

FTA Recipient Award Toolkit – General Application Development Information



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 recipient award toolkit from existing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) resources.	01/16/2025
2.0	Added Project Benefits, Project Location and Attachments subsections. Revised language throughout the document for improved clarity.	05/08/2026
2.01	Adjusted formatting and footnotes. Added estimated indirect cost amount to the Extended Budget Description (EBD) checklist. Updated the Suballocations section to reflect Transit Award Management System (TrAMS) updates.	05/19/2026

Notice: This document supersedes the document titled “FTA-Recipient-Toolkit-General-Application-Development-Information-05-08-2026.pdf” which was published to the FTA Recipient Award Toolkit page of the Federal Transit Administration website on May 9th, 2026, as well as supersedes all previous versions of the General Application Development Information document.

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.

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Toolkit Purpose & Orientation

Overview

The **FTA Recipient Award Toolkit** may be used as reference material for developing applications for awards in TrAMS and is intended to provide helpful information to recipients regarding application development, consistent with FTA Circulars and other information materials. This document, **General Application Development Information**, includes information that is applicable to most grant applications, including preliminary work for application development; considerations for application planning; and key elements of an application, such as information on developing the Executive Summary, projects within the application, and corresponding budget descriptions.

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 for support in areas requiring additional clarification beyond what is available in 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 are intended to help ensure that the key information in an 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's [Recipient Award Toolkit](#) website.

- **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 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. The program specific inclusions sections are linked on the FTA website above, and cover the following grant programs:

- **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.

Toolkit Legend

Throughout the **FTA Recipient Award Toolkit**, there are several instances where the following icons appear. Their use cases are outlined below:



Checklist
Reflects an action checklist recommended for use.




Guiding Tips
Provides additional details for consideration.

A. Preliminary Work for Application Development

Overview

The checklist below lists common prerequisites for application development. Additional in-depth guidance on Pre-Award Planning and Award Prerequisites can be found in [Chapter III: Award Development and Administration of Circular 5010.1F: Award Management Requirements](#). Contact your regional representative to ensure that all necessary preliminary work for application development is completed.

	Pre-Work Checklist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm active System for Award Management (SAM) Unique Entity ID (UEI) status. If SAM status is inactive, please work with the SAM Federal Service Desk to resolve this issue, as FTA is unable to award funding with an expired SAM status.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Complete planning activities applicable to your funding programs and projects. Ensure that the project(s) to which you intend to apply are included in the applicable planning program(s) (e.g., Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP))¹ and that projects are carried forward and reflected across the full range of applicable planning programs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that recipient contact information is updated and that applicable user roles are assigned (e.g., Submitter, Official) in TrAMS.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that all required recipient documents (e.g., opinion of counsel, authorizing resolution, designated recipient documentation) are current and uploaded to recipient organization level in TrAMS.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that Certifications & Assurances are provided for the current Fiscal Year.²
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm compliance with any relevant civil rights requirements.³
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Contact your regional representative to begin the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, if applicable.⁴
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that fleet status is updated, including all rolling stock information if applicable.

¹ [FTA Circular 8100.1D Program Guidance for Metropolitan Planning and State Planning and Research](#) (Chapter I, Section 5)

² [FTA Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\) User Guide - Recipient](#) (Step 4.3.7.4)

³ [FTA Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\) User Guide - Recipient](#) (Step 2.1)

⁴ [FTA Standard Operating Procedures for Managing the Environmental Review Process](#) (SOP No. 2)



Recipients are encouraged to begin preparation of necessary application materials prior to application development in TrAMS. Common attachments are listed in [this section](#), and program-specific attachments are listed in the applicable program Circular.



Recipients that receive formula assistance from FTA will need to be prepared to execute their annual Certifications & Assurances within 90 days of FTA's publication of a new version of the Certifications & Assurances. FTA publishes the annual Certifications & Assurances in conjunction with the Annual Apportionment notice.

B. Application Development Planning

Overview

Program requirements for each funding source are summarized within the [FTA Circulars](#). If recipients have questions regarding the topics addressed in the circulars, assigned regional representatives are available for consultation during application development, prior to initiating activities in TrAMS.

There are three main actions to consider for TrAMS application development or alternatives. In some cases, a new grant application may not be needed; amendments and budget revisions can be suitable as described below:

TrAMS Actions	Description	Purpose
Create Application	Development of a new application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obligation of funding for a new project, a project that is unique or has a detailed scope of work, or for new funding sources.
Create Amendment ⁵	Significant modification of an existing award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of an award that includes a change in scope of work and/or change in Federal assistance, as approved by FTA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: An amendment cannot be used to add new funding sources to an existing award.
Create Budget Revision ⁶	Minor modification of an existing award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget revisions may be made if there is no change in the recipient, purpose, Scope Codes, and Federal funding of the grant, regardless of the fiscal year the funds were appropriated. Ensure that budget revisions are consistent with the activities contained in an approved STIP and satisfy applicable NEPA requirements.

⁵ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter I, Section 4)

⁶ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter I, Section 4)

Application/Award Action Considerations

Additional considerations may pertain to some application/award actions, as noted below. If you are unsure whether to amend a grant or create a new grant, please review the applicable FTA Circular and then consult your regional representative if questions remain.

Award Amendments

- Award amendments are used when modifying the legal obligations of the Federal government or the recipient, including the modification of the award amount or change in project scope.⁷
 - Information regarding award amendments for a particular grant program can be found within the applicable [FTA Circulars](#).
 - In some circumstances, a proposed change to the budget for an active award may require an amendment rather than a budget revision.
 - To more efficiently process recipient needs, recipients are encouraged to first confirm if proposed changes can be accomplished via a budget revision, which can be completed faster and with fewer resources than an amendment.
- An award can only be amended to add additional funding from an existing funding source already within the award, subject to the period of availability⁸ for the funding.
 - Amendments cannot be used to add new funding sources to an existing award.
 - An award using multiple funding sources can be amended, but only for changes to the funding sources included in the initial award. For example, a single funding source award cannot become a multisource award via an amendment.

Detailed guidance on award amendments can be found in [Chapter III: Award Development and Administration of Circular 5010.1F: Award Management Requirements](#).

Insular Area Funding Consolidation

Per [48 U.S.C. § 1469\(a\)](#), Insular Areas may submit applications for consolidated awards to streamline and consolidate certain grant-in-aid programs specifically available to the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. As part of this process, Insular Areas may notify the appropriate FTA Regional Office in writing, describing the intended use of consolidated funds across eligible programs, along with providing information demonstrating that transportation of seniors and people with disabilities will not be adversely affected by the consolidation of funds.⁹

⁷ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter I, Section 4)

⁸ [Period of Availability for FTA Funds](#)

⁹ [FTA Circular 9040.1H: Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter III, Section 3)

Applications with Multiple Funding Sources

In TrAMS, recipients may have the opportunity to develop an application that consolidates funding from multiple programs. When an application contains more than one funding source, it is recommended that you consult with your regional representative first to determine if this is advantageous. For more information on applications with multiple funding sources in TrAMS, please refer to the following document: [Guidance on Combining Multiple Funding Sources in a Single Application](#).

Additional funding source considerations may apply in certain circumstances. FTA recommends that applicants consult assigned regional representatives if they have any of these needs:

Additional Funding Source Considerations	Description	Purpose
Funding transfers between United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) agencies (i.e., Flex Funds) ¹⁰	Consolidation of funding from another US DOT agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows Federal-Aid Highway Program funding made available for public transportation projects to be flexed (or transferred) to be administered by FTA for public transportation projects.
Funding transfers between FTA funding programs	Transfer of funding between different FTA programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of funding between FTA funding programs is subject to eligibility and requirements explained in the FTA Program Circulars.
Insular Area Grant Consolidation ¹¹	Consolidation of funding from multiple programs into a single award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows recipients in insular areas, (U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands) to consolidate funding for more streamlined grant funds.
Application with Multiple Funding Sources	Consolidation of funding from different FTA programs into a single award.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and streamline multiple funding programs. May be most efficient when multiple programs are being used to fund the same or related activities such as rolling stock acquisition, a capital improvement project; a construction project; or a

¹⁰ [Flexible Funding for Transit and Highway Improvements | FTA](#)

¹¹ [FTA Circular 9040.1H: Rural Area Formula Grant Programs](#) (Chapter III, Section 3)

Additional Funding Source Considerations	Description	Purpose
		system-wide improvement project. However, increased complexity can make an application with multiple funding sources more difficult to manage as opposed to separate grants.

C. Application Details

Overview

The following key elements constitute the introductory sections and Executive Summary of an application:


- Application Title/Name
- Award Description
- Executive Summary
- Period of Performance
- Pre-Award Authority (if applicable)
- Suballocations (if applicable)
- Indirect Costs (if applicable)

Specific information for each of these sections is detailed below.

Application Title/Name

For the application name, utilize straightforward and clear terms that are easily searchable in USASpending.gov, the Federal database of agency awards where the award will be published.

The name will exist throughout the life of the grant and cannot be edited once the grant has been awarded and executed, even if the award is amended. Choose an application name that will remain descriptive for the life of the award and any subsequent amendments. FTA recommends the inclusion of the following key elements for the application name:

	Application Name – Key Elements
	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory authorization (e.g., Section 5307, Section 5339(a), etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Activity being funded (e.g., Capital, Operating, Planning, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Indication if competitive or discretionary funding is being used
	<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended inclusion of a distinguishing element to differentiate this award from other awards to the same recipient – options include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Federal Fiscal Year(s) (FFY) of funding being used in the award (e.g., FFY23 - FFY24 Section 5307 funds for planning and capital expense)○ State Fiscal Year (SFY) (e.g., FFY22 5311 Formula, Capital and Operating [SFY 2023])



Application Name – Key Elements

- Identification of specific projects (e.g., Section 5307 funds for the District B Bus Maintenance Facility SGR project).

For Capital Investment Grant (CIG) projects with CIG funds, FTA recommends including the name of the project followed by the project type and then the award agreement. For example:

ABC Ave Subway - New Start - Full-Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA)

Award Description

Award descriptions provide spending information which will be made available to the public. Plain language is encouraged for use in award descriptions, as these will be published on USASpending.gov after the award is made final.

A format for creating award descriptions is provided in TrAMS. To satisfy TrAMS award description formatting requirements, FTA recommends inclusion of the following key elements:



Award Description – Key Elements

- Purpose of the award – Describe the goal(s) of the award.
- Activities to be performed – Provide high level description of activities.
- Expected outcomes – List the benefits.
- Intended beneficiaries – Indicate who will receive benefits.
- Subrecipient activities (if applicable) – Identify the specific subrecipients and use of funds.


Guidance on each of these key sections, along with example language, are provided in [TrAMS Award Descriptions Guidance](#). Please tailor the example language for each award description element specifically to the needs of the award program.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary of an application provides an overarching description of all activities to be funded in the award, as well as applicable program requirements. The Executive Summary is

intended to be succinct and avoid duplicating information that can be found elsewhere in the award application (e.g., Extended Budget Description, Milestone Information).

The following table outlines recommended information to include in the Executive Summary, which can help FTA better understand the purpose of a grant application and can make management easier over the life of a grant:

	Executive Summary – Key Elements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Fiscal Year [Year] Section [Program Number], amount of federal funds being requested, a brief application description, and types of project(s) included.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List of funding by Discretionary ID, if applicable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List of funding by Urbanized Area (UZA) name and/or number, and by year of appropriation.¹²
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For awards involving Flex Fund Transfers, the name of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding program and the name of the FTA funding program to which they are being flexed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Description of the source of local funds for non-federal match.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Names and descriptions of relevant application attachments.¹³
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Award numbers of other awards related to this application.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For awards requesting formula funding, indication of whether the requested funds represent the entire full-year apportionment or only a portion of the full-year apportionment for the funding source allocated to the geographic area (e.g., UZA or State).

Executive summary information may differ based on the characteristics of the application. A well-crafted Executive Summary includes the most pertinent information within the first few sentences. For recommended example language, see the table below. Ensure that any dollar amounts included match those in the Application Budget Control Totals.

¹² To the extent you are applying for funds apportioned or allocated to more than one UZA, this information is useful to ensure that funding is reserved accurately. If unknown, contact your regional representative.

¹³ Use Attachments for technical data, lengthy tables, or formal verifications to prevent disrupting the flow of the main narrative. This practice ensures the primary grant application remains focused on high-level objectives while providing reviewers with easy access to granular supporting evidence. Applicants may incorporate a comprehensive list of supplemental documentation within the Executive Summary to provide an organized roadmap for the reviewer. To maintain administrative consistency, these attachments can be cross-referenced both here and within relevant technical sections, such as the Extended Budget Description.

Application Characteristics	Additional Elements and Example Language
Formula Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Element: Include the UZA name and/or number in the summary. Example language: “This application includes \$[_____] in FFY 20[XX] Section [_____] funding allocated for [UZA name, State] and is for [all/a partial amount] of the full year apportionment.”
Competitive (Discretionary Funding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Element: Include the discretionary award identification number in the document. Example language: “The [Recipient Name] is submitting this application to request \$[_____] in Federal funding allocated through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), FFY 20[XX], Section 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program in support of the [Project Name] (hereafter “Project”). This Project is [Brief Project Description]. The total project cost is \$[_____]. Funding sources for the overall project include: [Federal Sources and \$_____] [State Sources and \$_____] [Local Sources and \$_____]”
Flexible “Flex” Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Element: Include the UZA name and/or number in the summary. Additional Element: Include the name of the FHWA funding program. Example language: “This application includes \$[_____] in FHWA [FHWA funding program] funds transferred to FTA Section [_____] in FFY 20[XX] for [Project identified on the flex funding form]. These will be used for [Brief, specific description of what is being funded].”
Award Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement: Include an updated amendment summary description above any previous amendment language. Do not delete/amend any past grant/amendment summary language; retain this as “original grant” language and label accordingly. Example language: “Amendment No. [____]: This amendment adds \$[_____] in FFY 20[XX] Section [_____] funding allocated for [UZA name, State] for a total of \$[_____]. These funds will be used for [Brief, specific description of what is being funded].”

Period of Performance

All FTA awards must include period of performance information as required per [2 CFR 200.211\(b\)](#)). The period of performance is the interval between the start and end dates of activities funded by a federal award, which may include one or more budget periods. Identification of the period of performance in the federal award consistent with [§ 200.211\(b\)\(5\)](#) does not commit the federal agency to fund the award beyond the currently approved budget period. TrAMS will generate the start date based on the award, but recipients identify a reasonable end date, typically three months after the last milestone date to allow for closeout activities.¹⁴

Projects and related activities described in the award are expected to be completed, and the Federal assistance is expected to be expended, within the period of performance. Per [2 CFR 200.344\(b\)](#) and reiterated in [Circular 5010.1F](#), recipients must submit all reports (financial, performance, and other reports required by the Federal award) no later than 120 calendar days after the conclusion of the period of performance.¹⁵ **Any grant award past its Period of Performance (POP) end date is subject to being placed on restricted drawdown.**



Set the Period of Performance award end date to on or after the last Application Line Item (ALI) milestone, which includes incurring obligations and completing the scope of work within the application.

¹⁴ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter I, Section 4)

¹⁵ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter III, Section 8)

Pre-Award Authority



Requirements for utilizing pre-award authority may differ by funding program, and not all programs are eligible. The information included in this section generally pertains to pre-award authority for formula programs, while competitive programs are often subject to different requirements. For additional information on pre-award authority, see FTA’s annual guidance associated with apportionments or Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs).

Pre-award authority¹⁶ allows recipients to incur certain project costs before FTA issues an award. It also allows recipients to retain reimbursement eligibility after award approval. The recipient assumes all risks and is responsible for ensuring that all conditions are met to retain eligibility, including procurement requirements and cost allowability.

To utilize pre-award authority, review and ensure compliance with all applicable Federal requirements, including planning and environmental requirements.¹⁷ Failure to comply with applicable Federal requirements will render those project costs or, in certain cases, the project in its entirety to be ineligible for FTA assistance.

FTA’s policy for pre-award authority and its list of permissible activities and conditions for grant programs is outlined annually in FTA’s Annual Apportionment Notice. When pre-award authority is exercised, recipients are expected to report allowable pre-award costs on the initial Federal Financial Report (FFR) submitted after award execution, consistent with FTA’s financial reporting requirements. Please coordinate with your regional representative to discuss pre-award authority, if applicable to your project.

Suballocations


Recipients applying for FTA funding may be characterized as a “Direct Recipient” if they are receiving funding directly from FTA; or as a “Designated Recipient” if they are designated by the governor of a State, responsible local officials, and/or publicly owned operators of public transportation to receive and apportion FTA funding (as characterized under [49 U.S.C. 5336](#)) to

¹⁶ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter III, Section 5)

¹⁷ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter III, Section 5)

UZAs of 200,000 or more in population, or to State or regional authorities that are applicable for receiving FTA funds.¹⁸

The following table provides recommended inclusions for Split Letters used to suballocate funding:

	Suballocation Documentation Checklist
	<input type="checkbox"/> Suballocation amount(s) and permission(s) for the award recipient (e.g., Direct Recipient) to receive and expend the suballocated Federal funds.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporation of language to reflect agreement of all signatories with documented suballocations.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Language clarifying that the Direct Recipient(s) will assume any and all responsibility associated with the award for suballocated Federal funds.

Below is an example of Split Letter language:

“As identified in this letter, the Designated Recipient(s) authorize(s) the reassignment/reallocation of [Include specific funding source here] to the Direct Recipient(s) named herein. The undersigned agree(s) to the amounts allocated/reassigned to each Direct Recipient. Each Direct Recipient is responsible for their application to FTA to receive such funds and assumes the responsibilities associated with any award for these funds.”

When prompted in the Application Financial Information section, “Does this application include suballocated formula funds,” click the button appropriate to your organization’s status for this application. There are three choices:

- Yes, my organization is a Designated Recipient – select this if your organization is a Designated Recipient and is applying for funding also as the Direct Recipient.
- Yes, my organization is the Direct Recipient of suballocated funds (from a Designated Recipient) – select this if your organization is not the Designated Recipient for these funds.
- No, my organization is a Direct Recipient; funds were directly allocated to my organization (usually Competitive or Congressionally-directed) – select this if this application does not include suballocated funds.

When you select either Yes button, the Current Suballocations/Split Documents feature will appear allowing you to upload the applicable current split letter documents. Use the provided controls to upload the applicable current split letter document(s).

¹⁸ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter I, Section 4, Pg. I-8)

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint purposes. These costs benefit more than one cost objective and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.¹⁹ Recipients that intend to seek payment for indirect costs will need to prepare a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) or an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP).²⁰ Guidance on this process can be found in [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E](#).

The Apply Estimated Indirect Cost – Related Action in TrAMS is intended to be completed for all applications to capture indirect costs. Recipients are expected to reflect indirect costs within the appropriate budget activity line items and associated project milestones. Guidance for completing this Related Action is provided in the following document: [Apply Estimated Indirect Cost – Related Action Guidance | FTA](#).

Example application language for indirect costs is provided below, corresponding to the federal agency approving the indirect cost request. Include such language under the Indirect Cost section of the award application.

Type	Example Language
Indirect Costs Approved by Cognizant Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example language: “The cognizant agency [Agency name] approved [Recipient entity], on [Current date] and information to support the organization’s approved rate is on file with FTA. The [Percentage(s)] will be applied to the applicable activity line item descriptions.”
Indirect Costs De Minimis Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example language: “The [Recipient entity] has submitted documentation to use the de minimis indirect cost rate of [Percentage(s)]. Documentation is attached.” Please contact your regional representative if more information on documenting the de minimis rate is needed.

¹⁹ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter VI, Section 7)

²⁰ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Chapter VI, Section 7)

D. Projects within an Application

Overview

Each award has its own scope(s) of work, defined by its project(s). Each award needs to have at least one project. Each project has a scope of work defined by the Budget Scope Code(s), Activity Line Item(s) (ALIs) and the Extended Budget Description(s). The ALIs and the Extended Budget Description provide the detailed narrative for individual project(s) that make up the overall award.

TrAMS allows for the creation of multiple projects within an award to capture the scopes of work included in the grant award to be funded. It may be beneficial to consolidate activities into projects where possible. A project may be defined as a specific large-scale project (e.g., Construct Maintenance Facility) or a project can group related but independent activities (e.g., 5307 Capital/Operating Activities). Each project created in a grant is assigned a project number. Please consult your regional representative to validate the structure of your application.

Project Title/Name



If you intend for projects to be funded from different grant programs, multiple years of appropriations, and/or different authorizations (e.g., Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), please consult your regional representative to validate the structure of your application as this could impact funding reservations and future grant modifications.

The project title may include:

- The funding source.
- A description of the specific activities included in the project.

Example project title: 5307 Operating Assistance, Preventive Maintenance, Vehicles

Consider the following when determining the naming of and number of projects to create:


- Does the application have one or multiple funding sources?
- How does the structure of your project activities impact how the award will be managed?

- Is the application using a funding source with several appropriations or different types of funding within the same program? (Confirm with your regional representative.)
- Contact your regional representative if uncertain about funding nuances as they pertain to project creation.

Project Description

The project description is intended to provide a high-level summary of the activities included in each individual project within the award and is meant to describe project details, not the overall award details. FTA encourages recipients to provide sufficient detail for FTA to obtain a general understanding of the nature and purpose of the planned activities in the individual project. Include information (within the application or as an attachment) on any subrecipients and their projects in the description. For applications including multiple subrecipients, include specific subrecipient information for each.

Please consider the following when developing application project descriptions:

	Project Description – Key Elements
	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Program Type(s): State the type (formula or discretionary) and program of funds requested (e.g., 5307/5311/5311[c]).
	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Amount: Include the total project cost and the amount of Federal funding being requested.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Scope: Describe the scope, components, and quantity of capital items funded under this project. Include useful life information, ²¹ unless it is more suitable for the Extended Budget Description.

Project Benefits

The Project Benefits section is intended to include details on the purpose, need, and qualitative and quantitative benefits of the project in terms of serving the public. For example, the project might help meet state of good repair goals; replace vehicles that have met their useful life; increase service and offer greater rider opportunity; or improve ridership experience.

Project Location

The Project Location section is intended to specify details regarding the location of the project. Please note key project location elements and considerations below.

²¹ If there are multiple types of projects being funded under one TrAMS project, these details can be included in the Extended Budget Description rather than project description. If application includes one project per TrAMS project, include this information in the project summary page.



Project Location – Key Elements & Considerations

- Include the location of the project. Provide the project address, or a narrative description, if applicable.
- For ALLs involving construction activities (e.g., renovations to a transit facility), include specific facility address information.
- For service provision across multiple UZAs, list relevant congressional districts and include descriptions of the transit service area such as start and end points (reflecting cross-UZA service).

E. Budget Information

Overview

The following key elements constitute the budgeting section of an award application:

- Scope Codes & Activity Line Items (ALIs)
- Funding Source
- Selection Quantity
- Extended Budget Descriptions
- Project/Activity Milestones

Specific information for each of these sections is detailed below.

Scope Codes & Activity Line Items (ALIs)

Application and project budgets are formulated by consolidating project scope codes and budget ALIs. A scope code is a five-digit number with an associated general category description to be funded (e.g., Scope Code 111-00 – Bus Rolling Stock). The ALI is a six-digit identification number with an associated title that describes a specific activity to be funded (e.g., 11.12.04 – Buy Replacement <30 FT Bus).

A list of all Scope Codes and ALI numbers is available for reference on the [Scope & Activity Line Codes](#) webpage. ALIs are program-specific and cannot be used across all programs; when developing an application, please consult with your regional representative to identify the most appropriate project scope code and associated ALI for your project.

If you have any questions regarding how budget and activity line items are populated and managed in TrAMS, refer to the [TrAMS User Guide, Section 5.2.1.11.4.](#)

FTA Funding Source Selection

Each funding program leverages one or more potential funding sources to disburse funding to recipients. A list of current FTA funding sources is available for reference at the following link: [TrAMS Funding Source List](#). Please review your apportionments or allocations and confirm with your regional representative that the appropriate funding source is selected for each project in your application.

If you are developing a multisource grant, separate each funding source for the grant into an individual project within the award application. Please contact your regional representative if you require any further guidance.

Quantity

Quantity describes the total quantity of the object, resource, or benefit that the application is funding and will be consistent with any discretionary selections. This may include accounting for and maintaining any equipment, facilities, and rolling stock procured with FTA funding. Input quantities for all activities funded in the grant, including equipment and rolling stock.²² For non-capital activities, input a total quantity of 0. Total quantities need to be input using whole numbers.

If multiple awards are funding one discrete project (e.g., rolling stock procurement), then the quantity reflected in the grant award will need to match the portion of funds allocated to each award. If the total quantity (for capital assets) across all awards for the project is 1, input the quantity of 1 for one award, and input the quantity of 0 for the other(s). For any award with a quantity of 0, include reference to the award with a quantity of 1.

It is important not to double count total quantity when one discrete project is funded by multiple awards. The box below provides an example of how to allocate a total quantity of 10 buses funded by multiple awards. In this example, each award does not individually specify 10 buses, as this would count them multiple times and produce an inaccurate total. Instead, the total is allocated among each award proportionally according to their respective bus funding.

“10 new buses using \$10,000,000 in combined Federal and local funds using two awards.

Award 1 (Grant ID _____) \$7,000,000 5339 (c) = 7 buses

Award 2 (Grant ID _____) \$3,000,000 5307 = 3 buses

Total \$10,000,000 = 10 buses”

Extended Budget Description (EBD)

The Extended Budget Description (EBD) is used to provide the greatest level of detail of the activity(s) being funded. This information may be used by technical reviewers to evaluate the reasonability of the cost and milestone schedule. FTA encourages recipients to ensure that each ALI's EBD provides a thorough, clear description of the specific component(s) and any applicable program requirements. Checklist items below that are addressed in the Project Description do not need to be repeated in the EBD. FTA recommends that recipients do not create a scope code with zero dollars in anticipation of future amendments to the award.

²² [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#) (Appendix B, Page B-12)



Activity Line Item EBD Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Details of what is occurring in the specific activity.
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimum useful life for capital items with individual value over \$10,000.
<input type="checkbox"/> For vehicle replacements: Useful life, mileage, and make/model/year/vehicle identification number (VIN) of the vehicle(s) being replaced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> For rolling stock procurements, include a vehicle description and fuel type; for expansion activities include a discussion on vehicle needs.²³<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle replacement information can also be attached under “Application Documents” and referenced in the application, rather than listed out within the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Year of activity for operating assistance and/or for preventive maintenance (any request may only be for the immediately preceding year and/or current year activities).
<input type="checkbox"/> If there are projects or Activity Line Items in this award for which the TIP/STIP is not already referenced in the Program Plan Information, please reference the TIP/STIP ID number and page number here (or UPWP ID number and/or page for planning projects; or Program of Projects or Coordinated Transit Plan and/or page for 5310/5311 projects).
<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated indirect cost amount, if applicable.

Below are two EBD examples for reference.

These funds will be used to construct a 300,000 square foot bus operations and maintenance garage (123 Metro Way, Washington DC). Construction related activities include [A, B, and C]. NEPA approval (DCE, EA, EIS) is xx/xx/xxxx and SHPO concurrence dated xx/xx/xxxx, both documents are attached titled [File Name]. Minimum useful life of the facility is XX years.

Transit Agency X will use funds for paratransit services beyond ADA requirements. The service is contracted to a provider who owns and maintains the vehicles used for the service. Pursuant to Circular 9050.1A. page IV-20²⁴, one half of the total contract for turnkey service (Type 6 contract) that includes contracted maintenance and leased service is eligible for federal capital cost of contracting funds at 80% of the resultant amount. For the period January 1, 20XX - December 31, 20XX, Transit Agency X is projecting a contract expense of \$200,000. Therefore, the total eligible cost of contracting is one-half this amount or

²³ [FTA Circular 5010.1F Award Management Requirements](#), (Appendix B, Page B-5)

²⁴ [FTA Circular 9050.1A Urbanized Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance](#) (Chapter IV, Table 4)

\$100,000. Capital cost of contracting covers the depreciation of the vehicles and equipment in addition to maintenance of facility leasing costs.

Project/Activity Milestones

Milestones are estimated goals or progress markers for each project. Milestone descriptions are intended to sufficiently detail how the recipient plans to demonstrate progress toward, and accomplishment of, the full scope of work. Some activities may require additional milestones, such as rolling stock and construction projects.

If you have exercised pre-award authority, milestones reflect those dates and may precede the award start date, which is auto populated by TrAMS.

At least two milestones are needed for each ALI, and at least three milestones are needed for ALIs that involve contracts/third-party contractors. It is key to ensure that the appropriate option is selected (“Yes” or “No”) in the application as to whether third-party contractors will be used to fulfill the ALI.²⁵

TrAMS provides default milestones for some ALIs, such as rolling stock, which FTA recommends use of as a minimum for specific cases. Please consult with your regional representative to ensure all key relevant milestones are reflected in your application. Below are three examples of milestones for different activities:

Example 1: ALIs that do not require contracts or third-party contractors require at least two milestones (line item activity start date, line item activity end date). If TrAMS does not auto-populate your ALI with these milestones, manually add in the missing milestones:

Milestone Name	Est. Comp. Date
Line Item Activity Start Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Line Item Activity End Date	MM/DD/YYYY

Example 2: Activities that do require contracts or third-party contractors require at least three milestones (contract award date, line item activity start date, and line item activity end date/contract completion date). If TrAMS does not auto-populate your ALI with these milestones, manually add in the missing milestones:

Milestone Name	Est. Comp. Date
Contract Award Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Line Item Activity Start Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Line Item Activity End Date or Contract Completion Date	MM/DD/YYYY

²⁵ [Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\) User Guide](#) (Section 5.2.1.11.4)

Example 3: TrAMS may auto-populate certain ALIs with milestones. In these cases, these pre-populated milestones should be used at a minimum with their associated ALI. The following example is what is typically auto populated for vehicle purchases.

Milestone Name	Est. Comp. Date
RFB/IFB Issue Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Contract Award Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Initial Delivery Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Final Delivery Date	MM/DD/YYYY
Contract Complete Date	MM/DD/YYYY

F. Application Finalization

Overview


Prior to application transmission, review the application for proper documentation of Environmental Determinations and inclusion of key attachments. More details on environmental documentation and common attachment types are provided below.

Environmental Review

Prior to approving an award in TrAMS, FTA verifies whether the action complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable environmental laws. Consult with your regional representative to review applicable environmental requirements, including Section 106 (Historic Preservation), for the project(s) contained within the grant to ensure compliance. FTA encourages recipients to review FTA's [Environmental Standard Operating Procedures](#) for additional guidance.

TrAMS allows recipients to select an Environmental Determination at the project level (i.e., all ALIs under one project are covered under one determination), or at the ALI level (i.e., each ALI activity is covered by a different determination). Make these settings in accordance with the determination(s) applicable to your project.²⁶

The following checklist provides several actions that FTA recommends recipients consider after environmental documentation (if required) is complete and FTA approval is granted:

	Environmental Review Checklist
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review that the appropriate Environmental Determination is selected.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the applicable supporting environmental documentation (e.g., Categorical Exclusion Worksheet , Record of Decision, or Finding of No Significant Impact) is included in the Application Documents.
	<input type="checkbox"/> In the Environmental Determination ' <i>Details</i> ' section, review that a formal statement affirming that environmental documentation is complete has been included, if applicable.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review that the ' <i>Environmental Determination Dates</i> ' section has been completed for each determination. ²⁷

²⁶ [FTA Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\) User Guide - Recipient](#) (Step 5.2.1.11.5)

²⁷ [FTA Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\) User Guide - Recipient](#) (Step 5.2.1.11.5)

Attachments

It is important that recipients ensure all necessary documentation related to their application is uploaded in TrAMS prior to submitting their applications. The most common application attachments are listed below; however, recipients are encouraged to consult with regional representatives to confirm that all attachments relevant to the application have been completed or included.

Attachment	Applicability
a. Relevant Pages of an approved TIP/STIP (not full document)	All applications/amendments.
b. Relevant Pages of Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	If the application provides funds for planning activities.
c. ICRP/CAP approved by federal cognizant agency, Rate Agreement, and De Minimis Rate Notification	If indirect costs will be applied.
d. FHWA Flex Funds Transfer Request (Form 1575)	If using FHWA Flex Funds.
e. Discretionary Application Forms: SF-424 and the Supplemental Form	If applying for discretionary/competitive funding.
f. NEPA Approval Letter	As specified in the environmental documentation checklist above.
g. Split/Suballocation letter	If recipient is a designated recipient, or is a direct recipient receiving suballocated formula funds from a designated recipient (i.e., MPO).
h. Replacement Vehicles/Equipment Documentation (include the vehicle or asset number, VIN, age, current mileage, and estimated useful life)	If purchasing replacement vehicles and sufficient information is not included in Extended Budget Description.
i. Transportation Development Credit (TDC) Letter (from State DOT)	If using TDCs.
j. In-kind Match Documentation	If using in-kind match, upload the appropriate documentation as specified below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property (such as land): FTA letter approving the value of the property being used as in-kind match. • Services (such as staff salaries): Documentation

Attachment	Applicability
	that details the rate(s), number of hours, and total value of the services that will be used toward match.
k. Force Account Justification, or Force Account Plan and FTA Approval Letter	<p>If opting to use own staff for capital projects (known as “Force Account”), then provide documentation as specified below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the force account work is less than \$1 million, no documentation is needed. • If the force account work on a given project is \$1 million or greater but less than \$10 million, upload a force account justification. • If the force account work is valued at greater than \$10 million for a project, upload a Force Account Plan and FTA approval letter.
l. Letter of No Prejudice (LONP)	If opting to use program funding towards pre-award authority with a program that does not explicitly offer pre-award authority (i.e., Sec. 5307, 5310, 5311, 5337, 5339).