate or excessive, if administrative costs are justified and reasonable, if staff percentage of hours working on the grant project are justified, accurate, and realistic, and if the work tasks are appropriate to implement the project.

Budget Details – Scoring is based on the use of appropriate budget categories, the listing of every expense within the expense categories, and the appropriateness of the expenses, line-item budget amounts and total project amount.

Justification of Memberships & Systems – Scoring is determined by how well the applicant showed how memberships are used by project staff to increase results and how systems are used.

Cost Effectiveness – The Cost Effectiveness score reflects if the project is efficient in achieving maximum results with minimum costs. The number of ridematching requests received during the prior year and the cost to achieve that result will be considered in the Cost Effectiveness score.

Ridematch Requests Trend – Scoring is based on the number of ridematch requests received over the past three years. An increase in ridematch requests will result in a higher score and no increase or a decline in ridematch requests will receive a low score, which could impact the amount of the grant award.

In addition, DRPT will consider the recent history of the applicant's ability to administer DRPT grants, which includes timeliness of reimbursement requests, status of current open and executed grants, timeliness and accuracy of reporting performance data to DRPT, whether recent grants were not fully implemented with important tasks and activities not conducted, and the number of new grant applications and ongoing projects as a factor in determining if the applicant agency is prepared to administer and implement another grant.

Application Requirements

Applications for all State Aid Grant Programs, including CAP Operating Assistance, are made online through DRPT's online grant administration website (**WebGrants**).

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

Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application

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

General Information

- *Application Title* – Enter the commuter assistance program name. Do not include the name of the grant funding program, fiscal year or agency name.

Project Information

- *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 project contact. The contact should be someone at the applicant agency and not a contractor.
- *Project Description* - For consistency and to ensure an accurate, succinct and understandable description of all commuter assistance programs for DRPT's SYIP, enter a description using this format and text: [Your commuter assistance program name] **which promotes transit, carpool, vanpool, and bicycle commuting to the public, and provides free ridematching and trip planning services through the** [enter either "Commuter Connections" or "the ConnectingVA app" or "Commuter Connections and the ConnectingVA app" **in the** [enter your program service region (e.g. Central Shenandoah region, Richmond region, County of Fairfax)].

Project Scope – This section is one of the most important parts of the application. It is where the applicant explains what will be done and how the project will be implemented. All program elements must be explained in this section, especially the required program elements. Enter an explanation of the project that details the operations of the commuter assistance program. Include details on how the project funds will be used, specifics on what services are provided and how they are provided, how the public receives the services, what ridematching system is used, how the public learns about the program, target markets, what will be done to increase the number of ridematch requests, what will be done to increase the use of transit, carpools, vanpools, and bicycle commuting (if the latter is part of the project), and any other grant funded components of the program. Include details on the implementation of program elements such as: the number of staff charging to the project, if a contractor(s) will be used, meetings, training and conferences that project staff is planning on attending, grant administrative work, and general information on marketing (materials development and ad placement).

Guidance Note: Activities and program elements in the Project Scope must be included in the applicant agency's approved Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan.

Budget 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. Prorate the cost of memberships, licenses, systems, and services shared by other agency staff and projects, when charging those items. 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.

- Enter as much detail as possible. DRPT will use this information in the creation of the grant contract. Consult with your DRPT Program Manager if you are unsure of the appropriate budget category.
- Round the line-item budget amounts to the nearest dollar. Do not include cents.

- *Other Funding Sources* - Enter funding sources used for this program, other than the CAP Operating Assistance grant, that will be used to fund the commuter assistance program. This includes, but not limited to, state funds from any state or other agency, federal funds, proffers, 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.

Justification of Memberships & Systems

- *Justification of Memberships* – Enter details on how project staff use the memberships noted in the Budget Details. Justification must include how project staff use each membership to improve the results of the commuter assistance program and increase ridematch requests. Include if and how other agency staff use the membership(s). Include how the membership was used in the past and how it will be used to increase grant performance results. Attendance of a conference is not sufficient justification. DRPT does not require

membership in any organization. Therefore, all memberships must be justified to show a benefit to project performance.

- *Justification of Licenses and Software, Etc.* – Enter details on how the licenses, software or systems listed in the Budget Detail are used. Include examples of how these items were used in the past. Include if the licenses and software will be used by other agency staff not associated with this project.

Staff and Contractors

- *Agency Staff and Work* – Enter details on each staff and work performed that is intended to be charged to the grant. Include whether the staff person is a full-time or part-time employee, the overall percentage of time from the person's total job duties will be spent working on the project. Follow the guidance provided above, including guidance in the Grant Administration Expenses section. Be specific and do not rely on the use of general terms, such as "oversight" and "supervise." DRPT will use the details of this section 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.
- *Contractor Work* – Enter a detailed description of work that will be performed by contractor(s) working on this project. Include the details from the scope of work for the contractor, if one has been created.

Marketing and Promotions

- *Marketing and Promotional Events* - List and describe the marketing efforts, the messaging, and desired "call-to-action" or result of each advertising and promotional event that will be conducted, including the marketing partnerships with DRPT and other agencies. If promotional items will be purchased, justify the quantity of the items in this section – how, where, and to whom the promotional items will be distributed.
    - Challenges and Contests – List and describe the challenges and contests to be implemented. The ConnectingVA app **must be used** for all challenges and contests and must be budgeted for in the Budget Details section of the application. There are three (3) ConnectingVA App event types, each with difference pricing and features.
        - Basic ($2,500): For informational events and simply tells the ConnectingVA users about the event.
        - Results ($5,000): Basic plus results (e.g. total VMT reduced, etc.), pre-event content (e.g. "Coming Soon"), post-event content (e.g. "Winners are…"), and additional messages during the event.

- Races ($10,000): Results plus races and leaderboards with categories, participating organizations, and selection of prize winners.

Guidance Note: The amount of money and effort to marketing and promote each travel mode must be representative of the actual mode split for the program's service area. For example, if the bike commuting mode split is 2%, then the money and effort spent on marketing biking should not be the majority or half of the total efforts and money spent on marketing. Include start and end dates and brief detail of all marketing campaigns, events, contests, and challenges in Milestones 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 listed in the Marketing and Promotional Events and Operating Costs sections of the application. Also, include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, promotions, advertising, marketing campaigns, challenges, contests, planned and expected promotional events, and all major program activities. Milestones are a critical tool for applicant agencies and 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 Budget Details section of the application and includes the grant amount and the local match.
- *Application Certification* - The Applications Certification section must be completed to submit the application.

ATTACHMENTS

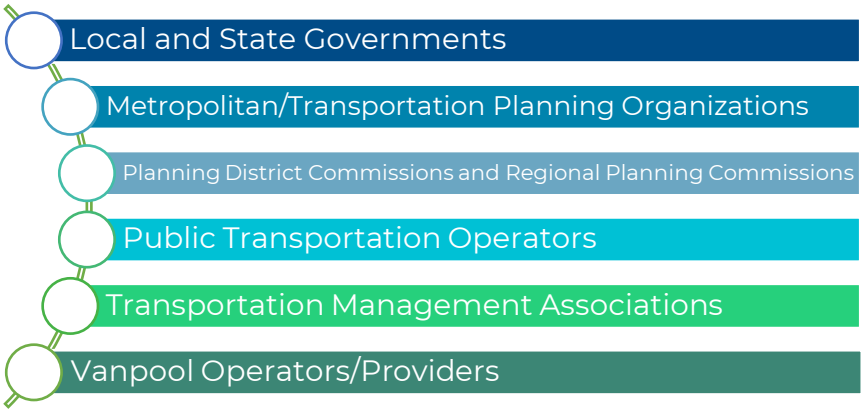
- *Attachments* - Attach a signed or adopted resolution from your agency's governing board or letter from the agency head stating local cash funds are committed for the project. If the local match resolution or letter is not available at the time the application is due, send it to the DRPT Program Manager when it is available. Other attachments, such as letters of support, may be included. Attached documents do not take the place of the application information and will not be included in application scoring.

Section 3.3 Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Project Assistance

This section provides an 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.

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 commuter benefits implementation, vanpool formation and ridership increase, and transit marketing projects. Other types of transportation demand management projects that meet the grant program goal and requirements are eligible.

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, an increase in carpooling, and/or an increase in bicycle commuting to work.

Eligible Projects

The following project types are deemed eligible for CAP Project Assistance funding:

- Employer Trip Reduction
- Vanpool
- Transit Marketing
- Special TDM

Guidance Note: If applying for funding for more than one project type a separate application must be submitted for each project. Separate applications are needed to ensure proper measurement of results and tracking of funding.

Employer Trip Reduction

Guidance Note: Prior award of funding for an Employer Trip Reduction project does not guarantee the continuous or future award of funds, or the amount of grant award.

The Employer Trip Reduction application is ONLY for projects that create or expand commuter benefits programs at private sector employers.

A commuter benefit is defined as the IRS qualified transportation benefit for employees that use transit or vanpool to travel to their worksite.

Qualified commuter assistance program operators should use the CAP Operating Assistance application for worksite promotions to employees and providing information about employee commute options to employers and employees.

Guidance Notes: Applicants receiving funding for employer services from VDOT must do the following;

- **Include the amount of that funding in Other Funding Sources in the Budget Details section of the application.**
- **Provide details of expenses charged to the VDOT funding.**
- **Where it is not obvious, applicants should explain how the work tasks, marketing, and activities in the DRPT grant are different from those performed under the VDOT grant funding.**

Vanpool

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

- Developing new vanpools
- Aid in the starting of new vanpools

- Aid in existing vanpools if riders leave the vanpool creating a financial strain on the existing riders
- Increase vanpool ridership

Qualified commuter assistance program operators should use the CAP Operating Assistance application for general marketing and promotion of vanpooling, and matching commuters in existing vanpools.

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

Pay-for-Performance

A "Pay-for-Performance" vanpool project is a performance-based project where the applicant is incentivized and rewarded for achieving results. Example projects are those that pay the applicant for each vanpool formed or for each new rider.

Vanpool Data Collection and NTD Reporting

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 to continue the monthly stipend payments without funding from DRPT after the FTA federal funds are realized from vanpool reporting, usually after 24 months of initial data entry in the NTD.

VanSave Assistance Program

VanSave is a financial assistance program to help existing vanpools continue operating when two or more riders leave the vanpool within a short period of time. VanSave is designed to provide short-term financial assistance to the Vanpool Provider while searching for new riders. The financial assistance will enable existing vanpool riders to continue to pay the same fare as they have been paying while new riders are recruited.

Guidance Note: Only VanSave projects that follow and use DRPT's ConnectingVA VanSave Vanpool Assistance Program Requirements and Application are eligible.

VanStart Assistance Program

VanStart is a financial assistance program to help new vanpools during the critical start-up phase. VanStart is designed to provide short-term assistance while new vanpools are recruiting for more vanpool riders to fill the

vanpool. Financial assistance will allow current vanpool riders to pay their normal fare without adding extra costs until all the seats are filled.

Guidance Note: Only VanStart projects that follow and use DRPT's ConnectingVA VanStart Vanpool Assistance Program Requirements and Application are eligible.

Transit Marketing

Transit Marketing projects are those that measurably increase ridership on bus services or other public transit services. Marketing may be used to increase ridership on a single route, multiple routes, or specific service areas. Use and customization 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.

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

Special TDM

Special TDM projects may qualify for CAP Project Assistance if they reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips, increase transit ridership, increase vanpool ridership, increase carpooling or increase bicycle commuting to work, and the results can be measured. Applicants are encouraged to be innovative with their projects, keeping in mind that only fully scoped projects will be eligible. Check with a DRPT Program Manager for eligibility of other TDM projects prior to completing an application.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

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. DRPT will remove ineligible expenses from the project during the application review process, which may result in a decrease in the total project budget and grant award or result in the application being screened out.

All expenses should be necessary and justified for the operation of the project, be both reasonable in nature and in terms of cost amount and contribute to achieving an increase in transit and vanpool ridership, carpooling and/or the use of bicycles to commute to work.

Eligible Expenses

Costs of administering the grant should not exceed or be close to the costs of implementing the project. Grant recipients should make every effort to keep administration costs down. Only staff that actually perform administration tasks for the project may charge their time to the project.

Grant administration tasks charged to the project should be limited to direct costs for:

- Preparation and submission of project claims
- Review and signing of grant contract
- Processing and paying vendor or contractor invoices
- Ordering of project supplies
- Project budget set up in financial system and tracking of line-item budget expenses versus grant contract budget

Consult with your DRPT Program Manager prior to completing an application to discuss the eligibility of administration charges not listed above.

Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are **ineligible** for CAP Project Assistance funding. This is not an all-inclusive list. Consult with your DRPT Program Manager prior to completing and application to discuss the eligibility of expenses not listed below.

- Expenses already funded through a state or federal grant, local jurisdiction, or other funding sources
- Conferences, training and out-of-state travel
- Transit schedule design, production, printing, and distribution
- Construction or maintenance of facilities or buildings
- Meals, food, snacks, and beverages
- Capital and operating expenses and depreciation for transit, vanpool, bikeshare, or other transportation services
- Office equipment
- Transit or other transportation service fare discounts or buy-downs
- Public notices, announcements, and events for transit service and fare changes, new buses, electric buses, low/no emission buses, route changes, and other transit service operating or capital events
- Commuter store operations

- Expenses such as marketing, promotion, and events for bicycling for reasons other than commuting. (i.e., recreation or other non-commuting purposes.)
- Expenses for safety project, including bicycle safety
- 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 grants, programs and projects, including those funded with federal or state funds.

Grant Match Requirements

The CAP Project Assistance 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 board 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.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Applications go through multiple reviews at DRPT. DRPT evaluates CAP Project Assistance applications based on if the project is an efficient and effective investment for the Commonwealth. Applications for funding are evaluated based on the realistic, expected results 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 scored applications may not be funded or funded at a lower amount than requested.

CAP Project Assistance Scoring Criteria

Category	Points
Project Description	5
Project Scope	15
Project Purpose	10
Expected Results	10
Measurement of Expected Results	15
Budget Details	10
Staff and Contractor Work	10
Marketing and Promotions	10
Milestones/Events	5
Cost Effectiveness	10
Total Points Possible	**100**

Project Description – Scoring will be determined by how succinctly the project is described. Anyone not familiar with the project should be able to get a good understanding of the project from the Project Description.

Project Scope – Scoring will be determined by how well the scope describes how the funds will be used, what will be implemented, services provided, what activities will occur, and what will be done to achieve results.

Project Purpose – Scoring will depend on how well the applicant described the purpose or reason for the project.

Expected Results – Scoring will be based on if results are specific, reasonable, and measurable.

Measurement of Expected Results – Scoring will be based how well the applicant will measure results.

Budget Details – Scoring will be based on the use of appropriate budget categories, the listing of every expense within the expense categories, and the appropriateness of the expenses, line-item budget amounts and total project amount.

Staff and Contractor Work – Scoring will be based on if staff and contractor levels are justified, appropriate or excessive, if administrative costs are justified and reasonable, if staff percentage of hours working on the grant project are justified, accurate, and realistic, and if the work tasks are appropriate to implement the project.

Marketing and Promotions – Scoring will depend on how well the marketing and promotional activities are defined.

Milestone/Event Descriptions – Scoring will be determined by how well all the activities and expenses from the Scope, Marketing, and Budget Details sections are represented in the Milestones section. The more milestones and details provided from those sections, the higher the score.

Cost Effectiveness – The Cost Effectiveness score reflects if the project is efficient in achieving the results. The cost per result will be calculated to determine how efficient the project is and compared to similar projects.

In addition, DRPT will consider the recent history of the applicant's ability to administer DRPT grants, which includes timeliness of reimbursement requests, current open and executed grants, timeliness and accuracy of performance reporting to DRPT, whether recent grants were not fully implemented with important tasks and activities not conducted, and the number of new grant applications and ongoing projects as a factor in determining if the applicant agency is prepared to administer another grant.

Guidance and Requirements for Completing the Application

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**.

Guidance Note: Separate applications must be submitted for each project. Projects cannot be combined on one application.

General Information

- *Application Title* – Enter a brief name of the project. Do not include the name of the grant funding, program, fiscal year or 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* – Enter a brief and succinct description of the project.
- *Service Area* – Enter the geographic area(s) the project covers. Include counties, cities, towns, corridors, etc. Include a map of the service area, if needed.

- *Project Manager Contact Information* – Enter the name, title, email address, and phone number of the project manager.
- *Project Results* – Enter the expected results the project will produce.
- *Measurement of Results* – Describe how and when the project results will be measured. Include methods to collect data, what data will be collected, and when the data will be collected.

PROJECT SCOPE

- *Project Scope* – Enter an explanation of the project that details how the project funds will be used, specifics on what tasks will be accomplished and what will be developed and implemented through this project. A detailed response in the Project Scope section will help DRPT better understand and evaluate the project.

BUDGET 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. Prorate the cost of memberships, licenses, systems, and services shared by other agency staff and projects, when charging those items. 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.
    - Enter as much detail as possible. DRPT will use this information in the creation of the grant contract. Consult with your DRPT Program Manager regarding appropriate budget categories.

- *Other Funding Sources* - Enter funding sources that will be used to fund this project. This includes, but not limited to, state funds from any state or other agency, federal funds, proffers, and donations. **DO NOT enter the local match amount.**

Guidance Note: Agencies that receive funding from VDOT for employer services/outreach must include that amount in Other Funding Sources.

- *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.

Justification of Memberships & Systems

- *Justification of Memberships* – Enter details on how project staff use the memberships noted in the Budget Details. Justification must include how project staff use each membership to achieve the project results. Include if and how other agency staff use the membership(s). Include how the membership was used in the past to increase performance results. Attendance of a conference is not sufficient justification. DRPT does not require membership in any organization. Therefore, all memberships must be justified to show a benefit to project performance.

- *Justification of Licenses and Software, Etc.* – Enter details on how the licenses, software or systems listed in the Budget Detail are used. Include examples of how these items were used in the past. Include if the licenses and software will be used by other agency staff not associated with this project.

Staff and Contractors

- *Agency Staff and Work* – Enter details on each staff and work performed that is intended to be charged to the grant. Include whether the staff person is a full-time or part-time employee, the overall percentage of time from the person's total job duties will be spent working on the project. Follow the guidance provided above in the Grant Administration Expenses and Staff and Contractor Expenses sections. Be specific and do not rely on the use of general terms, such as "oversight" and "supervise." DRPT will use the details of this section 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.

- *Contractor Work* – Enter a detailed description of work that will be performed by contractor(s) working on this project. Include the details from the scope of work for the contractor, if one has been created.

Marketing and Promotions

- *Marketing and Promotional Events* - List and describe the marketing efforts, the messaging, and desired "call-to-action" or result of each advertising and promotional event that will be conducted, including the marketing partnerships with DRPT and other agencies. If promotional items will be purchased, justify the quantity of the items in this section – how, where, and to whom the promotional items will be distributed.
- Challenges and Contests – List and describe the challenges and contests to be implemented. The ConnectingVA app **must be used** for all challenges and contests and must be budgeted for in the Budget Details section of the application. There are three (3) ConnectingVA App event types, each with difference pricing and features.
    - Basic ($2,500): For informational events and simply tells the ConnectingVA users about the event.
    - Results ($5,000): Basic plus results (e.g. total VMT reduced, etc.), pre-event content (e.g. "Coming Soon"), post-event content (e.g. "Winners are…"), and additional messages during the event.
    - Races ($10,000): Results plus races and leaderboards with categories, participating organizations, and selection of prize winners.

Include start and end dates and brief detail of all marketing campaigns, events, contests, and challenges in Milestones section.

Schedules

- *Program Schedule* - Enter July 1 as the start date and June 30 of the following year as the end date. If seeking a schedule for longer than one year, consult a DRPT Program Manager prior to submitting the application.
- *Milestones/Events* - Enter details and the start and end dates of operational milestones, activities, and events listed in the Marketing and Promotional Events and Operating Costs sections of the application. Also, include dates for issuing RFPs, hiring staff or contractors, promotions, advertising, marketing campaigns, challenges, contests, planned and expected promotional events, and all major program activities. Milestones are a critical tool for applicant agencies and 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 Budget Details section of the application and includes the grant amount and the local match.
- *Application Certification* - The Applications Certification section must be completed to submit the application.

ATTACHMENTS

- *Attachments* - Attach a signed or adopted resolution from your agency's governing board or a letter from your agency head 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. Other attachments, such as letters of support, may be included. Attached documents do not take the place of the application information and will not be included in application scoring.

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. On September 1, 2026 Congress approved the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act which extends federal surface transportation funding programs through December 11, 2026. DRPT will update this section of the Blue Book if Congress passes federal program or funding changes to these programs as part of the FY2028 federal appropriations and/or surface transportation reauthorization processes.

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

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 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. Private Sector Protections
5. Transit Asset Management Plan
6. Rolling Stock Buy America Reviews and Bus Testing
7. Urbanized Area Formula Grants Program
8. Formula Grants for Rural Areas

9. Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants and the Expedited Project Delivery for Capital Investment Grants Pilot Program
10. Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities and Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Grant Programs
11. Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Programs
12. State of Good Repair Grants
13. Infrastructure Finance Programs
14. Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing
15. Rail Safety Training and Oversight
16. Demand Responsive Service
17. Interest and Financing Costs
18. Cybersecurity Certification for Rail Rolling Stock and Operations
19. Tribal Transit Programs
20. Emergency Relief Program

FTA's annual certifications and assurances permit the applicant to submit a single certification to cover all the programs for which it anticipates applying. When available, the certification and assurances form will be distributed to DRPT's federal subrecipients for signature and upload into **WebGrants**. Compliance with applicable certifications and assurances and circular provisions is required as a condition of FTA funding.

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 must 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, 23 CFR 450-Planning Assistance and Standards

FTA Circular 8100.1D - Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning and State Planning and Research Program Grants

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 purpose 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.

Eligible Projects

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

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

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 UPWP must clearly show the total amount and PL/5303 split for each work task identified in the document narrative and budget.

The work task/projects and expense items in the application must match those in the UPWP.

Application Requirements

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 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 to receive funding from partner agencies.

The WebGrants application includes Federal Activity Line Items (ALIs) which must match work outlined in the UPWP The use of the "Other" ALI category is strongly discouraged and will be reviewed only on a case-by-case basis.

APPROVED ALIS FOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING:

44.21.00	**Program Support Administration**
44.22.00	General Development and Comprehensive Planning
44.23.01	**Long Range Transportation Planning - System Level**
44.23.02	Long Range Transportation Planning - Project Level
44.24.00	**Short Range Transportation Planning**
44.25.00	**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
44.26.12	Coordination of Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation
44.26.13	Participation of Transit Operators in Metropolitan & Statewide Planning

44.26.14	Planning for Transit Systems Management / Operations to Increase Ridership
44.26.15	Support Transit Capital Investment Decisions through Effective Systems Planning
44.26.16	**Incorporating Safety and Security in Transportation Planning**
44.27.00	Other Activities*

**Do not use Other Activities for any activities that can be covered by other ALIs. Commonly used ALIs are shown in bold.*

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

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

- Small Urbanized Areas / UZAs (with a 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 either public transportation operators, such as Transit Authorities and Transit Companies or 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

FTA Section 5307 is not an application-based funding program. It is a federal formula-based funding program where DRPT passes through Federal funding 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.

Allocation of Funds

Recipients do not submit an application for the FTA 5307 program. DRPT allocates funding based on the federal apportionments in the Federal Register. The recipient will then apply to the FTA for same funding amount that is 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 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.

Program Goals

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

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.

Grant Match Requirements

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

Applicants may choose to apply for federal operating assistance, capital assistance, or both. Federal operating assistance and capital assistance through the FTA 5311 and ADTAP formula programs are distributed through the state operating and capital assistance applications. All applicants to the "MERIT – Operating Assistance (Rural)" Funding Opportunity in WebGrants will be automatically evaluated for both state and federal operating assistance upon submission of an application. For federal capital assistance, applicants must select indicate that they are applying for federal capital funds in each of their capital assistance applications separately. 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, and less budgeted fares divided by 2 on the application. 5311 operating allocations are subject to funding availability and are not guaranteed.

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

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 in a separate document. This guidance can be found on the DRPT **website**.

CHAPTER 5

Training Scholarship Programs

Section 5.1 Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Scholarship Program

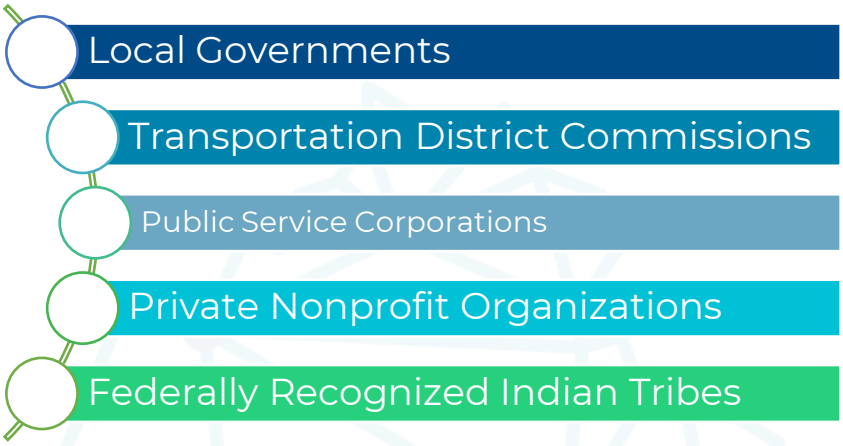
This section provides a general overview of the RTAP scholarship program, identifies who can apply, describes what types of projects could qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

RTAP funding is provided as part of the FTA Section 5311 program and 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 RTAP funding. Federal guidelines allow DRPT to offer RTAP funds to eligible sub-recipients. Public and non-profit organizations that provide transportation services or mobility management services in non-urbanized areas of Virginia are eligible to apply. This includes but is not limited to agencies that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 and 5311 funds. Eligible sub-recipients include:



Program Description

RTAP scholarships are available through DRPT to assist rural and specialized transit operations to further the development of management skills and encourage the development of professional networks by attending transit training, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Program Goals

The goals of the RTAP program are to promote safe and effective delivery of public transportation services in rural areas and to facilitate more efficient use of public transportation resources. To meet those goals, the program focuses on the following objectives:

A. Improving the quality of training and technical assistance resources available to the rural transit industry
B. Encouraging and assisting state, local, and peer networks to address training and technical assistance needs
C. Promoting the coordination of transportation services
D. Building a national database of information about the rural transit industry

DRPT's RTAP Scholarship Program seeks to promote these same goals by expanding access to training and professional development opportunities for rural and specialized transportation providers in Virginia.

Eligible Projects

Scholarships are available to reimburse organizations for courses, workshops, seminars, driver roadeos, and conferences with subject matter applicable to rural and specialized transportation and appropriate to the level of expertise of the person(s) attending. RTAP funds can be used for training, technical assistance, research, and related support services. The purchase of equipment to support these activities is also allowed. Scholarship funds may not be used for lobbying activity and may not be passed through to for-profit organizations under contract to Section 5310 and 5311 recipients. Travel is an eligible expense but reimbursement rates for hotel rooms, hotel taxes and meals are limited to rates in the effective edition of the **Federal General Services Travel Guidelines**.

Please keep in mind the following as you plan travel to be reimbursed by RTAP:

- Maximum reimbursement rates for hotel rooms, hotel taxes and meals are limited to rates in the effective edition of the Federal General Services Travel Guidelines **http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877**
- Reimbursement for meals is only valid when there is approved overnight travel. Expenses for meals for same day trips are not eligible for reimbursement. Expenses for alcoholic beverages are not eligible for reimbursement.
- GSA's M&IE rates and eligible reimbursement amounts vary by time of year, location, whether meals were provided or not, and travel days. Rates may vary from when the travel was scheduled to the actual travel dates. Therefore, it is

important to review the GSA rates and rules to ensure the correct amounts are used in the reimbursement request. DRPT will only reimburse based on the GSA per diem rates. Meal receipts do not need to be submitted.

- Air, bus, and train fares must be booked at the lowest available coach rates.
- Any increase to these fares after approval of the request must be submitted to DRPT prior to the program for approval. Fare increases will not be accepted after the approved program.
- Estimated luggage fees should also be itemized, as necessary.
- Registration fees should also be listed in the claim.
- Rental car fees are not eligible for reimbursement unless it is demonstrated that the location of the program and lodging make public transportation, taxis/ridesharing, shuttles, or walking inaccessible or inappropriate.
- AirBnB, Vrbo, and other rentals booked through other home-sharing services are not eligible travel expenses.
- Mileage is not reimbursable through RTAP.

Grant Match Requirements

DRPT typically funds applications at 100% federal funding.

Application Evaluation Process

Eligible applicants may apply for a $5,000 award during the regular application cycle. In this application, agencies should identify key conferences, workshops, and trainings they plan to attend as a tentative outline. The contracts will not be tied to specific trainings. Grantees should work with their DRPT program manager throughout the year to do a pre-travel cost check. This approach will continue to allow for flexibility for agencies throughout the year as additional information on available opportunities comes out, which is the key benefit to the RTAP program as currently administered.

After the $5,000 has been expended, agencies can come in for budget amendments up to a total award of $10,000, as funds are available.

Travel Pre-Check

Grantees should work with their DRPT Program Manager through-out the year to do a travel pre-check to ensure their expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

Application Requirements

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
- Proposed conferences, workshops, and trainings to be attended
- Certifications and Resolutions (in **WebGrants**)
- Special Section 13 (c) Warranty
- FTA Annual Certifications and Assurances
- Resolution Authorizing the Application for State Aid for Public Transportation

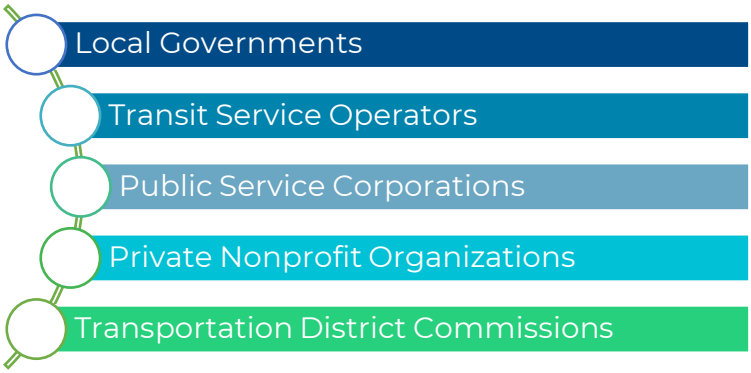
Section 5.2 Urban Training (UT) Scholarship Program

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

The UT Scholarship Program is used by transit providers across the Commonwealth to attend trainings, conferences, and workshops.

Designated Recipient & Eligible Applicants

All urban transit agencies are eligible to apply. Public and non-profit organizations that provide transportation services or mobility management services in urbanized areas of Virginia are eligible to apply. Additional transportation providers may be eligible to apply if they are deemed eligible by DRPT staff based on organizational size and resource capacity. Eligible recipients include:



Program Description

UT scholarships are available through DRPT to assist urban transit providers in furthering their professional development by attending transit training, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Program Goals

The goals of the UT program are to promote safe and effective delivery of public transportation services and to facilitate more efficient use of public transportation resources. DRPT's UT Scholarship Program seeks to expand access to training and professional development opportunities for urban transportation providers in Virginia.

Eligible Projects

Scholarships are available to reimburse organizations for courses, workshops, seminars, driver roadeos, and conferences with subject matter applicable to public and specialized transportation and appropriate to the level of expertise of the

person(s) attending. UT funds can be used for training, technical assistance, research, and related support services. The purchase of equipment to support these activities is also allowed. Scholarship funds may not be used for lobbying activity and may not be passed through to for-profit organizations under contract to recipients. Travel is an eligible expense but reimbursement rates for hotel rooms, hotel taxes and meals are limited to rates in the effective edition of the **Federal General Services Travel Guidelines**.

Please keep in mind the following as you plan travel to be reimbursed by UT:

- Maximum reimbursement rates for hotel rooms, hotel taxes and meals are limited to rates in the effective edition of the Federal General Services Travel Guidelines **http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877**
- Reimbursement for meals is only valid when there is approved overnight travel. Expenses for meals for same day trips are not eligible for reimbursement. Expenses for alcoholic beverages are not eligible for reimbursement.
- GSA's M&IE rates and eligible reimbursement amounts vary by time of year, location, whether meals were provided or not, and travel days. Rates may vary from when the travel was scheduled to the actual travel dates. Therefore, it is important to review the GSA rates and rules to ensure the correct amounts are used in the reimbursement request. DRPT will only reimburse based on the GSA per diem rates. Meal receipts do not need to be submitted.
- Air, bus, and train fares must be booked at the lowest available coach rates.
- Any increase to these fares after approval of the request must be submitted to DRPT prior to the program for approval. Fare increases will not be accepted after the approved program.
- Estimated luggage fees should also be itemized, as necessary.
- Registration fees should also be listed in the claim.
- Rental car fees are not eligible for reimbursement unless it is demonstrated that the location of the program and lodging make public transportation, taxis/ridesharing, shuttles, or walking inaccessible or inappropriate.
- AirBnB, Vrbo, and other rentals booked through other home-sharing services are not eligible travel expenses.
- Mileage is not reimbursable through UT.

Grant Match Requirements

DRPT typically funds applications at 80% state funding and 20% local funding.

Application Evaluation Process

Eligible applicants may apply for a $5,000 award during the regular application cycle. In this application, agencies should identify key conferences, workshops, and trainings they plan to attend as a tentative outline. The contracts will not be tied to specific trainings. Grantees should work with the UT program manager throughout the year to do a pre-travel cost check. This approach will continue to allow for flexibility for agencies throughout the year as additional information on available opportunities comes out, which is a key benefit to the UT program as is currently administered.

After the $5,000 has been expended, agencies can come to DRPT for budget amendments up to a total award of $10,000, as funds are available.

Travel Pre-Check

Grantees should work with their DRPT Program Manager through-out the year to do a travel pre-check to ensure their expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

Application Requirements

Applications for all programs are made online on DRPT's online grant administration website (**WebGrants**).

Required application data includes:

- Contact information
- Proposed conferences, workshops, and trainings to be attended
- Certifications and Resolutions (in **WebGrants**)
- Resolution Authorizing the Application for State Aid for Public Transportation

Glossary of Terms

Acronym/Term	Definition/Description
CTB	Commonwealth Transportation Board
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
MERIT	Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit – is the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) statewide public transportation grants program
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization, required in any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000
SOV	Single Occupant Vehicle
TDM	Transportation/Travel Demand Management. Policies and activities are designed to reduce the use of SOV (single occupancy vehicle) trips and increase the use of multi-modal transportation options.
WebGrants	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.
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or “Metro”