

National RTAP

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)

What's New:

December 1, 2003

5310 - Elderly and Disabled Assistance Program Comments Accepted

The Federal Transit Administration is asking states and local governments, as well as businesses, non-profit and other organizations for comments on the Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities program that funds transportation services for these group. The comment period has been extended to January 9, 2004

For complete information download docket No. [FTA-2003-16467](#) and submit your comments to Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington DC 20590 or submit your comments electronically

at: <http://dms.dot.gov/search/searchResultsSimple.cfm?numberValue=16467&searchType=docket>

The program is administered by states and may be used for urbanized, small urban and rural areas under the Nonurbanized Area Formula Program to provide public transportation assistance. The FTA reviews applications for eligibility and compliance. Reporting requirements by the state and agencies allows the FTA to monitor projects and develop annual reports.

Three New Members Named to the National RTAP Review Board

There are two new state representatives. They are Ken Bock from Delaware Transit Corporation and Joyce Sporhase from the State of Nebraska Rail and Public Transportation Division. There is also one new rural operator. She is Mary Ellen

Gomes from the Massachusetts Council on Aging. You can find the names of the all the board members at: <http://www.nationalrtap.org/rbmembers.asp>

Department of Transportation Issues Revised Final Rule on Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program

This final rule revises the Department of Transportation's regulations for its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. It makes several changes to the DBE program, concerning such subjects as uniform application and reporting forms; implementing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Small Business Administration (SBA); substantive amendments to provisions concerning personal net worth, retainage, size standard, proof of ethnicity, confidentiality, proof of economic disadvantage, DBE credit for trucking firms, and eligibility of firms owned by Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs); and clarifications concerning multi-year project goals and the use of the new North American Industrial Classification System ("NAICS").

For more information about this new rule you can download the [final rule as published in the Federal Register](#); go to the [DOT's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization \(OSDBU\) web site](#) and contact your FTA Regional Administrator.

ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL SUBMITTED:

SAFETEA is out of the bag. And it has good news for rural transit.

Continuing the promise in the President's FY 2004 transit budget to increase rural transit spending, the Administration's newly released ISTEA reauthorization bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA), would increase the nation's investment in rural transit by around 20 percent.

Released May 14, 2003, SAFETEA formally begins the dialog, bargaining, praising, complaining and negotiating over the terms of continuing ISTEA which expires the end of September 2003.

Rural (Other than Urbanized - 5311) funding authorizations in SAFETEA would increase from \$359 M in 2004 to \$402M in 2009. Two percent of that would be distributed by formula to the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) of which not more than 15 percent may be available for the National RTAP program.

FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn explained that five principles provide the framework for the transit aspects of the bill:

- Adequacy of resources,
- Predictable funding
- Local flexibility
- Federal government as partner to get results
- Serve the vulnerable populations.

For details of the Rural 5311 authorizations and programs download the [Key Information](#).

Some key language in the Public Transportation Formula Grants for Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities released by the Department of Transportation when the President's proposal for reauthorization of TEA-21 (SAFETEA) was unveiled is that eligibility requires that "projects be selected from a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan."

Funding authorizations would start at \$87M in 2003 and top at \$97M in 2009. (Authorizations are recommended levels, not the actual appropriations which take place each year). For more details download the [fact sheet](#).

A copy of the legislation with tables and section by section analysis can be down loaded by going to the DOT web site at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization>

For comments on the proposed legislation from the [American Public Transit Association \(APTA\)](#) and the [Community Transportation Association of American \(CTAA\)](#) go to <http://www.apta.com/media/releases/safetea.cfm> and <http://www.ctaa.org/fednews/safetea.asp>

Several reauthorization bills are poised for release in the House and Senate. (Hearings have been going on over the past year.) The National RTAP web page will add links to important SAFETEA information as the dialog continues on this biggest piece of infrastructure legislation in history.

Colorado DOT Transit Visibility Program

In order to raise the profile of public transit in Colorado, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) in 1997 established the Transit Visibility Project (TVP). Through this initiative CDOT provides funding and technical assistance to Colorado transit properties to help bolster their marketing efforts. The aim of TVP is to move participating transit agencies' promotional programs to the next level, enabling them to have a greater impact on the communities they serve.

For more information about the program download the [TVP Summary.pdf](#)

If you have any trouble downloading the information contact [Matt Grizzard by e-mail](#) or 202-408-9541 ext 3015 and the form can be sent to you by e-mail, fax or mail.

FTA Releases FY 2003 Apportionments, Allocations and Program Information

The Omnibus Appropriations Bill "Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003", (Pub. L. 108-7) was signed into law by President Bush on February 20, 2003, which includes the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations for fiscal year 2003 (FY 2003 DOT Appropriations Act), and provides FY 2003 appropriations for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) transit assistance programs.

You can see the 5311 apportionments well as RTAP apportionments for each state on the FTA web site at:

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/legal/federalregister/2003/tables/table5.html>

Or you can see the entire FTA Fiscal Year 2003 Apportionments, Allocations and Program Information Notice on the FTA web site at:

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/legal/federalregister/2003/fr31203.html>

New AARP Report Helps Agencies Understand Needs of Seniors

Are you planning a new service for seniors? or expanding an existing one? Doing either requires some insight into the needs and expectations of your passengers. A new report recently released by the AARP could help you gain the insight. *Understanding Senior Transportation* may help you better understand how older persons connect with their communities and the types of mobility problems they experience - particularly current or potential riders over age 75.

You can obtain a copy of the report on the AARP web site at: http://www.research.aarp.org/il/inb50_transport.pdf