



Cleveland, Ohio Urbanized Area Competitive Selection Process Fiscal Year 2010

Application Overview & Instructions

The New Freedom (49 U.S.C. Section 5317) program supports new public transportation services and alternatives beyond those currently required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) that assist individuals with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.

Available Funding

In the Cleveland Urbanized Area (UZA) \$0.643 million in New Freedom funding has been apportioned for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 and is available during this application cycle (includes up to 10% for administrative costs). It is anticipated that FFY 2010 funding may be authorized at approximately the same level and will also be offered during this application cycle, if available



Application Prerequisites

Eligible Applicants

- Private non-profit organizations
- State and local government authorities
- Public operators of public transportation services
- Private operators of public transportation services*

Applicants must be able to ensure that they will be able to meet, and continue to meet, all federal requirements, including FY 2010 Certifications and Assurances (available online at http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/2010-Certs-Appendix_A.pdf), required by FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program (Section 5307 program). Applicants are strongly encouraged to review these requirements prior to applying for funds.

*To be considered public transportation, the general nature of the service must include shared rides, meaning two or more passengers in the same vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together.

Eligible Geographic Area

This application is for New Freedom projects that are entirely or partially contained in the Cleveland UZA in the NOACA planning area. Please see Appendix A for a map and for additional information on the Cleveland UZA, small urbanized, and nonurbanized areas.

The Coordinated Plan

Federal transportation law requires that all New Freedom projects selected for funding must be derived from or be in support of the specific goals of a locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan ("Coordinated Plan"). This is a document that includes information on the existing transportation options and unmet needs of the three target population groups served by the JARC, New Freedom, and Specialized Transportation (Section 5310) programs: people with low income, individuals with disabilities, and older adults. The plan that covers Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties is called the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Northeast Ohio (available online at <http://www.noaca.org/transitplan.html>). Please review this plan prior to completing the application.

Eligible Uses of Funds

New Freedom funds may be used for capital, planning, or operating projects, with the following federal and local share breakdown:

- Capital costs: 80% federal/20% local
- Operating costs: 50% federal/50% local

Depending on the type of project, the sponsor will need to contribute between 20% and 50% of the total project costs, called the local share or local match. Fare revenue or user fees generated on the service to be supported may not be used as matching funds. New Freedom funds may not be used to pay for transit fares or passes. There are many potential sources for the local match including any non-Department of Transportation federal funds, foundation grants, donations, and state or local funds. Please see Appendix B of the Coordinated Plan for more information on local match requirements.

Eligible Projects

Below are a few examples of the types of projects that may be eligible for New Freedom funding. For a full listing, please see the federal program guidance (available online at http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html) or Appendix B of the Coordinated Plan.

- Enhancing Paratransit service beyond minimum requirements of the ADA, such as expansion of current hours of operation beyond those provided on the fixed-route services
- Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible
- Travel training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities

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- Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ridesharing, and/or vanpooling programs
- Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs

Grant Period

New Freedom funds available during this application cycle may be distributed over one or two years. Applicants must indicate the total amount and time period for which funds are requested. Any project selected must be initiated within six months of the grant award.

Technical Assistance & Questions

For technical assistance in preparing the FY 2010 New Freedom application for the Cleveland Urbanized Area, contact Sara Maier, Project Manager for JARC and New Freedom Programs at NOACA, at 216-241-2414, ext. 308, or smaier@mpo.noaca.org.

Competitive Grant Selection Process

NOACA is the Designated Recipient for the New Freedom Program for the Cleveland UZA and is responsible for conducting a competitive selection process to award grant funds. Below is a description of the process that will be used.

Solicitation for Applications

NOACA will advertise availability of New Freedom funds through legal notices, press releases, the NOACA Web site, and e-mail and direct mail to entities that participated in development of the Coordinated Plan.

Application Timeline

NOACA anticipates the following schedule for applications. Task Force-recommended projects will be processed through the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and NOACA's Governing Board as required before funds may be distributed.

Thursday, February 18	Post application on NOACA Web site; begin dissemination of notice of application availability
Tuesday, March 2	JARC & New Freedom application workshop at NOACA from 2:00-4:00 p.m. (Register by calling 216-241-2414, ext. 308 or e-mailing smaier@mpo.noaca.org)
Thursday, April 1	Applications due by 4:00 p.m. for hand-delivered applications; must be postmarked by date for mailed applications
Friday, May 21	Information item at TAC
Friday, June 11*	Information item at Governing Board
Friday, July 18*	Action item at TAC
Friday, July 9*	Action item at Governing Board

*Subject to change

Upon approval by the NOACA Governing Board, the final Program of Projects (POP) will be forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for final approval. At this time, NOACA is not able to provide an estimated date that FTA will approve the POP. Applicants should anticipate a delay of up to six months before receiving funds.

Application Review

NOACA staff will review each application upon its arrival for completeness, including submission of all necessary forms and attachments. Applications found to be incomplete after the submission deadline will not be considered for funding. A Task Force of individuals representing the region will review, score, and rank each application. If the solicitation for applications does not result in enough qualified projects to award all apportioned funds, the Task Force may determine that an additional selection round(s) should be initiated at a later date to award remaining funds.

Application Guidance & Scoring Criteria

The following criteria will be used to score and rate project applications for New Freedom funding.

K. Project Need/Goals and Objectives 20 Points

In K1 of the application, applicants should check all of the applicable goals that the proposed project supports. Of the 20 points available in this section, up to ten (10) points will be awarded based on the highest tier goal supported. Points will be awarded accordingly for projects supporting a goal in the following tiers: Tier 1 receives ten (10) points, Tier 2 receives five (5) points, and Tier 3 receives three (3) points. Applicants must describe how the project supports the Coordinated Plan. The remaining ten (10) points will be awarded based on how the project addresses identified transportation gaps or needs. The project application should clearly state the overall program goals and objectives, the population and area to be served, and should explain how the project is the most appropriate service or use of funds.

L. Implementation/Management Plan 20 Points

Applicants should provide an operations plan for projects seeking funds to support program operations and an implementation plan that includes major project milestones and a timeline for capital projects. Either should highlight the number of persons expected to be served. Please also provide a brief description of any relevant experience your agency may have, including similar projects or qualifications of key personnel to be involved in the project. The highest points will be awarded to projects that are clearly defined, financially feasible, and for which the project sponsor has demonstrated capability to execute.

M. Coordination and Program Outreach 15 Points

Projects will be evaluated based on ability to coordinate with existing transportation resources, including how key stakeholders will be involved in the project. Please explain any participation that the sponsor had in development of the Coordinated Plan. Letters of support from stakeholders should be attached to the grant application as "Attachment 2." Higher points will be awarded to projects and sponsors that demonstrate coordination of resources.

N. Project Budget 15 Points

Applicants must clearly state the expenses and sources of funding for the project in the attached budget sheets. Applicants must be able to certify the availability of the required local match. An explanation of the cost-effectiveness of the project should be included.

O. Project Sustainability 15 Points

The most points will be awarded to projects that require only a one-time award of funds or that have the potential to become self-sufficient. Applicants should consider potential funding sources for sustaining a project beyond the grant period. Points may also be awarded to projects that are anticipated to have an environment benefit such as reducing air pollution.

P. Program Effectiveness and Performance Indicators..... 10 Points

Project sponsors must identify performance measures to track the effectiveness of the service in meeting the identified goals in Section K. A plan should be provided for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the service, along with steps to be taken if the anticipated goals of the projects are not being met.

Q. Innovation..... 5 Points

Points may be awarded to projects that use an innovative or new approach to expanding transportation access for the target population.

Appendix A

Background

On August 10, 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was authorized, replacing the previous transportation legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). SAFETEA-LU authorizes \$286.4 billion in guaranteed transportation funding for the five-year period of Federal Fiscal Years (FY) 2005-2009, \$52.6 billion of which is for Federal transit programs.

Large Urbanized, Small Urbanized & Non-urbanized Areas

As authorized by SAFETEA-LU, funding for the New Freedom program is broken down into three categories: large urbanized areas, small urbanized areas, and other than urbanized (nonurbanized) areas. Urbanized area designations are determined by the Secretary of Commerce and are based on the most recent decennial census (Census 2000).

New Freedom funding is allocated by the following formula:

- 60% to Designated Recipients in large urbanized areas (populations of at least 200,000)
- 20% to the States for small urbanized areas (population greater than 50,000 but less than 200,000)
- 20% to the States for non-urbanized areas (population of fewer than 50,000)

Whereas NOACA's planning area consists of the entirety of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties, urbanized areas often have jagged boundaries that can cross through counties based upon population density determined by the decennial census.

- The Cleveland UZA is comprised of the majority of Cuyahoga County, most of western and portions of eastern Lake County, the far northeastern portion of Lorain County, the Brunswick area of Medina County, and the far western portion of Geauga County, along with portions of northern Summit and Portage counties, which are outside of the NOACA planning area (see attached Map).

Projects in small-urbanized/nonurbanized areas may be eligible for funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) through its competitive selection process. **Projects that are not at least partially within the Cleveland UZA are not eligible to apply for Cleveland UZA funds.** Please contact ODOT or NOACA for assistance in determining the appropriate grant program.

