

## 13 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### ***INTRODUCTION***

MassDOT administers FTA programs through two primary offices: The Rail and Transit Division and the Office of Transportation Planning. Programs of the two primary administrative offices are summarized below:

A. The Rail and Transit Division:

MassDOT through its Rail and Transit Division is primary recipient and manager of FTA transit grant programs. The summary below outlines the rail and transit grant programs administered and distributed through MassDOT.

**Title 49 USC § 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program:** Revamped in MAP-21, the FTA has split the §5310 Program into “Traditional Projects” and “Expanded Projects.” This reflects the fact that the New Freedom Program was consolidated into §5310, and no longer exists as a stand-alone program.

Traditional Project goals include:

Public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable or inappropriate. This DOES NOT include:

- Vehicles or equipment that benefits, or is assumed to benefit, seniors or people with disabilities in addition to the general public (for example, purchasing a 40-ft. bus for regular service which seniors and individuals with disabilities may or may not use).
- This DOES include:
  - Fully accessible vehicles (MassDOT purchases the vehicles for the grant recipient; See Fully Accessible Vehicle Guide for more information.);

- Vehicle equipment, such as communications equipment, lifts or ramps, or preventive maintenance as defined in the National Transit Database;
- Passenger facilities, such as benches or shelters;
- Intelligent Transportation Systems, fare box systems, computer hardware or software, or dispatch systems;
- Mobility Management activities targeted at elderly and people with disabilities. This includes planning, promoting and providing coordinated services enhancing access to transportation opportunities.

Expanded Project goals include:

- Projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This DOES NOT include:
  - Fixed-route service which does not specifically serve seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- This DOES include:
  - Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA;
  - Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services;
  - The incremental cost of providing same day service;
  - The incremental cost (if any) of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not as a reasonable modification for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system;
  - Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination;

- Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for wheelchairs under the ADA (i.e., larger than 30" x 48" and/or weighing more than 600 pounds) and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs. This would permit the acquisition of lifts with a larger capacity, as well as modifications to lifts with a 600 pound design load, and the acquisition of heavier-duty vehicles for paratransit and/or demand-response service;
- Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA;
- "Feeder Service" to intercity/commuter bus or rail service that is not otherwise required under ADA.
- Projects that improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit. This could include:
  - Building an accessible path to a to a bus stop not designated as a key station that is currently inaccessible, including curbcuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features;
  - Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA;
  - Improving signage, or wayfinding technology;
  - Implementation of other technology improvements to a stop not designated as a key station that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- Projects that are alternatives to public transportation, such as:
  - Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing, and/or vanpooling programs;

- Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers;
- Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs.

**Title 49 USC § 5311 – Rural Operations:** Program grants are distributed to enhance access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation; and to assist in maintenance, development, improvement and use of public transportation systems in non-urbanized communities. In the current program year, MassDOT made 4 grant awards from the Section 5311 federal allocation to the regional transit authorities. All subgrantees are regional transit authorities, one of which is a direct recipient of other FTA funds. MassDOT is responsible for monitoring compliance of the three remaining Section 5311 subrecipients—Franklin Regional Transit Authority, Martha’s Vineyard Transit Authority and Nantucket Regional Transit Authority.

**Title 49 USC § 5311(f) – Rural Intercity Bus Service:** FTA requires the state to spend not less than 15 percent of the annual 5311 funding to develop and support intercity bus transportation, unless the Governor certifies to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation that the intercity bus service needs of the state are otherwise being met. Eligible activities under the program include:

- B. Planning and marketing for intercity bus transportation;
- C. Capital grants for construction (i.e., intercity bus shelters);
- D. Vehicle purchase, rehabilitation, refurbishment, and wheelchair lift retrofit;
- E. Equipment purchase (e.g. Intelligent Transportation Systems, wheelchair lifts, etc.);
- F. Operating assistance, including the provision of feeder service.

**Title 49 USC § 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute:** Goal of the JARC Program is “to improve access to transportation services to employment and employment related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.” Note: while new funding is no longer available under this grant category (as this program was cancelled under MAP-21), MassDOT Transit is still administering existing available funds under this program and will continue to do so until such funds are exhausted.

**Title 49 USC § 5317 New Freedom:** This program aims “to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” Note: while new funding is no longer available under this grant category (as this program was cancelled under MAP-21), MassDOT Transit is still administering existing available funds under this program and will continue to do so until such funds are exhausted.

**Title 49 USC § 5339 – Bus and Bus Facilities:** Instituted in MAP-21 as a replacement for § 5309(b)(3), the § 5339 program is a capital-assistance only program. Eligible subrecipients include public entities and nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability, or low income. Eligible activities include:

- Purchasing, replacing, or rehabilitating buses or vans;
- Purchasing or replacing transit-related equipment, such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers, and shop and garage equipment;
- Construction of bus-related facilities, such as bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, and passenger amenities like shelters and bus stop signs.

B. Office of Transportation Planning:

The Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) coordinates activities of the Commonwealth's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The MassDOT Secretary & CEO serves as chair of each of the 10 MPOs and three Transportation Planning Organizations and is represented by the OTP Executive Director or other delegated OTP official to carry out this leadership role. The regional MPO planning processes are structured to be continuing, comprehensive and cooperative as well as the foundation for programming of federal transportation funds allocated to Massachusetts. As chair of the MPOs, the Office of Transportation Planning provides the leadership and agenda-setting functions. It also plays a critical role in communications between agencies and MPOs and on federal compliance oversight.

The Commonwealth's MPOs/TPOs are:

- Berkshire MPO
- Boston Region MPO
- Cape Cod MPO
- Central Massachusetts MPO
- Montachusett Regional MPO
- Merrimack Valley MPO
- Northern Middlesex MPO
- Pioneer Valley MPO
- Old Colony MPO
- Southeastern Massachusetts MPO
- Franklin County Transportation Planning Organization
- Martha's Vineyard Transportation Planning Organization
- Nantucket Transportation Planning Organization

For a full discussion of OTP's administration of FTA planning funds among the MPOs, refer to Chapter 12.

## ***STATE MANAGED FEDERALLY FUNDED TRANSIT PROGRAMS***

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Community Transit Grant Program is an annual competitive grant application process administered by the Transit Division of MassDOT. The application process occurs every February, which consists of a one-month open application process and a series of applicant training sessions held at the beginning of the application process. Applicants that are selected for awards are usually notified around the first week of April.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial assistance to states through a number of programs to develop new transit systems and improve, maintain, and operate existing systems. The Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has designated the MassDOT as the agency of authority and responsibility for administering assistance received in Massachusetts through Title 49 USC Sections 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, and 5339 (Small-Urban & Statewide portions only) funding programs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the MassDOT Rail and Transit Division provides financial assistance to eligible organizations through several programs to provide a state financial match to federally funded capital, operating, and planning projects. MassDOT Rail and Transit distributes financial assistance through the Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) to provide transportation services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities as defined in Chapter 637 Sec. 13 of the Acts of 1983.

MassDOT and its evaluation teams use a web-based grant application system for both state and federal public transportation grants. Applicants are asked to describe their project(s) and provide relevant information. Based on the information provided by the applicant, MassDOT will rate the application and determine which organizations will receive federal and state grant funding. The grant application process occurs on an annual basis.

MassDOT Rail and Transit establishes evaluation teams that review applications and make recommendations to MassDOT regarding project priorities. MassDOT works with the following agencies and organizations for representation on evaluation teams:

- Regional Transportation Planning Organizations/Municipal Planning Organizations
- Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
- Massachusetts Office on Disability
- Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- Human Services Transportation Office
- MassDOT Transit staff
- MassDOT Civil Rights staff
- MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning Staff
- MBTA System-wide Accessibility
- MBTA System Planning

This evaluation method accomplishes fair and equal treatment of all applicants. MassDOT announces the availability of the MassDOT Community Transportation Grant Application on the MassDOT Web site. In addition, an extensive distribution is made to all applicants from the prior grant cycle and those agencies, associations, and individuals listed on a mailing list of interested parties maintained by MassDOT. If all available funds are not awarded through the competitive process or if actual project expenses are below budgets creating a potential of unspent funds, MassDOT may conduct a call for smaller projects within the federal funding cycle. MassDOT will review and award funds based on appropriate criteria. For more detail on the scoring criteria, please refer to 5310 and MAP application questions and scoring guide document in Appendix 13-A.

Through annual grant agreements, subrecipients agree to comply with all applicable civil rights statutes and regulations. These include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Americans with Disabilities Act.



Each recipient must have a signed DOT Title VI Assurance and FTA Civil Rights Assurance on file with MassDOT.