

**KNOXVILLE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
CALL FOR PROJECTS**

**Federal Transit Administration
Knoxville Urban Area
Section 5310-Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Funding**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is soliciting projects to be funded through Federal Transit Administration (FTA) urban area Section 5310-Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (hereafter referred to as the Section 5310 program). Projects can include both operating services and vehicle purchases. Non-profits who serve the elderly, persons who are disabled, or persons of low-income may be eligible to apply for funding for vans or mini-buses to serve their clients. The TPO staff will administer the project selection process. The TPO Executive Board will make the final award decisions. Funding will occur through Knoxville Knox County Planning (Planning), the contracting agency for the TPO. With regards to this Call for Projects announcement, Planning and TPO are one-in-the-same agency. The information in an application is a public record. Applicants should not include information that may be regarded as confidential.

Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. EST on Friday, March 26, 2021. Applications should be sent to:

Mr. Doug Burton
Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
400 Main Street, Suite 403 - Knoxville, TN 37902
865-215-3824 or doug.burton@knoxtpo.org

The application, supporting material, and follow-up questions and answers are available on the TPO website at www.knoxtpo.org. Check the site **frequently** for updates. The TPO will only fund those projects that are eligible as defined by the FTA and are consistent with the Knoxville Regional Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan. **Detailed information on applicant and project eligibility is listed in the Program Management Plan.** The TPO can make changes, waive irregularities, or cancel this process if necessary. Staff are available to assist any applicant throughout the application process including those from minority communities and those with Limited English Proficiency.

Background Information

Projects funded must predominately serve the Knoxville urbanized area. The Knoxville urbanized area encompasses most of Knox and Blount Counties, parts of Loudon County (Lenoir City and City of Loudon areas), Anderson County (Oak Ridge, Clinton, Oliver Springs areas), Roane County (Oak Ridge area), and Sevier County (Seymour area). A map of the Knoxville urbanized area is included with the additional information posted with these instructions and the application on the TPO website.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) administers a statewide Section 5310 process for projects outside the urban area. TDOT has a separate process and timeline so check the TDOT

website for details. <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/multimodal-transportation-resources/office-of-public-transportation.html>

Section 5310 TPO Application

The TPO's Section 5310 application is a fillable PDF and is located on the TPO website. Applications that are incomplete or do not contain adequate supporting documentation will not be considered. The application is for both operating projects and capital projects (vans, mini-buses). However, only certain sections must be completed for each type of application. So, please read the application carefully. Applicants are encouraged to contact the TPO staff if you have any questions.

Program Management Plan (PMP)

The PMP is a document that describes a designated recipient's policies and procedures for administering the Section 5310 program. Applicants are encouraged to review the PMP and to familiarize themselves with the requirements for receipt of these grant funds. The PMP can be found linked with the call-for-projects posted on the TPO website.

Section 5310-Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Slightly more than half the TPO's funds must be used on capital projects that meet the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transit is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. Many non-profits have used this funding to purchase vans or mini-buses. The remaining funds can be used for projects that: (1) exceed the requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), (2) improve access to fixed-route services and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit, or (3) provides alternatives to public transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities. For more information go to: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/enhanced-mobility-seniors-and-individuals-disabilities>.

Knoxville Regional TPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan (HSTCP)

The HSTCP identifies gaps in existing services, proposes strategies to help meet the identified gaps, examines ways services can be coordinated, and outlines potential projects. The HSTCP list as a priority the use of Section 5310 funding by transit providers, social service agencies, non-profits, and churches to provide supporting transportation services to the existing regional public transit services. Projects should be coordinated to be sure funding is used in the most efficient means. For a complete list of strategies, see pages 44-45, in the HSTCP on the TPO website located here: <https://knoxtpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Human-Services-Transportation-Coordination-Plan.pdf>.

Section 5310 Funding Availability (estimated)

The following amounts of **Federal** funds are **estimated** to be available.

Capital Projects, Vehicles. Mobility Management = \$646,565

Operating Projects = \$411,450

The funding listed is an estimation of two years of federal appropriations (FY2020 & FY2021). ***It is anticipated there will not be another call of projects until sometime in 2022, so apply for the amount of funding needed, accordingly.*** If the TPO receives more applications than funding, agencies may be approved for less funding or less vehicles than requested.

Federal Share and Local Funding Match Requirements

The Federal share for capital projects (vans or mini-buses or mobility management) is 80% of the net cost with a local match of 20% required. The Federal share of operating projects is 50% of the net cost with a local match of 50% required. Certain operating costs, identified as mobility management activities, may be classified as capital and can be reimbursed at the 80%/20% rate. All of the local share must be provided from other than Federal Department of Transportation funds. Federal funds from other sources may be used for all or part of the local match. If you want to use Federal funds as match please refer to the PMP or contact the TPO to be sure of their eligibility.

TDOT traditionally has provided half of the local match. As such, TDOT would provide half of the 20% (or 10% of the total project cost) local match requirement for a capital project (vehicle purchase) or half of the 50% (or 25% of the total project cost) local match requirement for an operating project. Therefore, the applicant would be responsible for just a 10% match on a capital project (vehicle purchase) or a 25% match on an operating project. It is TDOT's policy that the TPO must first apply for and receive a contract from FTA, before projects can be submitted for TDOT's consideration to fund. Therefore, the TPO must require that applicants show that they can provide the **entire** local match themselves. Then, if and when, TDOT awards matching funds the local match requirement will be adjusted accordingly. ***While TDOT has historically matched projects, there is no guarantee that they will match projects this round as it is determined on a year-by-year basis.***

Civil Rights

Prior to the receipt of any awarded funding, Section 5310 recipients will certify compliance with the requirement of Title VI, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) (if applicable) laws and regulations. Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin for programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Six federal laws enacted between 1964 and 1991 comprise the federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, which prohibits job discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. Whenever possible, compliance with all civil rights requirements will be verified as part of the Section 5310 funding application process.

Section 5310-Enhanced Mobility Funded Vehicles

Vehicles must be selected off of the TDOT Multimodal Transportation Resources (MTR) Vehicle Bid List which meets FTA procurement requirements. The TDOT MTR Vehicle Bid List allows for other agencies to purchase vans or mini-buses at the State bid price. Therefore, when applying to the TPO you must use that list of vehicles and prices. Also, be advised the TDOT MTR Vehicle Bid List prices can change as there are periodic allowances for inflation. The TPO will try to help off-set any price increase, however, there is a chance future price increases **might** be your agency's responsibility. Under special circumstances, the TPO will consider approving an agency to procure vehicles themselves. However, those agencies must be able to show they are familiar with and capable of meeting the FTA procurement regulations. In order to self-procure vehicles, you must first submit your procurement policies and practices and have approval by the TPO.

Accessibility Requirements

This funding is provided by FTA to help provide transportation to the elderly or persons who have a disability. As such, the TPO highly encourages that all projects utilizing this funding be accessible.

Applicants should demonstrate that the projects, services, or vehicles being proposed for funding will be accessible. For vehicles this means being accessible by persons who require the use of a wheelchair or have otherwise limited mobility. Under special circumstances, exceptions can be considered. Applicants that are seeking consideration for funding for non-accessible projects are required to describe how their agency provides or ensures the provision of accessible transportation services as an attachment to the application.

Funding Availability and Payment of Invoices

Please read the following section carefully.

The TPO procedures are different than how TDOT handles funding for their 5310 program. The FTA and TDOT match funding is available to the TPO in a reimbursement posture, in that, funds can only be drawn down from FTA after a purchase has been paid for in its entirety. Therefore, applicants must be able to pay for services or vehicles themselves and the TPO will reimburse you the FTA and TDOT funding (minus your match). Typically, reimbursement will occur within 30 days or less. Applicants must be able to certify they can meet this financial requirement as part of their project submission. If you cannot meet this financial requirement, the TPO can discuss possible other payment options.

Timeline for Grant Award

The TPO staff will lead an evaluation team made up primarily of a subset of members of the TPO Technical Committee. Any member agency or jurisdiction that submits a proposal will not have a representative participating on the evaluation team. The evaluation team will make a recommendation for funding based on the application scoring. All projects and funding must be approved locally by the TPO Executive Board. This action will allow projects to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program, a precondition to submitting a grant to FTA.

Once approved by the TPO Executive Board, the projects then can be submitted to FTA. Once FTA approves the grant funds, then the TPO applies to TDOT for matching funding. The TPO cannot enter into a contract with the applicant until all funds have been approved by FTA and TDOT. Applicants need to be aware that obtaining grant funds through the FTA and TDOT can take a considerable amount of time. This process can take anywhere from eight to twelve months. This does not include the time to actually procure the vehicle. Therefore, applicants need to keep this time frame in mind when making a budget and/or decisions about capital purchases.

The TPO reserves the right to change or amend this process. Due to funding limitations, applicants may be approved for less funding than requested.

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Application Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored (total of 100 points) and ranked by the TPO Technical Committee (sub-committee) using the following criteria. This evaluation matrix is presented as an example to give applicants guidance on how to better answer questions.

Evaluative Criteria	Total Points
Project Description/Need	25
The project description provides adequate detail to fully understand the intended scope.	
The project is consistent with the 5310 objectives.	
The applicant indicates the impact of their projects on services for elderly and disabled populations through the number of persons expected to be served and the number of trips (or other units of service) expected to be provided.	
The applicant indicates how the project reflects a goal or need as outlined in the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan.	
Specific Performance and Evaluation	20
The applicant has established clear, measurable goals/outcomes for the project.	
The applicant outlines how they will evaluate indicators of success.	
Implementation	20
The applicant provides a well-defined service operations plan and/or capital procurement plan.	
Implementation steps and timelines for carrying out the plan are clearly defined.	
The applicant provides clear indication of who will be managing the project and related staff if applicable.	
The applicant's plan includes eligibility determination, marketing, and service delivery details. For vehicle(s), how will they be used to service clients.	
Project Budget	10
The applicant has submitted a complete project budget, indicating anticipated project expenditures and revenues (as applicable).	
The applicant has identified the local match funds, their source and dollar amount. These amounts are indicated in the submitted budget.	
Organizational Preparedness and Technical Capacity	15
The applicant's staff has experience in managing transportation projects and/or operating passenger transportation.	
The agency has experience with financial responsibilities such as, quarterly reporting, annual audits, and/or other forms of financial reporting.	
The applicant has proposed training, vehicle maintenance, inspection, or monitoring to manage risk and to provide safe services.	
The applicant appears to have done all the necessary planning and is ready to begin the project upon being funded.	
The proposed project aligns with the applicant's mission and objectives.	
Outreach and Coordination	10
The project includes coordination with transportation providers or other relevant stakeholders. Will vehicles help take pressure off of the public transit providers' services.	
The applicant addresses long-term efforts to sustain the service beyond the grant period.	
Total Possible Score	100