

**FACT SHEET**  
**New Freedom Program**  
**Section 5317 - Federal Transit Administration, US DOT**

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DOT may make grants under this section to a recipient for new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 that assist individuals with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Federal funds for capital projects under this section may not exceed 80 percent of the net capital costs of the project; Federal funds for operating assistance may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating costs of the project. Expenditures such as funding wheelchair accessible taxis and purchase of transportation services are allowable under this program.

New Freedom projects must be coordinated with activities Section 5310, 5316, and with related activities under programs of other Federal departments and agencies. Beginning in fiscal year 2007, 5317 recipients need to certify that the projects selected were derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan; and the plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the work force and full participation in society. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities. The 2000 Census showed that only 60 percent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. The New Freedom formula grant program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the ADA of 1990.

The three measures established for the New Freedom Program are:

1. Increases or enhancements related to geographic coverage, service quality and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for individuals with disabilities as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year.
2. Additions or changes to environmental infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, side walks, etc), technology, and vehicles that impact availability of transportation services as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year.
3. Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided for individuals with disabilities as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year.

New Freedom Program funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and new public transportation alternatives beyond those required by the ADA designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment

support services. For the purpose of the New Freedom Program, "new" service is any service or activity that was not operational on August 10, 2005, and did not have an identified funding source as of August 10, 2005, as evidenced by inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the STIP.

The list of eligible activities below is illustrative, not exhaustive. Recipients are encouraged to develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

- New Public Transportation Services Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.
  - (1) Enhancing paratransit beyond minimum requirements of the ADA.
  - (2) Feeder services. New "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.
  - (3) Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations.
  - (4) Travel training. New training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities. This includes travel instruction and travel training services.
  
- New Public Transportation Alternatives Beyond the ADA. The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom Program:
  - (1) Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing, and/or vanpooling programs.
  - (2) Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers.
  - (3) Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs. Supporting new 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.