



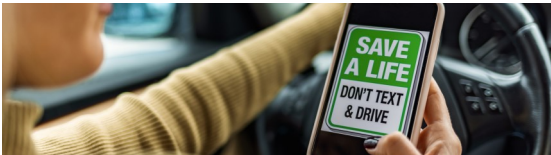
Transit Newsletter

6th Edition
April 2025

The Transit Newsletter is a quarterly publication dedicated to providing information and news to Montana transit providers, including recipients of direct and pass-through Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds as well as other transit stakeholders.

Newsletter Highlights

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Updates
Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Transit Section Program Updates and Reminders
Upcoming Conferences and Trainings
New and Ongoing Transit Facility Projects



April is National Distracted Driver Awareness Month

Distracted driving can lead to many unnecessary accidents and deaths. For the month of April, the National Safety Council (NSC) has free member-exclusive resources. Be sure to check them out at www.nsc.org.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) also has great resources for free you can access here www.nhtsa.gov.

National Aging Disability Training Center (NADTC)

NADTC is a great resource for training, events, programs and resources, and even grant opportunities. We encourage subrecipients to take a look at the federal and non-federal grant opportunities, found here: www.nadtc.org.



We want to hear from you!

Please reach out if you have news you would like to share with the Montana Transit community in a future quarterly newsletter!

Contact Jackie RedEagle,
jredeagle@mt.gov.

USDOT Updates

Sean Duffy was officially sworn in as the 20th Secretary of the USDOT. Secretary Duffy's first act was signing a memorandum directing staff to start the process of resetting Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, which will ultimately lower the price of a car for American consumers and eliminate the electric vehicle program. The full article can be found here: www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/sean-duffy-sworn-secretary-us-department-transportation-and-takes-immediate-action-make.

MDT is closely monitoring any changes communicated by the federal government. Any funding changes that affect transit will be communicated promptly to grant subrecipients and referenced in future newsletters. More information from USDOT can be found here: www.transportation.gov.

National FTA Updates

FTA has finalized an updated circular to assist recipients in their implementation of the Rural Areas Formula Program and the rural component of the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. The update and consolidation of the circulars incorporates provisions from the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act; the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL); the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal awards to non-Federal entities; and current FTA policies and procedures. More information from FTA can be found here: www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs.

MDT Transit Section Program Updates and Reminders

Supplemental Fund Program: MDT Transit Section holds back a portion of the Section 5311 apportionment to provide supplemental funds for expanded services and emergency repairs. Subrecipients who have or are looking to expand their service area or service time may apply for the supplemental funding grant. General public providers in need of funding for capital repairs may apply for the emergency repair grant. This could include but is not limited to vehicle repairs, facility repairs, and other justifiable activities. Please contact your regional planner for assistance with the application process.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): If an agency has written agreements with other organizations, please remember to review and update annually. Federal and State regulations apply to all relevant organizations with an MOU.

MDT Transit Section Program Updates and Reminders Continued on Next Page

MDT Transit Section Accomplishments

National Transit Database (NTD) Reports
NTD reports have been completed for the 2024 reporting year. Thank you to all the Section 5311 subrecipients for ensuring accurate data on your quarterly reports throughout the year. Your reporting ensures expediency and accuracy in the NTD report completion process.

New Application Training

In January, MDT Transit Section hosted two virtual trainings; one for Section 5310 capital applications and one for Section 5311 operating and capital applications. The trainings had a combined 45 attendees and was recorded for those who could not attend the training. The training will be held annually at the start of the next fiscal year grant application season.

Quarterly Report Back Up Ledger

MDT Transit Section would like to thank all of the Section 5311 subrecipients for providing system ledgers to back up their quarterly expenses. This has allowed the subrecipients and MDT Transit Section to catch mistakes and correct them before the reports are approved. This extra effort is greatly appreciated by MDT Transit Section.

Advanced Defensive Driving Course (DRIVE)

DRIVE is a great opportunity for transit drivers to receive advanced drive training. Registration is open for the course located in Lewistown, Montana. Classes are offered from June 3—August 8, 2025. MDT's Transit Section will provide scholarships for interested providers to attend the DRIVE course on first come first serve basis. For more information on registration and RTAP reimbursement, please contact Erin Root.

**Please take the
MDT Satisfaction
Survey!**

[How are we doing?](#)



De Minimis Indirect Cost Rate: Subrecipients requesting reimbursement for Indirect Cost (IDC), the threshold cap increased to 15% at the beginning of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), October 1, 2024.

Trainings: If there are three or more individuals in a particular region that need New Manager Training, either as a new manager or a refresher, MDT Transit Section will travel to the location to provide the needed training. MDT Transit Section has been utilizing Microsoft Teams to provide more virtual trainings. These virtual trainings are offered to all subrecipients. One-on-one trainings can be scheduled by contacting your MDT Transit Section Regional Planner. Please let your regional planner know if you are in need of training and how we may best assist you.

Agreements

MDT Transit Section will be working on State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 agreements during the fourth quarter to ensure all are executed before July 1, 2025. If you need to verify or make updates to the authorized signer for your organization this can be completed in BlackCat Transit Management System (BlackCat) in Contacts or if you need assistance please reach out to Nancy Lightner, nalightner@mt.gov.



Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)

RTAP (49 U.S.C. 5311(b)(3)) provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects and other support services tailored to meet the needs of transit operators in nonurbanized areas, www.transit.dot.gov/funding. RTAP is available to Section 5311 and 5310 subrecipients. To apply, complete an RTAP application and send to Erin Root, eroot@mt.gov, for approval. RTAP applications and reimbursement forms can be found in BlackCat Global Resources.

Direct Deposit

Want to receive Transit payments by Direct Deposit?

If you are currently receiving Transit-related payments from MDT in the form of a check and would like to speed up the process of receiving payments, you may choose to receive those payments by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The written process and forms are in BlackCat under Global Resources/Forms.



Already signed up for Direct Deposit-EFT?

If you already receive your payments via EFT, please ensure that the email addresses we have listed in your vendor file are current and have not changed over the years. You can also select more than one email address to receive the EFT Advice notices each time a payment is processed. Contact Natalie Wenzel, nwenzel@mt.gov, to confirm what is listed in your vendor file. You may add as many email addresses as necessary for your situation by providing Natalie with the information.

Transit Service Rural Needs Study Workshops

In February, a questionnaire was sent out via email to initiate the Rural Needs study. MDT Transit Section would like to thank everyone who participated. The next step of this project will be in-person coordinated workshops held in regional areas. Please plan to attend at least one workshop to ensure MDT Transit Section has full participation from all areas of the state. We also encourage you to invite any known transit stakeholders that would add value to this project.

East

May 19—Miles City

10 am—12 pm
Custer County Transit
1010 Main Street,
Suite 11

May 20—Glasgow

10 am—12 pm
Valley County
Courthouse Community
Room
501 Court Square

May 21—Great Falls

10 am—12 pm
Great Falls Transit
3905 N. Star Blvd.

West

May 19—Kalispell

10 am—12 pm
Mountain Climber
1333 Willow Glen Dr.

May 20—Missoula

10 am—12 pm
Location TBD

May 21—Butte

10 am—12 pm
Butte Public Library
Frank Little Community
Room
226 W Broadway St.

If you are a transit stakeholder and would like to be included in these workshops, please email Nancy Lightner, nalightner@mt.gov.

Upcoming Conferences and Training

In State:

Montana Transit Association (MTA) Spring Conference

The MTA Spring Conference will be May 12 - 16, at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center in Billings. Programming on Monday and Tuesday will provide Passenger Assistance, Safety, and Sensitivity (PASS) driver training, with additional driver training on Wednesday. Wednesday through Friday will provide agency training. Visit www.mttransit.org for registration and additional details.

Drug and Alcohol Training

Michael Redington from USDOT Volpe Center will be coming to Montana for two separate 2-day drug and alcohol trainings. One training will be in Billings, and another in Missoula. These trainings are required for transit managers to keep current with required annual drug and alcohol training. More details to follow.

Annual Transit Fall Workshop

The Annual Transit Fall Workshop will be September 3 - 4, at the Delta Hotel in Helena. The Fall Workshop is a mandatory two-day training event provided by MDT Transit Section to provide primarily, FTA Section 5311 and 5310 programs subrecipients with the latest program updates as well as other relevant and useful information. Details to access the hotel registration and agenda will follow.

National:

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Expo 2025

The CTAA Expo is June 2 - 4, San Diego, California. CTAA's largest event of the year brings more than 1,000 rural, tribal, and small urban transit agencies and their partners together to share and discuss opportunities and work through challenges in community transportation www.ctaa.org/expo-2025.



New and Ongoing Transit Facility Projects

Facility Expansion Project in Blackfeet Nation

Blackfeet Transit's facility expansion is continuing to make progress on construction with an official completion date set for June 15, 2025.



Pictures by Blackfeet Transit

Facility Expansion in West Yellowstone

The West Yellowstone Foundation facility expansion is progressing, with design-bid-build procurement preparation activities anticipated to begin in April.



Picture by the West Yellowstone Foundation



Office of Civil Rights: Language Assistance

Greetings from the MDT Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Per federal requirements, MDT has a Language Assistance Plan (LAP). The purpose of the LAP is to ensure MDT staff and subrecipients communicate effectively with Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals. LEP individuals do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to speak, read, write or understand English. The LAP offers guidance for reasonable steps to provide individuals with meaningful access to all MDT and subrecipient programs.

The OCR developed a language assistance presentation to share with MDT staff and subrecipients. The presentation provides a brief overview of federal language assistance requirements and resources available. It may be presented in person or virtually, takes only 20-30 minutes and will provide useful tools for communicating with LEP individuals.

Please reach out to Kim Vietz, MDT Title VI Specialist, for more information about language assistance resources and/or to schedule a language assistance presentation. Kim can be reached at kvietz@mt.gov, 406-444-6334.

Vehicle Delivery Updates

- **7-Passenger Non-ADA Vans:** SFY 2023-2025 van awards will be procured through a new third party process which requires the involvement of the awardee and the MDT Transit Section. Erin Root, MDT Procurement Planner, will provide 3rd party procurement oversight in accordance with FTA C 4220.1G. Erin will reach out to each awardee as she works through these procurements.
- **12-Passenger Non-ADA Vans:** A purchase order was issued in March for SFY2024 and 2025 vehicle awards. Deliveries should begin in fall 2025.
- **9-Passenger ADA Extended Vans:** MDT Transit Section is preparing the purchase order for vehicles awarded through SFY2025 and deliveries should begin in late 2025.
- **12-, 13-, 17-, and 19-Passenger Cutaway Buses:** A purchase order has been issued for vehicles awarded in SFY 2025. Deliveries will begin in spring 2025.
- **Medium Duty Buses:** MDT Transit Section is working directly with agencies to confirm order specifications and timelines.
- **Heavy Duty Buses:** MDT Transit Section will execute a new master contract in spring 2025 with a purchase order to follow.

Procurement related questions can be directed to Erin Root.

MDT Transit Program—Quarterly Report Timeline

QUARTER END DATE	QUARTER	SUBRECIPIENTS 30 DAYS TO SUBMIT	REGIONAL PLANNERS 15 DAYS APPROVAL	FISCAL PLANNERS 31 DAYS INVOICING / APPROVAL	EXPENSE DATES*
30-Sep	Q1	31-Oct	15-Nov	30-Nov	1-Jul—30-Sep
31-Dec	Q2	31-Jan	15-Feb	1-Mar	1-Oct—31-Dec
31-Mar	Q3	30-Apr	15-May	31-May	1-Jan—31-Mar
30-Jun	Q4	31-Jul	15-Aug	31-Aug	1-Apr—30-Jun**

*The expenses reported in Q1 through Q3 must be received and paid by the subrecipient within the stated dates for each quarter.

**The expenses reported in Q4 need only be received by the subrecipient between April 1 and June 30. Payment may take place after June 30.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided on request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.