

**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 vehicles to serve their clients.

Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. EST on **Friday, June 27, 2025**. Applications should be sent to:

Mr. Jonah Bird
Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
400 Main Street, Suite 403 - Knoxville, TN 37902
865-215-2694 or jonah.bird@knoxplanning.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. The information in an application is a public record. Applicants should not include information that may be regarded as confidential. The TPO Executive Board will make the final award decisions.

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), and Roane County (Oak Ridge 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/omat/5310-program.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 (vehicles). 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

The FTA requires a certain percentage of the funds be spent 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 vehicles. 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 lists 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. While we do not expect this, it should be realized that until the Federal funding is in an executed FTA grant it could be withdrawn.

Capital Projects to include Vehicles and/or Mobility Management = \$917,955

Operating Projects = \$584,152

The funding listed is an estimation of two years of federal appropriations (FY2024 & FY2025). 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 (vehicles 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 – Vehicles – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

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 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.

Finally, in the past call-for-projects, the TPO has awarded between 12-16 vans to various agencies. Some agencies have been awarded one vehicle, some two, and a few as many as four. However, based on the price increases the TPO may be looking at awarding as few as 8 vehicles. So, we expect the decision to award vehicles to be highly competitive. So, unfortunately, we cannot award as many as years past.

Vehicle Accessibility Requirements (Non-Accessible Vehicle Request Form Information)

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. On occasion the TPO will approve non-accessible vehicles. Applicants that are seeking consideration for funding for non-accessible vehicles, are required to sign the Non-Accessible Vehicle Request Form and 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 FTA and TDOT match funding is available in a reimbursement posture, in that, funds can only be drawn down from FTA/TDOT after a purchase has been paid for in its entirety. Therefore, applicants must be able to pay for services or vehicles themselves and you will be reimbursed. 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

All projects and funding must be approved locally by the TPO Executive Board. While not always, the TPO Executive Board typically meets monthly. Once approved by the TPO Executive Board, projects must be added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This process shows proof to TDOT and FTA that the funds have been officially approved. Once the TIP process is approved, TPO staff can begin to enter the projects into the FTA grant-making website. The draft grant must be approved by the FTA Atlanta office. Once the FTA staff have approved the draft grant it can be officially submitted for approval by both FTA Atlanta and FTA Washington D.C. offices. Once FTA approves the grant, then the TPO can apply 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, with the changes occurring at the federal level, obtaining grant funds can take several months. This time frame does not include the time to actually procure the vehicle(s). Therefore, applicants need to keep this process can take many months when making a budget and/or decisions about capital purchases.

The TPO reserves the right to change or amend or cancel 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.	
The applicant has established clear, measurable goals/outcomes for the project.	
The applicant outlines how they will evaluate indicators of success.	
Implementation and Procurement Ability (if required)	25
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	25
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	25
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 proposed project aligns with the applicant's mission and objectives.	
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.	
If capital funding is awarded, the applicant has the technical capacity to conduct an FTA procurement process (points only awarded if procurement is part of application).	
Total Possible Score	100