

FROM: NDOT Transit Section
TO: Rural public transportation providers
DATE: March 23, 2020

The information below is to keep you updated on the latest COVID-19 changes/information:

1. Per a press release from FTA dated 3/13/20 your operating and non-operating expenses will be reimbursed with 80% federal funds, 10% state funds and 10% local match. At this time, the monthly invoice will not change. Submit your invoice as usual and we will make the manual calculations and reimburse per the new guidelines starting with your March invoice. See a snippet from the press release below.

Today's announcement allows all transit providers in states where the Governor has declared an emergency related to COVID-19 to use their federal formula funds for operating expenses in addition to capital expenses and permits operating expenses to be covered at an 80 percent federal share rather than 50 percent.

2. FTA has also announced an emergency program that allows State DOTs to request temporary relief from Federal requirements under 49 U.S. Code Chapter 53-Public Transportation. I will submit the request for NDOT on behalf of the rural transit agencies. I will let you know if the request is approved.
3. If you suspend or alter service in response to the virus please email **me and the FTA regional office** (emails below) with the details. Some agencies have made the difficult decision to limit trips to medical only. Under normal circumstances, you would not be allowed to prioritize trips but the regional office appears to be flexible at this time.

Make sure to communicate any changes clearly to the public and document your efforts. This communication might be flyers, a public notice, advertisement in the local newspaper, etc.

Regional contacts to report service changes:

- a. Beth.Held@dot.gov
- b. Mokhtee.Ahmad@dot.gov
- c. Mark.Bechtel@dot.gov
- d. Logan.daniels@dot.gov

4. At this time, if you suspend service altogether we will not reimburse driver and dispatcher wages/benefits. However, we can justify some administrative costs for personnel, insurance, rent, utilities, etc.
5. FTA has created an email so you can ask questions directly related to operational impacts from COVID-19. You can email FTAResponse@dot.gov and cc Beth.Held@dot.gov or you can send questions to me and I can submit them on your behalf. I have sent several questions and have so far received no response.
6. You can use your federally funded vehicle to provide incidental service. This can include meal delivery, grocery pick-up and delivery, etc. However, expenses to provide these services must be paid for by a different program and not charged to the 5311 program. When using the vehicle for incidental service **DO NOT** report vehicle revenue hours or vehicle miles as you are not providing transit services. Do not report any revenue for providing these services as fares or other revenue. Track expenses, travel data and revenue separately from the 5311 program.
7. Unfortunately, we have cancelled some upcoming driver training. Don't be too concerned about meeting the driver training requirements as we will work with you. This is a good time to take advantage of online driver training. Your drivers can use 1 online training course to meet 2 of the 4 hours required for continuing education.
8. Also, please remember there is an online course for new drivers. Link to the online training below.

<https://nebraskatransit.com/index.php/resources/driver-training/online-driver-training/>