

5317 New Freedom Program Guidance

PROGRAM GOAL

FTA defines the goal of the Section 5317 (New Freedom) program as providing additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities that are seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society, reduce barriers to transportation services, and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the ADA of 1990.

5317 (New Freedom) ELIGIBILITY

Entities eligible to apply for 5317 New Freedom Funds include local governmental agencies, private non-profit organizations, operators of public transportation services and private operators of public transportation services. Public Transportation means surface transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but does not include school bus, charter, or intercity bus transportation or intercity passenger rail transportation provided by AMTRAK.

To be considered for New Freedom recipient must be in an urbanized area with less than 200,000 people or in a rural area.

Funding may be used for the following listed purposes. This list of eligible activities is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Recipients are encouraged to develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

- New Public Transportation Services Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.
 - Enhancing paratransit beyond minimum requirements of the ADA. ADA complementary paratransit services can be eligible under New Freedom in several ways as long as the services provided meet the definition of “new:”
 - 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 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 common wheelchairs under the ADA and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs.
 - Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA.

- Feeder services. New “feeder” service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail, and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA.
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. New accessibility enhancements that remove barriers to individuals with disabilities so they may access greater portions of public transportation systems, such as fixed-route bus service, commuter rail, light rail and rapid rail. This may include:
 - Building an accessible path to a bus stop 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, or
 - Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- Travel training. New training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities. This includes travel instruction and travel training services.
- New Public Transportation **Alternatives** Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom Program:
 - 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 new volunteer driver and aide programs.
 - The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented Transportation Management Organizations’ and Human Service Organizations’ customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers;
 - Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, Global Positioning System Technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer payment systems
 - Acquisition of technology

FUNDING MATCH

Required matching funds must be from sources other than USDOT.

- Capital Assistance: 20%
- Planning Assistance: 20%
- Mobility Management: 20%
- Operating Costs: 50%

Use of Other Federal Funds:

Local match may be derived from other Federal funds derived from Federal programs that are eligible to be expended for transportation, other than from the DOT programs. Examples of types of programs that are potential sources of local match include: employment training, aging, community services, vocational rehabilitation services, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). To be eligible for local match for FTA funds, the other Federal funds must be used for activities included in the total net project costs of the FTA grant. Expenditure of other Federal funds for transportation outside of the scope of the project cannot be applied as a credit for local match in the FTA grant. Specific program information for other types of Federal funding is available at www.unitedweride.gov.