



FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

# **Rural Public Transportation Programs October 22, 2019**

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

# Public Transportation Industry Profile

## Transit Passengers

FTA provides funding to transit providers delivering over 10 billion trips to public transportation customers, supporting access to jobs, education, health care and other important activities.

## Transit Agencies & Assets

### Agencies ≈ 4,000

900 FTA grantees: states and transit agencies  
3,000 Recipients of FTA funds through the states  
≈ 4,000 Total U.S. Public Transit Providers

### Assets ≈ \$850 billion

130,000 - transit vehicles (e.g. buses, rail cars, ferries)  
13,000 miles – rail track and Bus Rapid Transit guideway  
Other – transit stations, maintenance facilities, etc.

## Transit Workforce

400,000 U.S. Public Transportation Workforce

246,000 vehicle operations

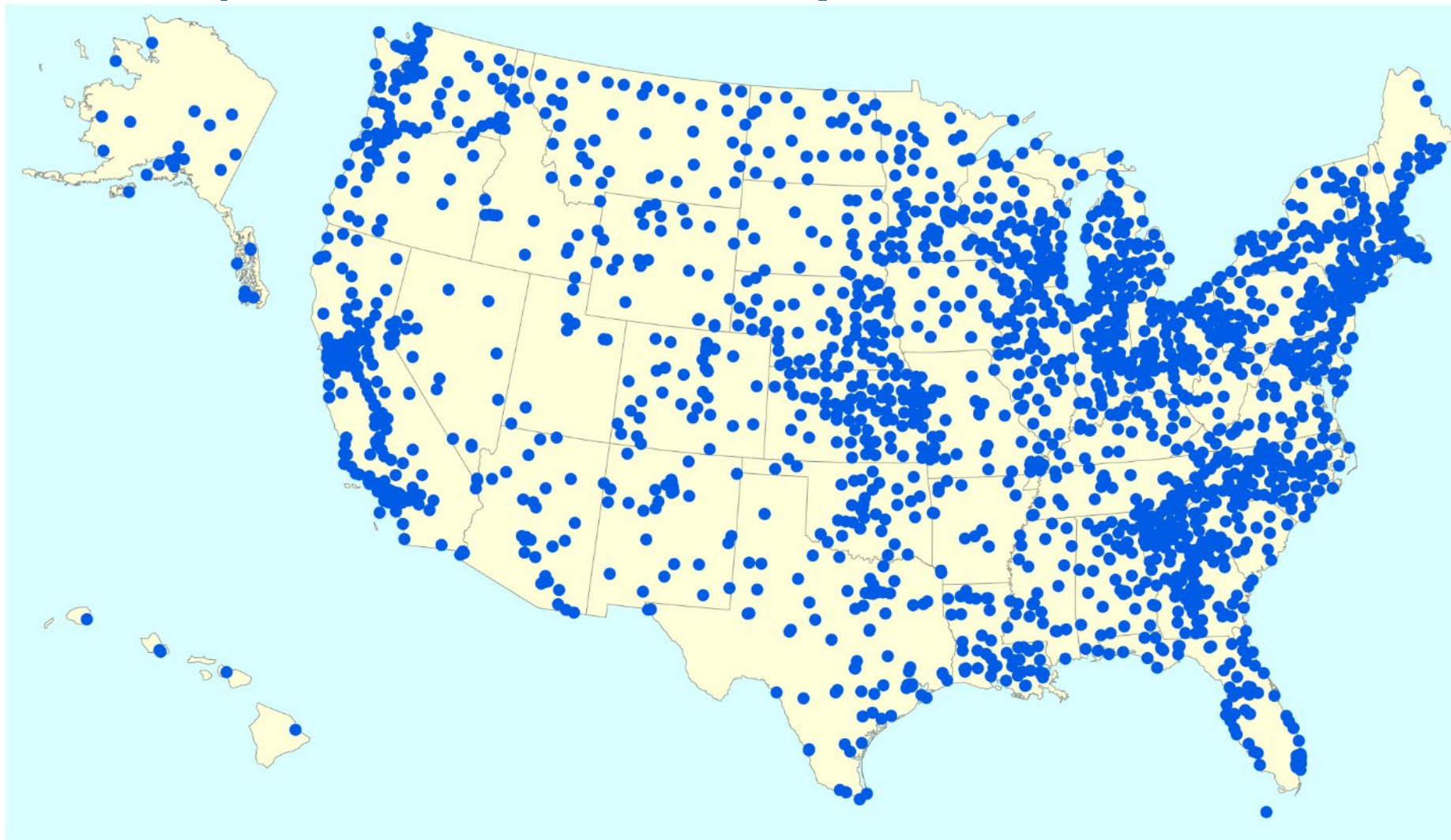
64,000 Vehicle maintenance

42,000 Administration

39,000 Non-vehicle maintenance

9,000 Other

# ≈ 4,000 U.S. Public Transportation Providers



# FTA's Rural Formula Grant Programs

	FY 20 Authorized
5311 Rural Areas Formula	\$709 M
5311 Rural Transit Assistance Program	\$11 M
5311 Tribal Transit Formula Program	\$30 M
5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities	\$57 M (rural amount)
5339 Buses and Bus Facilities Formula	\$91M (statewide amount)
TOTAL	\$898 M

# FTA's Competitive Grant Programs

# Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities

	FY 20 Authorized
5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive <sup>1, 2</sup>	\$289,044,179
5339(c) Low or No Emission Grants	\$55,000,000

<sup>1</sup> Statutory minimum of 10% for rural areas <sup>2</sup>President's Budget requests an additional \$250M

- **Program Purpose:** To assist in the financing of buses and bus facility capital projects.
- **Eligible Recipients:** States, Designated Recipients, Tribes, and Local Government Authorities.
- **Eligible Projects:** Replacement, rehabilitation, purchase or lease of buses and related equipment, and the rehabilitation, purchase, construction or lease of bus-related facilities. Purchase or lease of advanced technology zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including supporting facilities

# Example Buses and Bus Facilities Projects

**California Department of Transportation:** Awarded \$457,139 in 2018 on behalf of Eastern Sierra Transit Authority to build a new operations and administration facility.

**Idaho Transportation Department:** Awarded \$192,000 in 2018 on behalf of the City of Driggs to construct passenger shelters and bus pullouts.

**Iowa Department of Transportation:** Awarded \$7,000,000 in 2018 to replace rural buses throughout the state.

**Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (MT):** Awarded \$2,765,664 in 2018 to construct a new transit facility for vehicle maintenance and storage, administration, and passenger waiting area.

## Example Low/No Projects

**City and Borough of Juneau (AK):** Awarded \$2,600,000 in 2019 to purchase six new battery electric buses, associated charging infrastructure, and a back-up generator.

**Massachusetts DOT:** Awarded \$2,200,000 in 2019 to purchase battery electric buses and charging infrastructure for Massachusetts Regional Transit Authorities.

**Vermont Agency of Transportation:** Awarded \$3,000,000 in 2019 to purchase four new battery electric buses, charging equipment, and facility upgrades to support battery electric bus charging for Advance Transit, serving six communities in Vermont and New Hampshire.



# Public Transportation on Indian Reservations

	FY 20 Authorized
5311 Tribal Transit Competitive Program	\$5,000,000

- **Program Purpose:** Provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to Tribes to support public transportation in tribal areas, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations.
- **Eligible Recipients:** Tribes in rural areas.
- **Eligible Projects:** Planning, capital, and operating projects.

# Example Tribal Projects

**Seneca Nation of Indians** (NY) awarded \$270,000 in 2018 to build a storage facility to house its bus fleet, which links isolated communities to jobs and service.

The **Chippewa Cree Tribe** (MT) awarded \$88,465 in 2018 to install bus shelters throughout the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation to shield passengers from severe weather and improve efficiency.



The **Cherokee Nation** (OK) awarded \$281,250 in 2018 to purchase buses to both replace vehicles that have exceeded their useful life and expand their existing fleet.

# Pilot Program for Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility

	FY 20 Authorized
FAST Section 3006(b)	\$3,500,000

- **Program Purpose:** To support innovative projects for the transportation disadvantaged that improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services.
- **Eligible Recipients:** Recipients or subrecipients of FTA Section 5310 funds.
- **Eligible Projects:** Capital projects.
- **FY 2019 Selections:** Total of 37 projects were funded in FY 2019 totaling \$9.6M.

## Example ICAM projects

**Osage Nation:** awarded \$73,893 in 2019 to purchase a 15-passenger van to increase access to transportation to medical appointments.

**The Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center, Inc.:** awarded \$194,944 in 2019 to purchase vehicles for the Transportation for Rural Appalachian Communities Program (TRAC) in rural southern West Virginia.

**Capacity Builders, Inc.:** awarded \$130,000 in 2019 to focus on transportation services to non-emergency medical services, of the aging and people with disabilities populations in Northwest New Mexico and Montezuma County, Colorado.



# Competitive Program Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Key Points
Demonstration of Need	<b>What is the problem you are trying to solve:</b> Examples – buses beyond their useful life are expensive to maintain; fleets or facilities are too small to meet demands; safety problems Considerations – why this is a periodic need that cannot be funded through FTA's formula or state or local resources
Demonstration of Benefits	<b>What will the project do:</b> Examples – improve the condition of the system; improve reliability and rider experience; enhance access and mobility to jobs, healthcare, etc.
Planning and Local Prioritization	<b>Is the project in the STIP, or can it be added. Does the project have letters of support from local government officials</b>

# Competitive Program Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Key Points
Local Financial Commitment	<b>Is the source of local cost share already committed or can it be readily secured. Does the project provide match greater than required.</b> Submit evidence of availability of funds.
Project Implementation Strategy	<b>Can the funds be obligated within 12 months.</b> Considerations include: Is the schedule reasonable. Status of environmental work. Timeframe to be included in STIP.
Technical, Legal and Financial Commitment	<b>Does the applicant have the technical, legal and financial ability to undertake and complete the project.</b>

## Project Rating

- Projects rated Highly Recommended (HR), Recommended (R), Not Recommended (NR) for each criteria.
- Project provided overall rating
  - Generally project is HR if rated HR in 4 of the 6 criteria
  - NR if NR in any of the 6 criteria

## Selection Factors

- Overall project rating
- Support of Opportunity Zones
- Support of key Departmental objectives
- Higher local financial commitment
- Geographic diversity (nationwide)
- Area type – rural, small urban, large urban
- Diversity in size of the systems
- Receipt of other competitive awards



## Lessons Learned

- Is the project advanced enough to apply?
  - FTA's technical assistance centers can assist
- Identify whether the project is scalable?
- Read and address each evaluation criteria
  - Provide documentation and support
- If unsuccessful, request a debriefing

# Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grant Program

	FY 19 Appropriated
5309 New Starts	\$1,265,670,000
5309 Core Capacity	\$635,000,000
5309 Small Starts	\$526,600,000
Expedited Project Delivery	\$100,000,000
TOTAL	\$2,527,170,000

- **Program Purpose:** To support fixed guideway investments such as new and expanded rapid rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit, and ferries, as well as corridor-based bus rapid transit investments.
- **Eligible Recipients:** State and local government agencies, including transit agencies.
- **Eligible Projects:** Capital projects.
- **Process:** Proscribed steps in law instead of Notice of Funding Opportunity

## Example CIIG projects

- Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) only rural project to date.
  - VELOCIRFTA BRT PROJECT
  - FTA provided \$25 million to the \$46.2 million project for a 39-mile, 9-station BRT that provides frequent service in mixed traffic with designated bus lanes and traffic signal priority.
  - Opened in 2013, operates between Aspen and Glenwood Springs.



# Assisting Rural Areas Apply for Funding

- Presented “Improving Your Grant Writing Skills” at the NRTAP Conference in Portland, OR, September 2019
- NRTAP held a webinar for rural transit providers interested in applying for Low or No Emissions competitive funds, April 2018
- Presented “How To Build a Better Competitive Grant Application” at the FTA State Programs Meeting, August 2019

Links:

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/Webinar#PreviousWebinars>

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/Home>

# FTA's Technical Assistance Centers

# Technical Assistance Centers

- National Center for Mobility Management  
– grant partners Easterseals, Inc., APTA, CTAA
- National RTAP – grant partner Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association
- National Aging and Disability Transportation Center – grant partners Easterseals, Inc. and n4a



**NC4MM.org**



**NationalRTAP.org**

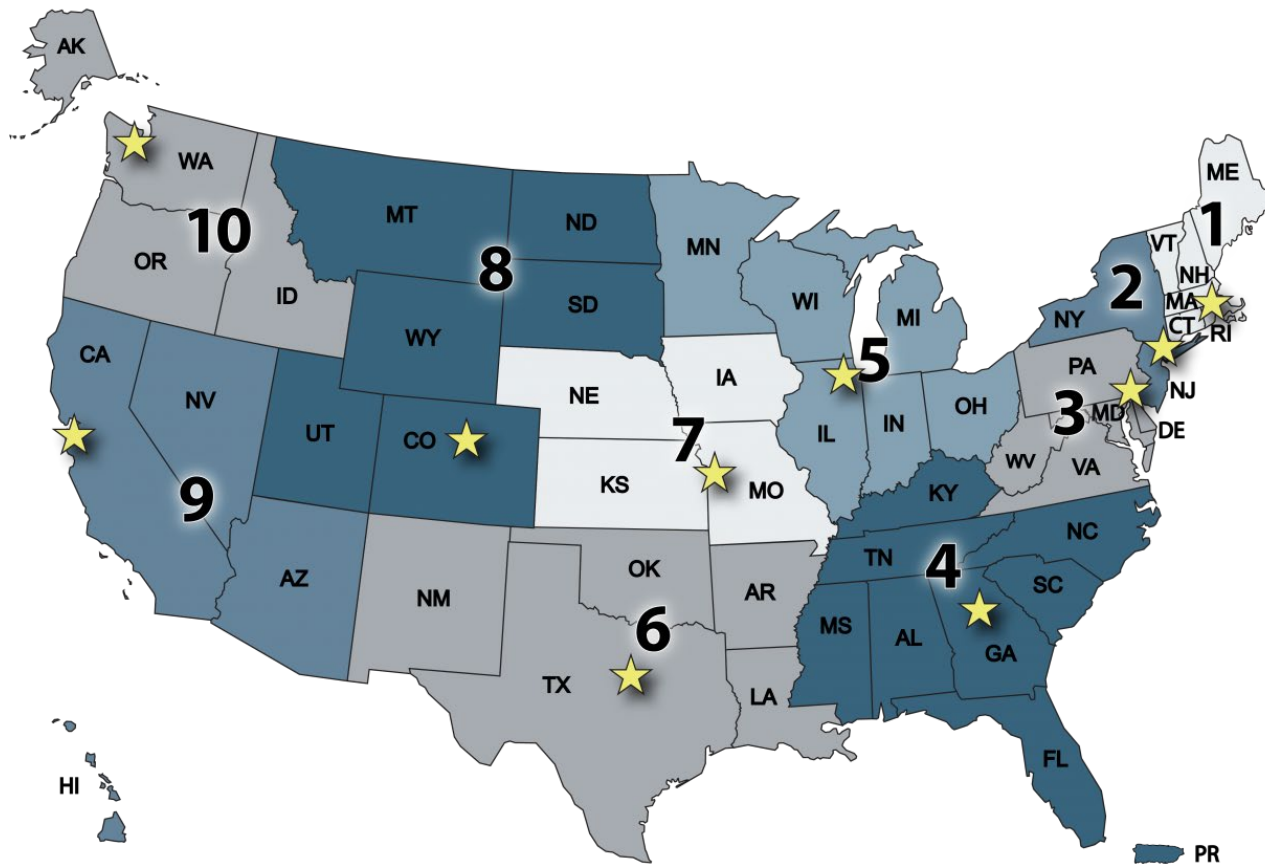


**NADTC.org**

# National Center for Applied Transit Technology

Awarded in September 2019, our newest technical Center, the N-CATT will develop and support the application of transit technologies and new institutional paradigms to make services in rural and small urban America more cost-effective and efficient, which is critical to the sustainability of services.

# FTA's 10 Regional Offices







Federal Transit  
Administration  
[www.transit.dot.gov](http://www.transit.dot.gov)