



# Notice of Funding Availability CDOT/DRCOG Consolidated Call for Projects Federal Transit Administration and DRCOG HST-FASTER Set Aside Funds

April 2019

## **PART 1**      **Introduction**

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) are issuing a Joint Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), requesting applications for transit Capital, Operating and Mobility Management projects in the greater Denver region to be initiated in 2020.

CDOT has over \$2.2 million available in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 **Denver-Aurora** funds (click on the link to see the map of the eligibility areas) and DRCOG has \$1 million Transportation Improvement Program, Human Service Transportation (HST), Set Aside funds available for transit projects within the **DRCOG MPO boundaries** (click on the link to see the map of the eligibility areas). DRCOG's HST Set Aside funds have been "swapped" for FASTER funds and maintain the eligibility criteria for FASTER funds (referred to herein as HST-FASTER Set Aside funds). Funds may be used for transit projects defined as Capital, Operating, and Mobility Management by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (see Part 3 for listing).

If selected for award, CDOT and DRCOG's expectation is that applicants will begin implementing their project no more than six months after the announcement of an award.

Applications are due to CDOT through COTRAMS by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 10, 2019. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.**

Applications will be submitted through COTRAMS, CDOT DTR's online grant management system (see page 3 for further guidance). We recommend that you use Google Chrome when submitting your application.

Potential applicants are required to read the guidance provided herein, and submit the new applicant questionnaire to CDOT and DRCOG immediately if you have not received any transit funds from CDOT and DRCOG in the past three years.

Questions about this NOFA can be directed to the following CDOT and DRCOG representatives:

Jane Hickey, CDOT: (303) 757-9237 or [jane.hickey@state.co.us](mailto:jane.hickey@state.co.us)

Kim Phi, CDOT: (303) 512-4055 or [kim.phi@state.co.us](mailto:kim.phi@state.co.us)

Qing Lin, CDOT: (303) 757-9973 or [qing.lin@state.co.us](mailto:qing.lin@state.co.us)

Matthew Helfant, DRCOG: (303) 480-6731 or [mhelfant@drcog.org](mailto:mhelfant@drcog.org)



**PART 2      Nondiscrimination**

The Colorado Department of Transportation, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

**PART 3      Funding**

Grant funds are valid for calendar year 2020, as made available through two transit programs administered by CDOT or DRCOG. The table below lists these funding sources and the estimated or anticipated amount available under each.

<b>Funding Program</b>	<b>Estimated Amount Available</b>
<i>CDOT FTA Section 5310: Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Large Urban 5310 (Denver-Aurora)</i>	\$2,259,038
<i>DRCOG HST-FASTER Set Aside Funds</i>	\$1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,259,038</b>

**PART 4      Applicant Eligibility**

In most cases, CDOT DTR and DRCOG staff will determine which funding source is best suited to meet your request for the Capital projects. For Admin/Operating and Mobility Management projects, you will need to determine which funding source to apply for. CDOT and DRCOG staff will use the following applicant eligibility guidelines to make that determination. However, applicants can state their preference in the application for a certain source(s) for a particular project(s).

**Federal Section 5310 funds:**

Private nonprofit organizations, who provide specialized transportation service targeted toward meeting the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, are eligible applicants for the Section 5310 program.

Public entities are eligible if (a) the public entity has been named by the State (CDOT) as the coordinating body for specialized transportation in their area; or (b) the public entity certifies there is no available private nonprofit agency providing service. For some projects, eligible applicants also include a local government authority or an operator of public transportation.

In the Denver area, it would not be reasonable to assume there are no available private non-profit agencies providing service. In order for a public entity to be named by the State as the coordinating body for specialized transportation in their area, a request must be made to DTR in advance of



application submittal; it would be DTR's expectation that such a public entity would be playing the lead role and working closely with all agencies in its area to coordinate services.

These specialized services do not have to be open door. However, all things being equal, a higher priority will be given to vehicles that will serve a wider population. Additionally, CDOT and DRCOG will not fund "residential" vehicles that are located at housing facilities and have a very limited usage and clientele.

Open door service refers to service that is made available to any elderly or disabled person who requests it, and is not limited to any particular client or membership group.

### **HST-FASTER Set Aside funds:**

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

Operate open door demand response or fixed route service within the **DRCOG MPO boundaries**.

The proposed project must be derived from the DRCOG Coordinated Transit Plan (Appendix 6 of the **DRCOG 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan** and the **DRCOG AAA Four Year Plan** or your local AAA's most recent aging plan (Boulder and Weld Counties).

Applicant organizations must be prepared to be the party that takes full responsibility for carrying out the proposed project. The project sponsorship cannot be transferred or reassigned to another party without prior written approval from CDOT and DRCOG

## **PART 5      Project Eligibility**

Projects for FTA-5310 **must be targeted** toward meeting the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, although they may be used by the general public on an incidental basis. It is **not sufficient** that seniors and individuals with disabilities are included (or assumed to be included) among the people who will benefit from the project.

For HST-FASTER Set Aside funds, DTR and DRCOG are prioritizing projects for operating assistance and rolling stock, including vehicle replacement and expansion.

**Eligible Capital Projects for FTA Section 5310 and HST-FASTER Set Aside funds include, but are not limited to:**

1. Rolling stock and related activities for Section 5310-funded vehicles and/or vehicles that are used for services funded by Section 5310 or HST-FASTER Set Aside:
  - a. Acquisition of expansion or replacement buses or vans, and related procurement, testing, inspection, and acceptance costs;
  - b. Vehicle rehabilitation or overhaul;
  - c. Radios and communication equipment; and
  - d. Vehicle wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices.



2. Passenger facilities related to Section 5310-funded vehicles:
  - a. Purchase and installation of benches, shelters, and other passenger amenities.
3. Support facilities and equipment for Section 5310-funded vehicles:
  - a. Extended warranties that do not exceed the industry standard;
  - b. Computer hardware and software;
  - c. Transit-related intelligent transportation systems (ITS);
  - d. Dispatch systems;
  - e. Fare collection systems; and
  - f. Service vehicles.

**Eligible Mobility Management activities for FTA Section 5310 include:**

1. Operating a transportation brokerage to coordinate service providers.
2. Providing information and referral services and/or resources.
3. Operating one call-one click systems and/or call centers.
4. Supporting local partnerships that coordinate transportation services, such as Regional Coordinating Council (RCC)/Local Coordinating Council (LCC).
5. Staffing for the development and implementation of coordination plans.
6. Providing travel training and trip planning activities.

**Eligible Operating Expenses for FTA Section 5310 and HST-FASTER Set Aside include:**

1. Those costs necessary to operate, maintain, and manage a transportation system. Operating expenses usually include such costs as driver salaries, fuel, and items having a useful life of less than one year.

**PART 6      Local Match**

All projects funded through these programs are required to have a sufficient local match. Capital and Mobility Management awards require a minimum local match of 20%, while Operating awards require local match of 50% of the net operating costs. Only net operating expenses—i.e., those expenses that remain after the provider subtracts operating revenues (e.g., farebox revenues) from eligible operating expenses—are eligible for assistance.

Local match may consist of any non-DOT federal funds, such as Medicaid, Older American’s Act funding, or other funds that may be used for transportation; local tax revenues; local general operating funds; donations; or in-kind goods and services.

DRCOG’s HST-FASTER Set-Aside may be used for FTA-5310 projects as local match. For proposed projects inside the **DRCOG MPO boundaries**, but outside the **Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area Boundaries**, applicants may propose using HST-FASTER Set-Aside match for an anticipated future FTA 5310 award (i.e., for rural or small urban area funds).



Local match may only be used once; for example, the same AAA funds may not be used for a 5310 grant application and a HST-FASTER Set Aside grant application. Local entities may choose to overmatch, meaning their portion of the total project budget may exceed 50% for operating and 20% for capital or mobility management projects.

Third-party in-kind goods and services may be used for up to 50% of the local share. If in-kind goods and services are being used for local match, they must have direct relevance to the project being matched and be contributed by a third-party. For example, volunteer driver hours may be used as part of the local match under 5310 operating if the volunteer drivers are providing service to seniors and persons with disabilities, valued at the same fair market value of hourly rate as other drivers.

Fuel contributed in lieu of funding is not considered in-kind when the fuel is used solely for the provision of transportation under one of the operating projects. The cost of the fuel is considered contributed income and may be used as cash local match.

Applicants wishing to use in-kind goods and services must identify them in their budgets and provide documentation for the valuation of services. All valuations of services and in-kind fair market values must be documented and approved by CDOT prior to any contract being issued.

CDOT requires written letters of support and commitment from **partners** in a project that will need to make a commitment to the project (e.g., organizations providing some, or all, of the local match, providing land or right-of-way for a project, or agreeing to share a multimodal facility). Applicants should not submit **general** letters of support, however.

## **PART 7**      **Application Process**

For this joint project call, the minimum project request is \$25,000. There is no maximum request, but applicants should take into consideration the amounts available and CDOT's preference to provide some geographic equity.

Applications must be submitted electronically through COTRAMS (<https://cotrams.force.com/cdotcommunity/login>), CDOT's on-line grant management system. If you are a current and active CDOT subrecipient you should have a user ID and password for the website. If you have misplaced your user ID and password, contact system administrator Audrey Dakan immediately ([audrey.dakan@state.co.us](mailto:audrey.dakan@state.co.us)) so that she can reset your login credentials. If you are a current subrecipient and have not had access to the portal, please contact Audrey so that she can assist you.

If you are **not** a current subrecipient, you are required to complete a **New Applicant Questionnaire** prior to submitting an application. This questionnaire is intended to determine eligibility prior to submitting an application, as well as the agency's ability to meet DTR's threshold criteria for the grants. This questionnaire will also inform potential applicants of the requirements of this funding and indicate which funding programs might be the most appropriate. DTR and/or DRCOG may also arrange a phone call and possibly an on-site visit so that questions can be answered to make the application process



more clear. If it is determined you are eligible and meet threshold criteria, you will be given a COTRAMS ID and user name so that you can apply in COTRAMS; you'll also be given COTRAMS training.

### **For Capital Projects:**

CDOT and DRCOG offer two online Capital applications through COTRAMS for:

1. **Revenue Service Vehicles** grant requests. A revenue service vehicle is rolling stock (e.g., buses, vans) used in providing transit service for passengers.
2. **Facility/Other Capital Projects** grant requests.

Within those two general categories are subcategories into which each project must fit, as follows:

- A. Revenue Service Vehicles
  - 1) Replacement vehicle(s)
  - 2) Expansion vehicle(s)
- B. Facility/Other Capital Projects
  - 1) Facilities, equipment, engineering and environmental studies, vehicle rebuilds, service vehicles, and other

One Revenue Service Vehicle and one Facility/Other Capital Project application will be released to each current COTRAMS agency. If an applicant plans to submit requests for multiple revenue vehicle replacement projects, the applicant may bundle those replacement projects into one single application; requests for multiple replacement and expansion projects, though, must be submitted in two separate applications--one for replacements and one for expansions. **If you have questions regarding the Capital application or if you want to submit multiple applications, please contact Jane Hickey at (303) 757-9237 or [jane.hickey@state.co.us](mailto:jane.hickey@state.co.us).**

### **For Operating Projects:**

CDOT and DRCOG offer one online Operating application through COTRAMS, which includes funds for the following two categories:

1. **FTA 5310 Operating for Specialized Transportation in the Denver-Aurora Large Urbanized Area** – this funding is to assist with an agency's costs necessary to operate, maintain, and manage a specialized transportation services (including open and close door services) for seniors and persons with disabilities.
2. **DRCOG HST-FASTER Set Aside Operating Projects in the DRCOG MPO boundaries** – this funding is to assist with an agency's costs necessary to operate, maintain, and manage fixed route services or a specialized open door demand response transportation service that focuses on vulnerable populations (seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans, low income, and other vulnerable populations).

One of each Operating Project application will be released to each current COTRAMS agency. If an applicant plans to submit requests for FTA 5310 Operating and DRCOG HST-FASTER Set Aside Operating, they must submit two separate applications. **If you have questions regarding the Operating application or if you want to submit multiple applications, please contact Kim Phi at (303) 512-4055 or [kim.phi@state.co.us](mailto:kim.phi@state.co.us).**



### **For Mobility Management Projects:**

CDOT and DRCOG offer one online fTA-5310 Mobility Management application through COTRAMS, which includes funds for the following types of service:

Purchased transit services, operating a transportation brokerage, providing travel training and trip planning activities, staffing for the development and implementation of coordination plans, supporting local partnerships that coordinate transportation services (R/LCCs), operating one call-one click systems and/or call centers, and providing information and referral services and/or resources.

**If you have questions regarding the Mobility Management application, please contact Kim Phi at (303) 512-4055 or [kim.phi@state.co.us](mailto:kim.phi@state.co.us).**

### **PART 8      Threshold (Minimum) Criteria**

The applicant must have the financial and managerial capability and capacity to manage any funds awarded, as well as demonstrate that it has the resources necessary to operate the project on an ongoing basis. Federal and HST-FASTER Set Aside grants will be awarded on a reimbursement basis; that is, the award recipient must first incur costs before being reimbursed by CDOT or DRCOG, after submitting sufficient documentation of such costs. Therefore, the recipient must have the financial ability and cash flow to incur and pay such costs upfront and not expect immediate reimbursement from CDOT. The applicant must also be willing and able to follow federal and DRCOG guidelines in procurement, as well as other pertinent regulations and guidelines.

### **PART 9      Evaluation Criteria**

All projects will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below. Projects will be evaluated based on the type of project—that is, based on whether they are rolling stock, facilities, equipment or studies, and, further, whether they are replacements or expansions. Please note that the sub-criteria will not be weighted equally and some will not be pertinent. For example, if a criterion has four sub-criteria, evaluators do not assign 25% weight to each; they are given flexibility in assigning scores. One exception is on replacement rolling stock scores, where there are metrics for comparing need. Also, some consideration may be given to geographical equity.

**Capital Projects** will be evaluated using the following metrics:

1. For Replacement of Revenue Service Vehicles:

**Metric 1:** The vehicle's State of Good Repair (SGR) - Age, Mileage, Usage, Readiness, including how the vehicle's replacement is projected and prioritized within the agency's or Group Asset Management Plans; higher mileage vehicles will be scored higher than lower mileage units;



Metric 2: Higher scoring will be awarded to applicants that can demonstrate a good state of repair through effective, documented, formal preventive maintenance programs or Transit Asset Management programs, and to those that have and follow a capital replacement plan;

2. For Expansion of Revenue Service Vehicles:

Metric 1: Demonstrated Need and Readiness: Higher scoring will be awarded to projects that clearly demonstrate the need for the expanded service in terms of documented ridership or need studies and community support, that demonstrate an effective business case and can demonstrate they are truly ready to implement the expansion;

Metric 2: Special Considerations: For vehicle requests, applicants with a lower fleet spare ratio, who have a capital replacement plan/asset management plan, who can show strong institutional commitment, and who can show a strong financial commitment (higher local match ratio), will be scored more strongly.

3. For Facilities, Design, and Equipment:

Metric 1: Readiness and Demonstrated Timetable: Higher priority will be given to those that are shovel ready (NEPA clearance finalized, at least 30% design completed, and site location selected and purchased), and to the completion of existing projects.

Metric 2: Project Purpose, Cost Savings, and Efficiency: Higher priority will be given to those projects that: have a high degree of local and regional support; well-developed and defensible business case, and support or provide significant transit operational and utilization benefits.

Metric 3: Special Considerations. Higher scoring in this area will be given to those projects that demonstrate they were developed in partnership with the local community. In the case of requests for the expansion of existing facilities, higher scoring will be applied if the project demonstrates the need for the facility and for growth in the program it supports. Agencies that adequately demonstrate institutional commitment, funding, financial capacity, and capability to sustain the service and project over time will be also be scored more strongly.

**Operating and Mobility Management Projects** will be evaluated based on:

1. Financial Need - Factors considered as a part of this criterion include:

- lack of funding sources available to the applicant;
- good faith efforts to obtain funds for the project from non-DOT sources;
- economic condition of the applicant's service area and/or clients served;
- level and amount of local commitment to transit;
- reasonableness of costs to operate and administer the project;



- amount of available revenue, including contract and earmarked funds; and
  - portion of costs covered by local funds.
2. Service justification - Factors considered include:
- lack of appropriate public transportation alternatives;
  - transit dependency of the population in the applicant's service area, particularly the extent to which the proposed project serves elderly or disabled persons, persons without a car, or low income persons, veterans, and other vulnerable populations;
  - extent to which the applicant provides service to other organizations; the numbers of riders and types of trips provided;
  - size of an applicant's service area; and
  - other relevant factors, including congestion mitigation and air quality improvement.
3. Coordination/Effectiveness – This is the extent to which an applicant demonstrates that it has coordinated with other organizations to promote the service and reduce service duplication, overlapping service areas, and conflicts. The IAEC will also evaluate how the proposed/selected activities will advance efficiencies in, accessibility to, and/or the effectiveness of transportation services provided to seniors and individuals with disabilities. The coordination of services evaluation is separate from the threshold requirement for projects to be derived from a local human services transportation plan. Factors to be considered are:
- extent which coordination reduces operating expenses, number of vehicles used and lead time for passenger scheduling;
  - extent to which the applicant works with community organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, human service agencies) to promote the service and make it more efficient;
  - lack of duplication or overlap with transit services provided by others;
  - an applicant's good faith efforts to coordinate with private for profit operators; and
  - The performance measure(s) listed for each activity demonstrates its ability to improve your clients' quality of life and can also indicate the quality of change that was produced by your activity.

## **PART 10      Selection Methodology**

A selection committee made up of staff of CDOT (DTR, DTD, the Policy and Government Relations Office, Office of Civil Rights) and DRCOG, including other outside neutral organizations, will evaluate and score applications. A recommended FTA Section 5310 project list will be presented to the DTR director for approval while the DRCOG HST-FASTER Set Aside project list will be approved by the DRCOG Board. After approval, CDOT and DRCOG will take all the steps necessary to set up the projects internally and budget them. Then DTR will begin scope of work and contract negotiations with the local agencies for FTA-5310 projects; DRCOG will do the same for the HST-FASTER Set Aside projects. The funding swap discussed in Part 1 will make it easier for subrecipients to access more federal funding by reducing federal local match requirements, since subrecipients receiving both 5310 and HST funds would be able to apply HST funds toward the local match for 5310. 5310 projects will be administered by CDOT. Subrecipients who can take advantage of this will have both projects administered by CDOT to make



project management more integrated. Stand-alone HST projects will be managed by DRCOG Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Transportation Planning and Operations (TPO) with CDOT oversight.

## **PART 11      Application Selection Appeals Process**

All applicants will be notified of Joint funding awards, including those not awarded funding. They are provided a list of projects that were selected, as well as, for transparency purposes, comments indicating the primary reasons an application or project may have received an insufficient score.

If an application is denied, the grounds therefore will be given to the applicant. Applicants not awarded funding may reapply in the future for project requests that were denied.

An applicant that is aggrieved by a grant determination may file an appeal with the DTR Transit Programming Unit Manager within 30 days of DTR publishing of the awards. The appeal shall state the nature and basis for the appeal. Any appeal related to alleged discrimination will be reviewed by the CDOT Civil Rights and Business Resource Center. A decision on the appeal shall be issued by DTR management within 30 days of the appeal. If the applicant does not accept the decision, they may request a hearing pursuant to the provisions of Section 24-4-104, C.R.S., as amended, of the State of Colorado Administrative Procedures Act. If a hearing is requested, it will be conducted in accordance with 24-4-105 C.R.S., as amended, before an administrative law judge. The request for a hearing must be made within 60 calendar days after an applicant is notified of the Department's decision. If a subsequent hearing overturns a DTR decision, DTR will take action to modify its decision and awards, which may include revisions to other awards, if necessary, to comply with the ruling.



**PART 12**      **Schedule**

Following is the schedule CDOT and DRCOG will generally adhere to for the CY 2020 project selection process.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Application/Evaluation/Selection Milestone</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Notice & Application Development	Call for projects officially broadcast by DTR and DRCOG	4/2019
	Pre-application workshop & training for applicants	5/2019
	Applications Due to DTR and DRCOG on COTRAMS	6/2019
Review, Scoring, and Selection	Initial screening (completeness/eligibility) by DTR and DRCOG	8/2019
	Applications evaluated by review committee	
	DTR and DRCOG completes scoring and prepares list of recommended projects; final scores and recommendations submitted to DTR Director	
Award Discussion and Approval	DTR and DRCOG develops list of recommended projects and consults with CASTA regarding the proposed selections	9/2019
	DTR Director finalizes awards	
Budgeting and Programming	TIP / STIP policy amendments	10/2019
	CDOT Business Offices set up project budgets	
	Scope of work drafting, negotiations with local agencies initiated by DTR, Regions	
Grant Agreements	DTR and DRCOG negotiate and finalize grant agreements/IGAs.	12/2019