



Federal Transit Administration  
Section 5310 Program

**Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People  
with Disabilities**

Management Plan

Approved by the Board of the  
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council  
02/26/2026

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# 1. Introduction

This Program Management Plan (PMP) outlines how the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC), as the Designated Recipient, administers Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funds for the McAllen Urbanized Area (MUA). It describes the processes for competitive project selection, grant development in TrAMS, execution of subrecipient agreements, and ongoing compliance oversight.

This PMP has been updated to reflect the requirements of FTA Circular C 9070.1H, "Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance and Application Instructions," effective November 1, 2024, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It establishes the policies, procedures, and internal controls required of a Designated Recipient, including documentation of the competitive selection process, conflict of interest safeguards, financial management practices, and subrecipient monitoring. The PMP applies to LRGVDC, all subrecipients, contractors, and partners involved in the administration or delivery of Section 5310funded projects.

## 2. Goals and Objectives

The goal of this Program Management Plan (PMP) is to describe the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's (LRGVDC) process for managing the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 program within the McAllen Urbanized Area (MUA). As part of the process, LRGVDC intends to fulfill the following objectives:

- a. Identify, contact and inform public agencies, community organizations and non-profit and private for-profit organizations providing service for seniors and persons with disabilities, of the availability of 5310 program grant funds;
- b. Establish, promote and outline a process for soliciting and evaluating 5310 program funding proposals consistent with federal competitive selection requirements;
- c. Ensure that proposals selected for funding are responsive to one or more of the needs identified in the regional coordinated plan;
- d. Establish the requirements for the selected projects to enter into grant agreements with the LRGVDC; and
- e. Summarize the requirements for managing and reporting the progress for implementing the funded projects. to ensure accountability, performance tracking, and compliance with FTA reporting standards.

This PMP is a living document. It will be updated as necessary to incorporate any expansions and enhancements of the 5310 program or any revisions to the program's management, requirements, or guidelines. Future updates will also incorporate federal guidance under IIJA and any subsequent FTA notices or regulatory changes issued by FTA.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities of LRGVDC

LRGVDC is the Designated Recipient for 5310 funds allocated to the MUA. LRGVDC's role includes administering, managing, programming, selection, and overseeing the implementation of the projects. LRGVDC may use up to ten percent of the MUA's annual apportionment for eligible administrative and program management activities.

### 3.1. Coordinated Plan

Coordination with stakeholders is heavily emphasized in the regional public transit-human services coordinated plan. This plan lays out various recommended approaches for maximizing the potential benefits that can be derived through the coordination of services.

The LRGVDC also emphasizes the coordination of services among the region's stakeholders and eligible subrecipients of funding from the 5310 programs. Accordingly, applicants must describe their project-level coordination arrangements prior to being considered for grant funding. LRGVDC also encourages the efforts of the region's stakeholders to streamline and expand the eligibility of projects and services that could be funded by the 5310 programs. LRGVDC is responsible for confirming that each selected project is included in a coordinated plan developed in accordance with applicable statutory requirements.

### 3.2. Role of the Rio Grande Valley MPO

The LRGVDC will coordinate with the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) in the implementation of this PMP. The RGVMPO plays a central and independent role in ensuring that the Section 5310 project selection process is fair, transparent, competitive, and free of conflicts of interest.

The RGVMPO will lead and facilitate the Call for Projects, including the public posting of solicitation materials, distribution of application documents, management of applicant communications, and oversight of the application intake process.

In alignment with FTA Circular C 9070.1H guidance, the RGVMPO will serve as the independent evaluator of all eligible applications. RGVMPO staff will review and score applications using the criteria established in the PMP Appendix, ensuring consistency, objectivity, and proper documentation of scoring decisions.

Additionally, the RGVMPO will coordinate the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) subcommittee review process, facilitating the discussion and validation of application scores and the development of a final ranked list of projects.

Upon completion of the evaluation and TAC subcommittee process, and if applicable, policy committee, the RGVMPO will submit the prioritized list of recommended projects to the LRGVDC

Board of Directors for final consideration and approval.

### 3.3. Contingency for RGVMPD Inaction

In the event that the RGVMPD is unable to perform its responsibilities within the timeframes necessary to meet program deadlines, the LRGVDC reserves the right to take reasonable and necessary actions to ensure continuity of the Section 5310 program and to prevent funding lapses or unnecessary delays.

Such actions may include, but are not limited to, facilitating elements of the Call for Projects, supporting or conducting application review activities, or advancing project selection processes, as appropriate to the circumstances.

Any actions undertaken by LRGVDC under this provision will be implemented in a manner that maintains fairness, transparency, and consistency with applicable federal requirements, including FTA Circular C 9070.1H, and will incorporate appropriate safeguards to mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

## 4. Eligible Subrecipients

Under federal guidelines, the following entities are eligible to apply for Section 5310 funding:

- Local governmental agencies.
- Public and private transportation providers.
- Social service agencies.
- Tribal governments.
- Non-profit organizations.

To be eligible for funding, proposed projects must be located in or either have an origin or a destination within the MUA.

## 5. Funding Eligibility

Section 5310 funds are available for capital and operating expenses to support the provision of transportation services that meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

### **Capital**

At least 55 percent of available funds shall be used for capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. Projects funded from this capital set aside must meet FTA's definition of capital and be implemented by eligible subrecipients. Eligible projects for the required 55 percent of capital projects include the capital cost of contracting for the provision of transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities and other specialized shared-ride transportation services. The purchase of rolling stock for or the

acquisition of ADA complementary paratransit service are eligible capital expenses that may also qualify under the 5310 program as public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when fixed-route public transportation is insufficient, unavailable or inappropriate, provided the projects are carried out by eligible subrecipients.

## **Operating**

Up to 45 percent of available funds may be used for operating expenses that provide transportation services that exceed the requirements of the ADA or improve access to fixed route services and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA complementary paratransit service. Operating funds must be requested through the competitive selection process and documented in the project application.

## 6. Local Funding Requirements

5310 funds may support up to 80 percent of the cost of capital projects and up to 50 percent of net operating costs.

Eligible sources of non-federal local match include undistributed cash surpluses, replacement or depreciation reserves, service agreements with State or local agencies, private social service organizations, or new capital contributions. Additional examples include State or local appropriations, dedicated tax revenues, private donations, revenue from service contracts, toll revenue credits (subject to State approval), and net income from advertising or concessions. Non-cash contributions such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions may be used as local match when they are documented, allowable under 2 CFR 200, represent an eligible capital cost, and are included in the project budget.

The source of local match must be identified in the initial 5310 grant application.

Use of Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) requires State certification and entry into TrAMS. Subrecipients are responsible for obtaining certification; however, LRGVDC will assist selected subrecipients in preparing TDC requests to the State.

## 7. Funding Distribution and Project Selection Criteria

### 7.1. Application Cycle

MAP-21 requires that projects funded under the Section 5310 Program result from a fair and equitable competitive selection process. To that end, LRGVDC implements a two-step process:

- **Local selection** through a public call for projects addressing identified needs in the McAllen Urbanized Area (MUA).

- **Federal submission** of selected projects to FTA through LRGVDC's electronic grant application in TrAMS.

The RGVMPPO will lead the facilitation of the Call for Projects, including public posting, distribution of materials, and coordination of applicant communications. If the RGVMPPO is unable to initiate the Call for Projects within the required timeframe, LRGVDC may initiate the solicitation in accordance with Section 3.3 of this PMP to prevent funding lapses or delays.

LRGVDC will aim to conduct the project selection process on a biennial basis with the assistance of the Rio Grande Valley MPO so as to avoid lapse of any funds.

5310 funds need to be obligated within the next two federal fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the funds were appropriated by Congress. In this regard, the federal fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year. Any 5310 funds remaining from prior fiscal years and which have not lapsed will be combined with funds from the fiscal year in which the selection will take place and those funds expected to be made available within the following fiscal year. Accordingly, 5310 funds from up to three consecutive fiscal years could be made available and LRGVDC will select projects and programs at intervals not to exceed this time frame. This approach will allow for the development of more viable and longer-term projects, reduce the administrative cost of the programs, and allow for other efficiencies.

LRGVDC intends to authorize project expenses annually, contingent upon the levels of federal appropriations expected to be made available by Congress each fiscal year. The awarding and programming of prior 5310 program grant funds will be prioritized for obligation in the most current process to avoid lapsing. Future selections will be contingent on the availability of funds and approval of new legislation by Congress.

## 7.2. Application Evaluation and Scoring

The Rio Grande Valley MPO will conduct the competitive evaluation process on behalf of LRGVDC. RGVMPPO staff will review, score, and rank all eligible applications using the criteria established in the PMP Appendix. The RGVMPPO's evaluation committee will implement conflict of interest safeguards, document scoring rationale, and retain scoring records to ensure transparency and defensibility of the selection process. Upon completion of the evaluation and TAC subcommittee process, and if applicable, policy committee, the RGVMPPO will submit the prioritized list of recommended projects to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for final consideration and approval.

## 7.3. Equity of Distribution

Beyond the broad outreach and consultation process undertaken during the development of the Coordinated Plan, the process for selecting projects will be widely publicized and disseminated directly to the agencies providing or needing specialized transportation services in the MUA. The information will also be disseminated through the various agency meetings.

Information relevant to the selection process and application guidelines and forms, will be made available at the RGVMPPO's website ([www.rgvmpo.org](http://www.rgvmpo.org)). As part of the application process, LRGVDC and the RGVMPPO will provide technical assistance to agencies that may not be

experienced in the preparation of transportation project proposals, including social agencies providing or funding transportation services.

#### 7.4. Project Approval and Award

Proposals will be selected based on the greatest benefit to the greatest number of the target population served. Specific criteria are given in the application contained in the Appendix to the PMP. Once projects are selected through the competitive process, the RGVMPPO will then submit the list of recommended projects to its technical and if applicable, policy committees for approval.

Once approved, LRGVDC will prepare and submit the corresponding FTA grant application(s) for federal review and award.

#### 7.5. Timeline

Once projects are selected for award by the LRGVDC Board, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the LRGVDC and the subrecipient will be prepared for execution. The LRGVDC will develop the grant application to FTA in consultation with the subrecipient. As soon as both the MOU and the FTA grant agreement are executed, the project may commence.

Many factors come into play when estimating the time from submission of the funding application to initiation of the project, such as the funding availability period and the number of applications received. The time from initial submission of the project to the RGVMPPO to the commencement of project activities may take approximately 5 – 12 months. The following is a tentative and estimated schedule using a competitive solicitation:

- a. **Solicitation for Proposals:** posting information on RGVMPPO website, delivering letters to list of agencies on file, and conducting additional outreach.
- b. **Proposals Due:** typically, 45 days after release of Solicitation for Proposals
- c. **Evaluation of Applications:** (approximately 2 months after proposals are due): the RGVMPPO may contact the applicant to inquire about the contents of the proposal and may request additional information or clarification. The applicant may also be required to provide an oral presentation of its proposal to the evaluation team.
- d. **Award Notification:** (approximately 1 month after Evaluation of Applications): after the LRGVDC Board approves the awards, a letter will be sent to successful applicants with information on the amount and source of the federal award. It will also include a request to confirm, in written, the acceptance of the award and the availability and source of the local match.
- e. **FTA Grant Application and Approval:** (about 2 – 6 months after Award Notification): LRGVDC staff will prepare and submit the grant application to the FTA for approval. Due to the certifications needed, including those from the United States Department of Labor, it may take several months for FTA's final approval.

- f. **Memorandum of Understanding:** (about 2 – 6 months after Award Notification): the time required for execution of the MOU between the subrecipient and the LRGVDC will depend on the availability of supporting documentation from the subrecipient (such as clear scope of work, timeline for project implementation, project item line budget and cash flow) and its readiness to accept its terms and conditions.
- g. **Effective Date of Reimbursable Activities:** the MOU specifies the effective date of its terms and conditions, including the period of reimbursable activities.

## 7.6. Subrecipient Monitoring

LRGVDC will coordinate a subrecipient orientation workshop after the funding award to provide technical assistance on the process that would need to be followed and the federal requirements that would have to be met to receive the federal funds. LRGVDC will also schedule regular meetings with the subrecipients to discuss issues or concerns regarding their projects and to provide assistance during implementation to ensure projects are consistent with the funding agreement. Subrecipients will also be required to provide quarterly progress reports and an annual report. In this regard, subrecipients need to keep track of the performance measures identified for their projects in the MOU.

## 7.7. Transfer of Funds

LRGVDC does not routinely transfer Section 5310 funds between urbanized and rural areas. Funds are allocated and programmed in accordance with their designated apportionment categories and in alignment with regional priorities identified in the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan.

However, in the event that allocated funds cannot be fully utilized within a specific area, LRGVDC may, on a case-by-case basis and in coordination with the Rio Grande Valley MPO and applicable stakeholders, consider the transfer or reallocation of funds to other eligible areas to prevent funding lapses and ensure effective use of available resources.

Any such transfer or reallocation will be conducted in compliance with applicable federal requirements, including FTA Circular C 9070.1H, and will be documented to ensure transparency and accountability.

# 8. Administration of 5310 Program

The following summarizes the responsibilities of LRGVDC as the designated recipient.

- Assists subrecipients or potential subrecipients with technical support to: i) establish

project eligibility; ii) manage and administer projects; iii) understand grantee (LRGVDC) and federal compliance policies, including procurement guidelines and required matching funds; and iv) understand the conditions on how federal grant funds can be spent.

LRGVDC has also developed a program to host a grantee introduction seminar for all new subrecipients after each selection process. The meeting will allow LRGVDC to meet with all of the new subrecipients to discuss general and specific performance goals to be achieved, their reporting and the administrative responsibilities, and LRGVDC's standardized invoicing practices.

In order to clarify the goals of each project and assist the subrecipients in the development of good progress reporting and accounting practices, LRGVDC will meet individually with each of the subrecipients before the beginning of grant expenditures.

- Ensures that subrecipients adhere to the FTA Master Agreement, LRGVDC's MOU, and other federal and state requirements, as applicable, to ensure federal funds are used according to the established contractual requirements. This activity will be accomplished with site visits and review of subrecipients' records.
- Seeks from the subrecipients an annual signed certification that affirms subrecipient compliance with the standard terms and conditions governing the administration of projects funded with federal dollars awarded by the FTA through LRGVDC, as described on the MOU or the FTA Master Agreement. This information is part of LRGVDC's compliance monitoring effort.
- Provides the Program of Projects funded with the 5310 program to the RGVMPPO for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program.
- Prepares a summary of the funds available for distribution upon approval of the federal budget for the federal fiscal year that starts October 1 and corresponding federal transportation appropriations sometime thereafter and their publication in the Federal Register.
- Initiates the development of the grant applications for the FTA, and upon FTA's award, initiates the funding agreements with the subrecipients.
- Coordinates regular workshops or meetings with subrecipients to ensure agencies have the technical capabilities to assist their customers with transportation needs and to manage their projects
- Organizes an annual workshop for the region's stakeholders to review project results, evaluate overall program accomplishments, and discuss opportunities for improvements. Unsuccessful applicants from previous Solicitation for Proposals cycles will also be contacted and invited to the workshop to familiarize themselves with the grant programs, the development of a successful application, and the implementation of projects and programs funded by the 5310 programs.
- Maintains good working relationships and coordination with the federal, state, regional, and local agencies regarding human services transportation projects and programs funded

with the 5310 funds.

- Analyzes federal, state, and local legislation and policies relevant to the 5310 program.
- Makes recommendations to the LRGVDC Board of Directors for improvements in managing and administering the 5310 programs.
- Serves as the point of contact for any activities related to the 5310 programs, such as coordinating the reviews and audits performed by the FTA.
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## 9. Title VI, Section 504, and ADA Compliance

LRGVDC requires subrecipients to document that they distribute FTA funds without regard to race, color, national origin, and disability or discrimination against disadvantaged business enterprises, among applicable civil rights requirements. Not all applicable civil rights requirements are discussed in the PMP.

LRGVDC complies with FTA's Title VI requirements in the following manner: i) provision of an annual Title VI certification and assurance; ii) development of Title VI complaint procedures; iii) record keeping of all Title VI investigations, complaints, and lawsuits; iv) provision of meaning access to persons with Limited English Proficiency; v) notification to beneficiaries of protection under Title VI; and vi) a requirement that each subrecipient develops a Title VI program or becomes part of LRGVDC's submittal of its Title VI program to the FTA's regional civil rights officer once every three years.

Within each of these broad categories are specific requirements for survey and other data collection, analysis, and information distribution that cover transportation programs, construction programs, and transit service planning, operations, and service/fare changes.

LRGVDC's promotion, administration, and distribution of information and funding relevant to the 5310 programs is consistent with LRGVDC's Title VI Policy, which is made part of this document by reference. This policy is available upon request.

LRGVDC will evaluate all projects receiving grant funds for compliance with all relevant ADA laws, regulations and policies and will work with subrecipients to provide technical assistance.

## 10. Management of 5310 Program

The following describes the activities to be performed by LRGVDC to ensure federal funds are not lost (lapsed) to the region. The activities described below are part of the oversight and project management activities necessary to ensure that projects funded with 5310 funds are implemented in accordance with the FTA program guidelines and funding agreements.

- a) Monitor expenses and reimbursements to subrecipients to ensure compliance with the

federal grant award and the MOU.

- b) Work with LRGVDC's Finance Department to include project related information in LRGVDC's financial system, such as project identification number, grant number, amount, and funding sources. This information is needed for accounting and monitoring of project funding and expenses.
- c) Review for accuracy and eligibility subrecipient invoices, ensure that the required documentation is on file and payments are made as approved.
- d) Compile and distribute FTA procurement guidelines to all subrecipients.
- e) Work with all grantees to analyze, evaluate, and answer any particular procurement questions they may have relevant to their project(s).
- f) Prepare quarterly status progress reports and financial reports and report to FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS) prior to the deadlines.
- g) Monitor, through yearly site visits, project implementation activities and ensure compliance with federal and contractual requirements.
- h) Analyze project activities and determine if any changes to the budget, scope, or schedule are required. Accordingly, initiate and prepare any needed grant and MOU amendments prior to requesting FTA's approval to grant revisions.
- i) Analyze monthly or quarterly project expenses and reimbursements from the FTA and reconcile with FTA's TrAMS system for accuracy.
- j) Prepare and file grant budget revisions.
- k) Evaluate, prepare and file grant and MOU closeout documents.
- l) Work with subrecipients to set performance measures through the life of the project to track its effectiveness and progress, as described in Section 11. and in the MOU.
- m) LRGVDC will collect performance data from subrecipients as required to support any applicable National Transit Database (NTD) reporting elements associated with Section 5310-funded activities. Subrecipients must maintain documentation to support reported data and provide it to LRGVDC upon request.

As part of the oversight and project management activities, each project will be assigned a project number that will be linked to the FTA grant funding the project.

## 11. Performance Measures

Consistent with federal guidelines and as incorporated in the MOU, subrecipients will be asked to

show (as applicable) all increased activity due to the grant funded project, such as:

- Actual or estimated annual number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) as a result of the implementation of program 5310.
- Annual increases or enhancements related to geographic coverage, service quality and/or service times that impact the availability of transportation services for individuals with disabilities.

The subrecipients will be required to establish baseline conditions and performance targets for each indicator, as applicable, to support evaluation of project effectiveness in accordance with FTA Circular C 9070.1H. Performance data must be supported by documented methodologies and reliable data sources identified in the MOU. Subrecipients will be required to report these performance measures on a quarterly or annual basis, depending on the nature of the project and federal reporting requirements, including any additional reporting identified by LRGVDC or FTA. LRGVDC will use this information to monitor project progress, assess compliance, inform risk assessments, and support TrAMS reporting, grant amendments, and project closeout.

## 12. Program Management Plan Updates

As stated earlier, the PMP is a living document. It will be updated regularly to incorporate any expansions and enhancements of the 5310 programs, as well as any revisions to the programs' management, requirements, or guidelines. It will also be updated per the request of the FTA or based on significant input submitted from subrecipients, eligible applicants, and the general public. At minimum, the PMP will be updated every three to four years.

## 13. APPENDIX – Funding Application, Call for Projects Guide, Scoring Criteria.

