

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF MASS TRANSPORTATION MS 39
1120 N STREET
P. O. BOX 942874
SACRAMENTO, CA 94274-0001
PHONE (916) 654-8074
FAX (916) 654-4816
TTY (916) 653-4086



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April 24, 2007

To: Regional Transportation Planning Agencies/Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Potential Applicants for the Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs

FTA SECTIONS 5316 and 5317 GRANTS PROGRAM UPDATE

This serves to provide you with updated information on the status of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Sections 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute and 5317 New Freedom grant program changes as brought about by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

FTA Grant Workshops – Since my last program update letter, we have made significant progress in the implementation of SAFETEA-LU. In January and February 2007, our office held six FTA Grant Workshops statewide. The workshops provided participants with all of the SAFETEA-LU changes and requirements for each of the federal transit grant programs administered by this office. The workshops were well attended, and we received great feedback indicating the information was both useful and appreciated. Participation in one of these workshops is required before applying for future FTA Sections 5316 and 5317 grant funding. For those who still need to participate in a workshop, we have posted our Fresno/Diamond Bar workshop presentations on our website. To view these workshops and obtain the necessary information needed to apply for future FTA grant funding, please go to <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/MAIN-Workshops.htm>.

Locally Developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) – SAFETEA-LU requires that all projects receiving FTA Sections 5316 and 5317 funds must be derived from a coordinated plan before funding can be approved. Consequently, the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 Sections 5316 and 5317 grant cycles were postponed in part to allow agencies sufficient time to complete their coordinated plans. In February, we surveyed urbanized-area agencies on their progress. We were pleased to learn that most urbanized areas were already underway in their coordinated plan process. We will conduct another survey in June 2007 to ascertain anticipated dates for coordinated plan completion. For rural areas, our office is completing the coordinated plans for 20 counties under a master contract funded through the rural transit grant program. These plans are scheduled for completion within 6-12 months from contract execution. (See the workshop presentation at the aforementioned link for more information on this master contract.)

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Circulars FTA C 9050.1 and C 9045.1 – The FTA has published the final circulars for the Sections 5316 and 5317 grant programs, and they are effective May 1, 2007. Subsequently, our office will be preparing the Section 5316/5317 State Management Plan, application, and guidelines in accordance with the final circulars. The circulars can be accessed online at the following websites: http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9050.1_JARC.pdf and http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_C_9045.1_New_Freedom.pdf

Small Urban JARC/New Freedom Program Advisory Committee – In May 2007, we will be soliciting participation from individuals representing local, State, and federal public and human services transportation agencies to be a part of the JARC/New Freedom Program Advisory Committee. The committee will provide a forum where JARC/New Freedom stakeholders can engage in discussions, learn from each other, and provide input into the development of a statewide competitive selection process that will provide a fair and equitable distribution of JARC and New Freedom funds for small urban areas in California. We hope to resume the grant cycle no later than the fall of 2007.

FFY 2006 JARC/New Freedom Grant – The FTA has approved these grants, and we are working with each grant recipient on completing all the federal requirements prior to receiving an executed contract. As the designated recipient for rural and small urban JARC and New Freedom funds, we must certify to the FTA that these projects have met all of the federal statutory or administrative requirements.

Rural JARC/New Freedom Grant Program – The rural program has been postponed to allow sufficient time for completion of the coordinated plan requirement. The Rural Coordinated Plans Master Contract is underway, and final selection to hire a consultant will be done in May 2007. Under this contract, we will hire a consultant to work in collaboration with 20 rural agencies to ensure compliance with the coordinated plan requirements of SAFETEA-LU. Once selected, the consultant will meet and confer with the Rural Counties Task Force and the Project Steering Group, which is comprised of California Department of Transportation staff, rural, public, private, and non-profit human services transportation providers, to review goals, project expectations, and identify a project timeline. The coordinated plans should take approximately 6-12 months to complete. We hope to resume the grant cycles no later than mid-2008.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact John Mason, JARC and New Freedom Branch Chief, at (916) 657-4192.

Sincerely,



KIMBERLY A. GAYLE

Office Chief

Federal Transit Grants

c: California Association for Coordinated Transportation
California Transit Association