

Principles for Emergency Support for Public Transportation

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Extraordinary economic times have brought with them the need for emergency federal funding for public transportation, supplementing existing levels of support. Such is needed to ensure that millions of Americans have access to their jobs and to preserve transit worker jobs. Emergency funds must be separate and distinct from continuing needs which APTA has long supported, including funding to address the cost of federal requirements beyond the ability of transit systems to control, and also the flexibility of public transportation systems in urbanized areas of more than 200,000 population which operate fewer than 100 buses in peak operation to use FTA Section 5307 funds for operating purposes.

Guiding principles for a new, additional, emergency support program would be as follows:

1. A new, free-standing, temporary emergency support program must be established to continue public transportation services in urban and rural America.
2. The new program would provide cash to all systems to be used for the continuation of vital public transportation services and avoidance of employee layoffs.
3. Funding would be allocated to transit systems on the basis of Section 5307 apportionment factors. Agencies outside of urban areas (i.e., rural areas) would be allocated funds on the basis of Section 5311.
4. This would be a temporary program and neither a precedent for any ongoing program, nor a substitute for any program in current law.
5. This temporary program would provide new, additional funding through general funds, and should not adversely impact public transportation appropriations as a result of budget marks.
6. The temporary program would sunset when the national economy recovers and unemployment returns to normal levels.
7. Federal funding used to support operations should preserve or create jobs and transit service and not be used for wage/salary increases for current personnel.
8. In the event that a state or local municipality takes sufficient actions to sustain and preserve public transportation service and/or fare levels without this assistance, a system may use funds allocated for this purpose to address the enormous capital infrastructure backlog facing public transportation.