



FTA Section 5310 Application Process—A Case Study

This case study from Minnesota describes the application process for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program (Section 5310), starting with how MnDOT, a direct recipient, administers its program followed by the application process for a MnDOT subrecipient, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.

Direct Recipient: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Pre-Award Announcements and Promotion: What guidance, templates and materials does MnDOT provide to applicants?

Information for all transportation funding programs, including FTA's Section 5310 Program, is available on MnDOT's [Office of Transit and Active Transportation's website](#).

Grant solicitation can vary by grant program. In Minnesota, FTA's Section 5310 Program is typically awarded every two years and is posted to the website and/or through the state's BlackCat Data Management System.

A list of funded projects is available online until the next solicitation occurs. Eligibility guidelines are identified in the grant solicitation documents, and the Office of Transit and Active Transportation requires submission of all grant applications through its BlackCat Data Management System.

Application: Do you require more than one application if a transportation provider is applying for both capital and operating, for example.

Minnesota does not offer operating assistance through FTA's Section 5310 Program. We offer three eligible capital programs:

- Vehicle Capital Program
 - 80% federal and 20% local match.
 - Projects can be replacement or expansion vehicles.
- Transit Coordination Assistance Program (TCAP)
 - 80% federal and 20% local match.

- Projects can be Mobility Management within Minnesota's seven large urban areas, including Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- Rural Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCC)
 - 80% federal, 10% state and 10% local match.
 - RTCCs are considered Mobility Management projects in Greater Minnesota (outside the urbanized areas). Note: The local share split is unique and may not be guaranteed to continue at that percentage.

To apply as a Rural Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC), rural providers must submit a separate application. Eligible applicants must be in good standing with the State of Minnesota and operate in a minimum of four contiguous counties. Public transit systems are not eligible to be RTCC's. Applicants must have completed the initial planning phase of the RTCC grant and be ready to implement the mobility management program.

Who is eligible to apply for FTA Section 5310 funding? Are there special requirements or prerequisites to become eligible?

Eligibility depends on the funding opportunity.

Vehicle Capital Grants: Eligible applicants include state or local governments; RTCC's; TCAP's; tribal governments; and private, non-profit organizations. In Minnesota eligible applicants must be approved by the state to coordinate services for seniors and individuals with disabilities and be ready to provide services for the region.

TCAP and RTCCs: On-going, eligible applicants must be in good standing with the state, meet the requirement of being in an urbanized area (TCAP) or represent a rural area in Greater Minnesota (RTCC).

Do you check the locally developed coordinated plan for project inclusion?

A coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, or coordinated plan, is required for each region throughout the state. Coordinated plans must be referenced in each of the applications, and applications are checked to ensure that grantees identify how their project addresses the needs of their region's coordinated plan.

Does MnDOT offer technical assistance during the application process?

The Office of Transit and Active Transportation has Project Managers who are available to assist applicants both online and in person. However, applications must be completed by applicants.

Does MnDOT invite or include partner agencies or human services agencies to review 5310 applications?

Yes, depending on the application.

The Office of Transit and Active Transportation's FTA Section 5310 Program Coordinator reviews grant applications for content completion and compliance. Once the initial review is completed, the assigned Project Manager will join the review process as well.

Vehicle Capital Grant applications are reviewed by an external statewide review committee comprised of representatives from the RTCCs, TCAPs, Minnesota State Council on Disability, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Aging and Adult Services, MnDOT Office of Transit Programming Staff and the FTA 5310 Program Coordinator.

The review committee for TCAP and RTCC applications is similar to the vehicle capital grant program, including the Program Manager and representatives from external human services organizations.

Does MnDOT offer on-going technical assistance after funding has been awarded?

The Office of Transit and Active Transportation has assigned Program Project Managers to each of the subrecipients' funded programs, and they are responsible for the day-to-day program oversight including review and approval of Request for Funds, budget adjustments, and program compliance from grant execution to grant closure.

Subrecipient: Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, Willmar, MN

Background

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) is the designated regional development commission (RDC) for the four Minnesota counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker and Renville. It administers state and federal programs, coordinates multi-jurisdictional activities, and provides technical assistance to government, businesses, and local organizations. It also manages one of six Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) in Minnesota, and while they do not provide transportation, they do provide mobility management services. MMDC's mobility management services include a four-county transportation resource guide, technical assistance to transportation providers; rider education, troubleshooting and problem-solving, driver recruitment assistance for both professional and volunteer drivers, and outreach to organizations that serve those with transportation barriers.

MMDC responds annually to funding notifications from Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for FTA's Section 5310 funds for mobility management, which is awarded as a capital grant. MMDC has been a subrecipient since 2017.

While the funding process is competitive, eligibility as an RTCC must be established with MnDOT before applying.

Application Requirements

MnDOT's Section 5310 application for mobility management contains the following required elements:

- Agency description
 - Staff expertise
 - Organizational qualifications
 - Technical capacity
 - Policies and procedures, e.g., conflict of interest, procurement process and other certifications
- Service area description
 - Geographic boundaries
 - Population data
 - Service need
- Project budget

Match Requirements

MMDC receives government funding through a regional mill levy, which qualifies to meet the required match for FTA's Section 5310 funding.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

As a Regional Development Commission, every five years the MMDC produces a coordinated plan for the entire region, known as the Local Coordinated Plan (LDC). This plan contains detailed transportation information for the region, descriptions of current transportation providers and services, and transportation needs for the region. Furthermore, its creation involves an advisory group and subcommittees comprised of numerous stakeholders including health and human service agencies and transportation providers. When applying annually for mobility management, MMDC references the LDC and describes how its workplan and services align with the needs identified in the plan.