

DRPT RTAP Scholarship Program Guidelines

Scholarships are available through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) for the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), 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. All RTAP applications must be submitted through [WebGrants](#).

Applicant Eligibility

Rural Areas

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 agencies that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 and 5311 funds.

Urbanized Areas

Providers of specialized transportation or mobility management services in urbanized areas, such as Section 5310 funded agencies, as well as public transit operators in small, urbanized areas, have many of the same training and technical assistance needs as transit providers in nonurbanized areas. DRPT permits participation by these providers, at the State's discretion, as long as the activities are primarily designed and delivered to benefit nonurbanized transit providers.

Program Eligibility Criteria

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. A person can only apply for a RTAP scholarship once a quarter for an off-site conference or training.

Application Procedures

To apply for a scholarship, submit to DRPT through WebGrants under the "RTAP Grant Program (Rolling)" Funding Opportunity. The application requires:

- **Project Name**
- **Project Description**
- **Project Justification**
- **Budget Details**
- **Total Project Cost**
- **Attachments**

The narrative project description and justification shall include the program to be attended, staff to attend, and a detailed description on how the program will benefit the agency and staff. The budget details shall provide an itemized list of estimated expenses. Attachments shall include all backup documentation, including an agenda or brochure describing the program to be attended, airline/train/bus fare details, hotel rates, and an explanation of per diem expenses. Meals provided as part of the conference or training should be identified. The application must be submitted to DRPT at least 30 days prior to the requested program.

Please keep in mind the following as you complete the application request:

- 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 request.
- 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.
- Mileage is not reimbursable through RTAP.

Out of State Travel

An agency can request a RTAP scholarship for an appropriate conference or training outside of Virginia. In most cases, only one person per agency will be approved for an

out of state conference or training. A person will only be approved for an RTAP scholarship for an out of state conference once per year.

Application Review

All applications will be reviewed for organization eligibility and program applicability. The individual submitting the application will be contacted if additional information is needed.

Scholarship Reimbursement

Reimbursement for expenses will be made to the agency, not the individual. To receive reimbursement, please submit a claim in WebGrants. Claims must include a detailed list of expenses and per diem rates, as outlined in the approved application. Copies of all receipts must be included, i.e. hotels, airline/train/bus, parking. Meal receipts do not need to be submitted, only the per diem rate to be reimbursed based on travel days and meals provided by the event. The claim should be submitted to DRPT through the WebGrants application process within 30 days of completion of travel.