

VCTC 2024 TRANSIT GRANTS CALL-FOR-PROJECTS GUIDELINES

FTA Section 5310 Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Funds
 FTA Section 5307 Jobs Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) Funds
 California Public Utilities Council (CPUC) Access for All (AFA) Funds

This is the primary funding initiative to support projects and strategies identified in Ventura County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, which can be found at: https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ITEM-10_ATTACHMENT-COORDINATED-PUBLIC-TRANSIT-HUMAN-SERVICES-TRANSPORTATION-PLAN.pdf

Program Purpose and Goals

Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Grant program:

To enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds that support the special needs of seniors beyond traditional public transportation services and for those with disabilities beyond that required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The FTA Section 5310 program provides grant funds for capital, mobility management, and operating expenses for:

- 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;
- Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and
- Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities and with transportation.

FTA Section 5307 JARC program:

To improve access to employment and employment related activities for eligible low-income individuals and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. The FTA 5307 JARC funds provide financial assistance for transportation service planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation needs of eligible low-income individuals.

Access for All (AFA) Program:

To incentivize the expansion and availability of on-demand transportation services for wheelchair bound individuals with disabilities whose needs cannot be met by conventional transit or paratransit services. The program provides operating and capital assistance to qualified service Access Providers.

- Since 2018, Senate Bill (SB) 1376 requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as part of its regulation of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) (e.g. Uber/Lyft), establish a program to improve the accessibility of persons with disabilities to on-demand transportation services, resulting in the establishment of the TNC Access-for-All Program requiring a fee in the amount of \$0.10 for each TNC trip provided and remit such fees to the CPUC based on the County in which the trip originated.
- TNCs request offsets of the fees collected should they elect to invest in improving their Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) service. Remaining funds are set aside to distribute through Access Fund Administrators (AFAs), such as VCTC, to qualified Access Providers that establish on-demand transportation programs or partnerships meeting the needs of persons with disabilities with enhanced WAV services.

INITIAL SCREENING CRITERIA

The screening criteria are divided into three categories. To be considered for funding, proposed projects must meet all the pre-screening criteria to move to the next phase of the process.

1. Project Eligibility:

- A. The proposed project and applicant must be eligible to receive the funding they are applying for (see [Eligibility Criteria](#)).

2. Planning Consistency:

- A. The proposed project *must* fall within the recommendations of Ventura County's Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. [The Ventura County Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation plan \(or Coordinated Plan\)](#)

3. Financial and Deliverability Feasibility:

- A. The recipient of funds must have the financial and resource capacity to complete, operate and maintain the project.
 - i. *Per FTA rules, there is a 10% cap on overhead expenses for non-profit organizations and may be included but need not be documented.*
- B. Projects must demonstrate that they can be implemented within Federal delivery requirements (if FTA funded); including but are not limited to:
 - i. annual outside audit
 - ii. triennial FTA audit
 - iii. five-year grant records retention
 - iv. written maintenance plan for vehicles, facilities, and equipment
 - v. competitive procurement
 - vi. Buy America
 - vii. ADA
 - viii. Civil rights.
 - ix. Agencies receiving funds will need to have in place a signed agreement committing to meeting FTA requirements.
- C. Projects must demonstrate that they can be implemented within CPUC delivery requirements (if AFA funded). Access Providers receiving funding are required to report on a quarterly basis data related to the Program, anticipated to be at minimum the following:
 - i. Number of Unique wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) in Operation.
 - ii. Number and percentage of WAV trips completed, not accepted, cancelled by passenger, cancelled due to passenger no-show, or cancelled by driver.
 - iii. Completed WAV trip request response times.
 - iv. Evidence of outreach.
 - v. Certification of Driver Training.
 - vi. Report of WAV Driver Training Programs and Controlled Substance and Alcohol testing.
 - vii. Certification of Inspection.
 - viii. Number of complaints.
- D. Local grant match is not *required*; however, five (5) points will be awarded to projects which provide the entire amount of match to federal funds (50% for operations, 20% for capital). No points will be awarded for partial matches of federal funds (TDCs will be utilized for match in the event an agency does not provide the full match). Funds from other sources (for local match) must be reasonably expected to be available. Private-nonprofit organizations will automatically be awarded the five (5) points.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants/Recipients

- **5310 Traditional:** States and designated recipients are direct recipients; eligible sub-recipients include private nonprofit organizations, states or local government authorities. Public agency sub-recipients for Traditional 5310 (except for Area Agency on Aging) must certify that they do not know of any nonprofit organizations that are readily available in their area to provide the proposed service.
- **5310 Expanded:** States and designated recipients are direct recipients; eligible sub-recipients include private nonprofit organizations, states or local government authorities, or operators of public transportation.
- **JARC:** Private non-profit organizations; State or local governmental authority; and Operators of public transportation services, including private operators of public transportation services that meet the needs of eligible low-income individuals.
- **AFA:** Eligible applicant Access Providers include public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private/commercial entities, and directly provide, or contract with a separate organization or entity to provide, on-demand WAV transportation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Eligible Projects and Activities

- **Traditional Section 5310 project examples include:**
 - buses and vans
 - wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices
 - transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems
 - mobility management programs which can include travel training and volunteer driver programs
 - acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement
- **Expanded Section 5310 project examples include:**
 - travel training
 - volunteer driver programs
 - building an accessible path to a bus stop, including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features
 - improving signage, or way-finding technology
 - incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service
 - purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, rides sharing and/or vanpooling programs
 - mobility management programs
 - 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 passengers.

At least 55% of the area's 5310 funds must be used on capital projects as described in the Traditional category of Section 5310 projects above.

- **JARC project examples include:**
 - projects designed to transport low-income persons or welfare recipients to jobs and employment-related activities.
 - projects designed to transport workers to suburban employment opportunities.

- **AFA project examples include:**
 - Eligible projects can include operational costs, vehicle costs (purchase/lease), driver training/incentives, technology investments, ride fare subsidies, and outreach, and must increase the availability of on-demand WAV transportation in the County of Ventura. “WAV” means a vehicle equipped with a ramp or lift capable of transporting non-folding motorized wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or other mobility devices. “On-demand WAV transportation” means that the provider can fulfill trip requests within 24 hours through a service that does not follow a fixed route and/or schedule.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

VCTC will use the following criteria to prioritize projects. Note: for projects receiving Large Urbanized Area funds, the projects selected by VCTC will be funded. For small urban and rural projects receiving funds in the State’s share, sponsors of projects prioritized by VCTC, upon receiving notification from VCTC, will need to prepare a Caltrans application which VCTC will forward to Caltrans for the final selection.

1. **Goals and Objectives (20 points):** Degree to which project supports new, enhancement, or expansion of service or system capacity for the targeted populations. The application should clearly state the program goals and objectives and describe how the project addresses the needs and service gaps identified in the [Coordinated Plan](#).
2. **Project Implementation Plan (30 points):** 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.
3. **Program Performance Indicators (20 points):** Project sponsors should explain how the project will be monitored and evaluated. The application should identify clear, quantitative performance measures including a cost/benefit calculation to track the effectiveness of the service in meeting the identified goals.
4. **Communication and Outreach (20 points):** 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.
5. **Emergency Planning and Preparedness (5 points):** Applicant should identify their most recent approved emergency preparedness plans or describe their emergency planning procedures as it relates to serving the grant’s target population.
6. **Matching Funds (5 points):** A maximum of 5 points will be awarded to projects providing the full funding match, zero points for partial match, and TDCs will be utilized for projects with no match. Private nonprofit organizations will automatically be awarded five (5) points for match under these scoring criteria.
7. **Bonus Points for Non-Profit Applicants:** Eligible projects submitted by eligible private-non-profit operators will receive an additional five (5) points in the scoring criteria.

SCHEDULE

The following schedule lists the milestones for the application and selection process:

Table 1: Section 5310 and JARC Call for Projects Schedule	
June 7, 2024	Call-for-Projects Released
July 26, 2024	Project Applications Deadline
September 11, 2024	TRANSCOM Recommendation
October 4, 2024	VCTC Approval
December 2024	FTIP Approval
March 2025	FTA Grant Approval