

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Division of Transportation Development
4201 East Arkansas Avenue, Shumate Bldg.
Denver, Colorado 80222
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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

September 17, 2013

TO PERSONS INTERESTED IN TRANSIT SERVICES:

The purpose of this letter is to announce that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is accepting applications for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5304 funds for FY 2014. This letter sets forth the purpose of the program, project and applicant eligibility, and guidelines for submitting an application.

Section 5304 funds can be used for a wide variety of transit related support activities, including: transit technical assistance, planning, research, demonstration projects, special studies, training and other similar projects. These funds are NOT available for capital or operating expenses of public transit systems. CDOT anticipates the availability of approximately \$200,000 in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 and some remaining money from previous funding cycles. However, please be advised that to date Congress has not yet passed a 2014 appropriation.

FTA Section 5304 funds are made available in Colorado on an 80% federal/20% local matching ratio. CDOT is calling for proposals for projects that would be funded with 2014 funds. According to CDOT's Rules for this program, only **public bodies** are eligible applicants for Section 5304 funds; however, interested private nonprofit organizations may apply through a willing public body where the non-profit is acting as the agency's sub-recipient.

The Department's Rules and Regulations for implementation of the Section 5304 program contain the purpose, authority, procedures and threshold criteria for applicant eligibility, evaluation criteria, funding, and appeal procedures. The text of the Rules can be accessed at: www.dot.state.co.us/rules/ under "**2CCR 603-3**". If you would like a hard copy of the Rules, please send a mailing label and request to me at the address found on page three of this notice.

A separate FTA program, Section 5303, provides funding for transit planning in urbanized areas (population over 50,000). Since Section 5303 funding exceeds that of Section 5304 funding by a ratio of over four to one, the Department will generally not consider Section 5304 requests for planning projects in urbanized areas, or assign them a lower priority. However, the Department will consider funding other activities (such as technical assistance, research, demonstration projects, special studies, training, etc.) that are eligible under the program.

According to the Department's Rules, first priority is given to **statewide projects**, which includes grant administration, the provision of planning, technical and management assistance to

transit operators, and special planning or technical studies. Activities in this top priority category are often carried out by CDOT staff or contracted out. Organizations wishing to suggest a statewide project or activity to be carried out by CDOT are encouraged to simply submit a brief descriptive letter to the Department, outlining the proposed project. The match for statewide projects is usually provided by the State. Applicants may propose to undertake a statewide project themselves and it will be considered, provided that it has statewide significance and benefit. In such cases, an applicant proposing to carry out a statewide project themselves would normally be expected to provide the 20% match.

The second priority is given to the **updating of existing regional transit plans (see below)**. Third priority is given to **requests for new regional transit plans**. The regional planning process, utilized by CDOT for updating the fifteen Regional Transportation Plans around the state, was completed and the 2035 Plan was adopted by the Transportation Commission. The development of the 2040 Plan is currently underway. An organization planning to request funds for Section 5310 or 5311 funding must first have its proposed project described in, and consistent with, a locally adopted transit plan. Each Regional Transportation Plan and the Statewide Plan includes a transit component, thus the planning requirements are met by this current document. **Therefore, the Division of Transit and Rail does not anticipate funding projects under categories two and three for 2014.**

Fourth priority is given to requests to conduct **local activities** such as: research, local transit operating plans, demonstration projects, training programs, strategic planning or site development planning. Fourth priority projects are usually in the \$15,000 to \$40,000 range. The fifth/last priority is funding studies in urbanized areas. Applicants from urbanized areas must either demonstrate that 5303 funds are otherwise committed or identify urbanized area funding to be used as part of the proposed study budget (in addition to any 5304 funds).

The process for applying for Section 5304 funds is relatively simple and primarily involves the completion of a narrative in response to a short list of questions. Normally most applicants are able to do so successfully in two to three pages. What is most important is to fully explain the nature of the proposed project - its goals and objectives, purpose, beneficiaries, scope of work, and cost justification.

Applications for FY 2014 Section 5304 funds will be due at the Department of Transportation no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, November 8, 2013**. Failure to submit the FTA Section 5304 application by the due date will result in your project being excluded from funding consideration.

Other Information:

- The application (MS Word format) is included with this Notice Of Funding Availability. It is very similar to that used for the most recent round of funding requests for CDOT's FASTER Transit Program.
- Administrative funds are not an eligible expense for the 5304 program.
- In general, local match is expected to be cash.
- In general, CDOT does not allow 5304 funds to be used to pay for existing agency staff w/o prior explicit approval from the Department.
- Funds are expected to be available as late as March 1, 2014.

To submit your completed application, email it to David Averill at david.averill@state.co.us. When it is received David will send you a confirmation email.

You can also download an application. To do so, please direct your internet browser to to <http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/transitandrail/transit> To access the application, select the link on the homepage. This will take you directly to the 2014 FTA 5304 Application Form. The signature page can be downloaded from the link located at the bottom of the online application form.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Please direct all questions to:

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