

SPECIALIZED SERVICES GUIDELINES

Operating Assistance

These funds are to be used for operating assistance, including purchase of service and vehicle leases. The amount of operating assistance will be subject to the level of need, the level of local coordination and commitment, funding availability, and legislative appropriation for specialized services.

Specialized services operating funds distribution will be determined based upon an annual application process. A local coordination plan is a requirement of the application. As part of the coordination plan, efficiency and effectiveness of the services shall be reviewed by the local coordination committee.

One coordinating agency representing the transit interests of the elderly and persons with disabilities is eligible to receive a grant per county or multi-county region. This agency shall be the applicant for all specialized services funding requests in that county or region, regardless of who actually provides the specialized transit services. In order of priority the coordinating agency must be one of the following:

- a. A public transit agency; or if no public transit agency exists:
- b. A governmental agency; or,
- c. An existing 5310 agency; or,
- d. A non-profit corporation representing specialized services interest.

Agencies receiving transit funding from other State of Michigan programs can also be eligible recipients under this program. However, funding from this program is not intended to replace existing funds provided for transportation from any public or private source.

Actual reimbursement shall be based on a rate per mile or a rate per one-way passenger trip of specialized transit service, up to a maximum amount per contract, as determined annually by the department. A vehicle must be owned or leased by an agency for services to be eligible for reimbursement, except for use of personal car.

It is the department's intent to preserve existing specialized services, when application requirements have been met. Applications will be funded by the categories listed below:

- a. Operating assistance for recipients of previous years Specialized Services Operating Assistance. Specifically, this means maintaining operating assistance for all services which received specialized services operating funds in previous years, provided all other application requirements have been met.
- b. Operating assistance in areas without current specialized service providers or public transit agencies.
- c. Operating assistance for specialized service providers and public transit systems operating in areas with unmet transit needs for the elderly and persons with disabilities. These funds are to be used for expansion of service for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Capital Assistance

Capital assistance is funded with state and federal funds through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program. For applications to be considered for the FTA 5310 program, coordination/consolidation of existing transportation services must be thoroughly addressed.

Any vehicle being requested under this program must also be included in the coordination plan for the county or multi-county region. Agencies within an urbanized Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) geographic area must include these requests in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Nonurban projects must be placed in the statewide TIP by MDOT.

Priority shall be placed on the funding of replacement vehicles prior to expansion vehicles. All agencies must comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and must submit a balanced operating budget to support the capital equipment being requested. All applicants, in cooperation with the local coordination committee, must prepare and submit, as part of the application, a coordination plan for area wide services for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The coordination committee has a continuing responsibility to monitor the transportation services and provide direction to promote the most effective use and care of the equipment. First time 5310 applicants and those requesting expansion vehicles must have support from the public transit agency in the area.

Public agencies are eligible to receive funding under this program if they have been approved by the state to coordinate services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and if they certify to the state that no non-profit corporations or associations are readily available in the area to provide service.

Leasing of vehicles is an eligible capital expense and will be allowed as long as the applicant can demonstrate that leasing would be more cost effective than owning the

vehicle. Based upon FTA's leasing regulations, leasing of vehicles from private non-profit agencies to local public agencies will be allowed for the purpose of improving transportation services for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Applications from the county or multicounty region must be submitted with the support of the local coordination committee. Applications must be submitted by one coordinating agency, which must be the public transit agency in urbanized areas. In order of priority the coordinating agency must be one of the following:

- a. A public transit agency; or if no public transit agency exists:
- b. A governmental agency; or,
- c. An existing 5310 agency; or,
- d. A non-profit corporation representing specialized services interest.

Vehicles¹ shall be included in the FTA 5310 program in the following order of priority:

- a. Agencies replacing vehicles previously funded under the FTA 5310 program. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category.
- b. Private, non-profit agencies operating public transportation systems funded under Local Bus Operating Assistance (Sec. 10e(4)(a) financed from other funding sources and used for transportation of the elderly and persons with disabilities requesting replacement vehicles. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category.
- c. Agencies funded under the existing Specialized Services Operating Assistance program replacing vehicles financed from other funding sources and used for transportation of the elderly and/or persons with disabilities. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.
- d. Agencies not currently participating in this Specialized Services program requesting replacement vehicles financed from other funding sources and used for transportation of the elderly and/or persons with disabilities. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved

¹ Includes communication equipment necessary to operate the vehicle.

requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.

- e. Agencies requesting expansion vehicles to provide new specialized transportation services in areas where no existing transportation services are available. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.
- f. Agencies participating in the FTA 5310 program, requesting expansion vehicles. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.
- g. Agencies operating specialized services and currently participating in this Specialized Services program requesting expansion vehicles. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.
- h. Agencies not currently participating in this Specialized Services program requesting expansion vehicles, who provide specialized transportation services in areas where transportation services are available. Two vehicles, but not more than one large bus, per agency until all approved requests for vehicles under this priority have been funded before proceeding to the next category. However, these agencies may apply only after all other federal and state funding sources are exhausted.
- i. After all the above vehicle priorities have been met, any remaining funds may be used to purchase other approved capital equipment.