

FTA REGION IV



NEW GRANTEE HANDBOOK

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New Grantee Handbook

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New Grantee Official Request Letter

To initiate the New Grantee Process, all potential new grantees should send a letter to FTA Region IV outlining their intentions with regard to their FTA funding requests. Each letter should contain the following elements:

1. Identify what types of activities FTA funds will be used for.
2. Identify the type of FTA funds the potential new grantee will seek.
3. Cite the planning basis for the activities being funded, i.e. feasibility study, transit service analysis, long-range transportation plan, state or metropolitan transportation improvement program (STIP/TIP), etc.
4. Identify a point of contact at the potential new grantee's agency to work with FTA through the review process.

There must be a planning basis for every project or for every group of projects. As such, the official new grantee request letter will outline for FTA Region IV the types of projects the potential new grantee will seek as well as the planning basis for these types of project. Further, FTA requires recipients to include the planning justification in the Transportation Electronic Award and Management (TEAM) system grant application. Feasibility studies can occur at varying levels of detail as appropriate and proportionate to the complexity of the project or projects in question. For facility-related projects, the letter should also address the status of the project in regards to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Planning Guidance Documents and Links

FTA Office of Planning & Environment Website

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/12347.html> FTA Office of Planning & Environment

Environmental Website

http://www.fta.dot.gov/13835_5222.html

FTA Region IV Environment/NEPA

Resources Website

http://www.fta.dot.gov/region4_12134.html

Regional Expert

Varies by Geographic Area

See [Geographic Assignments](#) for FTA Region IV for the Engineer/Program Manager

Assigned to your area

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Capacity/Requirements Review

Demonstrate Legal Capacity

Before FTA may award a grant, FTA must make a finding that the grant applicant has or will have the legal capacity to carry out the project. In making this finding, FTA generally relies on the grant applicant's certification that it has or will have the legal capacity to carry out the project.

Specifically, the grant applicant must be eligible and authorized under State or local law to request, receive, and spend FTA funds to administer FTA-assisted projects. Officials acting on behalf of the applicant must have appropriate authority designated by State or local law or by the governing body of the applicant. FTA requires first-time applicants to submit an Opinion of Counsel and Authorizing Resolution as described below. FTA also retains the discretion to require any recipient to submit a legal opinion and other supporting documentation throughout the period of FTA funding assistance.

(a) Opinion of Counsel

An Opinion of Counsel identifies the legal authority of the grant applicant, citing, for example, State and local statutes, and states whether any significant legislation or litigation is pending that may affect the legal status of the applicant. It is not uncommon for legislation or litigation to be pending; its significance in terms of legal capacity and in terms of ability to complete the project determines whether or not it should be noted in the Opinion of Counsel. A sample format of an authorizing resolution is provided in Appendix A of this handbook. While the first Opinion of Counsel sets forth the basis that gives the grant applicant the authority to apply for FTA funding, the recipient will certify its authority to apply for subsequent grants in the annual certification process. That affirmation appears on FTA's website at www.fta.dot.gov, on the page that lists the current year Certifications and Assurances.

FTA expects the recipient to notify FTA of any change in local law, litigation, conditions, or any other event that may significantly affect the recipient's ability to carry out the project. Any significant change in status will require a new Opinion of Counsel.

(b) Authorizing Resolution

The authority of those officials acting on behalf of a public body grant applicant generally must be demonstrated by a resolution from the governing body of the grant applicant, a statute, or an ordinance showing the grant applicant has authority to file an official grant application, showing who has the authority to act on behalf of the applicant, and supporting the application. A certified copy of the authorizing resolution is required for all FTA recipients. A sample format of an authorizing resolution is provided in Appendix A of this handbook. The

authorizing resolution only has to be submitted prior to the grant applicant's first application. For subsequent grant applications, FTA will rely on the annual certifications and assurances.

Potential new grantees should also be familiar with the FTA Master Agreement and Annual Certifications and Assurances.

(a) *FTA Master Agreement*

The FTA Master Agreement is the FTA official document containing FTA and other cross-cutting Federal requirements applicable to the FTA recipient and its project(s). The Master Agreement is generally revised annually in October. The Master Agreement is incorporated by reference and made part of each FTA grant, cooperative agreement, and amendment thereto. The current Master Agreement is included in Appendix A.

(b) *Annual Certifications and Assurances*

Before FTA may award Federal funding, the applicant must provide to FTA all certifications and assurances required by Federal laws and regulations. Near the beginning of each Federal fiscal year, FTA publishes the certifications in the *Federal Register*, highlighting any changes or additions from the previous year. FTA sometimes publishes the certifications and assurances on the same date the formula apportionments are published. The current Certifications and Assurances can be found in Appendix A. The authorized representative of the recipient and the recipient's attorney must make the requisite certifications by attesting to the certifications and assurances electronically with a personal identification number (PIN) in TEAM. New grantees will be required to complete this PIN process immediately upon receiving access to the TEAM system.

FTA Legal Capacity Guidance Documents and Links

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Example Opinion of Counsel | Appendix A |
| Example Authorizing Resolution | Appendix A |
| FTA Master Agreement | Appendix A |
| Annual Certifications & Assurances | Appendix A |

Regional Expert

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Summary of Required Submittals

1. Opinion of Counsel
2. Authorizing Resolution

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Demonstrate Financial Capacity

A potential new grantee for FTA funds must be able to match and manage those funds, to cover cost overruns, to cover operating deficits through long-term stable and reliable sources of revenue, and to maintain and operate federally funded facilities and equipment. Financial capacity and proposed project financing must be made evident. The source of local share must be identified and assurances must be provided that adequate local funds will be available at the time Federal funds are drawn down. Financial capacity is also reviewed by FTA's Financial Management Oversight contractors as deemed necessary.

[FTA Circular 7008.1](#), "Financial Capacity Policy," defines the basis upon which FTA will make determinations of a grant applicant's financial capacity to receive a Section 5307 grant. The circular refers to two aspects of financial capacity: general financial condition of the transit operator and financial capability.

- (a) The general financial condition includes historical trends and current experience in financial factors affecting the ability of the grant applicant to operate and maintain the transit system at present levels of service. The information supporting an assessment of financial condition is usually available in audited annual financial statements and other financial reports which address working capital levels, cash balances, capital reserves, the presence and status of depreciation accounts, long-term debt levels, trends in transit costs compared to available revenues, and trends in relevant economic indicators.

As part of this aspect, FTA Region IV requires the submittal of the following documentation:

1. FTA Region IV Financial Capacity Questionnaire

This questionnaire provides FTA Region IV a current and past snapshot of the potential new grantee's financial standing. An example is provided in Appendix B. A PDF-form version can be found on [FTA Region IV's New Grantee Handbook](#) website.

2. Current Year Operating and Capital Budgets

3. Three Most Recent Years of A-133 Audit Reports.

The Single Audit Act, as amended (31 U.S.C. 7501 *et seq.*), implemented by OMB Circular A-133, requires recipients of Federal awards resulting in expenditures of \$500,000 or more to have independent audits conducted annually. FTA Region IV will review the results of these independent audits for potential material weaknesses in the potential new grantees financial systems.

- (b) Financial capability addresses the sufficiency, stability, and reliability of the grant applicant's revenue sources to meet future operating deficits and to meet future annual capital and operating costs. Financial capability considers the nature of funds pledged to support operating deficits and capital programs, and changes in forecast in fare and nonfare revenues. To ensure the potential new grantee has the financial capability necessary to manage their FTA program a financial plan must be developed and submitted to FTA Region IV for Review.

1. 3-5 Year Financial Plan

Multi-year financial plans should indicate adequate revenues to maintain and operate the existing systems and to complete programs of projects. Revenue sources must be stable and reliable enough to meet future capital and operating costs. Any sign of major decreases in service levels or operations must be explained. Guidance for the development of these plans can be found in Appendix B

FTA Financial Capacity Guidance Documents and Links

Financial Capacity Questionnaire Appendix B

FTA Triennial Review Workbook

http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FY_2014_Triennial_Review_Workshop_Workbook_Rev_2.pdf

FTA SMR Workbook

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/12898.html>

FTA Grant Management Circular

http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8640.html

FTA Financial Capacity Policy

http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_4122.html

Best Practices Procurement Manual

http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13054_6037.html

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Summary of Required Submittals:

1. Financial Capacity Questionnaire
2. Current Year Operating and Capital Budgets
3. Three Years of A-133 Reports
4. 3-5 Year Financial Plan

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Demonstrate Technical Capacity

Technical capacity involves the capability of the grant applicant to properly carry out and manage Federal grants. A first-time grant applicant must demonstrate that it can carry out the project described in the grant application in accordance with the requirements of the grant agreement, and with all applicable laws and regulations, using sound management practices. Thus, a certification that the recipient will comply with all requirements applicable to its grant application and to the grant agreement, when awarded, is required. Guidelines for management practices can be found in [FTA Circular 5010.1](#), “Grant Management Requirements.” In order to review and confirm the potential new grantee has the requisite technical capacity to manage FTA-funded projects, the following documentation should be submitted:

(a) FTA Region IV Technical Capacity Questionnaire

This questionnaire provides FTA Region IV an overview the current type of service being provided, as well as the policies and procedures the potential new grantee has in place to ensure its ability to comply with FTA grant management requirements. An example is provided in Appendix C. A PDF-form version can be found on [FTA Region IV’s New Grantee Handbook](#) website.

NOTE: Adequately answering some of the questions may necessitate the submittal of additional support documentation. These materials will be required in order to begin the FTA Region IV Regional Review Process.

(b) Potential New Grantee Organizational Chart

The organizational chart should illustrate which positions and offices will carry out grant-related activities such as procurements, reporting, equipment maintenance, and operations. If this information cannot be discerned from the generic organizational chart, the chart should be accompanied by a narrative explaining how these various activities will be handled.

Potential new grantees should also be familiar with the Triennial Review Workbook, updated annual by FTA.

(a) FTA Triennial Review Workbook

The Triennial Review is the process by which FTA is required to review and evaluate completely every three years the performance of a recipient of Urbanized Area Formula (Section 5307) Program funds and how it meets statutory and administrative requirements, especially those requirements included in the Annual Certifications and Assurances. In addition to evaluating compliance with Federal law, the review gives FTA an opportunity to provide technical assistance on the latest FTA requirements. Triennial reviews also aid FTA in reporting to the Secretary, Congress, other oversight agencies, and the public transportation community on the Urbanized Area Formula Program.

While the potential new grantee might not be subject to these reviews, depending upon the type of funding is being requested, the workbook provides a strong assessment and abundant guidance on FTA requirements for any grantee.

FTA Technical Capacity Guidance Documents and Links

Technical Capacity Questionnaire Appendix C

FTA Triennial Review Workbook

http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FY_2014_Triennial_Review_Workshop_Workbook_Rev_2.pdf

FTA SMR Workbook

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/12898.html>

FTA Grant Management Circular

http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8640.html

Third Party Procurement Circular

http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8641.html

Best Practices Procurement Manual

http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13054_6037.html

Regional Expert

Varies by Geographic Area

See [Geographic Assignments](#) for FTA Region IV for the Engineer/Program Manager

Assigned to your area

Summary of Required Submittals:

1. Technical Capacity Questionnaire
2. Technical Capacity Questionnaire Supporting Documentation
3. Organizational Chart

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Comply with Civil Rights

Potential new grantees must agree to comply with all applicable civil rights statutes and implementing regulations as a condition of receiving any FTA funding, regardless of type.

The three major Civil Rights Programs that require a submittal to FTA as part of the New Grantee Process are:

1. **Title VI Plan**
2. **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan**
3. **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan and Triennial Goals**

Two other Civil Rights areas should also be reviewed and considered as part of the New Grantee Process:

4. *American with Disabilities Act (ADA)*
5. *Environmental Justice*

While these areas do not require specific submittals for the purposes of the Regional Capacity/Requirements Review, all FTA grantees are subject to their requirements.

FTA Civil Rights Guidance Documents and Links

| | |
|--|---|
| Title VI Program Checklist | Appendix D |
| FTA Title VI Website | http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12328.html |
| Title VI Circular | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_14792.html |
| EEO Program Checklist | Appendix E |
| FTA EEO Website | http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12327.html |
| EEO Circular | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_5951.html |
| DBE Program Checklist | Appendix F |
| FTA DBE Website | http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12326.html |
| FTA TVM Listing | http://www.fta.dot.gov/12326_5626.html |
| USDOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization | http://www.dot.gov/osdbu/ |
| Proposed EEO Circular | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_14860.html |
| Environmental Justice Circular | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_14740.html |

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Summary of Required Submittals:

1. Title VI Plan and Required Elements
2. EEO Plan (or Questionnaire to justify exemption)
3. DBE Plan (or Exemption justification letter)

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states the following:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the broad, institution-wide application of Title VI. Title VI covers all of the operations of covered entities without regard to whether specific portions of the covered program or activity are federally funded. The term “program or activity” means all of the operations of a department, agency, special purpose district, or government; or the entity of such State or local government that distributes such assistance and each such department or agency to which the assistance is extended, in the case of assistance to a State or local government.

Potential New Grantees must submit a Title VI Program that is compliant with reference [FTA Circular 4702.1B](#): “Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for FTA Recipients”, and submit an assurance that it will comply with Title VI.

All potential new grantees are required to submit a Title VI plan with the following elements:

1. Title VI Notice to the Public, including a list of locations where the notice is posted
2. Title VI Complaint Procedures (i.e., instructions to the public regarding how to file a Title VI discrimination complaint)
3. Title VI Complaint Form
4. List of transit-related Title VI investigations, complaints, and lawsuits
5. Public Participation Plan, including information about outreach methods to engage minority and limited English proficient populations (LEP), as well as a summary of outreach efforts made since the last Title VI Program submission
6. Language Assistance Plan for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), based on the DOT LEP Guidance. Additional guidance on LEP can be found in the LEP Handbook provided in Appendix D.
7. A table depicting the membership of non-elected committees and councils, the membership of which is selected by the recipient, broken down by race, and a description of the process the agency uses to encourage the participation of minorities on such committees
8. Primary recipients shall include a description of how the agency monitors its subrecipients for compliance with Title VI, and a schedule of subrecipient Title VI Program submissions
9. A Title VI equity analysis if the recipient has constructed a facility, such as a vehicle storage facility, maintenance facility, operation center, etc.
10. A copy of board meeting minutes, resolution, or other appropriate documentation showing the board of directors or appropriate governing entity or official(s) responsible for policy decisions reviewed and approved the Title VI Program. For State DOT’s, the

appropriate governing entity is the State's Secretary of Transportation or equivalent. The approval must occur prior to submission to FTA.

Further information is also required depending on the type of potential new grantee and the service they will provide. Refer to chapters IV, V, and VI of the Title VI Circular for additional submittal requirements. A checklist of the Title VI Plan requirements is also available in Appendix D.

In addition, consistent with 28 CFR § 50.3, entities applying for FTA funding for the first time must provide a summary of any past Title VI compliance activities stemming from the receipt of funding from any other Federal agencies.

(a) *Summary of Title VI Compliance History*

Specifically, this summary should include any Title VI compliance review activities conducted in the previous three years, including the purpose or reason for the review, the name of the agency or organization that performed the review, a summary of the findings and recommendations of the review, and a report on the status and/or disposition of such findings and recommendations. In addition, first-time applicants shall submit a brief description of any pending applications to other Federal agencies for assistance, and whether any Federal agency has found the applicant to be in noncompliance with any civil rights requirement.

2. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

The Federal Transit Laws, 49 U.S.C. 5332(b), provide that "no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or age be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any project, program or activity funded in whole or in part through financial assistance under this Act." This applies to employment and business opportunities and is considered to be in addition to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

To achieve the Equal Employment Opportunity described in the Federal Transit Laws, FTA requires all recipients of FTA funding, which meet certain thresholds, to develop and submit for approval an EEO Plan every three years. Those thresholds are:

1. Fifty (50) or more transit-related employees AND
2. Receives capital or operating assistance in excess of \$1 million, OR planning assistance in excess of \$250,000.

In order to assist potential new grantees in determining if they meet these thresholds, each potential new grantee should complete the EEO Questionnaire found in Appendix E.

The purpose of the EEO plans is to establish a strong company policy and commitment to equal employment opportunity. Within these plans, top officials should be assigned responsibility and authority for the program. In addition, the plan should analyze the present workforce to identify jobs and departments where minorities and females are underrepresented. From there the plan should outline a detailed, results-oriented set of procedures designed to achieve prompt and full utilization of minorities and women at all levels and in all parts of the grantees' workforce.

Each EEO Plan should have the following components:

1. Statement of Policy
2. Dissemination
3. Designation of Personnel Responsibility
4. Utilization Analysis
5. Goals and Timetables
6. Assessment of Employment Practices
7. Monitoring and Reporting

An EEO Program Checklist is provided in Appendix E for reference in the development of these plans.

3. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan and Triennial Goal

All FTA Grantees must comply with DOT regulation, “Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in Department of Transportation Financial Assistance Programs,” 49 CFR part 26. Among other provisions, this regulation requires certain recipients of DOT Federal financial assistance, namely State and local transportation agencies, to establish goals for the participation of disadvantaged entrepreneurs and certify the eligibility of DBE firms to participate in their DOT-assisted contracts.

There are two main components of an FTA-approved DBE Program:

(a) Written DBE Program

Written DBE programs are required of FTA recipients of planning, capital, and/or operating assistance that will have contracting opportunities (excluding transit vehicle purchases) exceeding \$250,000 with those funds in a Federal fiscal year. Contracting opportunities are counted in the aggregate, and include FTA funded purchase orders, capital projects, professional services, Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan funded projects, and contracting activities of subrecipients.

The DBE program plan is not an annual submission and grantees do not submit regular updates of their DBE programs. However, significant changes to the programs must be submitted for approval. Grantees (particularly new grantees) that do not meet the threshold are not required to develop a written DBE program.

(b) Triennial DBE Goals

Overall three-year goals must be submitted to FTA for review by August 1 preceding the Federal fiscal year in which the goal submission is due. The submittal must include a description of the methodology used to establish the goal and other items detailed in 49 CFR 26.45.

These goals must be based on demonstrable evidence of the availability of ready, willing, and able DBEs relative to all businesses ready, willing, and able to participate on FTA-assisted contracts. The goal must reflect the grantee’s determination of the level of DBE participation the grantee would expect absent the effects of discrimination. Grantees cannot rely on either the 10 percent aspirational goal at the national level, or the previous goal, or past DBE participation rates without reference to the relative availability of DBEs in the market.

As required by 49 CFR part 26 and approved by DOT, the recipient’s DBE Program is incorporated by reference and made part of the Grant Agreement or Cooperative Agreement. The recipient agrees that implementation of this DBE Program is a legal obligation, and that

failure to carry out its terms shall be treated as a violation of the Grant Agreement or Cooperative Agreement.

It is also important to note that FTA recipients that meet the DBE thresholds are also required to submit Semi-Annual DBE Reports. These reports are to be filed in our Transportation Electronic Award and Management (TEAM) System on June and December 1 of each year.

Regardless of whether a DBE program and goal submittal is required for a potential new grantee, for FTA-assisted transit vehicle procurements, all FTA recipients must ensure that each transit vehicle manufacturer (TVM) certifies that it has complied with the USDOT DBE requirements. This can be achieved by checking the [TVM listing](#) on FTA's website or by checking with FTA's Office of Civil Rights at the time of bid-opening that the manufacturer, which is the apparent contract recipient, is in fact in compliance.

4. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provide that no entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation service. The law sets forth specific requirements for vehicle and facility accessibility and the provision of service, including complementary paratransit service.

Recipients must ensure that each transit vehicle meets the accessibility requirements for that vehicle type specified in 49 CFR Part 38, as incorporated by 49 CFR 37.7 and implemented under Subpart D to 49 CFR Part 37. Where a vehicle or component departs from the particular technical and scoping requirements of 49 CFR Part 38, as described in 49 CFR 38.2, the recipient must obtain a determination of equivalent facilitation from the FTA Administrator as described in 49 CFR 37.7(b), subject to the provisions found in 37.7(b)(2)-(6). Where a specific vehicle type is not addressed by 49 CFR Part 38, accessibility requirements must be determined by the US Department of Transportation in consultation with the US Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) as specified in 49 CFR 38.171(c).

Recipients must ensure that transit facilities meets the accessibility requirements specified in 49 CFR Part 38, as incorporated by 49 CFR 37.7 and implemented under Subpart C to 49 CFR Part 37. Where any departures from the specific requirements are contemplated, as permitted under 36 CFR part 1191, the recipient must obtain a determination of equivalent facilitation from the FTA Administrator as described in 49 CFR 37.9(d), subject to the provisions found in 37.7(d)(2)-(6).

Potential New Grantees must also agree to comply, and assures the compliance of each third party contractor and each subrecipient at any tier of the project, with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance.

While no specific submittal is required during the New Grantee Process, these requirements are incorporated into the FTA Master Agreement and Annual Certifications and Assurances. Failure to adhere to these requirements could result in FTA funding restrictions or repayments.

5. Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” required the USDOT and the FTA to make environmental justice (EJ) part of our mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of our programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and/or low-income populations (collectively “EJ populations”). Environmental justice at FTA includes planning and decision-making processes as well as project-specific environmental reviews.

FTA grantees and subgrantees are required to consider the EJ guiding principles followed by DOT and FTA:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significantly delay the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

While no specific submittal is required during the New Grantee Process, these requirements are incorporated into the FTA Master Agreement and Annual Certifications and Assurances. Failure to adhere to these requirements could result in FTA funding restrictions or repayments.

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System Access Documentation

Once the potential new grantee has completed the Capacity/Requirements review, the next step in the New Grantee Process is to ensure access to the various systems FTA uses to award grants and funnel federal funds to grantees.

The two systems a New Grantee will need access to in order to conduct business with FTA are:

- 1. Transportation Electronic Award and Management System (TEAM)**
- 2. Electronic Clearing House Operation (ECHO)**

1. Transportation Electronic Award and Management (TEAM)

The Transportation Electronic Award and Management (TEAM) system is FTA's Web-based application used to apply for, administer, and manage FTA grants. In order for a new grantee to gain access to the system, the following forms and documents should be completed and provided to the New Grantee Coordinator:

a) Vendor ID Request Form

A copy of this form can be found in Appendix G or on the Region IV [New Grantee Handbook](#) website. The New Grantee should ensure the "Vendor Information" and "Contact Persons" sections are completed in their entirety.

b) TEAM User Access Forms

Every individual in the New Grantee's organization who will require access to the TEAM system is required to submit a TEAM User Access Form. New Grantees should establish their own policies and procedures to determine the appropriate level of access for their TEAM Users. In general, there are three levels of access:

- *Inquiry Only:* These users are able to view grants and reports in the system. They will not be able to enter or alter any substantive information.
- *User Without PIN #:* These users are able to submit reports, enter, and edit grants in the system.
- *User With PIN #:* These users will have the same abilities as those without a PIN #, but will also have a PIN # which, depending on the PIN access granted will be able to submit or execute grants, or electronically sign the annual certifications and assurances as the main Official or Attorney for the grantee.

NOTE: Any users requiring a PIN number will need to submit a Designation of Signature Authority Letter along with their User Access Form.

For a more in depth description of all aspects of the User Access Forms, please reference the [Instructions](#) document provided in Appendix G.

c) Designation of Signature Authority Letter

For any users that will require a PIN #, their User Access Forms should be accompanied by a Designation of Signature Authority Letter (example letter provided in Appendix G). These letters should be on agency letterhead and contain the following information:

- Reference the user being granted a PIN #
- The user's PIN functions, i.e. submit grant applications, certify as attorney, etc, this should correlate with the User Access Form.
- Signatures from the organization's CEO and legal counsel.

After this documentation has been provided, the FTA Region IV Local Security Manager (LSM) for TEAM will create the user profiles based on the forms submitted. TEAM will send automated emails with the user's new username and temporary password. For any users that requested a PIN #, the Region IV LSM will call the new user to provide that information directly.

TEAM Guidance Documents and Links

| | |
|---|---|
| Vendor ID Request Form | Appendix G |
| TEAM User Access Form | Appendix G |
| TEAM User Access Guide | Appendix G |
| TEAM User Access Form Instructions | Appendix G |
| Example Designation of Signature Authority Letter | Appendix G |
| FTA Region IV TEAM Training Website | http://www.fta.dot.gov/region4_12240.html |
| TEAM-web | http://ftateamweb.fta.dot.gov |

TEAM Point of Contact

Robert Buckley, Community Planner
Phone: 404-865-5618
E-mail: robert.buckley@dot.gov

Summary of Required Submittals:

1. Vendor ID Request Form
2. User Access Form(s)
3. Designation of Signature Authority Letter

2. Electronic Clearing House Operation (ECHO)

ECHO is a computer-based application that processes draw down requests from and makes payments to FTA. It consists of a web-based application which grantees can access via the internet to submit their draw down data. ECHO then transmits funds for requests approved for payment to the Grantee's financial institution through Treasury's Automated Clearing House (ACH) process. The ECHO User Manual can be found in Appendix H.

ECHO processes payment requests by validating individual project payment requests against the available project balance maintained by the FTA and FAA Accounting Offices. The FTA accounting and financial system staff are the only users who will have global access to all ECN numbers in ECHO. In order to grant access to the appropriate users in the New Grantee's organization, the following documentation is required:

a) ECHO Authorization and Certification Letter for User Access

The Authorization and Certification Letter designates the Authorizing Official and Contact Persons for your organization. It must contain the following information:

- Signature of Authorizing Official (s)
- Signature of the Head of your Organization or Designee
- Contact person (s) who are designated to have User-IDs

The Authorizing Official approves all payment requests; monitors fund availability, and are responsible for approving all changes concerning financial institution account information. It is important to note that ***Authorizing Officials are restricted to INQUIRY Only access***, if they receive an ECHO account. Authorizing Official ***cannot*** have Update Access.

The contact persons are the recipients of the ECHO User-IDs. These individuals are responsible for querying the system for payment information or ensuring that payment requests are submitted properly. They serve as the primary liaisons between the recipient organization and FTA.

This letter should be printed on the new grantee's letterhead, with authorizing signature, and included with the additional forms below for each of the identified users.

A blank version of this form can be found on the ECHO website at <http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov>.

b) ECHO-Web User Access Request

This form specifies the user and their access level to the ECHO system. A separate form will be needed for each user. Include information for mandatory fields in the USER INFORMATION section. User's E-mail address and ECN must be associated with the

organization (no personal email addresses). Only one user can be designated for INQUIRY access and up to two users can be designated for UPDATE access.

A blank version of this form can be found on the ECHO website at <http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov>.

c) ECHO-Web System Rules of Conduct

A signed copy of this form must accompany each User Access Request form and should be signed by the user requesting the access. Make copies of the form for the number of users requiring access. Each user requesting access must sign and date the form. Designated ECN must match the ECN entered on User Access Request form. Return signed originals with the authorization letter to FTA

A blank version of this form can be found on the ECHO website at <http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov>.

ECHO Guidance Documents and Links

| | |
|---|---|
| ECHO User Manual | Appendix H |
| ECHO User Access Request Form | http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov |
| ECHO-Web Rules of Conduct Form | http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov |
| ECHO Authorization and Certification Form | http://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov |

ECHO Point of Contact

Derethia Johnson, Transportation Program Specialist

Phone: 404-865-5627

E-mail: Derethia.johnson@dot.gov

Summary of Required Submittals:

1. ECHO Authorization and Certification Letter for User Access
2. ECHO-Web User Access Requests for all users
3. ECHO-Web System Rules of Conduct for all users

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New Grantee Review Process

Once all materials discussed in the preceding sections have been compiled/developed they should be submitted via email or mail to the FTA Region IV New Grantee Coordinator:

Robert Buckley
 230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 800
 Atlanta, GA 30303-1512
 Phone: 404-865-5618
 E-mail: robert.buckley@dot.gov.

The Region IV New Grantee Coordinator can be contacted for any process or general New Grantee questions. A Regional Expert has been identified in each of the preceding sections for any questions relating to the development of those materials.

The Regional Review process will begin once all documentation has been received by the FTA Region IV New Grantee Coordinator (Please see the New Grantee Checklist below that summarizes the required submittals for all sections). Upon receipt of all documentation, the New Grantee Coordinator will initiate a 30 day review period for the Regional Experts to review the submitted documentation and provide concurrence to the New Grantee Coordinator that the potential new grantee has demonstrated appropriate capacity and compliance with FTA requirements.

A sample timeline for the New Grantee Process is below. Potential New Grantees should expect questions/comments from Regional Experts as they review the submitted documentation. Depending on the substance of the questions/comments, the review process could extend beyond 30 days.

New Grantee Process Timeline

| <u>Action</u> | <u>Agency</u> | <u>Estimated Time</u> |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| Compilation/Development of Required New Grantee Documents | New Grantee | 30 Days |
| FTA Review Period: New Grantee Documents | FTA | 30 Days |
| New Grantee Response to FTA Review Comments | New Grantee | 30 Days |
| Approval of Legal/Technical/Financial/Civil Rights Requirements | FTA | 14 Days |
| System Access Documentation Development | New Grantee | 14 Days |
| System Access Documentation Processing | FTA | 14 Days |
| Confirmation of New Grantee Process Completion | FTA | 14 Days |
| Total Estimated Time | | ~5 Months |

New Grantee Checklist

Legal Capacity

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Opinion of Counsel | |
| 2. Authorizing Resolution | |

Financial Capacity

| | |
|---|--|
| 3. Financial Capacity Questionnaire | |
| 4. Current Year Operating and Capital Budgets | |
| 5. Three Years of A-133 Reports | |
| 6. 3-5 Year Financial Plan | |

Technical Capacity

| | |
|--|--|
| 7. Technical Capacity Questionnaire | |
| 8. Technical Capacity Questionnaire Supporting Documentation | |
| 9. Organizational Chart | |

Civil Rights Requirements

| | |
|--|--|
| 10. Title VI Plan and Required Elements | |
| 11. EEO Plan (or Questionnaire to justify exemption) | |
| 12. DBE Plan (or Exemption justification letter) | |

TEAM Forms

| | |
|---|--|
| 13. Vendor ID Request form | |
| 14. User Access forms for all users | |
| 15. Designation of Signature Authority Letter: New users with PIN | |

ECHO Forms

| | |
|---|--|
| 16. ECHO Authorization and Certification Letter for User Access | |
| 17. ECHO-Web User Access Requests for all users | |
| 18. ECHO-Web System Rules of Conduct for all users | |

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Additional FTA Guidance Documents and Links

Once approved through the New Grantee Process, there are number of resources available for familiarizing those within the New Grantee’s organization about FTA programs, procedures and processes. The links below provide a snapshot of that information. The assigned planner and program manager for the New Grantee’s geographic area will also be an invaluable resource for becoming familiar with FTA.

FTA Grant Program Guidance

Cross-Cutting Program Circulars

| <i>Topic</i> | <i>Circular</i> | <i>Link</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Grant Management Requirements | FTA C 5010.1D | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8640.html |
| Procurement | FTA C 4220.1F | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8641.html |

Major Program Specific Circulars

| <i>Topic</i> | <i>Circular</i> | <i>Link</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 5307 UZA Formula Program | FTA C 9030.1E | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_15209.html |
| Metro and State Planning Program | FTA C 8100.1C | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8454.html |
| 5309 Capital Investment Program | FTA C 9300.1B | http://www.fta.dot.gov/legislation_law/12349_8642.html |

FTA Region IV Grantee Resource Centers

FTA Region IV also provides a large amount of information and training materials online at their external website. New Grantees are encouraged to explore this resource and reach out to assigned planners and program managers with questions/comments/concerns.

- **Region IV Grantee Resource Center:** http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/region4_261.html

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Appendices

Appendix A: Legal Capacity Documents

Appendix B: Financial Capacity Documents

Appendix C: Technical Capacity Documents

Appendix D: Civil Rights – Title VI Documents

Appendix E: Civil Rights – EEO Documents

Appendix F: Civil Rights – DBE Documents

Appendix G: TEAM Documents

Appendix H: ECHO Documents