

FY 2026 FTA RURAL PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

This notice is to announce the availability of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding financial assistance for the ADOT Rural Public Transit Program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Multimodal Planning Division (MPD) of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) administers the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program commonly known as the Section 5311 Program or as the Rural Public Transit Program. This program provides funds for public transportation and intercity bus projects serving rural areas. The division also manages Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities (statewide) Funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities for fixed route bus services only per FTA guidelines. The purpose of these funds is to address the mobility needs of Arizona's rural population. Section 5311 Program grants are intended to provide access to employment, education, health care, shopping, and recreation and Section 5339 funding provides access to funds to maintain a state of good repair of transit assets and transit facilities.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) is now referred to as the Federal Assistance Listing and the Formula Grants for Rural Areas and Tribal Transit Program Section 5311 is 20.509. The federal Assistance Listing for the section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities program is 20.526.

Rural Public Transit subrecipients may include local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

For this competitive application available funding includes 5311 and 5339 Statewide Formula Funds. For this two year application cycle approximately \$14 million will be available each year of 5311 formula apportionment funding and approximately \$4 million per year of 5339 Statewide formula funds. This funding is dependent upon FTA FY 2026 and FY 2027 apportionments and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) transfers for FY 2026 and FY 2027. Statewide Planning funds may also be awarded.

ADOT MPD anticipates awarding the maximum amount of funding possible to all eligible projects. Awards will only be made to projects that are ready to proceed and all required project information and environmental documents have been provided/completed.

ADOT anticipates awarding funding to 27 rural subrecipients via the grant application process in amounts ranging from \$50,000 to \$2,000,000 depending on project types per year. In FY 2024 27 rural subrecipients were awarded funding ranging from \$79,200 to \$1,901,331.

The anticipated period of performance for this funding will be October 2026 through September 2028.

The ADOT Transit Program through its State Management Plan first prioritizes the preservation of systems, then the expansion of current systems and finally new systems, while also considering Title VI and Environmental Justice factors to ensure equitable distribution of funds to eligible entities throughout Arizona.

The evaluation criteria address six specific areas: Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Service, Benefit to Rural Community, Financial and Managerial Capability, Local Commitment to Transit and Accessibility, Safety and Training, and Coordination. Applicants from existing Rural Public Transit programs are evaluated based on current system performance, financial management, and contract deliverables. New applicants are evaluated on estimated performance and demonstrated operational and financial management capability.

Those who are awarded FTA funds will:

- Enter into a contract with, and become a Sub-recipient of ADOT.
- Be required to comply with all Federal program requirements.

No activities may occur before the ADOT execution of the FFY 2026 ADOT Grant Agreement.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible applicants for the Rural Public Transit program include local governments, non-profits, and Tribal governments. Private operators are eligible to apply for intercity funds through this program. Aside from planning requests, new applicants must have a planning feasibility study completed and an implementation and operations plan prior to application award. All applicants must serve areas of the state with populations less than 50,000.

Application and Submission Information

Applications and all related materials are to be completed and submitted electronically through <https://Egrants.azdot.gov> by **Wednesday, February 18, 2026 by 3 PM**. Any applicants that do not have access to the E-grants system can contact the Transit Program Managers by email or phone: Shatawn Reed via email at sreed2@azdot.gov or by phone at 480.979.4111; Luke Taylor via email at ltaylor3@azdot.gov or phone at 480.848.3545; Jesse Zaragoza via email at jzaragoza2@azdot.gov or phone at

480.848.6756; Mary Villarreal-Perry via email at mvillarreal-perry@azdot.gov or phone at 480.721.0443, for assistance in gaining access to the online application system, technical questions regarding navigating the application or printed materials if needed.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications should be submitted electronically through the E grants system <https://Egrants.azdot.gov> and be completed entirely by answering all questions and providing all necessary backup documentation. For applications requesting capital projects, maps must be provided showing the proposed location of the capital projects. For construction projects, documentation of site selection and environmental justice studies along with NEPA documentation must be included in the application. ADOT and FTA strongly suggest that coordination meetings have been held with your funding agency prior to applying for funds. For Rural Public Transit subrecipients of ADOT, coordination meetings should be held with ADOT and FTA. Applicants should also include letters of support, and documentation of the source of local match funding.

Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to register in the System for Award Management (SAM.GOV) prior to submitting an application and maintain an active registration in SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration. All applicants are required to provide their SAM.gov unique entity identifier number on the organizational page in E-grants for their agency. ADOT may not make a federal award until the applicant has obtained all required unique entity identifiers and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time ADOT is ready to make a federal award, ADOT may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Submission Dates and Times

The due date for this application is February 18, 2026 no later than 3:00 pm

Funding Restrictions -

For this grant each applicant is restricted to one overall grant application for the 2 year application cycle. Applicants must identify funding for Year 1 and Year 2 in the original grant submission. Applicants may apply for project administration, operating, intercity, capital and planning projects. ADOT prioritizes funds for existing services first, then expansion of existing services and finally new services.

Other Submission Requirements

ADOT uses the E-grants system egrants.azdot.gov to accept applications, please reach out to the ADOT Program managers listed in this document if you need access to E-grants. In addition to the Program Managers ADOT offers E-grants technical assistance at:

E-grants Help Desk

Hours: Monday thru Friday 8am to 5pm MST

Phone: 1-866-449-1425

Email: azhelpdesk@agatesoftware.com

Application Review Information Criteria

When reviewing applications ADOT will confirm the timeliness of the application submission. E-grants will not allow submissions after the time due. Should these occur, applications submitted after the due date and time will not be considered for funding. ADOT will evaluate if the applicant submitted all necessary supporting documents to justify the requested funding.

Review and Selection Process

Pursuant to A.R.S. §41-2702(F) Applications shall be evaluated by at least three panelists who are peers or other qualified individuals. Each panelist will review applications individually and will determine a score for each applicant. All scores will be calculated and used to determine recommendations for funding. Eligible applicants for the Rural Public Transit program include local governments, non-profits, and Tribal governments. Private operators are eligible to apply for intercity funds through this program. Aside from planning requests, new applicants must have a planning feasibility study completed and an implementation and operations plan prior to application award. All applicants must serve areas of the state with populations less than 50,000. Panelists will rate applicants based on completeness of application including if all supporting documentation needed is provided, clarity of project objectives, and feasibility. Panelists will also look at the geographical location of the applicants to ensure the proper dispersion to ensure program balance and diversity. This includes ensuring services are provided in locations with large populations of elders, low income, and limited English proficiency households.

Rural Public Transit Evaluation Criterion:

The ADOT Transit Program through its State Management Plan first prioritizes the preservation of systems, then the expansion of current systems and finally new systems, while also considering Title VI and Environmental Justice factors to ensure equitable distribution of funds to eligible entities throughout Arizona.

The evaluation criteria address six specific areas: Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Service, Benefit to Rural Community, Financial and Managerial Capability, Local Commitment to Transit and Accessibility, Safety and Training, and Coordination. Applicants from existing Rural Public Transit programs are evaluated based on current system performance, financial management, and contract deliverables. New applicants are evaluated on estimated performance and demonstrated operational and financial management capability.

For any federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if ADOT anticipates that the federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance the following applies:

- a. That ADOT, prior to making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.
- b. An applicant may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered

and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.

- c. That the awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant. The threshold for micro purchases under federal financial assistance awards is \$10,000 and the threshold for simplified acquisitions is \$250,000 for all recipients.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

ADOT anticipates announcing preliminary awards for this funding by early May 2026. Once preliminary awards are issued, subrecipients will have 10 business days to review and appeal decisions if they choose to.

Federal Award Administration Information Award Notices

Those who are awarded FTA funds will:

- Enter into a contract with, and become a Sub-recipient of ADOT.
- Be required to comply with all Federal program requirements.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Successful applicants must comply with all ADOT and FTA requirements regarding the specific FTA funding awarded. Applicants can reference the following materials:

Rural Public Transit Guidebook.

The Guidebook can be found on the ADOT Transit Program Handbook, Applications and Awards Page in the Rural Public Transit Section:

<https://azdot.gov/planning/transit-programs-and-grants/program-handbooks-applications-and-awards>

Rural Areas Formula Grant Program FTA Circular

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/formula-grants-rural-areas-program-guidance-and-application>

FTA circular 5010 - Award Management Requirements

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/award-management-requirements-circular-50101e>

ADOT's State management plan

<https://azdot.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/State-Management-Plan-2024-Final-Draft-2018-w-updates-for-2024.pdf>

ADOT subrecipients also need to comply with their ADOT grant agreement which can be found in E-grants for the current award year.

If the federal share of any award may include more than \$10,000,000 over the period of performance, post award reporting is required. Please see 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix XII.

Awarding Agency Contact(s)

All application materials are to be completed and submitted electronically through <https://Egrants.azdot.gov> by **Wednesday February 18, 2026 by 3PM.**

Application Webinar ADOT will host a webinar with information about applying for this grant.

Rural Public Transit 2026 Webinar

Monday, December 22 · 10:00am – 12:00pm

Time zone: America/Phoenix

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ygu-yjxh-dma>

Or dial: (US) +1 661-527-0160 PIN: 412 516 721#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/ygu-yjxh-dma?pin=4577687728627>

If you have questions about the Rural Public Transit Program or to register for the webinar, please contact Shatawn Reed via email at sreed2@azdot.gov or by phone at 480.979.4111; Luke Taylor via email at ltaylor3@azdot.gov or phone at 480.848.3545; Jesse Zaragoza via email at jzaragoza2@azdot.gov or phone at 480.848.6756; Mary Villarreal-Perry via email at mvillarreal-perry@azdot.gov or phone at 480.721.0443. Should you experience technical challenges related to the E-grants system please contact the above listed program managers or the Egrants Help Desk.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Thank you for your interest in FTA funding.