# Application Guidelines for Vehicle Capital

(Traditional 5310 projects)

Cycle 50 (Calendar Year 2026)

Application Deadline: 12:00 p.m. August 22, 2025

#### Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Senior and Individuals with Disabilities Grant Program

Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for Small Urban and Non-urban areas; Southeastern WI RPC, East Central WI RPC, Green Bay MPO, and Madison Area MPO administer applications and programs for their respective Large Urban areas

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

Specialized.Transit@dot.wi.gov
WisDOT Section 5310 Website

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## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Applications for the 2026 Section 5310 program will be submitted on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) online grant management system <u>WisDOT Transit Management System</u> (TMS) for the following areas:

**Small urban areas** (populations of 50,000 – 199,999)

Non-urban/Rural areas (populations under 50,000)

If your agency is not currently registered in TMS, please use this link to register <a href="https://wisdot.us-1.smartsimple.com/s">https://wisdot.us-1.smartsimple.com/s</a> Login.jsp . Please email Specialized Transit at specialized.transit@dot.wi.gov with any questions.

\* Applications for the urbanized areas of **Milwaukee**, **Madison**, **Appleton** and **Green Bay** will <u>not</u> use the TMS grants system. If you are applying for a project within these urbanized areas, you can visit <u>the Milwaukee area website</u>, <u>the Madison area website</u>, the Appleton website. Or <u>the Green Bay website</u>. Maps of Wisconsin's four urbanized areas can be found on the <u>WisDOT website</u>. Please note that some of these four are run on a biennial basis.

#### This application guidance is for Vehicles only (Traditional Section 5310 Projects).

This portion of the application is specific to the purchase of vehicles used for transporting seniors and individuals with disabilities. Vehicles used for this program are not to be used as emergency vehicles.

Applicants wishing to obtain funds for Non-traditional projects such as mobility management or operating assistance projects for CY2026 Section 5310 program should refer to the separate application in TMS. If you are applying for both a vehicle <u>and</u> a Mobility Management and/or Operating Assistance project, you must complete and submit <u>separate</u> sets of applications.

## **PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

The Section 5310 Program provides formula funding to states and other designated recipients to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

This program provides grant funds for capital and operating expenses to recipients 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) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);
- 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 with transportation.

#### **FUNDING**

#### **FUNDING SOURCES**

- This program is funded in part by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as authorized under 49 U.S.C. Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (CFDA 20.513) and is administered as an annual competitive application process.
- Local match is provided by the grantee as a cash match of at least 20 percent of the vehicle purchase which is due at the time the grant agreement is executed.

#### **FUNDING DISTRIBUTION**

The Section 5310 program as reauthorized under Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), is a federal formula program distributed nationally through FTA. The formula is based on the ratio of the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities in each area compared to the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all such areas. The FTA apportionment is allocated regionally:

- Large urbanized areas with populations of 200,000 or more
- Small urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 199,999
- Non-urbanized (rural) areas with populations under 50,000

If you have questions about what category your project falls under, contact the Section 5310 program managers. As provided for in BIL, large urbanized areas (200,000 population and more) are the designated recipient for distributing Section 5310 funds in those areas.

If your project falls in the geographic area of one of these large urbanized areas, please contact the designated recipient directly for application instructions (see links on page 3). WisDOT will continue to be the designated recipient for rural and small urbanized areas of the state and will process applications for projects located in those areas. Note that funds from federal fiscal year 2025 will be used to fund calendar year 2026 projects. The FFY 2025 Section 5310 annual allocation is:

AREA	FFY 2025
Milwaukee urbanized area	\$1,683,311
Madison urbanized area	\$497,793
Green Bay urbanized area	\$298,776
Appleton urbanized area	\$293,805
Small urbanized areas – WisDOT	\$2,416,243
Non-urbanized (Rural) – WisDOT	\$2,506,449

#### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS**

WisDOT will award a maximum of eighty percent of the vehicle prices as listed on the state's Human Service Vehicle procurement list. Any additional modifications or specification are to be arranged directly with the vendor at one-hundred percent cost to the Grantee.

Most grant recipients select vehicles from the Human Service Vehicle procurement list which includes ten vehicles contracted for delivery by WisDOT; please see Appendix C for the list with estimated costs. Selecting a vehicle from this "DOT List" requires grantees to provide their local match payment up to six months prior to receiving the vehicle. Grantees may choose to "self-procure" their vehicle. Grantees interested in self-procurement should keep in mind that they must pay the full cost of the vehicle; up to eighty percent of the vehicle will be reimbursed by WisDOT once required Delivery Documents are approved. Moreover, grantees interested in self-procurement should keep in mind the extensive requirements that must be followed; please see the "Vehicle Purchase Guide" and related appendices on WisDOT's transit procurement webpage.

In accordance with <u>WisDOT's federally-required Transit Asset Management Plan</u>, WisDOT prioritizes funding vehicle replacement projects over vehicle expansion projects. Due to the high demand for vehicles statewide, the older, higher mileage and more deteriorated vehicles are considered for replacement before others during each annual award cycle. Even if vehicles meet their useful life or mileage standard, they are not guaranteed to be replaced because the overall demand for funding exceeds funding available.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

#### RECIPIENTS

Applications may be submitted by either private non-profit organizations or, in their absence, by a local public body; "local public body" means a municipal or county government agency.

#### **Private Non-Profits**

Private non-profit corporations which are on file and in good standing with the State of Wisconsin, Department of Financial Institutions are eligible applicants. Organizations which are part of a statewide or national non-profit organization should confirm their corporate status. If an organization is not on file with the state, its parent organization should be the applicant.

#### **Local Public Body**

To be eligible for the program a local public body shall satisfy **EITHER** (A) or (B).

- (A) No private non-profit available Certify that no private non-profit organizations are available and willing to provide transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities in the proposed service area.
- **(B) Designated Transportation Coordinator** Certify that the local public body is approved as the coordinator of transportation services in the proposed service area. This approval must come from **either** a Transportation Coordinating Committee or all county boards covering the service area.

#### **Previous 5310 Recipients**

Any agency previously awarded a Section 5310 grant through WisDOT must have submitted required quarterly reports in an acceptable and timely manner. Additionally, all previous grantees must be in satisfactory status with any required Compliance Site Review (CSR) recommendations. No award will be made to applicants not meeting these requirements.

#### **PROJECTS**

#### Eligible

In this application, Section 5310 funds are available for the purchase of vehicles to be used for transporting seniors and individuals with disabilities. If you are seeking funds to replace an existing vehicle, the vehicle to be replaced must meet FTA useful life standards; these standards can be found in the <u>WisDOT Disposal guidelines</u>.

#### Ineligible

Examples of projects not eligible include expenses for emergency vehicles, charter service, school bus service, depreciation expenses, voucher programs for rides on transit systems receiving federal funding, and projects not targeted to seniors or individuals with disabilities.

#### LOCAL MATCH

All applications must include a commitment to provide a minimum of 20 percent local cash match for vehicle purchases. Local match ensures local support for the transportation initiative. Local match must comply with local, state, and federal guidelines required for that funding source. All sources of local match must be identified and described in the grant application at the time of grant award. The written response must include a discussion of the source and security of the local match funds.

#### Examples of cash match:

- State or local funding
- Private donations
- Grantee agency funding
- Other non-USDOT federal funds

#### COORDINATION

FTA requires that awarded projects funded under Section 5310 be included in a "locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." This ensures that applicants are coordinating services with other private, public, and non-profit transportation providers. Proposed Section 5310 projects must be identified by a strategy and/or action item in a county, multi-county or regional plan sponsored by a local Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC). This strategy/action item, along with a page number, must be provided on the general information tab of the application document. For more information and copies of the current plans, visit the <u>WisDOT coordination web page</u>.

#### **GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The performance period for this grant begins upon a signed Grant Agreement and ends upon a disposal approved by WisDOT Program and Asset managers. Grantee responsibilities remain in effect for the entire period of performance. Below are highlights of the grantee responsibilities if an award is executed; for more information, please contact the program manager for a copy of a grant agreement example.

- Applicants are required to initial and sign a current Certification and Assurances document at the time of application and again when grant agreements are issued.
- Adhere to all federal Civil Rights requirements including developing and implementing a <u>Title VI</u> plan.
- Comply with and submit reports on <u>Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)</u>, as requested by WisDOT Program Manager(s).
- Comply with <u>WisDOT's Asset and Vehicle Management</u> requirements, including vehicle liens, disposal procedures, maintenance plans, and lease requirements. Features of this compliance include:
  - The Grantee must be the title holder. Title is non-transferrable unless WisDOT prior approval is obtained during a request for disposal.
  - WisDOT is the lien holder on vehicles throughout their useful lives and retains WisDOT's percent interest in the vehicle while the fair market value is greater than \$10,000. Please see your grant agreement for this percentage.
  - Sale or disposal of the vehicles must be approved by WisDOT. WisDOT will release the lien once the disposal has been approved. The vehicle must have passed its standard useful life and must be offered for sale in a public sale process.
  - The organization applying for the vehicle is the Grantee. If the Grantee provides the vehicle to another organization to operate the vehicle, in accordance with the application, there must be an active lease agreement, approved by WisDOT, outlining the division of responsibility between the Lessor and Lessee. Please note, WisDOT will work with the Grantee only, and hold the Grantee responsible for all requirements outlined in the application and Grant Agreement.
  - o In past years, some organizations have grouped together to submit joint grant requests assuming this would improve their coordination score. It does not. For a better understanding of what is meant by coordination, please see page 7. While a joint grant application is not prohibited, there are certain disadvantages in using one formal applicant for multiple entities:

- When the vehicle is sold, WisDOT will recognize the agency that submitted the application as entitled to these funds no matter who provided the percent of local match.
- Quarterly reporting must be submitted by the actual grant applicant. Lessees should submit their ridership data to the grantee.
- Applicants with passing scores have their priority vehicle awarded first; a second round of awards is made to a smaller group with higher scores, and onward until funds are exhausted. A group applicant could find themselves not receiving a vehicle even if their application is strong.
- Adhere to insurance requirements. A grantee or its lessee must carry physical damage (collision and comprehensive) insurance on the vehicles. Vehicles must also be insured for personal injury and property damage liability. State law establishes minimum limits for liability coverage.
- Complete reports detailing program operation as requested and outlined by WisDOT Program Manager(s). This includes ridership reports. Reports must be submitted in a manner approved by the department. Rides are to be reported on a quarterly basis due one month after the quarter's end (i.e., January through March is considered quarter one; the report is therefore due by the end of April). As noted earlier, reports must be submitted only by grantees.
- Complete and submit all required delivery documents within 10 days of delivery, inspection, and acceptance of your vehicle.
- Register the vehicle as a Human Service Vehicle and obtain an inspection by the Division of State Patrol within the first year and on an annual basis. Local public bodies may register the vehicle as a Municipal Vehicle.
- Include the following notification language of federal participation in all its requests for proposals, solicitations, contracts, press releases, brochures, website, or other publications funded under this grant:

"This program is funded in part by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as authorized under 49 U.S.C. Section 5310."

- Maintain vehicles according to a self-developed maintenance schedule and provide regular servicing to the vehicle, as needed.
- Once awarded, any modification to the project must be approved by the program manager and a grant amendment executed prior to permitting the change to proceed.

## **APPLICATION COMPLETION**

TMS is still under construction for application submission, we will notify you when it is ready. For now, please start your application process by using the documents we have provided to prepare for application submittal in TMS.

The following items will be required as an upload:

- 1. General Letter of Application
- 2. General Public Notice
- 3. W-9 (for non-profits only)
- 4. Local Match Certification
- 5. Local Public Body Eligibility (local public bodies only)
- 6. Certification of Equivalent Service (If applying for a non-ADA vehicle only)
- 7. Certifications And Assurances

The following items will be fillable fields within TMS, but please use the resources we provided in our email to prepare for application submittal into TMS:

- 1. Vehicle Written Response
- 2. Vehicle Workbook

Instructions on how to submit the application in the new Transit Management System (TMS) will be forth coming. For the application to be successfully submitted and eligible to compete for funding, it will need to be submitted in TMS by the completion date and time.

## **NEXT STEPS / EVALUATION**

Funding decisions for projects are made as part of the federally mandated open, competitive grant application process. Decisions are based on the scoring of an application's content using the following: 1) evaluation criteria, 2) ranking as compared to other applications, and 3) available funding. The evaluation committee may also consider past grant management by the applicant, information provided on previous grant applications, as well as your overall fleet condition. WisDOT will also consider current county 85.21 trust fund balances when making awards to county government agencies. Trust Fund spending plans included in each county's 2025 85.21 application will be taken into consideration.

After the deadline, the application will go through a completeness check. The program manager will contact you with any comments or issues with the technical aspects of the application. An evaluation team will then review, score, and rate each application project (vehicle requests will be evaluated as one request). Vehicle applications require a minimum score of 70 to be considered for funding. However, this minimum score does not guarantee an award; decisions are also based on available

funding as well as the number and quality of other applications. Once selections are made and approved, they will be announced to the public and to all applicants.

#### **APPEALS PROCESS**

#### WISDOT APPEALS

An applicant may file an appeal with WisDOT on the results of a non-funding recommendation. In order to be considered, an appeal must be based on a perceived issue with the process by which a grant application is scored and awarded. Upon receipt of a request to appeal, WisDOT will investigate and review the process to ensure that all aspects of the evaluation were performed in an appropriate manner and in compliance with state and federal rules. Requests to appeal that are related to the merits, scoring, and ranking of an application will not result in final outcome reconsideration.

An appeal must be made in writing via U.S. mail. The letter of appeal from the applicant must include the organization name, contact person, address, telephone number, project description, and the grounds for appeal. The letter of appeal must be postmarked no later than 14 calendar days from the date of WisDOT's notice of the applicant's funding status.

Appeals should be sent via U.S. mail to:

Transit Section Chief
Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads & Harbors
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
PO Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707-7913

A written decision will be provided within ten working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision rendered through the appeal process shall be the final decision and is not subject to further appeal or judicial review.

#### MPO DECISION APPEALS

If you are applying through an MPO in one of Wisconsin's four urbanized areas, your appeal should be submitted to that granting agency.

## **APPENDIX A: LOCAL PUBLIC BODY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS – VEHICLES**

To be completed by municipal and county government agencies applying for 5310 vehicles.

**Instructions:** To be eligible for the Section 5310 program, the local public body must fulfill the requirements of A **or** B:

**A.** Certify there are no private non-profit organizations available and willing to provide transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities in the proposed area. Submit with your application, a copy of the **Availability of Private Non-Profits** letter or email (see page 14) you send to all known private non-profit organizations in the area that may be interested in providing transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities. Be sure letters or emails to the private non-profit organizations are sent allowing sufficient time for response. A list of private non-profit organizations in your area can be found in each county's coordinated plan which can be found at <u>WisDOT Transit</u> Coordination.

Also submit with your application, the **List of Private Non-Profit Specialized Transportation Providers** form (see page 15) to record each private non-profit organization you contacted, along with copies of any comments, objections, or requests for information you received.

- **B.** Submit a certified copy with your application:
  - 1. The County Board resolution designating your agency as the coordinator of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Or

2. Documentation showing that a Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) designated your agency as the coordinator of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities in the proposed service area.

If a local public body is in the process of seeking a county board resolution or TCC designation to be certified as the coordinator of transportation services, and the process will not be complete by the application deadline, complete and submit the application. If your application scores well enough to be awarded vehicles, the vehicles will be awarded on a conditional basis pending the completion of the resolution/designation process.

## APPENDIX A - TEMPLATE 1. AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE NON-PROFITS LETTER

**Instructions:** Upload <u>one</u> copy of this letter/email as a representation of what to send to private non-profits. It is not necessary to attach a copy of each customized letter/email. Once 5310 application construction is completed in TMS, you will upload this to the supporting documents tab.

(Date)
(Name) (Address)
Dear (Name),
The (insert name here), a unit of government, is applying for a vehicle purchase grant through the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program.
A condition of our eligibility is that no private non-profit organizations are available to provide transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities in our service area.
This letter is being sent to you to determine your interest in providing this type of transportation in this area. Written comments, objections regarding certification, and/or requests for additional information must be emailed or postmarked by (insert date).
If you have any questions, please free to contact (insert name) at (insert phone number, email or address).
Sincerely,
(Signature) (Title)

## APPENDIX A - TEMPLATE 2. LIST OF PRIVATE NON-PROFIT SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS CONTACTED

**Background Information:** Local public bodies must notify all private non-profit organizations that provide specialized transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities in their service area that they are applying for Section 5310 vehicles. It must also offer those organizations the opportunity to provide the proposed service, or comment on and offer alternatives to the proposal.

**Instructions:** List each of the private non-profit organizations in your area who you have sent an "Availability of Non-Profits" letter to, and attach a copy of any comments, or offers of alternative services that are received with your application.

Private Non-Profit Name	Contact Name	Email	Address	Comments or alternative services received? (Y/N)

I certify that I have made a good faith effort to notify all private non-profit organizations that provide specialized transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities in my service area, and that to my knowledge have contacted all private non-profit organizations that provide specialized transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Name of Authorized Individual	<del></del>
Signature	Date

## **APPENDIX B: CERTIFICATION OF EQUIVALENT SERVICE**

**Background Information:** This form is required for any applicant that is applying for one or more vehicles which are **not** accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Instructions:** Sign and date the form below and upload a copy with the application materials under the Resource tab.

In accordance with 49 CFR 37.77, I certify on behalf of our agency that its demand-responsive system, when viewed in its entirety, shall be deemed to provide equivalent service if the service available to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs, is provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual and is equivalent to the services provided other individuals with respect to the following characteristics:

- Response time
- Fares
- Geographic area of service
- Hours and days of service
- Restrictions or priorities based on trip purpose
- Availability of information and reservation capability
- Any constraints on capacity or service availability

Name of Agency	
Name of Authorized Individual	
Signature	
Date	

## **APPENDIX C: ANTICIPATED VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS AND COSTS**

Vehicle descriptions based on the 2025 vehicle procurement. Because of changes in available equipment, prices and the changing needs of recipients, the vehicles may differ from this list, and prices may also change. Applicants will be notified of the finalized prices and selection of vehicles as soon as it is available. Vehicles will be purchased with standardized specifications.

Туре	Seating Options (ambulatory passengers / wheelchair positions)	Estimated Total Cost	Estimated 20% Match Cost	FTA Line Item Number (New / Replacement)
Minivan – Side Entry	3/2	\$85,477	\$17,095	
Minivan – Rear Entry	3/2	\$82,139	\$16,428	
Transit/Bariatric Vehicle – Rear Entry Med Roof	7/0-3/1-3/2	\$87,004	\$17,400	111215 /
Transit/Bariatric Vehicle – Side Entry Med Roof	7/1-5/2-5/1	\$87,214	\$17,443	111315
Transit/Bariatric Vehicle – Rear Entry High Roof	7/0-3/1-3/2	\$88,350	\$17,670	
Transit/Bariatric Vehicle – Side Entry High Roof	7/1-5/2-5/1	\$88,560	\$17,712	
Medium Bus – Gas	12/1, 10/2, 8/3	\$128,196	\$25,639	
Med. Bus – Honeycomb Fiberglass Construction	12/1, 10/2, 8/3	\$136,834	\$27,367	111204 /
Medium Bus (Large) - Gas	13/1, 11/2, 9/3	\$129,509	\$25,902	111304
Medium Bus (Large) – Honeycomb Fiberglass	13/1,11/2, 9/3	\$138,387	\$27,677	

## **APPENDIX D: APPLICATION EVALUATION FORM**

Request:	Total/40
Demonstration of Vehicle Need and Service Benefits (40 points possible)	
Demonstration of Vehicle Need and Service Benefits (40 points possible)  1. Describes transportation services provided by the organization. (10 pts)  2. Describes services and benefits to be provided with the vehicle. Describes results if request is not funded. Discussion is supported by data. (15 pts)  3. Replacement Vehicle: Explains why current fleet cannot meet current needs. Explains choice of specific vehicle to be replaced. (15 pts)  OR  Service Expansion Vehicle: Describes the planned service expansion and how the need for the expanded service was determined. (15 pts)  Promotes the Development of a Coordinated Network (30 points possible)  4. Identifies all partners and stakeholders; describes applicant's role in providing service among these partners and stakeholders. (10 pts)  5. Identifies existing available transportation services. (10 pts)  6. Describes how applicant will ensure service coordination;	
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6. Describes how applicant will ensure service coordination;	/30
describes how the grant request will complement, rather than duplicate, those services. (10 pts)	
Financial and Technical Capabilities (30 points possible)	
	/30
7. Describes the organization's ability to manage the vehicle and comply with all federal and state requirements for the full useful life of the vehicle. (20 pts)  Evaluator Comments:	
8. Describes source of local match. If from outside sources, certifies it is secure with support letters. (10 pts)	
Total points per project	/10