



FY 2027
COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

FOR WAVE TRANSIT'S TRANSPORTATION FOR
ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM
(FTA SECTION 5310)

INTRODUCTION

This application package is for the FY 2027 Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Community Grant Program (Section 5310). The following information is contained in the application package: information on funding availability, applicant and project eligibility, application timeline and project evaluation criteria. The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority (d.b.a. Wave Transit) was appointed the Designated Recipient by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), the Governor of North Carolina and the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization of the 5310 grant funding for the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area (UZA). As the Designated Recipient, Wave Transit is responsible for developing a 5310 Program Management Plan (PMP) and administering a call for projects announcing available funding for eligible sub recipients within the UZA. Interested applicants should review the [2021 Locally Coordinated Plan](#) and this application to determine if they are eligible for funding.

AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR FY27 COMMUNITY GRANTS

The expected funding amount available for FY 2027 is approximately \$120,000.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

There are three types of applicant organizations eligible to be subrecipients of funds under the Community Grant Program Section 5310. Eligible applicants are as follows:

1. Private nonprofit organizations
 - a. A nonprofit organization is a corporation or association determined by the United States Secretary of the Treasury to be an organization described by 26 U.S.C. §501(c) that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. §501(a) or one which has been determined under state law to be nonprofit and for which the designated state agency has received documentation certifying the status of the nonprofit organization. Nonprofit applicants must be recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and submit a copy of the certificate from the IRS.
 - b. Private nonprofit applicants desiring to receive funds under Section 5310 must submit an attorney's certification declaring the agency's legal status and attach a copy of the charter and bylaws as listed with the North Carolina Secretary of State.
2. State or local governmental authorities
3. Private operators of public transportation

The definition of “public transportation” includes “... shared-ride surface transportation services ...” Private taxi companies that provide shared-ride taxi service to the general public on a regular basis are operators of public transportation, and therefore eligible sub recipients. “Shared-ride” means two or more passengers in the same vehicle who are otherwise not traveling together.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Section 5310 funds are available for capital and nontraditional projects to support the provision of transportation services to meet the specific needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. All projects must be situated within the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area (UZA) (see Figure 1 on Page 7 for a map of the UZA), and all projects must meet a need identified by the [2021 Locally Coordinated Plan](#).

The lists of eligible activities are intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. FTA encourages recipients to develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of elderly persons (as defined as 65 years of age or older) and persons with disabilities in their communities.

Both traditional capital and nontraditional capital and operating projects must be targeted toward meeting the specific needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities. It is not sufficient that elderly persons and persons with disabilities are merely included (or assumed to be included) among the people who will benefit from the project. FTA encourages projects that are open to the public as a means of avoiding unnecessary segregation of services.

ELIGIBLE CAPITAL PROJECTS

Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for capital expenses to support public transportation capital projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of persons age 65 and older and persons with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable, or inappropriate. Examples of capital projects which must be carried out by an eligible recipient or sub recipient, include, but are not limited to the list below. Any vehicles provided for the use of grantees will be owned and maintained by Wave Transit.

1. Rolling stock and related activities for Section 5310-funded vehicles
 - a. Acquisition of expansion or replacement buses or vans, and related procurement, testing, inspection, and acceptance costs
 - b. Vehicle rehabilitation; or overhaul
 - c. Preventive maintenance
 - d. Radios and communication equipment
 - e. Vehicle wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices
2. Passenger facilities related to Section 5310-funded vehicles
 - a. Purchase and installation of benches, shelters and other passenger amenities
3. Support facilities and equipment for Section 5310-funded vehicles
 - a. Extended warranties that do not exceed industry standard
4. Computer hardware and software
 - a. Transit-related intelligent transportation systems (ITS)
 - b. Dispatch systems
 - c. Fare collection systems
5. Lease of equipment when lease is more cost effective than purchase.

Note that when lease of equipment or facilities is treated as a capital expense, the recipient must establish criteria for determining cost effectiveness in accordance with FTA regulations, "Capital Leases," 49 CFR part 639 and OMB Circular A-94, which provides the necessary discount factors and formulas for applying the same.

6. Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement.

This may include acquisition of ADA-complementary paratransit services when provided by an eligible recipient or sub recipient as defined in the 5310 Program Management Plan. Both capital and operating costs associated with contracted service are eligible capital expenses. User-side subsidies are considered one form of eligible arrangement. Funds may be requested for contracted services covering a time period of more than one year. The capital eligibility of acquisition of services as authorized in 49 U.S.C. 5310(b)(4) is limited to the Section 5310 program.

7. Support for mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation.

Mobility management is an eligible capital cost. Mobility management techniques may enhance transportation access for populations beyond those served by one agency or organization within a community. For example, a nonprofit agency could receive Section 5310 funding to support the administrative costs of sharing services it provides to its own clientele with other elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities and coordinate usage of vehicles with other nonprofits, but not the operating costs of service.

Mobility management is intended to build coordination among existing public transportation providers and other transportation service providers with the result of expanding the availability of service. Mobility management activities may include:

- a. The promotion, enhancement, and facilitation of access to transportation services, including the integration and coordination of services for persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and low-income individuals
- b. Support for short-term management activities to plan and implement coordinated services
- c. The support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils
- d. The operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies, and passengers
- e. The provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented transportation management organizations' and human service organizations' customer-oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as coordinating individualized travel training and trip planning activities for customers
- f. The development and operation of one-stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs
- g. Operational planning for the acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of geographic information systems (GIS) mapping, global positioning system technology, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies, as well as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system, and single smart customer payment systems. (Acquisition of technology is also eligible as a standalone capital expense)

ELIGIBLE NONTRADITIONAL PROJECTS

Funds for the Section 5310 program are available for nontraditional projects which are defined as those that:

- a. Provide transportation services that exceed the requirements of the ADA
- b. Improve access to fixed route services and decrease reliance by persons with disabilities on ADA complementary transit service
- c. Provide alternatives to public transportation projects that assist persons age 65 and over and individuals with disabilities with transportation needs

Nontraditional projects may include capital or operating expenses. Any vehicles provided for the use of grantees will be owned and maintained by Wave.

PROJECTS THAT EXCEED THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ADA

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of public transportation service that is beyond the ADA or former Section 5317 projects:

- a. Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the three-fourths mile required by the ADA
- b. Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed-route services
- c. The incremental cost of providing same-day service
- d. The incremental cost (if any) of making door-to-door service available to all eligible ADA paratransit riders, but not on a case-by-case basis for individual riders in an otherwise curb-to-curb system
- e. Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination
- f. Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for wheelchairs under the ADA regulations, 49 CFR part 38 (i.e., larger than 30"× 48" and/or weighing more than 600 pounds), and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with oversized wheelchairs. This would permit the acquisition of lifts with a larger capacity, as well as modifications to lifts with a 600-pound design load, and the acquisition of heavier duty vehicles for paratransit and/or demand- response service in order to accommodate lifts with a heavier design load
- g. Installation of additional securement locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA
- h. Feeder services. Accessible "feeder" service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail, and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA

Projects that Improve Access to Fixed-Route Service and Decrease Reliance by Persons with Disabilities on ADA-Complementary Paratransit Service

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of public transportation service that improves access to the fixed-route system:

- a. Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations. Improvements for accessibility at existing transportation facilities that are not designated as key stations established under 49 CFR 37.47, 37.51, or 37.53, and that are not required under 49 CFR 37.43 as part of an alteration or renovation to an existing station, so long as the projects are clearly intended to remove barriers that would otherwise have remained. Section 5310 funds are eligible to be used for accessibility enhancements that remove barriers to persons with disabilities so they may access greater portions of public transportation systems, such as fixed-route bus service, commuter rail, light rail, and rapid rail. This may include:
 - Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including curb cuts, sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, or other accessible features
 - Adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, or other accessibility improvements to a non-key station that are not otherwise required under the ADA
 - Improving signage or wayfinding technology

- Implementation of other technology improvements that enhance accessibility for people with disabilities including ITS.

Projects that Provide Alternatives to Public Transportation that Assist Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities

The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of a service that provides an alternative to public transportation:

- a. Purchasing vehicles to support accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and/or vanpooling programs. Section 5310 funds can be used to purchase and operate accessible vehicles for use in taxi, ride-sharing, and/or vanpool programs provided that the vehicle meets the same requirements for lifts, ramps, and securement systems specified in 49 CFR part 38, subpart B, at a minimum, and permits a passenger whose wheelchair can be accommodated pursuant to part 38 to remain in their personal mobility device inside the vehicle.
- b. Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers. This activity is intended to support and supplement existing transportation services by expanding the number of providers available or the number of passengers receiving transportation services. Vouchers can be used as an administrative mechanism for payment of alternative transportation services to supplement available public transportation. The Section 5310 program can provide vouchers to elderly persons and persons with disabilities to purchase rides, including: (a) mileage reimbursement as part of a volunteer driver program; (b) a taxi trip; or (c) trips provided by a human service agency. Providers of transportation can then submit the voucher for reimbursement to the recipient for payment based on predetermined rates or contractual arrangements. Transit passes or vouchers for use on existing fixed-route or ADA complementary paratransit service are not eligible. Vouchers are an operational expense which requires a 50/50 (federal/local) match.
- c. Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs. Volunteer driver programs are eligible and include support for costs associated with the administration, management of driver recruitment, safety, background checks, scheduling, coordination with passengers, other related support functions, mileage reimbursement, and insurance associated with volunteer driver programs. The costs of enhancements to increase capacity of volunteer driver programs are also eligible. FTA encourages communities to offer consideration for utilizing all available funding resources as an integrated part of the design and delivery of any volunteer driver/aide program.

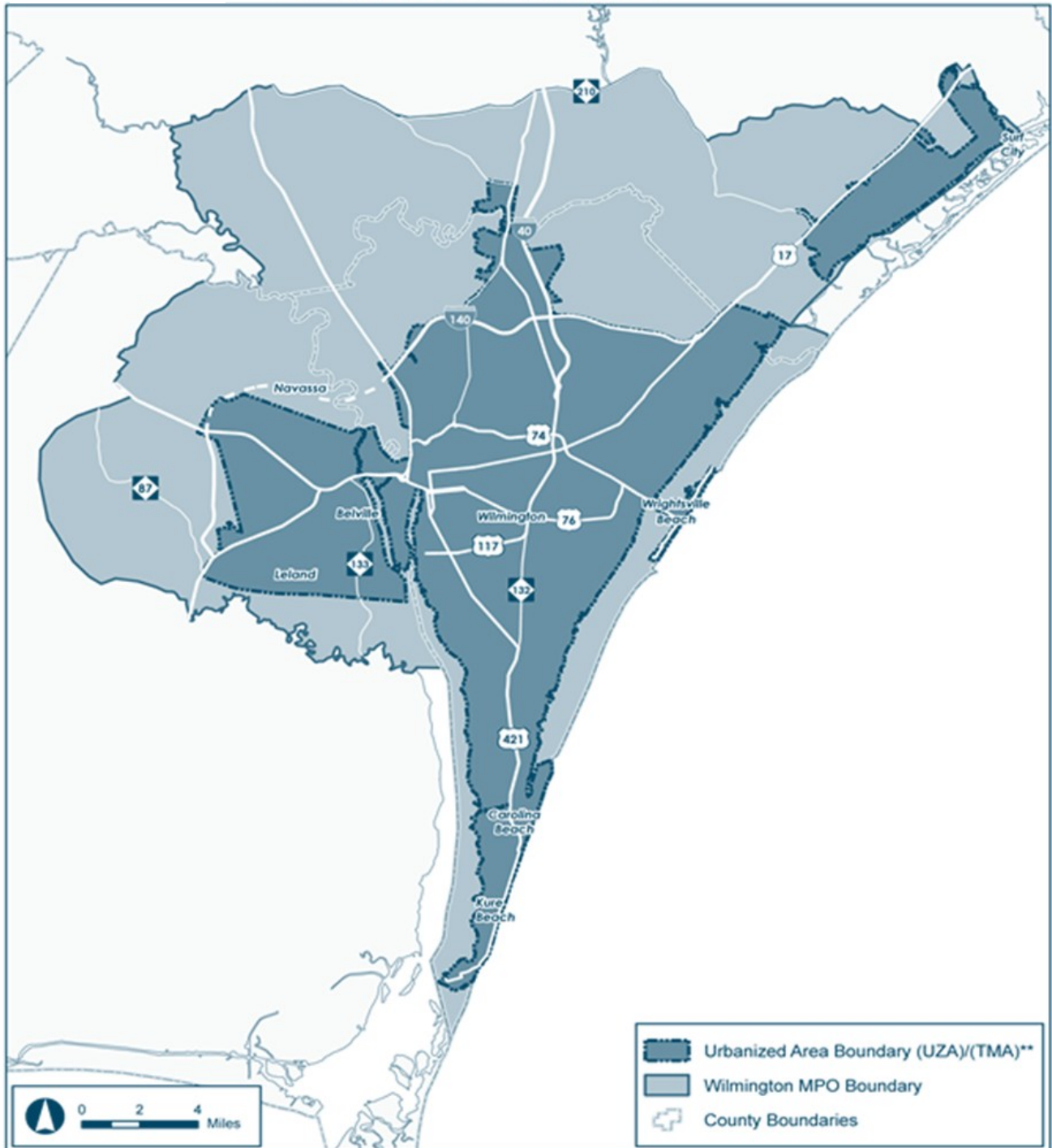
MAP OF WILMINGTON METROPOLITAN URBANIZED AREA (UZA)

Potential applicants must propose services that are within the Wilmington Metropolitan Urbanized Area as shown in Figure 1 below.



Urbanized Area Boundary (UZA)/Transportation Management Area (TMA)

*Map created by the WMPO in partnership with the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
** Source of Data: NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch



APPLICATION PROCESS

Completed applications (Parts I-III of the 5310 Community Grant Application) should be submitted to the Wave Transit contact below. Applications must be received before Monday, May 4, 2026, deadline. Mailed applications should be delivered in an electronic format on a flash drive. Applications can be completed either as a Microsoft Word Document, electronically filled PDF, or scanned PDF.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications emailed as an attachment are preferred. Submit applications to the follow addresses:

BY EMAIL:

bditri@wavetransit.com

BY POST:

Attn: Brianna D'Itri - PR Manager, Wave Transit
505 Cando St, Wilmington, NC 28405

APPLICATION AND PROJECT SELECTION SCHEDULE

The 5310 Call for Projects and project selection will adhere to the following schedule:

April 2, 2026: First day to submit application for 5310 funds

May 3, 2026: Last day to submit application for 5310 funds

End of June 2026: Applicants notified of selection

July 1, 2026: Funding available

PROJECT EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Upon verification that the project meets the minimum guidelines below, a Project Selection Committee comprised of Wave Transit personnel and members of the WaveConnect Advisory Group will evaluate and score the projects and make funding recommendations to the Wave Transit Board.

MINIMUM PROJECT GUIDELINES

1. Does the project meet a need identified in the 2021 Locally Coordinated Plan?
2. Is the proposed project a non-duplicative service or program?
3. Are eligible matching funds identified and available?
4. Is the primary focus of the proposed service or program serving the target populations?
5. Does the project provide programming and/or services within the UZA?

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Please complete Parts I-III of the Community Grant Program Application. Return the completed application to Wave Transit as noted in the Application Process section.

PART I – FUNDING REQUEST

Applicant Information

Organization Name:

Contact Person:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

Project Description

Title:

Brief Description:

Project Type: Capital Nontraditional

Service days/hours (if applicable):

Estimated cost per one-way trip (if applicable):

Estimated daily riders per weekday/weekend (if applicable):

PART II – PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please complete the Project Narrative questions below.

Expanded Project Description

Use this space to expand on your project description beyond the brief description provided in Part I, if needed.

Project Need

1. How is the proposed project consistent with eligible program activities and objectives of the funding program? Describe how the project meets a need identified by the Locally Coordinated Plan. Please provide the associated page number(s) in the Locally Coordinated Plan.

2. Describe the impact of the program for the Wilmington Metropolitan Area’s elderly and disabled population. Please provide the number of persons expected to be served, and the number of trips (or other units of service) expected to be provided.

Project Planning and Implementation

1. Describe how the proposed project might coordinate or link with other transportation providers or transportation stakeholders.

2. Describe the project timeline and project lifespan

3. When could your project begin upon receiving funding? Describe the process your organization would take to implement the project.

Project Budget

1. In addition to filling out the Proposed Project Budget, note any plans for continued investment and/or maintenance for the proposed project after the grant funds are spent.

Project Effectiveness and Evaluation

1. How does your organization plan to collect information to monitor quality control and customer satisfaction related to implementing the proposed project? Include in your description any measurable indicators you propose to use.

2. If your organization has previously been awarded Community Grant funding, what was the impact of that funding on your project and on your organization overall?

Organizational Preparedness

1. *Describe how your proposed project aligns with the overarching mission of your organization*

2. *Describe the staffing plan for this project. Who would be the primary staff person responsible for managing the grant? What other staff would be involved? Describe any relevant past experience these staff have in working on the type of project proposed.*

3. *Please note any experience your organization has as an existing grantee of 5310 funds, or similar fund administration, as well as experience with financial reporting such as quarterly reports, annual audits and/or other forms of financial reporting.*

4. *Describe any training, maintenance, inspections and/or service monitoring you plan to do focused on managing risk and providing safe services*

PART III – PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

PROJECT FUNDING

Local matching funds are required for all application submittals. For projects requiring operating funds the required match is 50% from non-federal transportation funds. For capital projects the required match is 20% from non-federal transportation funds. Some potential capital match exceptions are noted in the FTA guidance and the Wave Transit 5310 Program Management Plan.

Total Project Budget \$ _____
Capital Federal Share \$ _____ %
Capital Local Match \$ _____ %
Operating Federal Share \$ _____ %
Operating Local Match \$ _____ %
Local Match Fund Source: _____

Note: *The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to provide local funds and provide appropriate documentation. Documentation may be in the form of a letter or other supporting documentation noting where funds will be drawn from.*