



NATIONAL AGING AND DISABILITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER

2021 FTA Section 5310 Compendium

Area Agencies on Aging and Section 5310 Funding

Background

Older Americans are one of the fastest-growing demographics in the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2030, 1 in every 5 Americans will be 65 and older. As this population grows, the demand for transportation is steadily increasing. To ensure older adults and people with disabilities are able to stay connected to their community and essential services, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are at the forefront of community efforts to expand transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities.

What is an Area Agency on Aging?

Area Agencies on Aging are public or private non-profit agencies designated by the state to address the needs and concerns of all older persons at the regional and local levels. There are currently 622 AAAs serving older adults around the country. AAAs were established in 1973 under the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) and are charged with planning, developing, coordinating and delivering a wide range of long-term services and supports, including nutrition, health and wellness, caregiver supports, elder rights, and transportation.

AAAs and Transportation Services

Transportation is critical in connecting older adults and people with disabilities to essential services, such as medical appointments, grocery stores, and pharmacies. Viewing transportation as a key support for independent living, AAAs play an important role in the development, funding, oversight and support of transportation services in the communities they serve. AAAs address social isolation by connecting older adults to social activities and to the broader community; transportation services are essential to making such connections.

According to the [2020 AAA National Survey Report](#), 89% of AAAs provide transportation services, most often through contracts (72.8%) with local transportation providers. AAA transportation services are varied:

- 83% provide assisted transportation, a service that may include “door-to-door” or “door-through-door” for passengers who need someone to help them get in and out of cars or stay with them throughout the trip;
- 73% offer non-medical transportation;
- 59% provide wheelchair-accessible transportation;
- 46% provide non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT).



Photo credit: Sebastopol Area Senior Center, Sebastopol, CA

Area Agencies on Aging are required by the Older American Act to offer Information and Referral/Assistance on a wide range of issues that may impact older adults; many AAAs serve as the local or regional Aging and Disability Resource Center. This longstanding experience with organizing and providing information means that AAAs are typically seen as a trusted resource in the communities they serve. Thus, it is not surprising that 38% of AAAs provide transportation information and referral assistance, mobility management, one-call/one-click services and/or transportation options counseling.

- Mobility management is an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer. Mobility management focuses on meeting individual customer needs through a wide range of transportation options and service providers.
- One-call/one-click services allow customers to make one phone call or search one website to find information about transportation services in the community.
- Transportation Options Counseling assists individuals in need of transportation services to make an informed choice about the services that best meet their needs.

Section 5310 Funding and AAAs

Thirty-seven percent (37%) report that they received transportation funding from federal, state or local sources. According to the [NADTC National Survey of Transportation Providers](#), Area Agencies on Aging use multiple sources of funding to operate their transportation services. AAAs reported using eleven different funding sources to support transportation, including the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. At 30%, Section 5310 funding was cited as the third most frequent funding source used

AAAs, compared to 68% that use Older Americans Act funding, and 38% that use state funding to support their transportation programs.

FTA's Section 5310 program provides formula funding to states to assist private nonprofit groups in enhancing mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit. The funds are apportioned directly to states based on their population of older adults and people with disabilities. States then distribute funds to agencies across the state. Section 5310 funds may be used to purchase vehicles, support existing services, increase service hours, create mobility management or travel training programs, and many other projects. [Coordination](#) among public transportation and human services providers is a requirement for Section 5310 grantees.

The federal share for Section 5310 funding is 80% for capital projects and 50% for operating assistance. Local match can come from state and local funds or other Federal non-DOT funds. This can allow local communities to implement programs with 100 percent federal funding. The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) [Federal Fund Braiding Guide](#) identifies select Federal non-DOT funds for local match.

Examples of Local AAA Programs Using Section 5310

Bay Aging & Bay Transit, Virginia



Bay Aging is an Area Agency on Aging serving the rural Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck (MP/NN) in Virginia. The MP/NN region covers over 2,600 square miles and encompasses ten rural counties—Essex, Gloucester, King & Queen, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland—and two planning districts.

Bay Transit, a division of Bay Aging, provides rural public transportation service to Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck, Charles City and New Kent Counties. It is the only public transportation service in the region, giving riders access to employment, medical appointments, nutrition, social activities and more. The majority of rides are demand-responsive, curb-to-curb or dial-a-ride. In 2020, Bay Transit provided 3,222 people in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula over 140,000 rides.

In 2012, Bay Transit started the New Freedom program using Section 5310 funds to provide transportation services to older adults and people with disabilities. The program gives riders access to work, shopping, social activities, health services and recreational events. Rides are also provided outside of Bay Transit's service area and/or service hours. In FY 2020 under New Freedom, Bay Transit provided close to 3,800 rides. With Section 5310 funds, Bay Transit works with individuals to coordinate transportation options that best fit their needs through their New Freedom Mobility Management program.

Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging, Santa Rosa, California

Sonoma County is one of nine counties that make up the San Francisco Bay area and is located about 60 miles north of San Francisco. Under their Sonoma Access Transportation Program, Sonoma County AAA contracts with six non-profit agencies (e.g., faith-based organizations, senior



centers) that provide volunteer transportation and mobility management throughout the county and runs a Rural Feeder Shuttle (West County) to people aged 60 and older who have no other viable transportation options. The rides provided are free-of-charge to medical and social appointments.

To support their volunteer transportation programs, Sonoma County AAA was awarded transportation grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), receiving New Freedom funds, for fiscal years 2014 to 2017, and Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Section 5310 funds for fiscal years 2016 through 2018. Most recently, Sonoma received Section 5310 funds for fiscal years 2019 to 2020. In FY2020, over 9,200 one-way rides and 730 transportation vouchers were provided.

Summary

Access to adequate transportation services is critical to the health and well-being of older adults and people with disabilities. However, transportation can be a significant barrier for older adults and people with disabilities to connect to community services. Area Agencies on Aging recognize this challenge and are at the forefront of filling transportation gaps in their communities. With [Section 5310](#) funding, AAAs are provided the opportunity to implement a variety of approaches to meet the unique mobility needs of this population because there is no one-size-fits all solution to addressing mobility needs of older adults and people with disabilities. As the older population continues to grow, AAA's experience in developing and managing transportation programs and providing information and referral/assistance is key to expanding transportation options that enable older adults to access essential services and live independently in their communities.

References

Census Report: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>

2020 AAA National Survey Report: <https://www.usaging.org/Files/AAA-Survey-Report-2020%20Update-508.pdf>

FTA Section 5310: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-individuals-disabilities-section-5310>

Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/coordinated-public-transit-human-services-transportation-plans>

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Transportation: Spotlighting Opportunities Under Section 5310 and Promising Approaches in Rural Areas: <https://www.nadtc.org/event/area-agencies-on-aging-aaas-and-transportation-spotlighting-opportunities-under-section-5310-and-promising-approaches-in-rural-areas/>

CCAM Federal Fund Braiding Guide: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/ccam/about/coordinating-council-access-and-mobility-ccam-federal-fund>

NADTC 2019 National Survey of Transportation Providers: <https://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/nadtc-2019-national-survey-of-transportation-providers/>