



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Concerning the State Matching Grant Program (MGP)

For the Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation

Q1. What can we do with these funds?

A. Provide new or expanded transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities, such as: Weekend, evening or out of town services, additional days of service or special trips.

Q2. Can I apply for additional funds if some towns choose not to apply for their allocation?

A. No, any funding that is not awarded is held in the Special Transportation fund.

Q3. One of the towns in my region is not going to apply for all of their allocation; can the maintenance of effort/matching funds be provided from a regional pot of funds?

A. No, the purpose of the Matching Grant Program (MGP) is to create a balanced funding program for seniors and disabled transportation across the state and to compensate for inequities in how these programs have traditionally been funded.

Q4. Why have Regional Planning Organizations (RPO's) and Transit Districts manage the application and collaboration process?

A. There is no statewide delivery structure for transportation services, therefore, planning for these services must be managed regionally. The RPO's are very important partners in the Federal Section 5310 Senior and Disabled Transportation Program.

Q5. Do I have to coordinate with other Municipalities, RPO's or Transit Districts?

A. The Connecticut General Statutes 13b-38bb states that municipalities must apply for the MGP through a designated RPO or Transit District. If coordination is not possible or a municipality chooses to not coordinate, the municipality can still apply for, and, if approved, receive their full grant apportionment. While coordination can be an effective use of resources, it may not always be the least expensive method or the most productive method a municipality can use. By requiring a municipality to apply through an RPO or Transit District, the municipality and the RPO can work through what method of service will work best for the municipality and the region.

Q6. My town has cut their budget for transportation services. Will this impact our ability to obtain MGP funds?

A. Yes. This funding is not intended to replace municipal funding for transportation service. It is to allow services to be expanded. If a town cuts their transportation budget, the Department of Transportation (Department) would reduce the municipal grant funds available to the town by a percentage equal to the percentage reduction of municipal funds. In the future, MGP funds would not be restored until the municipality returns to their original funding level. For more information please see page 6 of the Management Plan for a State Matching Grant Program for Elderly and Disabled Demand Response Transportation.

Q7. How and when do I receive payment?

A. An application must be completed by the Municipality, Transit District or RPO. Municipalities or Transit District then send the application to the RPO. The RPO will review the application and forward it to the Department for review and award. In the case of a new contractor an agreement will be prepared by the Department. In the case of a current contractor, it may be as simple as a budget addendum to the agreement already in place. Once the agreement or addendum is fully executed the recipient then submits an invoice to the Department program manager to request payment. It takes approximately 3 weeks from the time the program manager begins the invoice process to the time the recipient receives the payment. The recipient bills the program four times a fiscal year.

Q8. After I am awarded the grant and I bill the state, is there any other paperwork that needs to be accomplished?

A. Yes, besides quarterly billing, a quarterly report must be submitted with specific information about the ridership that is mentioned in the management plan. (Page 7 of the Management Plan). That also is required 4 times a fiscal year.

Q9. Are there any restrictions on the type of trip we can provide? Are we required to prioritize trips based on their purpose?

A. Because so many transportation programs are restrictive and may serve only specific trip purposes, the Department has not placed restrictions on these funds relative to trip purpose. These funds should allow people to get out and remain active in the community.

Q10. My current program uses volunteer drivers. Can I quantify the value of the volunteer drivers as local match?

A. Yes, simply multiply the hours of driving by a reasonable estimated wage for your area and this can be used as in-kind match.

Q11. My town does not have enough cash match, what can I use as in-kind match?

A. Volunteer hours and mileage directly related to the transportation service, donated equipment and supplies, loaned office space and equipment = 100% as in-kind match.

Q12. What is an Administration cost?

A. 10% of the total MGP can be used towards administration of the transportation program. These costs must be directly attributable to the dial-a-ride program. A portion of existing administrative costs can also be charged to the grant, for example, rent, electricity or utilities. Administrative and clerical salaries, office supplies, postage, local telephone costs, shall normally be treated as indirect costs. Direct charging of administrative and clerical staff salaries may be appropriate where a major project or activity explicitly budgets for administrative or clerical services and individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity.

Q13. What operating costs are allowed?

A. Vehicle fuel and insurance, maintenance costs, tires, lubricants, driver wages and benefits, vehicle leasing costs due to the expansion of service. All of these operating costs are the direct cost of your dial-a-ride program. If you have a question you may contact the program manager at the phone number provided below.

Q14. May I use a portion of these funds to give the bus driver(s) a raise?

A. Yes, the bus driver(s) salary is directly linked to the operation of the program.

Q15. Can I buy a video surveillance camera for our dial-a-ride vehicle?

A. No, that would be considered capital equipment. MGP funds are to be used for operating expenses only.

Q16. Can I buy a copy machine for our facility?

A. A portion of the copy machine can be charged to the program if it will be used to administer the MGP. If the MGP provides 25% of your dial-a-ride program funds, then that percentage could be applied to the cost of the copier under administration costs. In the case of the start up of a new program, the MGP may cover up to 50% of that copier (to be matched with local funds). But, no more than 10% of the total grant can be used for administration.

Q17. I have a volunteer who has helped to coordinate the trips. The volunteer is not elderly or disabled. Are they allowed to travel along with the riders?

A. Yes, as long as they are providing assistance with the trip to the target populations.

Q18. I have a rider that would like to bring along family members that are not elderly or disabled. Is this allowed?

A. As long as:

- a. the family member does not take the “seat” from an eligible rider,
- b. the vehicle does not travel any additional miles to pick up the family member(s), or the MGP is not charged for these costs, and
- c. your insurance covers it.

Q19. Can ADA eligible riders use services provided by these grant funds?

A. Yes, they would be eligible for service. But, transit districts may not use grant funds to replace ADA paratransit funds.

Q20. Can I transport students?

A. Not to school or school-related activities. Since, the dial-a-ride service is available to people with disabilities of any age, if a person with disabilities happens to be a student and needs transportation to places other than school or related activities, it can be provided.

Q21. What is a transportation brokerage?

A. A method of matching travelers with a variety of transportation providers through use of central dispatching and administrative facilities

Most questions can be answered through the Management Plan for the State Matching Grant Program for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation. If you do not have a plan and would like to obtain a copy, Please feel free to write, call, fax or e-mail to the program manager at:

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