



Nevada Department of Transportation

Rural Transit Program

Award Methodology Memo

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Overview

Programs

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) administers four Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs for rural public transit funding assistance in Nevada. These include:

- 5304: State Planning and Research Program
- 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- 5311: Rural Area Program
- 5339: Bus and Bus Facilities Program

Each of these programs, including eligible recipients, subrecipients, and activities, as well as funding/match requirements, are described in detail in NDOT's [Rural Transit Application Guidance](#) document and in the [Transit](#) section of the agency's website.

Application Process

A complete set of information about program and application requirements is available on NDOT's website and is further detailed in the [Rural Transit Application Guidance](#) document. This document outlines steps for accessing the online application, including instructions for using the [BlackCat](#) system. It also notes specific considerations or requirements for each transit program (i.e., 5304, 5310, 5311, and 5339) and provides guidance on creating a budget and a list of key milestones for submittal, along with required attachments.

Evaluation and Selection

Evaluation Criteria

NDOT has developed a set of evaluation criteria to facilitate and standardize the selection process. The application scoring process makes use of an Excel file, which facilitates compiling and summarizing information about each application received. Staff inserts information about each application, and the spreadsheet conducts a series of automatic calculations and summaries.

The scoring mechanism includes three tiers, described in further detail in the following subsections:

- Evaluation of applications for eligibility and completeness.
- Evaluation for consistency with One Nevada and Rural Transit Program goals.
- Technical capacity of the applicant and project readiness.

Each tier prompts staff to answer a brief series of yes/no questions about the application (with the exception of the External Risk Assessment Results, Average Cost Per Trip, and Response Time), as detailed below. The spreadsheet also requires selection of a specific program (i.e., 5304, 5310, 5311, or 5339) and the funding amount requested. An applicant score is automatically calculated at the bottom of each sheet.

TIER 1: ELIGIBILITY AND COMPLETENESS

- Applicant provided a complete application.
- Applicant included a transit service map of non-urban rural routes, stops, and connectivity hubs for the previous year.
- Applicant provided annual route miles specific to non-urban rural areas for the previous year.
- Applicant provided annual ridership specific to non-urban rural areas for the previous year.

TIER 2: OVERALL RISK ASSESSMENT

- External risk assessment results (numerical score to be entered).
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient experience and capability in grants management.
- Average cost per trip (dropdown menu choices include \$1-\$15, \$16-\$30, and \$31 and up).

TIER 3: TECHNICAL CAPACITY AND READINESS

- Applicant provided a SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- Applicant provided the prior year's agency single audit reflecting no issue with federal funding.
- Applicant has experience managing transportation projects and grant awards.

- Applicant has a history of consistent monthly reporting compliance for ridership and service vehicle reports.
- Applicant has a history of timely invoicing and financial reporting.
- Applicant average response time to NDOT requests (Above Average, Average, Below Average).

Rankings and Funding

The scoring spreadsheet automatically develops a ranked list of applications in the Application Scoring Tab. This tab includes the following information about each application to help staff make decisions and weigh tradeoffs:

- Program (5304, 5310, 5311, or 5339)
- Applicant
- Application Amount (\$)
- Applicant Score
- Rank
- % Funded
- Award Amount

This tab also shows the total amount of funding available for each program, the total award amounts for the year at hand, and the remaining balance.

NDOT Internal Review and Approval Process

Following the review and evaluation by the technical team, the recommendations will be reviewed and approved by NDOT leadership. A summary of highly ranked applications will be developed and will include the following information:

- Description of the various transit service/project types submitted and recommended for funding.
- Description of the proportion of the rural Nevada population that would be served by the grant program funds based on the evaluation of applications.

GRANT AWARDS AND NOTIFICATION

Highly ranked applicants are notified of their award eligibility via a signed letter on official NDOT letterhead.