



Section 5310 Application Guidelines for Non-traditional Projects

(Operating Assistance projects)

Cycle 50 (Calendar Year 2026)

Deadline to apply is 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 for their respective Large Urban areas

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

Specialized.Transit@dot.wi.gov

[WisDOT Section 5310 Website](#)

Table of Contents

Important Information	3
Program Background.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Funding.....	4
Funding Sources	4
Funding Distribution	4
Additional Funding Considerations	5
Eligibility	6
Eligible Applicants	6
Coordination	6
Eligible Match	6
Projects.....	7
Valuing Volunteer Time.....	8
Grantee Responsibilities	9
Application Completion.....	10
Next Steps / Evaluation.....	10
Appeals Process.....	11
WisDOT Appeals	11
MPO/RPCs appeals	11
APPENDIX A: Application Evaluation Form	12
APPENDIX C: Local Public Body Eligibility Requirements –	13
Mobility Management Projects.....	13
APPENDIX C - TEMPLATE 1.	14
AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE NON-PROFITS LETTER.....	14
APPENDIX C - TEMPLATE 2.	15
LIST OF PRIVATE NON-PROFIT SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS CONTACTED	15
APPENDIX D: In-Kind Rates by County	16
APPENDIX C: Local Public Body Eligibility– Mobility Management Projects.....	21
APPENDIX D: In-Kind Rates by County.....	24

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Applications for the 2026 Section 5310 program will be submitted on WisDOT's online grant management system [WisDOT Transit Management System \(TMS\)](#) 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 <https://wisdot.us-1.smartsimple.com/s/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 not be submitted through the WisDOT Transit Management grant system. If you are applying for a project within these urbanized areas, you can visit the [Milwaukee website](#) or the [Madison website](#), or the [Appleton website](#) or [the Green Bay website](#) for application materials, information, and submission instructions. Maps of Wisconsin's four urbanized areas can be found on the [WisDOT website](#). Please note that some of these four are run on a biennial basis.

This application guidance is for Mobility Management and Operating Assistance only.

This portion of the application is specific to non-traditional Section 5310 projects, previously known as "New Freedom," projects authorized under the Section 5317 New Freedom program. These projects include Mobility Management projects and Operating Assistance projects.

Applicants wishing to apply for a vehicle purchase should refer to the separate 5310 vehicle purchase application materials which can be found in TMS. Operating Assistance, Mobility Management and Vehicles will each require a separate application in TMS.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

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 through cash and/or in-kind services available to support the project.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

The Section 5310 program, as reauthorized under MAP-21 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 with any questions; see links on page 3. WisDOT is the designated recipient for rural and small urbanized areas of the state and will process applications for projects located in those areas. 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	\$2,416,243
Non-urbanized (Rural)	\$2,506,449

ADDITIONAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

- Planning for the proposed project and any costs incurred prior to the contract period (calendar year) are not eligible for funding.
- An applicant's continuing projects must have met all grant requirements, including timely report submittals, in order to be an eligible applicant for the current grant cycle.
- Application reviewers will compare prior year grant amounts with actual spending levels when determining funding levels for an approved application. Additionally, reviewers may contact applicants to discuss funding requests significantly greater than prior year grant amounts.
- Funding for the non-traditional Section 5310 "Other" or "New Freedom-type" eligible projects is provided via quarterly reimbursement. Reimbursement checks cannot be issued until federal funds have been secured and a grant agreement has been executed. ***Please be advised that this means that first payments will likely not be concurrent with the beginning of the grant agreement period.*** Grants are awarded for one year with no guarantee of continued funding. An application is required each year to be considered for future funding. See the vehicle-only application instructions for information on funding for vehicle-only requests.
- BIL has further apportioned the funds for the Section 5310 program so that no less than 55% of the funds are to be used for capital projects. Remaining funds may be used for operating projects or additional capital projects. Mobility Management is considered a capital project.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Private non-profit organizations
- Local public bodies
- Operators of public transportation that receive a Section 5310 grant indirectly through another recipient

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 [WisDOT transportation coordination page](#).

ELIGIBLE MATCH

Applications must include a minimum 20 percent local match for Mobility Management projects and 50 percent of net expenditures (total expenditures minus any passenger revenues) for Operating Assistance projects. Local match helps ensure local commitment, promote long-term vision, and support transportation initiatives. Local match must comply with local, state, and federal guidelines required for that funding source. Local share must come from sources other than federal US Department of Transportation (US DOT) funds.

Eligible Cash Match

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

In-kind Match Eligibility Considerations

- Must be the value of services and goods donated to the project.
- Must be represented as an expense in the applicant’s budget.
- Must represent a cost that would otherwise be eligible under the project.
- Must be reported in the quarterly reimbursement requests.
- Must be formally documented in the grantee’s records and available for WisDOT review.
- Must not be included as match for any other federally assisted project or program.
- Must be allowable under applicable cost principles (see below for more information).
- Must be documented in a letter of support, if outside the applicant’s organization.
- Examples of In-kind Match:

- Donated facility space or supplies to operate the program.
- Labor contributed to the project such as the value of time provided by volunteer drivers; see note on valuing volunteer time below.
- Other expenses (e.g., website hosting, marketing costs, travel, and mileage).

Eligibility Test for Local Share

All contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind, shall be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all the following criteria:

- Are verifiable from the recipient's records.
- Are not included as contributions for any other federally assisted project or program.
- Are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives.
- Are allowable under the applicable cost principles.
- Are not paid by the federal government under another award, except where authorized by federal statute to be used for cost sharing or matching.
- Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the federal awarding agency.

Indirect Cost Rate/Allocation Plan

Some organizations have developed an agency indirect cost rate because they receive numerous federal grants. The rate is based on all the internal goods and services within the organization that relate to grants/programs. From this amount, an indirect cost percentage is determined and applied to other grants. If indirect costs are used as match, they would be considered a cash match.

For More Information

For more information regarding allowable costs, local match, and indirect cost rates, consult the Office of Management and Budget Super Circulars 2 CFR 200 "Uniform Guidance". Both require grantees who intend to seek payment for indirect costs to prepare a cost allocation plan (CAP) or an indirect cost rate proposal. CAPs and/or indirect cost rate proposals must be approved by FTA or another cognizant federal agency.

PROJECTS

Ineligible Projects

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

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects will enable seniors and individuals with disabilities to fully participate in their communities.

Operating Assistance Projects

The basic definition of an operating cost is something that does not have a useful life of more than one year. Examples of activities that are eligible for funding include:

Operating Activities

- Volunteer Driver Programs
- Voucher Programs
- Transportation Service Enhancements
- System Capacity Building
- Establishing new or expanded fixed route or demand response services

VALUING VOLUNTEER TIME

In determining volunteer time, actuals (Method 1 below) should always be used to value time when available. **Volunteer time calculations should not include cost of benefits.** When actuals are not available (Method 2 below), WisDOT requests that you use Appendix D to find your allowable volunteer in-kind rate. This data is derived from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's [Wisconomy Website](#). If your service area encompasses more than one county, use the average of the counties your agency provides services in.

Method 1 – Actual value of time is available

Your agency's director devotes one hour per week to the oversight of your project for a total of 50 hours per calendar year. The director's salary, including benefits, is \$65 per hour and the funding for the director comes from non-US DOT funding (e.g., charitable donations). In this case, the value of the in-kind contribution is estimated at \$3,250 (\$65 per hour x 50 hours) for the year. Over the course of the year, the director may only end up devoting 45 hours to the project, so the actual value of the in-kind contribution is \$2,925 (\$65 x 45).

Method 2 – Actual value of time not available

Use Appendix D for your in-kind rate.

GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Below are highlights of the grantee responsibilities if an award is executed. For a complete list of state and federal requirements please request a sample grant agreement.

- Period of performance will begin January 1, 2026, and conclude December 31, 2026. All documentation, reporting and reimbursement requests should be completed no later than February 1, 2027.
- Comply with the federally mandated Certifications and Assurances. This document must be signed and initiated at the time of application and an updated version must be signed when grant agreements are issued.
- Submit quarterly reimbursement and performance measurement forms within 30 days of the close of each quarter. These reports will be compared to the data provided in the application for purposes of compliance, evaluation, and future funding consideration. These quarterly reports must include financial reporting documentation such as a general ledger summary of program expenditures and revenues, and supporting documentation for all in-kind.
- Follow all federal and state requirements for procurements. WisDOT requires purchase of services or capital items be submitted to WisDOT for review and approval prior to the applicant's entry into a service contract or purchase of any capital items. See the [WisDOT procurement web page](#) for further information. Failure to follow this requirement will make any unapproved procurement ineligible for reimbursement.
- All recipients of FTA funding are required to meet all Civil Rights requirements including developing and implementing a [Title VI plan](#) and (if applicable) complying with [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) reporting](#).
- Adhere to federal and state asset management requirements.
- The recipient must include the following notification language of federal participation in all its requests for proposals, solicitations, contracts, press releases, brochures, web site, 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 Mobility Options of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (CFDA 20.513)."
- Final reimbursement for grantees will be withheld until the final grantee reports are submitted and all performance and outcome criteria specified in the grant have been adequately addressed.
- Once awarded, any modification to the project must be approved by the WisDOT program manager prior to permitting the additional work to proceed.
- Organizations must be willing to share project successes for potential replication by other organizations.
- All awarded projects will be evaluated on the performance and completion of the specific performance measurements as outlined in the grant application.

APPLICATION COMPLETION

TMS is still under construction for application submission, we will notify you when it is ready. 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. Operating Written Response
2. Operating Workbook

NEXT STEPS / EVALUATION

Decisions for the recommendation of funding 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.

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 through the comments section in the application. Once the completeness check is finalized, an evaluation team will review, score and rate each application project. Once selections are made and approved, they will be announced to the public and 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/RPCs 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: APPLICATION EVALUATION FORM

Applicant Name:					
Grant Request Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operating Assistance				
Requested Funding:					

Criteria					Total
----------	--	--	--	--	-------

Demonstration of Need and Service Benefits (40 points possible)

1. Clearly describes the project and how it meets the eligibility requirements. (10 pts) 2. Describes how project will help meet transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. (10 pts) 3. Describes the outcomes and benefits that are expected. Identifies specific services and activities the project will provide. Response supported with data and discussed how data determined. (10 pts) 4. Outlines what will happen if the project is not awarded. (10 pts)					____/40
<i>Evaluator Comments:</i>					

Promotes Service Coordination with Others (40 points possible)

5. Identifies partners and stakeholders; describes each party's role in providing service, including your organization. (10 pts) 6. Identifies existing available transportation services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities in the area. (10 pts) 7. Describes how the project contributes to the development and implementation of coordinated services. Describes how the applicant will ensure service coordination. (10 pts) 8. Describes how the grant request will complement, rather than duplicate, those services (10 pts)					____/40
<i>Evaluator Comments:</i>					

Financial and Technical Capabilities (20 points possible)

9. Describes all transportation-related services provided by the organization to seniors and individuals with disabilities. (5 pts) 10. Describes the organization's ability to manage the project and comply with all federal and state requirements during the life of the grant. (10 pts) 11. Describes source of local match funding. If from outside sources, certifies it is secure with support letters. (5 pts)					____/20
<i>Evaluator Comments:</i>					

Total points per project					____/100
---------------------------------	--	--	--	--	----------

Evaluator award recommendation if other than full request:

APPENDIX C: LOCAL PUBLIC BODY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS – MOBILITY MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

To be completed by any local public bodies applying for 5310 Mobility Management projects.

Instructions: To be eligible for a Mobility Management project under 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 Mobility Management services to seniors and individuals with disabilities in the proposed area by submitting the following two documents:
1. The **Availability of Private Non-Profits** letter or email to all known private non-profit organizations in the area that may be interested in providing transportation services to seniors and individuals with disabilities in the area. (See page 18)
 - Letters/emails to private non-profit organizations must be sent to allow an appropriate amount of time for response.
 - A list of many of the private non-profit organizations in your area can be found in each county's coordinated plan. ([WisDOT Transit Coordination](#)).
 2. The **List of Private Non-Profit Specialized Transportation Providers** form to record each private non-profit organization you have contacted, along with copies of any comments, objections or requests for information you have received. (See page 19)
- 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, the grant will be made on a conditional basis pending the completion of the resolution/designation process.

APPENDIX C - TEMPLATE 1.

AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE NON-PROFITS LETTER

Instructions: Upload one 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 the 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 Mobility Management 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 Mobility Management 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 service 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 C - 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 a Section 5310 grant. 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

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: IN-KIND RATES BY COUNTY

Rates taken from Wisconomy. Shuttle Drivers and Chauffeurs.

Area	In-Kind Rate
Adams County	\$14.23
Ashland County	\$14.24
Barron County	\$14.33
Bayfield County	\$14.24
Brown County	\$15.26
Buffalo County	\$14.33
Burnett County	\$14.24
Calumet County	\$13.05
Chippewa County	\$14.22
Clark County	\$14.33
Columbia County	\$15.96
Crawford County	\$14.33
Dane County	\$15.96
Dodge County	\$14.63
Door County	\$14.23
Douglas County	\$15.59
Dunn County	\$14.33
Eau Claire County	\$14.22
Florence County	\$14.23
Fond du Lac County	\$14.43
Forest County	\$14.23
Grant County	\$14.63
Green County	\$15.96
Green Lake County	\$14.63
Iowa County	\$15.96
Iron County	\$14.24
Jackson County	\$14.33
Jefferson County	\$14.63
Juneau County	\$14.33
Kenosha County	\$18.61
Kewaunee County	\$15.26
La Crosse County	\$14.94
Lafayette County	\$14.63
Langlade County	\$14.23
Lincoln County	\$14.23
Manitowoc County	\$14.23

Area	In-Kind Rate
Marathon County	\$13.94
Marinette County	\$14.23
Marquette County	\$14.63
Menominee County	\$14.23
Milwaukee County	\$14.95
Monroe County	\$14.33
Oconto County	\$15.26
Oneida County	\$14.23
Outagamie County	\$13.05
Ozaukee County	\$14.95
Pepin County	\$14.33
Pierce County	\$18.45
Polk County	\$14.33
Portage County	\$14.23
Price County	\$14.24
Racine County	\$16.76
Richland County	\$14.63
Rock County	\$14.60
Rusk County	\$14.24
Sauk County	\$14.63
Sawyer County	\$14.24
Shawano County	\$14.23
Sheboygan County	\$13.94
St. Croix County	\$18.45
Taylor County	\$14.24
Trempealeau County	\$14.33
Vernon County	\$14.33
Vilas County	\$14.23
Walworth County	\$14.63
Washburn County	\$14.24
Washington County	\$14.95
Waukesha County	\$14.95
Waupaca County	\$14.63
Waushara County	\$14.63
Winnebago County	\$14.82
Wood County	\$14.23