Michigan Department of Transportation

Office of Passenger Transportation

2026 Rural Task Force (RTF) Fall Training

Serving and connecting people, communities, and the economy through transportation.



Who is the Office of Passenger Transportation (OPT)?

OPT administers MDOT's passenger transportation programs, including local transit, intercity bus, and for-hire passenger regulation, to provide a safe and balanced statewide network of passenger transportation services to meet the social, safety, and economic well-being of the state.

- Program Administration Section (PAS)
- Transportation Services Section (TSS)
- Mobility Innovation

Transportation Services Section

Regional Project Management (RPM) Unit:

2 Supervisors

1 Quality Assurance PM

9 Regional Project Managers (assigned statewide)



Who is eligible for RTF Funding?

57 Rural Transit Agencies

48 Private Non-Profit Agencies

Why is RTF funding needed?

- Operating Funding – various federal and state sources
- Capital Funding
  - formula based and limited in nature
  - typically, can only replace a small percentage of eligible revenue vehicles each year.
- Additional Capital needs rely on discretionary funds via Notice Of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) or Flex funds which include Rural Task Force (RTF/STBG)

Summary of Public Transit Funding

Operating
- LBO
- Sec 5311
- Mileage/Passenger based reimbursement
- Local
- Other Federal/State program (JARC, New Freedom, Sec 5307)

Capital
- Sec 5339 – Statewide Capital, formula
- Sec 5339 – Discretionary: Grants Applied for (Not sustainable)
- Sec 5310 - Seniors, disabled, and capital for Private Non-Profits
- Rural Task Force, Small Urban, CMAQ

Schedule and timing of RTF projects

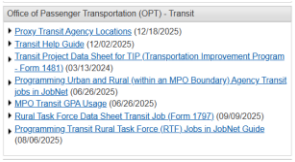
- Call for projects in S/TIP every 4 years
- Local meetings
- Regional multi-county meetings
- Bid savings
- Flex process (deadlines)

What Transit Agencies need to do

- Complete 1797 forms
- Attend local and regional multi-county meetings to decide on projects and get approval
- Work with RPA to program job in JobNet
- What if there are project changes? Complete updated 1797, coordinate with MDOT OPT for approval, task force approval may be needed, work with RPA to update JobNet.

Transit Agency Resources

Resources available on JobNet home page:


Office of Passenger Transportation (OPT) - Transit

- Proxy Transit Agency Locations (12/18/2025)
- Transit Help Guide (12/02/2025)
- Transit Project Data Sheet for TIP (Transportation Improvement Program - Form 1481) (03/13/2024)
- Programming Urban and Rural (within an MPO Boundary) Agency Transit jobs in JobNet (06/26/2025)
- MPO Transit GPA Usage (06/26/2025)
- Rural Task Force Data Sheet Transit Job (Form 1797) (09/09/2025)
- Programming Transit Rural Task Force (RTF) Jobs in JobNet Guide (08/06/2025)

- How to complete 1797 form
- Help guide for RPAs including step-by-step process to properly program jobs in JobNet

Life cycle of an RTF project

1. 4-year call for projects (S/TIP development)
   - RPA schedules local and regional multi-county meetings
   - Agency must complete 1797 forms
   - Local meetings recommend projects for regional multi-county meeting
   - Regional multi-county meeting counts for vote/approval of project
2. RPA programs approved projects in JobNet
3. Up until project flexes, changes can be made.
   - Requires RTF approval (in-person/email vote)

Life cycle of an RTF project *(slide 2 of 2)*

4. Funds flex in May/June of each year.
   - Projects must be finalized in JobNet by May flex deadline
5. Once project flexes, it goes into an FTA grant.
6. Once FTA grant is approved, state level project authorizations issued and project can commence.
7. As of August 2026, MDOT is no longer accepting changes to RTF/Small Urban flex projects once in an approved FTA grant. After the project is completed, any remaining funds will lapse and be redistributed.

OPT Pain Points - RTF projects:

1. 1797 Form; showing up unprepared to meeting without completed 1797 form.
2. Not sending 1797 form to OPT project manager to review prior to submitting to RPA.
3. Not attending meetings; must attend local and regional multi-county meetings; building relationships.
4. Project review and planning prior to going into federal grant/authorization; having realistic projects that the agency can complete.

OPT Pain Points - RTF projects:
(continued; 2 of 3)

5. Understanding timeliness of spending funds; MDOT relationship with FTA for grant oversight and close out.
6. RTF committee members understanding that transit can use bid savings.
7. Agencies not having illustrative list projects; need to have projects planned and documented.

OPT Pain Points - RTF projects:
(continued; 3 of 3)

8. RPAs not using/following JOBNET Help Guides
9. Transit not understanding the RTF relationship. Road commission/transit/cities or villages; building relationship and communicating needs.
10. Understanding different methods for funding distribution throughout the RTF (allocated every year/every other year/every third year).
11. Notify RPA staff of personnel changes within agency

Thank you for supporting Public Transit!

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