

## **SBCAG Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program**

### **Program Background**

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 (FTA 5310) Grant Program funding offers funding to non-profit organizations, state or local government authorities, and local operators of public transportation<sup>1</sup> to enhance the mobility and transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Prior to 2024, Caltrans administered the FTA 5310 Grant program for Santa Barbara Urbanized Area (UZA) as it was only a small UZA. In 2020, the Santa Barbara UZA became a large UZA. FTA requires that one or more designated recipients administer FTA funds for large UZAs.

As the regional transportation planning agency for Santa Barbara County and dual-designated recipient of FTA 5310 funds in the Santa Barbara UZA alongside Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District, SBCAG is responsible for conducting a Call for Projects. Any agencies receiving FTA 5310 funding from SBCAG will be considered subrecipients.

### **2025 Call for Projects**

This Call for Projects is the primary funding source to support projects and strategies identified in SBCAG's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. This cycle will provide approximately \$267,541 for FY 25/26. Per program guidelines, as the fund administrator, SBCAG is able to use 10%, or \$26,754 for administration.

During the FY 24/25-26 two-year Call for Projects, the total ask was less than the total amount available. The SBCAG Board approved programming all of FY 24/25 funds and partial FY 25/26 funds and conducting a Call for Projects for the remaining FY 25/26 balance of \$203,750.

**For this call for projects, approximately \$203,750 will be available for eligible projects in the Santa Barbara UZA.**

### **Program Goal**

The FTA 5310 Grant Program is intended to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available.

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<sup>1</sup> Operators of public transportation are entities that provide regular continuing shared-ride surface transportation services that are open to the general public or open to a segment of the general public defined by age, disability, or low-income.

The Program provides funding for:

- a. Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable;
- b. Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- c. Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and
- d. Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities and with transportation.

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants, or subrecipients, include:

- a. A private nonprofit organization
- b. A state or local governmental authority that:
  1. Is approved by a state to coordinate services for seniors and individuals with disabilities; or
  2. Certifies there are no nonprofit organizations readily available in the area to provide the service.
- c. Operators of public transportation (Expanded projects only).

### **Coordinated Plan**

Proposed projects **MUST** address one or more of the goals included in Santa Barbara County's [Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan](#) (Coordinated Plan). The Coordinated Plan was approved by the SBCAG Board of Directors on March 21, 2024. The plan can also be found on SBCAG's website: <https://www.sbcag.org/planning-programming/document-directory/>

Goals in the Coordinated Plan include:

1. Develop a Comprehensive Plan for communication, education, and awareness throughout the county;
2. Strengthen provider resources and create sustainable funding streams;
3. Establish a County-wide plan for coordinated advocacy and policy development;
4. Support ongoing planning, coordination, and collaboration, while creating new community partnerships; and
5. Ensure consistent operation of safe, accessible, and affordable services for county residents.

***Projects that do not address any goals in the Coordinated Plan will not be considered for funding.***

## **Eligible Activities – Traditional and Expanded Projects**

Eligible projects include capital, mobility management, and operating expenses.

Section 5310 funding can be used for traditional or expanded projects with descriptions on traditional and expanded projects provided below.

### Traditional Section 5310 project examples include:

- a. buses and vans
- b. wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices
- c. transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems
- d. mobility management programs which can include travel training and volunteer driver programs
- e. acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement

### Expanded Section 5310 project examples include:

- a. travel training
- b. volunteer driver programs
- c. building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
- d. improving signage, or way-finding technology
- e. incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service
- f. purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, rides sharing and/or vanpooling programs
- g. mobility management programs

FTA's Section 5310 program allows grantees to coordinate and assist in regularly providing meal delivery service for homebound individuals if the delivery service does not conflict with providing public transportation service or reduce service to public transportation.

***At least 55% of 5310 funds will be allocated to Traditional projects.***

## **Match Requirements**

At least 20% match using non-USDOT funds is required for traditional projects and at least 50% match using non-USDOT funds is required for expanded projects.

## **Federal Grant Requirements**

The recipient agency must be able to meet the Federal Transit Administration's conditions for use of its funds. These conditions include but are not limited to: annual outside audit; triennial FTA audit; five-year grant records retention development of a written maintenance plan for FTA-funded vehicles, facilities, and equipment; competitive procurement; buy America; ADA; and civil rights. (Drug and alcohol testing is not a requirement for these

programs.) Agencies receiving funds will need to have in place a signed agreement committing to meeting FTA requirements.

### Evaluation Criteria

SBCAG will use the following evaluation criteria to score and select projects with projects evaluated on a 100 point scale as shown below:

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Points    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. Goals and Objectives:</b> Degree to which project supports new, enhancement, or expansion of service or system capacity for the targeted populations. The application should clearly state how the project addresses the program goals and the goals and service gaps identified in the Coordinated Plan.                                                                                                                       | <b>10</b> |
| <b>2. Project Implementation Plan:</b> Degree to which the project implementation has been well designed. Proposals must state who will be responsible for the implementation, and implementation steps and timeline. Sponsors should describe how the project will improve service delivery, coordination, and cost-effectiveness.                                                                                                   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>3. Communication and Outreach:</b> Degree to which applicants coordinate with other community transportation and/or social service resources. Application should describe efforts to keep stakeholders involved in and informed of project activities. There should be demonstrated public support for the project (including letters of support), as well as a plan to promote awareness of the project to the target population. | <b>10</b> |
| <b>4. Emergency Planning and Preparedness:</b> Applicant should describe emergency planning and any participation in emergency drills.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>10</b> |
| <b>5. Ability of Applicant:</b> Applicant should provide existing experience in providing transportation service or social services for elderly or disabled individuals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>20</b> |
| <b>6. Transportation Service:</b> Determination that existing fleet is fully utilized based on days and hours, passenger trips, and service area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>20</b> |

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| <p><b>7. Proposed Project:</b> Applicant will be scored based on project type—vehicle replacement/expansion and equipment. Replacement and expansion vehicles will receive ratings based on mileage, service hours per week, and number of people served. Equipment will be scored based on number of vehicles within the fleet which are coordinated and service efficiency enhancement with the new equipment. Operating Assistance and Mobility Management Projects will be scored based on the extent to which the applicant provides clear, measurable, and outcome-based performance measures with quantifiable methodology to track the effectiveness of the project.</p> | <p><b>20</b></p> |
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### Schedule

| Milestone                                                                | Date              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Draft Guidelines presented to SBCTAC                                     | September 6, 2025 |
| Comments on guidelines due                                               | October 1         |
| Final Guidelines approved by SBCAG Board and Call for Projects announced | October 18        |
| Applications due to SBCAG                                                | November 30       |
| Program of Projects approved by SBCAG Board                              | February 19       |

### Reporting Requirements

The following reporting requirements will be due to SBCAG on the dates or frequency provided below. If awarded FTA 5310 funds, reporting will be specific to the year of apportionment.

- a. **Milestone Progress Reports:** recipient must provide SBCAG with updates on the milestone dates (as provided in the application) annually by October 3.
- b. **Program Measures:** recipient must provide SBCAG with information available on each of the following measures annually:

#### Traditional Projects

1. Gaps in Service Filled: Provision of transportation options that would not otherwise be available for seniors and individuals with disabilities, measured in numbers of seniors and individuals with disabilities afforded mobility they would not have without program support as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.
2. Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section

5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of traditional Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Expanded Projects

1. Service Improvements: related to geographic coverage, service quality, and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year
  2. Physical Improvements: Additions or changes to environmental infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, sidewalks, etc.), technology, and vehicles that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.
  3. Ridership: Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided annually for seniors or individuals with disabilities on Section 5310 supported vehicles and services as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.
- c. **National Transit Database**: 49 United States Code (USC) Section 5335(c) requires all FTA grant recipients that provide public transportation, including grant recipients under Section 5310, to report an asset inventory or condition assessment conducted by the recipient to the National Transit Database (NTD). Recipients that provide services only to their own clients are exempt from this requirement, as such services are not public transportation.
- d. **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Reports**. If the state or designated recipient receives planning, capital, and/or operating assistance and awards prime contracts exceeding \$250,000 in FTA funds in a federal fiscal year, DOT regulations require the state or designated recipient to have a DBE program and establish a DBE goal methodology that applies to all direct and subrecipient contracting activity resulting from those funds. Subrecipients must follow the recipient's established DBE program. FTA recipients that meet the above thresholds must submit a DBE goal to FTA for review by August 1 at three-year intervals, based on a schedule established by FTA.