

Call for Projects for FTA Section 5310 Funding (FY2021)

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

September 27, 2021

French Broad River MPO
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806

mpo@landofsky.org

828.251.6662

Introduction

The following information is for the French Broad River MPO fall 2021 call for projects for FTA Section 5310 funding—Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. This call for projects is being held to allocate FY2021 apportionment of FTA Section 5310 funds to the Asheville Urbanized Area. This document provides prospective applicants with the tools and guidance needed to submit an application for the 2021 funding year for the following Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 funding sources—the French Broad River MPO Apportionment:

- 5310 Mobility Management in rural, small urban areas, and large urban areas
- 5310 Operating assistance for transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities in small and large urban areas
- 5310 Purchased transit service for seniors and persons with disabilities in small and large urban areas

Funding Available

| FY 2021's Section 5310 Allocation | |
|---|-----------|
| FY 2021 FTA Section 5310 Funds Available to Asheville UZA | \$354,278 |
| Section 5310 Admin at 10% | \$35,428 |
| Remaining Section 5310 after Admin | \$318,850 |

| American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Section 5310* | |
|---|----------|
| ARPA 5310 (Total) | \$60,154 |
| 10% Admin | \$6,015 |
| Remaining ARPA after Admin | \$54,139 |

*Note: ARPA funds can only be used for operations and payroll (if employees were furloughed). Thus, the only projects that can receive ARPA funding are “Other” or non-capital projects.

Program Goal

“The goal of Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. The FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas—large urbanized, small urbanized, and rural. The program requires coordination with other federally assisted programs and services in order to make the most efficient use of federal resources.”

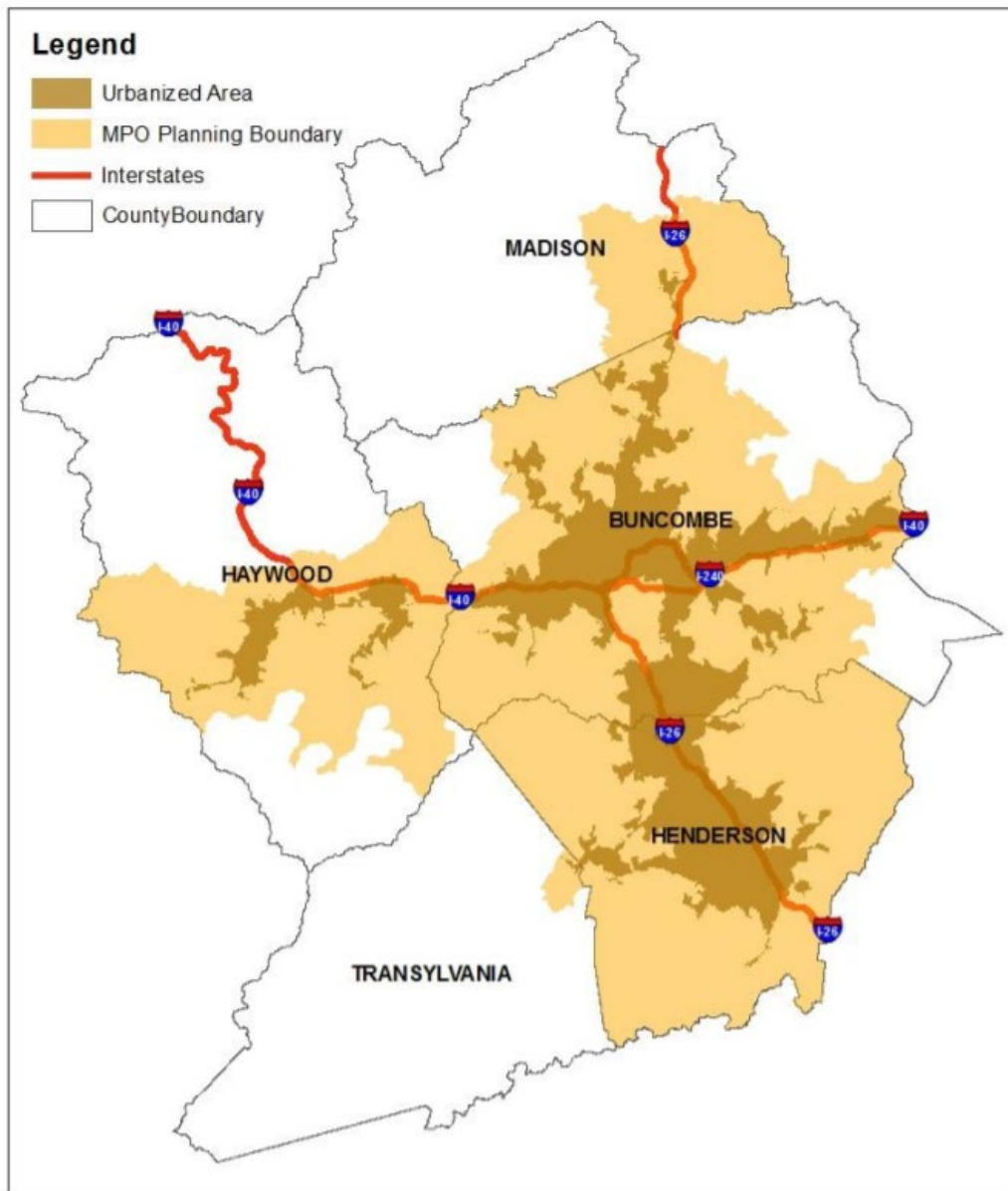
Program History

The Section 5310 program was established in 1975 as a capital assistance program for public transportation providers (or nonprofit organizations where public transit was unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate.) Since 1975 the program has undergone a number of transformations that included the eligibility of public transportation providers to coordinate human service transportation and requirements that projects be linked to a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.

Under MAP-21, FTA's Section 5317 program (New Freedom) and its eligible activities were consolidated into the Section 5310. As a result, projects that were eligible under New Freedom are now eligible under Section 5310.

In our region, the City of Asheville was appointed as the designated recipient of FTA Section 5310 funds for the Asheville Urbanized Area (shown below) in 2014. While the French Broad River MPO and its 5310 Selection Committee are responsible for holding a call for projects and selecting projects to be programmed, any selected subrecipients will be required to contract with the City of Asheville in order to receive funds.

Asheville Urbanized Area



Eligible Applicants

Private nonprofit organization, state or local government authorities, and private operators of public transportation systems are eligible for Section 5310 funding. However, applicants that are eligible for Section 5310 funding differ based on the type of funding that is being requested: Traditional Section 5310 Projects or Other Section 5310 Projects.

Organizations eligible for Traditional 5310 funding activities include:

- Private Nonprofit Organization
- A state or local government authority that:

- Is approved by a state to coordinate services for seniors and individuals with disabilities; or
- Certifies that there are no nonprofit organizations readily available in the area to provide the service.

Organizations eligible for Other Section 5310 activities include:

- State or local government authority
- Private nonprofit organization
- An operator of public transportation that receives a Section 5310 grant indirectly through a recipient.

***Applicants with a Section 5311 – Rural Transit System in their area are ineligible for operating assistance unless the applicant provides adequate proof that the public transit system is unable to meet the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in the area. Applicants must demonstrate how the additional 5310 funding will fill the gaps in service for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Applicants must also describe their current and future coordination efforts with the rural to ensure that all federal funds will be used to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the community. Applicants without a 5311 transit system in their area will receive first consideration.

Eligible Projects

Section 5310 covers a wide range of eligible activities, but the funding source has several specific requirements that determine how much of the region’s funding can go towards specific activities. The FTA requires that 55% of a region’s 5310 funds be used for traditional 5310 activities. Up to 10% may be used for administrative expenses by the designated recipient, and the remaining funds may be used for Other/Nontraditional 5310 activities.

All proposed projects must conform to the locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit—Human Services Transportation plan (LCP).

Traditional 5310 Projects

At least 55% of program funds must be used on “traditional” capital projects that are:

- Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable.
 - Examples of “traditional” projects include, but are not limited to:
 - Vehicle rehabilitation (e.g. radios, wheelchair lifts, ramps)¹
 - Passenger facilities (benches, shelters, amenities)
 - Intelligent transportation systems (including scheduling, routing, one-call systems)
 - Dispatch and fare collection systems

¹ Legal ownership of all vehicles purchased under the 5310 program is retained by the transit operators and in the case of private provider, by the City of Asheville. Subrecipients are required to submit a “Buy America” provision and certification with their bidding documents for vehicles.

- Mobility management programs (described below)
- Lease of equipment when it is more cost effective:
 - Transportation services under contract or lease
 - Capital and operating expenses associated with contracted services
 - Mobility management (including travel training, marketing of services, & eligibility management)
 - Coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies

Nontraditional/Other Projects

The remainder of program funds may be used for public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of ADA, improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit service, or provide alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation. The following activities are examples of eligible projects that go beyond the minimum requirements of ADA:

- Expansion of paratransit service beyond the ¾ mile required by ADA
- Expansion of service hours for ADA paratransit beyond hours of fixed-route services
- Incremental cost of providing same day service; incremental cost of making door-to-door service available to all ADA paratransit riders
- Enhancing service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination
- Purchase of equipment designed for mobility aids that exceed the dimensions/weight ratings under the ADA and labor costs of aides to help drivers with over-sized wheelchairs
- Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond ADA requirement feeder service to other transit services for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations or renovation to an existing station
- Building accessible paths to bus stops that are currently inaccessible (curb cuts, sidewalks, pedestrian signals, or other accessible features)
- Improving signage or wayfinding technology
- Other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for those with disabilities including ITS
- Travel training
- Public transportation alternatives that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation.
 - Examples of “nontraditional” projects include: Travel training, volunteer driver programs, building an accessible path to bus stop including curb-cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals or other accessible features; improving signage or wayfinding technology; incremental cost of providing same day service or door-to-door service; purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, rides sharing and/or vanpooling programs; and mobility management.
 -

Mobility Management

This category covers projects designed to enhance the mobility of individuals within a region. Funds may be used to hire staff to provide mobility services, purchase transportation for individuals needing to travel in a region, marketing of mobility services for a region, coordination efforts within a region, or other services designed to enhance mobility.

Mobility Management assists moving any individual using a range of transportation options with a focus on effectiveness and cost-efficiency. Mobility Management seeks and leverages a variety of funds and partnerships to connect resources and needs in a sustainable manner. Mobility Management is customer focused, serves a vital role in improving access for citizens, especially those who are elderly or have disabilities, and assists transportation providers in making the best use of scarce resources. Mobility management activities are intended to build coordination between existing health and human service agencies, employment services, and public transportation providers with the result of expanding the availability of service. Funding may be used for salaries, benefits, and related program expenses.

Eligible mobility management activities include: promotion and enhancement of access to transit services; short term management activities for planning/implementation of coordination; support of local coordination bodies and councils; operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers; provision of coordination services like travel training and trip planning; development and operation of one-stop travel call centers; eligibility management; operations and planning using intelligent transportation technology (GIS, GPS, coordinated vehicle scheduling/dispatch/monitoring, coordinated billing, and single smart customer payment system). **The purchase of technology** is also an eligible capital expense.

Travel Training

Projects in this category consist of efforts designed to transition persons with disabilities from specialized ADA services onto regular fixed route services. These projects must operate within an area where a fixed route program **and** its complementary paratransit program exist. They typically operate in areas where other mobility management services are available. Funding may be used for salaries of trainers, purchase of travel training services, development of travel training materials, or the purchase of fixed route tickets or passes needed for one-on-one training.

Brokerage Operations

Funding for these services is limited to agencies that broker transportation trip requests among at least three service providers. The applicant may be one of the providers as long as they identify the other participants in the brokerage. In addition, the applicant must show the processes by which they broker requests.

Public Transportation Alternatives

Alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities are eligible for funding. These activities may include: ride sharing and/or vanpooling programs; supporting the administration and expense related to new voucher programs for existing transportation services offered by human service providers (mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program, taxi trip, or trips provided by human service agency). Vouchers are an operational expense that requires a

50/50 match. Support of volunteer driver and aide programs is also an eligible activity (administration, safety, background checks, scheduling, coordination of passengers, and insurance associated with volunteer driver programs).

For a more detailed list of traditional and other project types, please refer to the FTA Section 5310 circular, available at:

https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/C9070_1G_FINAL_circular_4-20-15%281%29.pdf

OR contact MPO staff at mpo@landofsky.org

In addition to the eligible project types mentioned above, the City of Asheville's Program Management Plan for Section 5310 specifies the following requirements:

- Eligible matching funds must be identified and available.
- The primary focus of the proposed service or program must serve the target populations, namely seniors and individuals with disabilities
- The project must benefit the French Broad River MPO urbanized area. More details about project eligibility are available in the FTA Section 5310 Circular, mentioned above.

Cost Sharing/ Match Requirements

The 5310 grant program requires a local match. The FTA's contribution varies according to project type (please see below). Non-DOT funds and local and private funds can be used as the local match. Examples of types of programs that are potential sources of local match include: employment, training, aging, medical, community services, and rehabilitation services. Funds can be used to support:

- Capital Projects – 80% Federal/20% Local Match
- Operating – 50% Federal/50% Local Match
- ADA vehicle-related equipment (on and attached to the vehicles) – 90% Federal/ 10% Local Match
 - The match must be the total cost of the project, not just a match of federal portion

Below are some examples of potential sources for local match, which may be used for any or the entire local shares amount:

- State or local appropriations (such as EDTAP funds);
- Other non-DOT Federal funds that are eligible to be expended for transportation;
- Private donations;
- Revenue from human service contracts;
- Net income generated from advertising and concessions;
- Non-cash share such as donations, volunteered services, or in-kind contributions is eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported, AND is a cost that will otherwise be eligible under the program;
- Income from contracts to provide human service transportation.

Title VI

As a recipient of federal funds, each grant partner must develop and maintain a Title VI Program in accordance with FTA Circular 4702.1B, "Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit

Administration Recipients.” The purpose of Title VI is to ensure non-discrimination in the recipient’s services, programs, and activities. Funds will not be administered to an agency without a documented Title VI Program.

Application Procedures

This Section 5310 program application is for funds to be used within the Asheville Urbanized Area. The initial project application consists of the program specific requirements detailed in this package of forms and instructions.

Prospective applicants should email mpo@landofsky.org by **close of business (5:00pm) on October 29, 2021** to express their interest in applying. The email should include general scope of the project, anticipated costs, and requested federal funding, in order to ensure the project is eligible under FTA guidelines.

Applications must be submitted electronically in PDF form and must mail 2 hard copies of the application to the FBRMPO office. Please note that email attachments should be 20 megabytes or less; if sending larger files, please split into multiple emails. For those who prefer to submit applications via email or mail, a PDF version of the application will be available on the MPO website. Any submissions sent via mail should be submitted to:

French Broad River MPO
Land of Sky Regional Council
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806
mpo@landofsky.org

The information in this application is a public record. Applicants should not include any information that may be regarded as confidential. The applicant must comply with all necessary Certifications and Assurances if funding is awarded.

Application and Project Selection Timeline

| 2020 FTA Section 5310 Call for Projects Application Timeline | |
|--|---|
| September 27, 2021 | 5310 and JARC Call for Projects opens |
| November 19, 2021 | 5310 and JARC applications due to FBRMPO |
| January 2022 | FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee meets to review 5310 and JARC applications |
| January 2022 | TCC approves 5310 and JARC project selection |
| January 2022 | MPO Board votes on 5310 and JARC project selection |
| January 2022 | MPO Board approves TIP Amendments for 5310 and JARC Projects |

Required Documents for Application

The following documents are required for applications for FTA Section 5310 funding:

1. A completed application form (at the end of the packet)
 - a. Project need/goals that align with the CPT-HST
 - b. Implementation Plan
 - c. Program Effectiveness and Performance Measures
 - d. Outreach Plan
 - e. Agency's Title VI Plan
2. Map of Applicant Service Area
3. Proposed Project Budget/Financial Statement
 - a. Audited Financial statements for the past three years including tax returns (if applicable)
 - b. Applicable pro-forma balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements for the duration of the project (or public sector budget equivalents)
 - c. Applicable current insurance coverage including assets and liability and/or quotes for new or expanded projects
 - d. Describe how project relates to any federal or other programs that the agency operates and, if applicable, how these resources can be leveraged for the project
 - e. Describe any potential long-term efforts or funding sources that will sustain this project should 5310 funding no longer be available in the future years, if proposed project is a multi-year project.
4. Letter of non-federal match commitment
 - a. Provide sufficient evidence of the stability of the non-federal share submitting a letter ensuring intent to request funds be allocated to match in the following budget (or that funds continue to be matched if they already are). Applications without match will not be considered.
5. Appropriate Certifications and Assurances (or a statement indicating whether the necessary certifications and assurances will be submitted, if submitting at a later date)

Certifications and Assurances

The City of Asheville Program Management Plan for 5310 specifies the following requirements for 5310 subrecipients:

"Subrecipients recommended for federal funding submit all project appropriate FTA certifications and assurances prior to contract execution and annually thereafter. These include, but are not limited to:

- Standard Assurances
- Nondiscrimination Assurances
- Private Mass Transportation Companies
- Assurance of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

The COA will not execute any grant contract without first having received these items. The City shall exercise an active oversight role with regard to the equipment procurement process."

Project Selection

This call for projects will be competitive. Projects will be passed along from MPO staff to the 5310 Selection committee. The FBRMPO Prioritization Subcommittee has been serving as the 5310 Selection Committee for the French Broad River MPO since the spring of 2018, with final approval of projects selected for funding taking place at the French Broad River MPO Board.

Project Evaluation Criteria

The scoring for projects will be weighted based on regional priorities and alignment with existing plans. This will be broken down more specifically in the scorecard for this Call for Projects.

All applications must meet the following:

1. Proposed project must include **ALL** of required documentation and be eligible for funds according to FTA 5310 Circular.
2. Proposed project must be a non-duplicative service/program.
3. Eligible matching funds must be identified and available.
4. The primary focus of proposed service or program must serve target populations.
5. The project must benefit the UZA.

Eligible applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Project Need and Goals (35 points)**
 - Aligns with the 5310 Grant program's objectives.
 - Fits with high-priority needs identified in the locally coordinated plan and City of Asheville's Program Management Plan.
 - Positively benefits mobility of senior citizens and/or people with disabilities and provides a service necessary for the quality of life of those persons. Applicant demonstrates how project fills an identified gap in transportation that cannot reasonably be filled otherwise.
 - Includes projected ridership or impact as well as measures to ensure quality service.
 - Will consider factors including the responsiveness of the proposal to existing travel patterns, provision of clean, safe, comfortable, and affordable services, and linkages to other agencies to fill infrastructure gaps.
 - The applicant's proposal meets a need/goal specified in the Coordinated Public Transportation and Human Services Transportation Plan. The latest CPT-HSTP, adopted February 2018 is available at <http://www.fbrmpo.org/tdm/cpt-hst-plan>.
- **Project Budget and Organizational Preparedness (25 points)**
 - Proposal includes sufficient and compelling evidence to demonstrate a need for funding.
 - Project includes necessary budgets and identifies local match funding.

- Projects with highest level of utilization will receive priority consideration for funding. Efficiency is ideally demonstrated by the estimated cost per new customer. Demonstration of need should be done through clear, data-driven cases that involve estimates of current service/performance and anticipated performance measures.
- Project shows financial sustainability beyond grant period
- Proposal demonstrates ability to manage proposed project by including past experience in funding management, detailing organization's capacity, and depicting current operations and management.
- **Project Implementation (25 points)**
 - Proposal has detailed implementation and evaluation plan.
 - Proposal identifies key personnel.
 - Proposal aligns with organization's missions and objectives, which are identified in the proposal.
 - Proposal includes demonstration of staff's experience in managing and/or operating transportation projects and passenger transportation.
- **Equity, Outreach, and Partnerships (15 points)**
 - The Proposal highlights its importance in the realm of equity.
 - Applicants include their Title VI Plan **OR** a document highlighting the ways they are committed to addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion on an organizational level.
 - *Note: Successful applicants will be required to submit a Title VI Plan prior to receiving funds; however, it is not necessary to have a pre-existing Title VI Plan to be eligible to apply for funding.*
 - Proposal includes outreach plan with details on geographic range of project benefits.
 - Outreach plan identifies the ways that applicant intends to market to target groups, marginalized populations, and promote awareness of the project.
 - Project involves coordination with other groups and has stakeholder support including but not limited to human services organizations, the Area Agency on Aging, healthcare providers, etc. Effectiveness of proposed partnerships—describe existing relationships with other organizations to ensure best use of existing services (i.e. list providers in area to be served and ability of clients to access services; report on degree of coordination between local and regional providers and agreements that exist; submit joint application with others in the area if possible; share vehicles with providers when possible).
- **BONUS: Alternative Fuels / Fuel Efficiency (5)**
 - Project utilizes high-efficiency or alternative fueled vehicles / transportation methods.