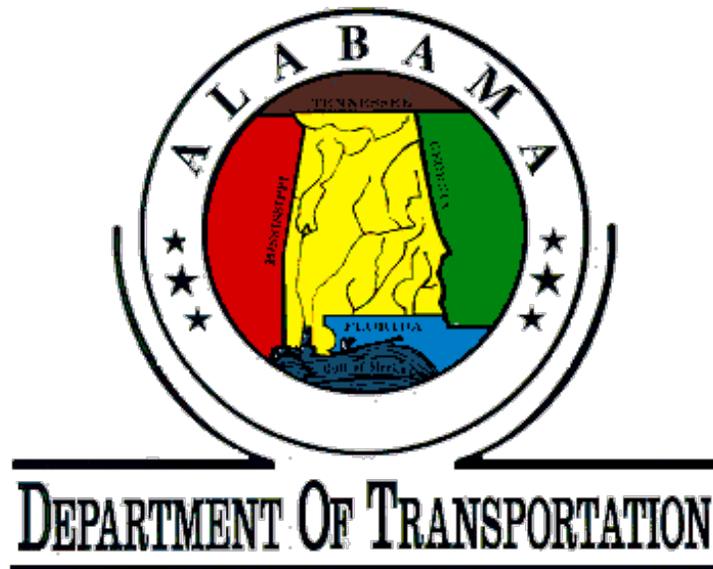


**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION BUREAU
Public Transit Section**

**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Section 5311 Instructions



**Dissemination Date: November 1, 2024
Due Date: January 31, 2025**

1.1 General Instructions

This application package contains information and application forms for the **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Public Transportation Programs**. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) will have primary responsibility for administering this funding. Section 5311 and/or Section 5311(f) recipients subject to ALDOT administration will be eligible applicants under this program. **Grantees must meet specified Federal and State requirements under Section 5311 and/or 5311(f) program(s) respectively.**

ALDOT administers Alabama's Rural Transit Program (49 USC Section 5311) for the FTA. Federal rural area transit funds are provided to eligible applicants following submission and approval of a grant application.

According to **FTA Circular 9040.1G**, the purpose of the Section 5311 Program is to support public transportation for people living in any area outside of an urbanized area (UZA) as designated by the Bureau of the Census. A UZA consists of a core area and the surrounding densely populated area with a total population of 50,000 or more, with boundaries fixed by the Bureau of the Census. Areas not within a UZA as of the 2020 Census are eligible for Section 5311 funding even if they are included within the metropolitan area planning boundary (which includes the surrounding area expected to be urbanized within 20 years and/or the air quality nonattainment boundary). A rural area is defined as “an area encompassing a population of less than 50,000 people that has not been designated in the most recent decennial census as an urbanized area by the secretary of Commerce”.

1.2 Required Exhibits

The Section 5311 Program application comprises several narrative exhibits. These exhibits are described in detail in the following pages. The required exhibits in the application must appear in the order listed on the **Checklist**. Examples of several of the required exhibits are found in the application package. You may use the blank forms included with this application to aid in developing the required exhibits.

1.3 General Program Information and Requirements

Applicants are encouraged to review the most current State Management Plan at <https://www.dot.state.al.us/publications/LocalTransportation/pdf/StateManagementPlan.pdf> and visit the FTA Website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/> to access current circulars and review the most current Master Agreement and other pertinent documents relating to the Section 5311 public transportation programs before proceeding.

Applications must be for eligible services, eligible service areas, eligible recipients, eligible expenses, and must be properly matched. Applicants must also assure compliance with conditions placed on recipients of federal funds. These include, but are not limited to, transit service coordination, civil rights, private enterprise participation, compliance with safety and drug free workplace regulations, and competitive procurement of goods and services paid for with federal grant funds.

Match: The Section 5311 Program permits required match to be derived from other unrestricted federal funds. Contract revenues from social service agencies may also be used as local match in the Section 5311 Program. Non-cash items such as donations of goods and services, volunteered services or in-kind contributions are eligible as local match for project expenses only if the value of each is formally documented

and supported. Recipients may use funds from other federal agencies (non-DOT) for the entire local match if the other agencies make the funds available to the recipient for the purposes of the project. The only DOT funds that can be used as local match for Section 5311 projects are from the Federal Lands Highway Program cited in 49 U.S.C. 5311(g)(3). Section 5310 or other FTA funds cannot be used as match for Section 5311 Program funds.

Even though funds may be available to rural transit providers through third-party transportation service agreements with state agencies, local social service agencies and/or private social service organizations' FTA funds may not be used as match because they are derived from other DOT programs. Such funds may, however, be treated as farebox revenue. An acceptable combination of local funding (private or public) should be identified and committed to provide the required non-federal share. Applicants are not authorized to place liens on federally funded capital equipment in order to borrow funds to be used as local match.

1.4 Section 5311 Program Threshold Requirements

Section 5311 funds must be used for the provision of public transportation in nonurbanized areas that is provided on a regular and continuing basis. Public transportation is defined as "transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but does not include school bus, charter, sightseeing, or intercity bus or rail transportation" (49 U.S.C. 5302(a)(10)).

A rural transit provider may design its Section 5311 funded services to maximize use by members of the general public who are transportation disadvantaged. Transportation disadvantaged people include seniors and people with disabilities. Coordinated human service transportation that primarily serves seniors and people with disabilities, but that is not restricted from carrying other members of the public, is open to the general public and is advertised as public transportation service, are eligible under this program. Transportation services may not be designed exclusively to serve the transportation requirements of social service agencies or other specific agencies without regard for the mobility needs of the community as a whole.

Recipients may establish new routes that serve critical community needs at any time. [FTA's charter rule](#) at 49 CFR 604.3(c)(1) defines charter service as the exclusive use of a bus or van for a negotiated price. If a recipient provides exclusive transportation for schoolchildren to meal sites, and the service is funded by a third-party, such service would be categorized as a charter service. Although normally prohibited under FTA formula funding, charter service is eligible for COVID-19 response for up to 45 days from the beginning of each state of emergency incident period. For charter services lasting longer than 45 days, the recipient should submit a request to the [Emergency Relief Docket](#).

Services Ineligible for Reimbursement: Charter, sightseeing, and exclusive school bus services are not eligible services under the Section 5311 Program.

Charter Service: FTA grantees are prohibited from using federally funded equipment and facilities to provide charter service except on an incidental basis and when one or more of applicable exceptions as set forth in the charter service regulation at 49 CFR 604.9 (b) applies. Charter service is an allowable activity on an incidental basis if the applicant successfully completes the charter public notice requirements and no "willing and able" private charter providers are available. Applicants must reference Federal Transit Act, as amended 49 CFR 604.11(c). Please refer to the Appendix for more details on charter service.

Service provided under contract to a social service agency will usually be public transportation, not charter service, if the service is under the control of the subrecipient, is open door, and the subrecipient can put any rider on the vehicle in addition to the agency's clients. The regulation should not discourage Section 5311 subrecipients from using FTA funded equipment in coordinated systems or from providing service under contract to social service agencies if the requirements of the regulation are met.

Since the goal of Section 5311 is to enhance the overall mobility of people living in nonurbanized areas, Section 5311 projects may include transportation to and from urbanized areas.

Section 5307 funds must be used to support public transportation in urbanized areas. If an Applicant receives both Section 5307 and 5311 funding to provide public transportation to urbanized and surrounding nonurbanized areas, these applicants should use the Section 5311 funds only to assist the nonurbanized portion of those localities. In such cases, ALDOT will require the subrecipient to develop a cost allocation plan with allocated costs to the respective programs.

All grant recipients must demonstrate that they have the requisite fiscal and managerial capability, and legal authority, to receive the federal funds applied for and to carry out the project for which funds are sought.

FEMA Statement or other Federal Agency Statement: Recipients must indicate in the application that the project has neither applied for nor received funding from FEMA or any other federal agency. Recipients must indicate any transit-related expenses reimbursed by FEMA or another federal agency regardless of if they're applicable. Please include the following statement:

The recipient agrees that if it receives federal funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or through a pass-through entity through the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, a different federal agency, or insurance proceeds for any portion of a project activity approved for FTA funding under this Grant Agreement, it will provide written notification to FTA, and reimburse FTA for any federal share that duplicates funding provided by FEMA, another federal agency, or an insurance company.

1.5 Funding Ratios

Operating Expenses: Funded at 50% Federal / 50% Local Match Ratio.

Administration Expenses: Funded at 80% Federal / 20% Local Match Ratio.

Capital Equipment: All capital projects are funded at 80% Federal / 20% Local Match Ratio unless otherwise specified (please see "Bicycle Racks and Access" below). NOTE: Items listed in the Capital Equipment Budget must be tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. If it does not meet these criteria, the item should be included in the Operations or Administration Budget.

Capital equipment may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Vehicle purchases
- Passenger amenities (bus stop shelters, benches, etc.)
- Fencing for security of vehicles and facility

- Security systems
- Vehicle enhancements
- Audio visual training, equipment, and materials
- Office equipment (printers, computers, copiers, etc.)
- ITS technologies (software updates, scheduling software, etc.)
- Two-way mobile communications
- Shop and related maintenance equipment
- Preventative Maintenance (Includes all maintenance, both preventative and responsive. Preventative maintenance is available for 5311 federally funded vehicles which ALDOT is lienholder on. Locally owned vehicles do not qualify for this funding.)
- Mobility Manager (Only for agencies which coordinates services between multiple programs qualify. 5311 only programs are not eligible.)
- Facility Leases

Capital Transit Facilities: Transit Facilities are funded at 80% Federal / 20% Local Match Ratio.

Proposals for capital projects to address facility needs include, but are not limited to:

- Renovations of existing transit facilities
- Purchase of new facility

Proposals in this category will be grouped (for consideration of funding) using a multi-year phasing. The phases are divided as such:

- Phase 1- Preliminary planning and design
- Phase 2- Environmental analysis
- Phase 3- Construction and project completion

Due to the complexities of the environmental process, projects that are unlikely to be considered a Categorical Exclusion and require further study, analysis, or tests to determine existing conditions shall be presented to FTA for review before being consider for funding. ALDOT will use the following evaluation criteria in reviewing transit facilities requests:

- Meeting the program objectives
- Supporting the State emphasis
- Need and purpose
- Service design and/or justification
- Financial management
- Connectivity and coordination
- Local and regional support
- Project continuation and commitment

Clean Air Act (CAA) or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Equipment and/or Facilities: The federal share for vehicle-related equipment and/or facilities required by the Clean Air Act (CAA) or the ADA is 80%.

Bicycle Racks and Access: The Federal share may be 90% for those capital projects used to provide access for

bicycles to transit facilities or to install racks or other equipment for transporting bicycles on transit vehicles.

Capacity and Legal Authority: All grant recipients must demonstrate that they have the requisite fiscal and managerial capability and legal authority to receive the federal funds applied for and to carry out the project for which funds are sought.

1.6 Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance is available to any applicant for Section 5311 funds through ALDOT and Troy University Office of Public Transportation (OPT). Applicants may request Section 5311 technical assistance from their regional manager or Section 5311(f) technical assistance from ALDOT by phone or email using the contact information listed below.

Lauren Heikkinen
Troy University-OPT
North Regional Manager
heikkinenl@dot.state.al.us
256-658-9691

Lora Weaver
Troy University-OPT
Central Regional Manager
weaverl@dot.state.al.us
256-613-8883

Chandra Middleton
Troy University – OPT
South Regional Manager
middletonc@dot.state.al.us
251-923-6687

Sundae Ragland
ALDOT (5311(f) Only)
Local Transportation
raglands@dot.state.al.us
334-242-6764

1.7 General Instructions and Format of the Application

The forms and required exhibits included in this package provide the Alabama Department of Transportation with the information necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. The required submissions must be complete, correct and in order. Applicants should be aware that there are severe penalties and sanctions for furnishing false information in order to obtain federal grants.

Only One (1) Application per Applicant

Submit only one (1) application per applicant, even if the applicant will be applying for assistance at multiple locations. If there are multiple locations, it will be necessary to submit multiple originals of some exhibits (one for each location).

Completed Checklist Is Required

- The completed application package must be submitted in the order listed on the Checklist.
- Attachments/supporting documents must be inserted directly after question.
- All pages are to be numbered in whole numbers and in sequence of checklist including support documents.
- On the **Checklist**, enter the page number corresponding to each exhibit and return the **Checklist** with your application to ensure all exhibits are included in the correct order. Supporting documents should be in sequence of checklist and directly after question.
- The completed **Checklist** will be placed at the front of the application following the cover page.

1.8 Application Format

- All pages should be on 8.5" x 11" paper.
- Number all pages consecutively in whole numbers (example: 1, 2, 3, etc.) including support documents directly after question.
- Text should be printed on one side of the paper.

Address all documents within application to:

Mr. Bradley B. Lindsey, P. E.
State Local Transportation Engineer
Local Transportation Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
1409 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36110

1.9 Public Hearing

A public hearing is required and must be published at least seven (7) days prior to the public hearing. (See Exhibit 5 for details).

1.10 Signatures

Information should be typed and signed in the appropriate areas. All signatures must be the originals of the authorized official for the applicant or transit provider (for example, mayor, county commission chairman, or executive director). Signatures are requested to be in **BLUE INK.**

1.11 Grant Application Submission Process

1. A digital copy of the complete grant application must be submitted to your regional manager via email by close of business on the due date. Regional managers will review grant applications ONE TIME prior to the due date.
2. Regional managers will review and approve the completed grant application. Applications needing corrections will be returned to the applicant for revisions.
3. Once the grant application review has been completed and the application has been approved, the regional manager will provide the applicant with a copy of the regional manager's Grant Review Checklist as well as a copy of the applicant's SAMs report. The regional manager will then submit the final version of the Application to ALDOT for final review and approval.

1.12 Application Due Date

Applications must be submitted by email to the applicant's regional manager **no later than 5:00 PM on January 31, 2025.**