

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## 2017 CALL FOR PROJECTS

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FUNDING  
AVAILABLE FOR:

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**§5307** – URBANIZED AREA FORMULA PROGRAM:

JOB ACCESS/REVERSE COMMUTE PROJECTS ONLY

**§5310** - ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND  
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAM

APPLICATIONS DUE: APRIL 7, 2017

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IMPORTANT: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds require a high degree of dedication to detail and reporting, along with very specific requirements. If you are unfamiliar with FTA regulations and grant management requirements or have not received FTA funds in the past, please review the FTA Guidance for each program and the documents associated with this Call for Projects to determine if your agency is willing, and has the institutional capacity, to comply with the required terms and conditions.

## **General Call for Projects Questions**

### **1. What is the deadline for completion and submission of this grant application?**

Applications are due in the NCTCOG office by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 7, 2017. A complete application consists of an original signed hard copy and another copy on either a CD or flash drive. Late submissions will not be reviewed.

### **2. What is the deadline to send applications for review for completion?**

To have applications reviewed for completion prior to the April 7 deadline, submit them by March 31, 2017. NCTCOG staff will review all applications received and let applicants know about any missing items by close of business on Wednesday, April 5, 2017.

### **3. Is it too late to send in an Intent to Submit form?**

No, the form can be submitted at any time. Those who do submit the form will receive a reminder email two weeks before (by March 24) the April 7 deadline.

### **4. Are there recordings of the Pre-Proposal Workshop presentations?**

Each presentation contained the same information. The March 10 meeting at NCTCOG was recorded. The presentation and an audio recording can be found under the Pre-Proposal Workshops banner found on the [Call for Projects](#) homepage.

### **5. For how many years can I request funding?**

Funding is intended to assist in piloting projects for one to three years.

### **6. What happens after the end of the project? Would service then also conclude?**

Funding through the Call for Projects is intended to initiate and pilot unique and innovative approaches to serving the needs of transit dependent individuals. Applicants should consider how the proposed project will be sustained after the Call for Projects funding ends as well as be able to describe how and when a pilot project's success will be evaluated in order to determine if it should be continued.

### **7. Can one project apply to both programs?**

Yes, four forms—a JARC application, JARC budget workbook, Enhanced Mobility application, and Enhanced Mobility budget workbook—would be submitted for a project serving only one urbanized area. If the project will serve both the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington and Denton-Lewisville urbanized areas, four budget workbooks would be required in addition to the two applications—one budget workbook for each urbanized area and funding program.

### **8. What is shared-ride?**

Shared-ride is included as part of FTA's definition of "public transportation" and means "two or more passengers traveling in the same transit vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together. Similar to general public and ADA demand response service, every trip does not have to be shared-ride in order for a taxi company to be considered a shared-ride operator, but the general nature of the service must include shared rides."

### **9. Will there be a match requirement?**

The match requirement varies depending on the project type.

- The majority of capital projects require a 20 percent local match (ADA-compliant vehicles require a 15 percent local match).
- Planning projects also require a 20 percent local match.

- Operating assistance projects require a 50 percent local match.

Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) are available for request as a substitute for local match on capital and planning projects but are not guaranteed. An agency should be prepared to provide a cash match in the event that TDCs are not awarded.

**10. Would funds received by other Federal Departments such as the Department of Labor or Health and Human Services be acceptable match on this project?**

Yes, other federal non-Department of Transportation (DOT) funds are acceptable as a match for these funds.

**11. We receive an annual allocation of non-DOT federal funds that we'd like to use as local match. However, we have not yet received an award letter for 2017. Do you have any suggestions as to what other appropriate supporting documentation we could provide?**

It is sufficient to note the source and anticipated amount of funding in the Sources of Local Match section of the budget workbook. State in the Assumptions section of the budget workbook that these are annual funds and indicate how the amount entered was determined (i.e., previous year's amount, previous years' average, or other method used).

**12. What are the requirements to be eligible to request TDCs?**

An agency eligible to apply for funding through the competitive process is eligible to request TDCs. Small transit providers, state or local governments, non-profit organizations and private operators of public transportation may receive TDCs through Category 1 (Strategic Awards to Small Transit Providers) of the Regional Transportation Development Credit Program. Larger providers such as DART, FFTA and DFTA may receive TDCs through Category 6 (MTP Policy Bundle) of the program.

**13. When applying for TDCs, does the entity applying need to have the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Policy Bundle approved?**

Approval of an agency's MTP Policy bundle submittal is not required at the time of application in order to request TDCs. If TDCs are desired, they must be requested on the budget workbook.

The MTP Policy Bundle applies to local governments and transportation authorities (i.e., DART, DFTA, and FFTA). It allows these entities to access TDCs to match eligible federal capital transit expenses in exchange for voluntarily agreeing to adopt 50 percent of applicable policies as determined by entity type. More information about the MTP Policy Bundle can be found at <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/mtp/policybundle/>.

**14. The presentation referenced the phrase, "unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate." What does this mean if we are within a transit provider's service area?**

This phrase refers to both where services are non-existent and to those situations where temporal or geographic gaps exist within public transportation services areas. For example, filling a temporal gap may mean that the proposal would provide transportation to low-income individuals working a third shift when the existing transportation provider does not operate. Or, it could be providing a senior with same-day service to go to the grocery store when the existing service provider requires at least 48 hours advanced notice. An example of a geographic gap filler could be providing transportation to a large employer or employment center that cannot be accessed directly by public transportation.

**15. Must all riders for a project focused on transporting low-income individuals, seniors or individuals with disabilities be certified as such in order to be able to use a proposed service? How specific are applicants required to be in terms of documenting eligible ridership?**

Projects must focus on providing service to persons with low incomes, seniors or individuals with disabilities but do not have to be exclusive to these populations. In the Applicant Overview section of the application, there are questions that seek to understand both the demographics of the proposed service area and expectations for the level of service to be provided to the target audience. Should the project be awarded, this information will be used as a factor in determining actual performance measures that demonstrate a focus on meeting the transportation needs of the target population.

**16. How do I show need? Does support for the proposed service have to come from published reports or studies?**

The case for a project's need does not have to come from a published report or study. Support can come from either internal (e.g., client survey, assessment, etc.) or external sources (e.g., *Access North Texas* plan ([www.accessnorthtexas.org](http://www.accessnorthtexas.org)) or Census data).

**17. How specific do we need to be in describing the actual routes planned for a proposed service? Would lack of detail on routes hurt our chances for award? Can route selection occur after award?**

For transit services that are not yet in operation, a specific route does not yet have to be confirmed. The application should describe the general area that is to be served and potential stops along the route. Final route development and testing can occur after award. Project proposals should include route selection as a milestone in the timeline if not already determined. Requests for funding that involve an existing service should include route maps and schedules.

**18. In what month in spring of 2018 do you estimate funding will begin?**

Because FY 2017 funding has not yet been made available by Congress, we are unable at this time to specify a particular month. Our best estimate based on past experience is that projects will begin in the spring of 2018.

**19. Can the Call for Projects be held at another time of year? The deadline coincides with our current monthly and quarterly reporting deadlines for other federal funds.**

NCTCOG staff will consider this when preparing for the next Call for Projects.

**Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) Project Questions**

**20. Is the JARC program for job access and low-income individuals?**

Yes, the JARC program is designed to provide funding to support transit planning and services to job training or employment opportunities for low-income individuals.

**21. On page 5 of the Application Information Packet, please clarify “Actual or estimated number of jobs that can be accessed as a result of geographic or temporal coverage from the JARC project being implemented.” Does this mean the estimated total number of jobs available in the service area, or the number of actual jobs we plan to provide transportation to as a result of this funding?**

This question is asking for the actual or estimated number of jobs for which the proposed project will provide access. As part of establishing the need for the project, be sure to

develop an estimate of the impact the project will have if it is new or an expansion of an existing transportation service. Existing projects will likely have actual numbers to provide.

### **Enhanced Mobility Project Questions**

**22. If a city or nonprofit organization would like to purchase service for seniors and individuals with disabilities from an existing transit provider, who should apply for funding?**

The transit provider would apply for funds for a *new* or *expanded* Enhanced Mobility project in which the city or non-profit purchases service from the transit provider.

Funds for *existing* Enhanced Mobility projects (i.e., those currently supported with Enhanced Mobility funds through NCTCOG) are received by transit providers during the annual Program of Projects (POP) process. These funding levels are capped at service levels agreed upon in years previous.

**23. For Enhanced Mobility funds, how are amounts between the two urbanized areas (UZA) determined?**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) determines the amount of Enhanced Mobility funds that an urbanized area receives each year. In the North Central Texas region, the funds available through the Call for Projects are the result of a two-step allocation process. During the first step, public transit providers request Enhanced Mobility funds for their existing projects through the annual POP process. During the second step any funds remaining are then made available for competitive award in the Call for Projects.

**24. Why are there no operating funds available for Enhanced Mobility projects in the Denton-Lewisville urbanized area?**

In addition to determining the amount of Enhanced Mobility funds made available to urbanized areas each year, FTA also mandates that a minimum of 55 percent of the funds be dedicated to capital projects and a maximum of 45 percent be dedicated to operating projects. NCTCOG uses a two-step process to allocate these funds. Public transit providers have the first opportunity to access these funds for their existing projects. If, in this first step, the requests for operating assistance reaches the maximum of 45 percent of the urbanized area total, then no operating funds are available for the Call for Projects in the second step of allocation.

**25. Where can I get demographic information for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the service area I plan to serve?**

The Census ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) can provide demographic data about your specific service area.

**26. Does a transit agency that already receives Enhanced Mobility funds need to apply for funding for an expansion of the existing funded project?**

Yes, transit agencies should apply for new and expanded Enhanced Mobility projects through the competitive process. Existing projects are capped in funding at their same level of service.

### **Project Specific Questions**

**27. Is Lancaster a part of the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington urbanized area?**

Yes.

**28. Can funds be used to cover up to 80 percent of the costs of a purchase of service agreement with an existing public transit provider to provide services for persons with disabilities and seniors to help them get to medical appointments, work, and social engagements?**

Yes. If the contract between the public transit provider and the agency or local government was not competitively procured, the public transit provider will need to submit the proposal.

**29. Can I apply for a project focused on the transportation needs of senior and disabled veterans?**

Yes, a transportation project for this population would be most eligible for funding through the Enhanced Mobility program.

**30. Could we apply for the replacement of vehicles for a current service we provide to seniors accessing a senior recreation facility?**

Yes, that is an eligible activity under the Enhanced Mobility program. If the vehicle cost is not based on the information provided in Appendix B of the Application Information Packet, on the Supplemental Information tab of the Enhanced Mobility Budget Workbook, discuss how the cost was derived. It would also be helpful to include how the quantity and types of vehicles requested were determined.

**31. For services in McKinney, can we utilize TxDOT and CFP funding?**

NCTCOG does not administer JARC or Enhanced Mobility funds for use within the McKinney urbanized area. Those funds are administered by TxDOT. Please visit TxDOT's Public Transportation Division (PTN) website (<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance.html>) for more information.

If the project proposes to assist low-income individuals, seniors or persons with disabilities in the City of McKinney to access services or locations within either the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington or Denton-Lewisville urbanized areas, the project may be eligible for funding through this Call for Projects. More information would be needed to make that determination.

TxDOT funding and funds awarded through this Call for Projects may not be used as match to one another.

**32. Is a project to provide a mobile resource unit eligible? It would bring social service and transportation resource information to seniors.**

More information would be needed to provide a definitive answer. This could be an eligible mobility management project if it is part of an effort to coordinate services among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation.