



USDA Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program

What is the program for?

The Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program – funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Development Program and administered by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) – helps rural communities enhance economic growth and development by improving transportation services. Public transit can help support a wide range of other economic development initiatives in rural communities. Program objectives include helping small and emerging businesses and stimulating economic development through new and improved transportation services. The program provides planning assistance for facility development, transit service improvements and expansion, new system start-up, policy and procedure development, marketing, transportation coordination, training and public transit problem-solving activities.

Who qualifies for assistance?

To qualify for technical assistance, a project must be located in a rural area with a population of less than 50,000. Requests for technical may be submitted by private for-profit or not-for-profit organizations or agencies with annual revenues of less than \$1 million. Public entities may submit requests, but projects must also benefit new or existing small and emerging businesses.

How are projects selected?

Applications for technical assistance are submitted directly to CTAA for review. Potential projects are reviewed to establish eligibility, and are scored and ranked according to the selection criteria described below:

- Will project help create or preserve jobs or small businesses?
- Is project located in an economically distressed area?
- Is project likely to be implemented after technical assistance has been provided?
- Are project goals directly linked to economic development?

- Will technical assistance be utilized innovatively to help resolve transportation issues and economic concerns?
- Is there local consensus and community support for the project?

How is the technical assistance program administered?

Once an application has been received, reviewed and approved by CTAA and USDA, CTAA will notify the recipient and arrange for an initial site visit. During the site visit, CTAA staff will conduct a comprehensive project analysis and technical assistance needs assessment. CTAA will gather additional information about the proposed project and will work closely with the applicant and local officials in assessing the transportation needs of the community. Participants will explore ways in which the technical assistance program might be applied to help meet the transportation, small business and economic development objectives of the area.

Based on information collected during the initial site visit and needs assessment, CTAA will develop a refined scope of work which will define the project approach, work tasks, deliverable products and various roles and responsibilities of all project stakeholders. If the project requires assistance from independent consultants, a consultant work plan, budget and consultant procurement plan may be developed by CTAA. During the course of a major project, CTAA staff and consultants will develop recommendations and solutions that are responsive to the community's needs.

Each year CTAA anticipates that four long term projects will be approved. Long term projects receive in-depth assistance over a period of about a year. Projects with more limited scopes may be eligible for short term technical assistance which has a streamlined review process. Short term applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Eligible projects that are not selected for long term assistance are all provided short term assistance. The Program does not provide funding, but planning assistance directly from CTAA staff. CTAA will work with recipients to identify capital and operating funding sources to help implement projects.

For further information contact:

Charles Rutkowski
Director of Technical Assistance Programs
Phone: 202-299-6593 / 800.891.0590 x719
Fax: 202-737-9197
Email: rutkowski@ctaa.org

Or write to:

Community Transportation Association
1341 G. Street, NW
10th floor
Washington, DC 20005

