

5.30 Federal Transit Administration Section 5339 Policies

5.30.1 Program Overview

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5339 provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. In small urban (population under 200,000) areas, FTA apportions a formula component to states. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Rail and Mass Transportation (DRMT) is the direct recipient of Section 5339 funds. DRMT administers the funds. SRTA, as the Transportation Planning Agency for Shasta County, distributes the regional apportionment to eligible recipients.

Federal and state guidelines supersede these policies.

5.30.2 Eligible Applicants and Projects

Local public agencies and private nonprofit organizations engaged in fixed route public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability, or low income, are eligible to apply for the following types of capital assistance:

- Acquisition of buses for fleet and service expansion
- Acquisition of replacement vehicles
- Bus rebuilds (for bus rebuild and rehabilitation projects, only over-the-road, large buses are eligible)
- Passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs
- Accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers, and shop and garage equipment

5.30.3 Call for Projects

Caltrans will announce an FTA Section 5339 call for projects and provide a balance sheet to SRTA with the regional apportionment and any carryover funds. SRTA will provide public notice of the program via email, SRTA's website and/or SRTA's social media and will issue a request for pre-applications for eligible projects. Pre-applications will be due to SRTA by a specified date noted in the request. Interested parties are to use the pre-application form provided in the request.

5.30.4 Funding Discretion

In exercising discretion over regional apportionments, SRTA may:

- Advise pre-applicant(s) to modify requested funding amounts depending on total requested amount from all pre-applicants.
- Advise pre-applicants of other grant programs or funding options that are better fit.

5.30.5 Project Selection

Pre-applications will be evaluated based on the criteria below by a review team determined by SRTA. The SRTA Board of Directors will approve projects and the Program of Projects (POP) as required by Caltrans.

The evaluation method for FTA Section 5339 projects is consistent with the way SRTA evaluates and prioritizes other components of the transportation system, such as arterial, highway and transit projects. Transportation project priorities are established in planning documents like the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and programming documents such as the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).

Evaluation criteria of pre-applications are as follows:

General Intent

These funds are intended to maintain and enhance fixed route public transportation with capital funding.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

- The project must conform to state and federal regulations.
- The project must conform to Caltrans guidelines.
- The project must be consistent with the RTP.
- The project must provide documentation of project authorization by the applicant's board of directors, president or principal, or be part of an adopted, current planning document approved by same.
- Other sources of funding for cooperative projects must be identified. Supporting documentation shall show that matching funds are committed.

Project Scoring Criteria

- Serves the general public – preference given to projects that are not targeted to a segment of the general public
- Leveraging – includes third party support (e.g. funds from other programs; funds a project component needed to effectively compete for a state or federal grant)
- Consistency with RTP – level of consistency with goals in current, adopted RTP and RTP implementation (e.g. is in, or connects to, a Strategic Growth Area; safety)
- Safety – design effectively addresses documented safety issues
- Consistency with local transit priorities – level of consistency with Short Range Transit Plan, Shasta Coordinated Transit Plan, and other applicable planning document
- Need – demonstrated need based on age, mileage, and deferred maintenance of vehicles or facilities

SRTA staff will recommend authorizing selected projects. SRTA staff will present recommendations to the board of directors authorizing application(s) submittal and delegating authority to the executive director to provide information as needed to Caltrans for the application to proceed.

5.30.6 Public Participation

The Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP or formal FTIP amendment) public participation and approval processes carried out by SRTA can serve to satisfy requirements for public participation under Section 5339 (draft FTA Circular 5100.1).

5.30.7 Post-approval Process

For projects selected by the SRTA Board of Directors, pre-applicants will be required to submit the full FTA Section 5339 application to SRTA for review. SRTA will certify the applications consistency with the RTP and FTIP. SRTA will provide the approved POP and certifications to Caltrans. Subsequent to receiving the POP from SRTA, Caltrans will prepare and submit the statewide Section 5339 grant application to FTA for approval. Hereafter, the applicant and Caltrans work together on the standard agreement and reimbursement; SRTA has no further responsibilities.