

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force



Statement of Priorities for 2009 Solicitation

Introduction

The TPB is the designated recipient of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds for the Washington, DC-VA-MD Urbanized Area and conducts an annual solicitation for projects to make competitive grant awards for transportation programs and services specifically designed to meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities and low-income workers. The TPB's Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force is releasing for public comment proposed priority projects for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funding for the 2009 solicitation.

The TPB through its Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force develops priority projects to encourage applications for services to address unmet transportation needs. The projects are guided by the TPB's Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. Organizations interested in applying for either JARC or New Freedom funding may also submit applications for projects that are *not* priority projects. All applications for funding are evaluated through a competitive selection process. More information about the Coordinated Plan and the competitive selection are available at the TPB's Coordination website: www.tpbcoordination.org. All projects must meet specific Federal requirements which are described at the website address listed above.

The Task Force is focusing more on JARC projects this year since the past solicitations have had less JARC applications than New Freedom applications and the JARC Federal funding amount is greater than the New Freedom amount as shown in Table 1 below. This is why there are three JARC priorities and only one New Freedom priority.

Funding Available

Table 1 shows the Federal funding available for the 2009 solicitation; note that all projects require matching funds that can come a variety of sources, including local governments, non-profit agencies, private companies and non-transportation Federal funds.

Table 1: Federal Funding Available for the TPB’s 2009 Solicitation

	Federal Funding	<i>If all Projects are Operating</i> Total Funding with 50% match is:	<i>If all Projects are Capital or Mobility Management</i> Total Funding with 20% match is:
JARC	\$2,447,675	\$4,895,350	\$3,059,594
New Freedom	\$1,187,188	\$2,374,376	\$1,483,985

JARC Program and Priorities

The JARC program provides funding for transportation services to employment and employment-related activities for low-income individuals as well as for reverse commute services. These JARC priorities have been established for the 2009 solicitation. Project sponsors are still needed to take the lead in developing applications and identifying matching funds for these projects.

1. Transportation vouchers for low-income workers

A voucher project could involve a human service agency, an employer, or a non-profit agency building upon existing voucher programs to provide bus passes, taxi trips or gas cards to low-income individuals in getting to job sites, attending training programs, or transitioning to work. Multiple agencies could coordinate the purchase of passes and provide them to their clients. Taxi voucher programs could be implemented to help low-income workers living in areas not well served by transit to connect to bus stops or rail stations. Voucher programs offer flexibility to low-income workers by allowing them to choose the transportation options that best meet their needs. This project would be an operating project that requires a 50 percent match. However, if two or more agencies coordinate the purchase and distribution of vouchers, *the administrative costs would qualify as mobility management, which would reduce the required matching funds to 20 percent for the administrative portion of the project*¹. Note that FTA does not allow New Freedom nor JARC funds to be used for purchasing transit fares.

2. Expanded Transit in Underserved Neighborhoods

Expanded transit in underserved neighborhoods recognizes the need to expand transit in neighborhoods that don’t offer sufficient transportation options for workers without cars. Feeder service to rail stations or projects to fund the incremental costs of adding weekend or evening service hours on existing routes could be proposed as cost-effective alternatives to starting new service. The Human Service Transportation Coordination

¹ Note that the administrative portion of a voucher program would be relatively low compared with the cost of purchasing the transit passes or taxi trips.

Task Force identified the need for additional transit service in the eastern portions of the District of Columbia and areas in Prince George’s County or other residential areas with significant concentrations of low-income individuals. This project would be an operating project and therefore requires a 50 percent match.

3. Shuttles/Vanpools to Suburban Employment Sites

Providing shuttles to suburban employment sites, especially ones not well served by transit or that require non-traditional work hours. The Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force identified the following areas as having a great potential for successful vanpool projects: The Dulles Airport and I-270 corridors, National Harbor or Springfield Mall. Prospective applicants could partner with major employers in these locations to help underwrite the cost of the service. Services should be developed that provide options for shift workers and on weekends when transit options are unavailable or infrequent. This project would be an operating project and therefore requires a 50 percent match.

New Freedom Program and Priorities

The New Freedom program provides funding for transportation services for people with disabilities that go above and beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The transportation service must be a new service and go beyond ADA transportation requirements. This one New Freedom priority has been established for the 2009 solicitation. As stated earlier, there are fewer priorities for New Freedom than JARC since past solicitations have yielded more New Freedom applications than JARC applications, and the JARC Federal Funding amount is greater than the New Freedom amount as shown in Table 1 above. Project sponsors are still needed to take the lead in developing applications for this New Freedom priority and matching funds need to be identified.

1. Travel Training

In-depth travel training for people with disabilities on how to use the bus and rail systems is a need in the Washington region. The TPB’s Coordinated Plan identified travel training as a New Freedom priority action: *“A travel-training curriculum on the bus and rail system could be developed for all types of disabilities and offered region-wide. The curriculum would be coordinated with WMATA, local transit agencies and human service agencies to expand training services to ensure that they are widely available to all who need them, and to ensure that people with all different types of disabilities can obtain training sufficiently suited to their needs so that they can safely use the bus and rail system².”* This project qualifies as a mobility management project under federal rules and therefore the required match would be 20 percent.

² Page 36. Coordinated Plan for Human Services Transportation Plan. April 28, 2007. National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board.