

JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT  
49 U.S.C. Sections 5310 and 5311

1. EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial assistance to states, local governments, private nonprofit agencies, and public bodies through the 49 U.S.C. Section 5311 program for transportation services in nonurbanized areas and the 49 U.S.C. Section 5310 program for transportation services designed to meet the needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The rural transit assistance program (RTAP), a subsection of Section 5311, provides for training, technical assistance, and related activities to support rural public transportation.

The provisions of the Federal Transit Act, as amended, and 49 CFR Part 18, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments,” and 49 CFR Part 19, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-profit Organizations,” require that FTA review Section 5310 and Section 5311 applications for federal financial assistance. This review assesses eligibility and compliance with statutory and administrative requirements and provides a basis for monitoring approved projects to ensure timely and appropriate expenditure of federal funds by grant recipients. The applications must contain enough information to enable the agency to make the findings required by law and enforce program requirements.

Although differences exist in the administration of these two programs, the information collection under each program is structured to comply with legislative and administrative mandates. Generally, the reporting requirements are identical and are submitted by grantees in two stages: the application stage and the project management stage. Since both the Section 5310 and Section 5311 programs are administered by the states, application and reporting requirements to FTA have been streamlined and made as minimal as possible. For each program, the state submits a consolidated annual application on behalf of all the subrecipients within the state. The subrecipients do not submit any information directly to FTA, but are required by the state to file sufficient documentation to support the assurances and certifications the state must make on their behalf.

This information collection satisfies the mobility goal in the Departmental Strategic Plan.

APPLICATION STAGE

During the application stage, FTA must determine the applicant’s eligibility to receive program funds. Project planning requirements should be complete and properly documented prior to submitting grant application. FTA must know: (a) who

the applicant is; (b) for what purpose the funds are requested; and (c) the amount of federal funds requested.

A description of the application stage requirements, as included in the program circulars, follows:

- a. The Project Budget identifies funds for project implementation. The applicant prepares the program budget, which identifies the local and federal shares that make up the project funding. The identification of the amounts of the local and federal shares is necessary for project approval.
- b. The Program of Projects includes a list of subrecipients that will be funded, the total amount of funds for each subrecipient, and a description of the projects to be funded. Only certain categories of transit projects are eligible for funding, and the project description enables FTA to determine whether funding of the proposed project is permissible under the law. These project descriptions usually consist of a list of capital acquisitions planned, or the period of operating assistance, or type of service to be funded. The projects are listed in three categories: those which have already met all requirements and can be initiated as soon as approved, those which are expected to complete all requirements during the year, and a program reserve for unanticipated needs. Once the program of projects is approved, the state has considerable flexibility to make revisions without further FTA concurrence.
- c. The Project Implementation Plan is a brief plan for implementation of the program of projects. The plan should include significant milestones such as vehicle procurements and agreements with subrecipients, an estimated schedule for encumbrance of funds, and an estimated completion date for the grant.
- d. The State Management Plan describes the grantee's policies and operating procedures in administering the programs. The submission of this information is on a one-time basis. The information enables FTA to ascertain that the grantee's administration of the programs is consistent with Federal policies without conducting repeated inspections and detailed supervision of each grantee's procedures. Significant changes in program procedures are reflected in revisions to the State Management Plan.
- e. Annual Certifications and Assurances certify compliance with all applicable related Federal requirements. The annual notice, published in the Federal Register, provides the applicant with a single signature page on which the applicant and its attorney certify compliance with all certifications and assurances applicable to each grant for which the applicant wishes to apply in each fiscal year.
- f. Public Hearings Notice, Certifications, and Transcripts. Section 5311 applicants and Section 5310 applicants, which include public bodies among their

subrecipients, are required to certify that a hearing was held or the opportunity for a hearing was provided for each project for which an application was submitted. The transcripts for any such hearings held must be retained by the states and made available to FTA upon request.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAGE

Upon notice of approval of the program of projects, the grantee may begin implementation of project elements. The reporting requirements, listed below, are necessary to ensure proper and timely expenditure of federal funds within the scope of the approved program of projects. This requirement complies with 49 CFR Parts 18 and 19 and is contained in the above-referenced FTA circulars.

Financial Status Report. On an annual basis, the state should provide a financial status report (SF 269a) for each active grant.

Annual Program Status Report. The information collected is essentially an update of the program of projects for each active grant.

### 2. INDICATE HOW, BY WHOM, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE THE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED.

The information collected is used by the FTA Regional Offices to determine eligibility for grant benefits and ensures compliance with Federal requirements. The information is also used by FTA Headquarters for program management and evaluation. Without the information FTA could not make the findings statutorily required in order to make grants under these programs, nor could it administer the programs in accordance with congressional intent.

### 3. DESCRIBE WHETHER, AND TO WHAT EXTENT, THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION INVOLVES THE USE OF AUTOMATED, ELECTRONIC, MECHANICAL, OR OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL COLLECTION TECHNIQUES OR OTHER FORMS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

All of FTA's Section 5310 and Section 5311 grant applications and project management reports are submitted electronically (100 percent) through the Transportation Electronic Award and Management (TEAM) System. This electronic system allows grantees to apply for funds, seamlessly receive information about their requests and provide overall project management. The TEAM system has a point-and-click capability, menus and selection choices designed to streamline the application process and significantly reduce the amount of information a user needs to input. It effectively elevates the management of the federal assistance application and administration process to the users' desktop and reduces dependency on paper copies. Since FTA last reported, some enhancements have been made to the TEAM system. Grantees can now attach documents as part of their TEAM application, allowing them

to include required information (such as programs or projects) that they may have readily available for other program purposes as an attachment, rather than transferring the data into appropriate TEAM fields. In addition, the TEAM system is now a web-based system, allowing our grantees greater accessibility to the system and ensuring fewer delays due to restrictions inherent in the former disk-based system.

4. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION. SHOW SPECIFICALLY WHY ANY SIMILAR INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE CANNOT BE USED OR MODIFIED FOR USE FOR THE PURPOSES DESCRIBED IN ITEM 2.

Through consultation with grantees, FTA has streamlined the information collection to eliminate duplication. Many requirements have been satisfied with one-time submissions that must be updated only when significant changes occur.

The information is project specific and is not available elsewhere. The statute specifically requires projects to be funded under Section 5311 and included in an annual state program of projects. It also directs the federal agency to make specific findings in order to approve funding. Whenever possible, one-time submissions have been substituted for repeated or potentially duplicative submissions.

5. IF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IMPACTS SMALL BUSINESS OR OTHER SMALL ENTITIES, DESCRIBE THE METHODS USED TO MINIMIZE BURDEN.

The information collection does not involve small businesses. Local governments and transportation providers, some of which are small entities, deal only with their own state government, not directly with FTA.

6. DESCRIBE CONSEQUENCES TO FEDERAL PROGRAM OR POLICY ACTIVITIES IF THE COLLECTION WERE CONDUCTED LESS FREQUENTLY AS WELL AS ANY TECHNICAL OR LEGAL OBSTACLES TO REDUCING BURDEN.

The information that is collected during the application stage must be collected annually because grantees submit one annual grant during a fiscal year. Section 5311 and Section 5310 funds are apportioned to the states each fiscal year.

During the project management stage an annual financial report and an annual program status report are submitted. These reports provide needed financial information on the grant and a status of the program of projects.

The information collected during the application stage and the project management stage is required to ensure FTA compliance with the provisions of the Federal Transit Act and 49 CFR. If the information were collected less frequently than required

during the application stage and the project management stage, it would inhibit FTA from determining the applicant's eligibility for funding. Also, less frequent submissions would reduce the effectiveness of FTA's monitoring responsibility required by 49 CFR Parts 18 and 19.

7. EXPLAIN ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE THE COLLECTION TO BE CITED IN A MANNER INCONSISTENT WITH THE GUIDELINES IN 5 CFR 1320.6.

The information collected is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO CONSULT WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY.

A 60-day Federal Register Notice was published on March 26, 2007 (page 14167), soliciting comments prior to submission to the Office of Management and budget (OMB). No comments were received. A 30-day Federal Register Notice was published on June 8, 2007.

A national meeting of state program managers is held every other summer to discuss program administration issues, including needed revisions to the circulars and the burden of information collections requirements. Approximately 90 program managers attend these meetings, representing most of the states.

FTA will continue to consult State Program Managers to assess whether program reporting requirements are causing an increase in labor hours based upon future changes that occur as a result of SAFETEA-LU.

9. EXPLAIN ANY DECISION TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS, OTHER THAN REMUNERATION OF CONTRACTORS OR GRANTEES.

No payment or gift is made to respondents.

10. DESCRIBE ANY ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS AND THE BASIS FOR ASSURANCE IN STATUTE, REGULATION, OR AGENCY POLICY.

FTA gives no assurance of confidentiality since the information is not personal or sensitive in nature. All information collected is certified to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act of 1974, and 49 CFR Parts 18 and 19.

11. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY QUESTIONS OF SENSITIVE NATURE.

No questions of a sensitive nature are involved.

12. PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF THE HOUR BURDEN OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION AND ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS.

## Section 5310

Annually, it is estimated to take 90 hours (41 hours of application preparation and 49 hours of project management) per 52 respondents (the trust territories of Guam, America Samoa, and the Northern Marianas and the State of North Carolina transfer their Section 5310 funds to the Section 5311 program).

Therefore, 90 hours x 52 respondents = 4,680 total annual burden hours.

The burden was estimated by contacting state program managers in several states with programs of varying size and complexity.

Their responses were combined into an average of the typical state burden and hourly staff wage rate.

## Section 5311

Annually, it is estimated to take 129 hours (74 hours of application preparation and 55 hours of project management) per 55 respondents (50 states and 5 territories), for both Section 5311 and RTAP.

Therefore, 129 hours x 55 respondents = 7,095 total annual hours.

The burden was estimated by contacting state program managers in several states with program of varying size and complexity.

Total Burden hours for Both Programs:

Section 5310	4,680
Section 5311	<u>7,095</u>
Total Hour Burden	11,775

The estimated cost to the respondents is calculated as follows:

Section 5310     \$30 per hour x 4,680 hours = \$140,400

Section 5311      \$30 per hour x 7,095 hours = \$212,850

Total cost to respondents	\$353,250
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13. PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS OR RECORDKEEPERS RESULTING FROM THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.

There are no additional costs beyond those shown in Items 12 and 14.

14. ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

This cost is calculated as follows:

Application Review

It takes approximately 17 hours to review each application at \$32 per hour (GS-12/5) from 107 respondents (49 states and 2 U.S. territories and the District of Columbia for Section 5310 and 50 states and 5 U.S. territories for Section 5311).

Therefore:

17 hours per respondent x \$32 per hour = \$544 x 107 respondents = \$58,208 annually for both programs.

Project Management

Project management activities annually take approximately 41 hours per respondent at \$32 per hour.

Therefore:

52 hours per respondent (for both programs) x \$32 per hour = \$1,664 x 55 respondents = \$72,160 annually.

Application Review	\$58,208
Project Management	<u>72,160</u>

Total cost to federal government    \$130,368

15. EXPLAIN REASONS FOR ANY PROGRAM CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS REPORTED IN ITEMS 13 OR 14 ON OMB FORM 83 – I.

Since the last time FTA reported, the burden hour estimate for grantees has not changed. The change in number 14 is an adjustment to correct the amount that was entered in the previous approval of this information collection.

FTA has added no new application or reporting requirements for the grantees and has made

some enhancements to the TEAM system to help streamline the application and reporting requirements. Grantees can now attach documents as part of their TEAM application, allowing them to include required information that they may have readily available for other program purposes as an attachment, rather than transferring the data into appropriate TEAM fields. In addition, the TEAM system is now a web-based system, allowing grantees greater accessibility to the system and ensuring fewer delays due to restrictions inherent in the former disk-based system.

16. PLANS FOR TABULATION AND PUBLICATION OF COLLECTION OF INFORMATION WHOSE RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED.

There are no plans to publish the results of this information collection for statistical use.

17. IF SEEKING APPROVAL NOT TO DISPLAY THE EXPIRATION DATE FOR OMB APPROVAL, EXPLAIN THE REASONS.

There is no reason not to display the expiration date of OMB approval.

18. EXPLAIN ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT IDENTIFIED IN ITEM 19 OF OMB FORM 83-I.

No exceptions are stated.