

**FTA Recipient Award Toolkit  
Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas  
Program Specific Inclusions**



**Federal Transit Administration**

**Fiscal Year 2026**

## Version Log

The following table records the history of modifications and successive editions of this document.

Version	Updates	Version Date
1.0	Developed a Section 5311 program-specific toolkit from existing FTA resources.	05/08/2026

## Legal Notice

**Notice:** This guidance document is not legally binding in its own right, and the Federal Transit Administration will not rely upon it as a separate basis for affirmative enforcement actions or other administrative penalties. Conformity with this document (as distinct from existing statutes and regulations) is voluntary only, and nonconformity will not affect rights and obligations under existing statutes and regulations. This toolkit does not relieve recipients of the need to thoroughly review relevant FTA program circulars and applicable Federal regulations. FTA does not require recipients to adhere to the recommendations in this document, except to the extent to which they cite Federal regulations.

# Toolkit Purpose & Orientation

## Overview

The **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Recipient Award Toolkit** may be used as reference material for developing applications for awards in the Transit Award Management System (TrAMS) and is intended to provide helpful information to recipients regarding application development, consistent with FTA Circulars and other information materials. This document, **Section 5311 Program Specific Inclusions**, provides FTA recipients with recommendations for developing grant applications specific to the Section 5311 grant program. This document offers program-specific guidance around program requirements (including eligibility and match requirements), recommended application inclusions, and application sample language.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. FTA recommends that recipients consult the [TrAMS User Guide](#) while navigating TrAMS. Throughout the application development process, continue coordinating with assigned regional representatives to support areas requiring additional clarification beyond the TrAMS User Guide.

By following the recommended language and documentation standards outlined in the **FTA Recipient Award Toolkit**, recipients can:

- **Streamline Application Review:** These suggested approaches to application development, relevant to specific programs, are intended to help ensure that the key information in your application is clearly presented. This can reduce the possibility of later requests for clarification and can accelerate the path to a grant award.
- **Facilitate Grant Management:** Using a standardized format for critical program data within the application often makes managing the grant, from initial review through closeout, more efficient for both the recipient and FTA staff.

## Toolkit Structure

This document is part of a larger **FTA Recipient Award Toolkit** which provides a framework for all TrAMS applications. All of the toolkit documents are linked on the FTA website at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/applying/fta-recipient-award-toolkit>.

- **General Application Development Information:** provides recipients with an understanding of the processes, approaches, and best practices of a TrAMS award application, including preliminary work for application development; considerations for application planning; and key elements of an award, such as the executive summary, application projects, and budget descriptions.
- **Program Specific Inclusions:** expands on the General Application Development Information document by providing recipients with accessible information for

application development for the grant programs listed below, including program descriptions, program-specific applicability requirements, match percentages for funding, and navigation support for FTA Program Circulars.

- **Section 5307:** Urbanized Area Formula Program
- **Section 5310:** Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- **Section 5311:** Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program
- **Section 5311(c)(2):** Public Transportation on Indian Reservations (Tribal Transit) Program
- **Section 5337:** State of Good Repair Grants Program
- **Section 5339:** Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program

Acronyms and definitions for terms used in this toolkit are provided in the applicable [FTA Circulars](#).

This toolkit is subject to change without notice. When available, hyperlinks to source documents are included so that users have access to the most up-to-date information.

# Section 5311: Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program

## Program Introduction and Application Considerations

**Overview:** FTA apportions Section 5311 funding for planning, public transportation capital projects, operating costs, preventive maintenance, intercity bus (5311f), and the acquisition of public transportation service to States and Indian Tribes located in rural areas.

The following application considerations are unique to Section 5311 funding:

5311 Program Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Per <a href="#">49 USC 5311(f)</a>, States must use at least 15% of their apportionment toward intercity bus activities or certify in a letter to FTA that all intercity bus needs have been met through consultation. A sample intercity bus certification letter can be referenced in <b>Appendix B</b> of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a>.<sup>1</sup> FTA recommends recipients send the certification letter to the Regional Administrator and upload it to Application Documents in TrAMS.</li></ul>

## Executive Summary – Recommended Inclusions

To streamline application reviews, FTA recommends including the following Section 5311 elements in the Executive Summary. These Executive Summary recommendations are specific to Section 5311 and supplement the Recipient Award Toolkit – General Application Development Information document. FTA recommends that recipients include:

- A brief description of your application, as outlined within the **Executive Summary** section of the [Recipient Award Toolkit - General Application Development Information](#).
- For 5311(f), an acknowledgment that the grant either meets the 15% requirement or note the Governor’s certification of met need (and attach the Governor’s letter). The Certification of Met Need must have been established after March 2020.<sup>2</sup>

## Award Description – Recommended Inclusions

In the application **Award Description**, provide a brief description outlining the Purpose, Activities to be Performed, Expected Outcomes, Intended Beneficiaries, and Subrecipient Activities pertaining to the application.<sup>3</sup> A sample Award Description for a 5311 application follows below; alter the details for your specific application:

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<sup>1</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 9, Section 4)

<sup>2</sup> Per 49 USC 5311(f)

<sup>3</sup> [FTA Circular C5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Appendix B, Section 3, Pg. B-3)

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this award is to provide the state of XXX and its subrecipients operating assistance, eligible capital projects, and for the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) for the state and its subrecipients.
- **Activities to be Performed:** Funds will be used to cover eligible operating expenses, including driver salaries, fuel, items having a useful life of less than one year, and preventive maintenance, to continue transit operations. Funds will also be used for the purchase of five 24-passenger buses. Funds will also be used for training, technical assistance, and state administration.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Continued safe and effective operation of transit services for rural areas of XXX.
- **Intended Beneficiaries:** XXX State transit agencies and citizens in the rural and non-urbanized areas of the state.
- **Subrecipient Activities:** Three rural agencies (Agency 1, Agency 2, and Agency 3) will receive operating assistance, along with [Name] intercity bus operator. Two rural agencies (Agency 4, Agency 5) will receive capital funding for the purchase of equipment. [Identify all subrecipients, either in the award description itself or in an attachment that is referenced in the grant text.]

## Budget Information – Eligible Program Activities, Scope Codes, and Match Requirements<sup>4</sup>

The following table describes activities eligible for Section 5311 funding. List applicable local non-Federal funding match percentages in the **Project Budget**.

Because Section 5311 uses specific scope codes that are separate from the scope codes commonly used in most FTA grant programs, please use the scope codes listed in the “Eligible Activities and Scope Codes” column of the table below.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Pg. IV-1)

<sup>5</sup> Scope Codes are five-digit numbers with associated general category descriptions that express what will be funded within an Application/Award’s Project. Applicants must add Scope Codes and ALIs to each Project within an Application/Award within TrAMS. Scope Codes/ALIs are added to Projects through clicking “Related Actions” within a Project and then clicking “Manage Budget Activity Line Item and Milestone.” For more information on Scope Codes, see <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grantee-resources/teamtrams/federal-transit-administration-scope-codes-activity-line-items>

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
<p><b>State and Program Administration<sup>6</sup></b> Scope Code: 610-00</p>	<p><b><u>Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipients may use up to 10% of their total Section 5311 funding towards program administration and recipient technical assistance.</li> <li>• Eligible administrative costs include salaries, overhead expenses, supplies, and office equipment (that are used to administer the program).</li> <li>• Technical assistance may include the development, planning, or coordination of public transportation programs (public, private for-profit, and nonprofit), and such research as the State may deem appropriate to promote effective means of delivering public transportation service in rural areas. The recipients under these programs may pass any portion of these funds on to subrecipients for the same purposes.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Match Requirement</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded at up to 100% Federal share and does not require a local match.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capital Activities<sup>7</sup></b> Scope Code 600-00</p>	<p><b><u>Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital projects eligible under Section 5311 include all projects listed under <a href="#">49 USC 5302(4)</a>. <b>Chapter IV</b> (Pg. IV-4) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> contains a list of eligible capital activities.</li> <li>• Indirect capital costs are eligible (provided that the recipient has an approved Indirect Cost Allocation Plan or indirect cost proposal).</li> <li>• Additionally, refer to <b>Chapter IV</b> (Pg. IV-10) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> to confirm that your award activities meet any unique eligibility considerations and circumstances for particular capital activities (e.g., requirements for fleet expansion or facilities).</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 1 Pg. IV-1)

<sup>7</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 3, Pg. IV-4)

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
	<p><b><u>Match Requirement</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%). Some capital activities may be subject to differing match requirements (e.g., up to 85% Federal share for the acquisition of Vehicles that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant). Sliding scale rates for capital costs under Section 5311 are available to 14 States described in <a href="#">23 USC 120(b)</a>. Refer to <b>Chapter III, Section 5</b> (Pg. III-11) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> for more information on eligible States.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning<sup>8</sup></b> Scope Code 600-00</p>	<p><b><u>Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning activities are eligible under Section 5311 funding, provided that the planning activities funded under Section 5311 are in addition to those funded with Section 5305 funds, for planning activities that are directed specifically to the needs of rural areas in non-metropolitan areas in the State.</li> <li>Document funds programmed for this purpose (e.g., rural planning) in the state’s statewide Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and check for consistency with <a href="#">Circular 8100.1D</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Match Requirement</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employee Training<sup>9</sup></b> Scope Code 600-00</p>	<p><b><u>Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities that address human resource needs, as they apply to public transportation activities Including but not limited to: Employment training programs; Outreach programs to increase employment for veterans, women, individuals with a disability, and minorities in public transportation activities; Research on public transportation personnel and training needs; Training and assistance for veteran and minority</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 2, Pg. IV-2)

<sup>9</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 4, Pg. IV-16)

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
	<p>business opportunities; Consensus- based national training standards and certifications in partnership with industry stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is also eligible to be expended on employee training at the National Transit Institute (NTI).</li> </ul> <p><b>Match Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Operating Assistance<sup>10</sup></b> Scope Code 600-00</p>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only net operating expenses are eligible for assistance. Net operating expenses are those expenses that remain after the provider subtracts operating revenues (such as fares) from eligible operating expenses.</li> <li>Per page IV-16, Section 5 of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a>, at a minimum, the following items are considered as operating expenses: fuel, drivers’ salaries and fringe benefits, dispatcher salaries and fringe benefits, and licenses.</li> <li>Refer to <b>Chapter IV, Section 5</b> (Pg. IV-16) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> for additional information on eligibility of Operating Assistance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Match Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 50% Federal share and a 50% local match (50%/50%).</li> <li>Sliding scale rates for Operating expenses under Section 5311 are available to 14 States described in <a href="#">23 USC 120(b)</a>. Refer to <b>Chapter III, Section 5</b> (Pg. III-11) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> for more information on eligible States.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project Administration<sup>11</sup></b> Scope Code 620-00</p>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the Section 5311 program only, the State may treat project administrative expenses incurred by a local provider</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 5, Pg. IV-16)

<sup>11</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 6, Pg. IV-17)

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
	<p>as a separate cost category from capital, planning, or operating expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible project administrative costs may include, but are not limited to, general administrative expenses (e.g., salaries of the project director, secretary, and bookkeeper); marketing expenses; insurance premiums or payments to a self-insurance reserve; office supplies; facilities and equipment rental; standard overhead rates; and the costs of administering drug and alcohol testing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Match Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%), or more if the State is eligible for sliding scale costs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Projects<sup>12</sup></b> Scope Code 646-00</p>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JARC project activities are focused on employment-related transportation and reverse commute transportation for low-income persons.</li> <li>Refer to <b>Chapter IV, Section 7</b> (Pg. IV-18) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> for requirements for JARC funding and examples of eligible projects under JARC.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP)<sup>13</sup></b> Scope Code 635-00</p>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding is made available to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects and other support services tailored to meet the specific needs of transit operators in rural areas.</li> <li>Refer to <b>Chapter X</b> (Pg. X-1) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a> for eligibility information regarding the RTAP Program.</li> </ul> <p><b>Match Requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded at up to 100% Federal share and does not require a local match.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intercity Bus</b> Scope Code 634-00</p>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p>

<sup>12</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 7, Pg. IV-18)

<sup>13</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 10, Pg. X-1)

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Per <b>Chapter 9</b> (Page IX-7) of Circular <a href="#">9040.1H</a>, the definition of a subrecipient in Section 5311(a)(2) includes an operator of intercity bus service that receives Federal transit program grant funds through a State or Indian Tribe that is a recipient. In some instances, intercity bus providers may prefer to maintain a contractual relationship. The State may use either mechanism to provide assistance to private operators for intercity bus service. In either case, the State must conduct all transactions in a manner that provides full and open competition to ensure that the private operator is qualified, will provide eligible service, can comply with Federal and State requirements, and is the best or only provider available to offer service at a fair and reasonable cost.<sup>14</sup></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Match Requirements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>For operating assistance:</u> Funded at up to 50% Federal share and a 50% local match (50%/50%).</li> <li><u>For capital activities:</u> Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Appalachian Program</b> Scope Code 648-00</p>	<p><b><u>Eligibility</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligible rural recipients under the Appalachian Development Public Transportation Assistance Program (ADTAP) include 13 States located in the Appalachian region: Alabama; Georgia; Kentucky; Maryland; Mississippi; New York; North Carolina; Ohio; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; Tennessee; Virginia; and West Virginia, as defined under <a href="#">40 U.S.C. 14102</a>. Subrecipients of ADTAP funding include State or local governmental authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation services. For the full list of eligible counties, please see <b>Chapter 8</b> (Page VIII-1) of <a href="#">Circular 9040.1H</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Match Requirements</u></b></p>

<sup>14</sup> Per [2 CFR §§ 200.317–200.327](#)

Eligible Activity and Scope Code	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>For operating assistance:</u> Funded at up to 50% Federal share and a 50% local match (50%/50%).</li> <li>• <u>For capital activities:</u> Funded at up to 80% Federal share and a 20% local match (80%/20%).</li> </ul>
<b>Interest and Debt Financing<sup>15</sup></b>	<p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bond interest under advance project authority, buildings and equipment, working capital, leasing, capital cost of contracting, and other interest costs are often eligible project costs, with certain limitations (including the factors indicated in <a href="#">2 CFR 200.449(c)-(g)</a>).</li> <li>• For further information, please refer to <b>Chapter VI</b> (Pg. VI-13) of <a href="#">Circular 5010.1F</a>.</li> </ul>

**Application Finalization – Relevant Attachments and Documentation**

The following table outlines TrAMS attachments for grant applications utilizing Section 5311 funding. Upload attachments to the “**Recipient Documents**” or “**Application Documents**” modules in TrAMS as designated below.

Attachment	Description	Document Upload Location
<b>Program of Projects (POP)<sup>16</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the POP, identify whether the recipient applying for Section 5311 funding is within “Category A” or “Category B.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Projects in “Category A” include those projects that the State has certified as having met all the Federal statutory and administrative requirements for approval applicable to both the project activities and subrecipient that will carry</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application Documents</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 4, Section 8, Pg. IV-21)

<sup>16</sup> [FTA Circular C9040.1H Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter 5, Section 5, Pg. V-4)

Attachment	Description	Document Upload Location
	<p>out those activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recipients can designate projects in “Category B” that they anticipate approving during the current year, but which have not met all Federal statutory or administrative requirements.</li> </ul>	
<b>STIP/TIP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For capital projects and operating assistance, the relevant components of the applicable Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the project or activities the funds are proposed to support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application Documents</li> </ul>
<b>Intercity Bus Governor’s Certification Letter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate that the grant either meets the 15% requirement or note the Governor’s Certification of Met Need within the last four years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application Documents</li> </ul>