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Description Area	FY2024-2025 Application Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
Description Area	
Description Area	Application instructions
Description Area	Application Due: April 24, 2025 at NoonIf you have any questions, please contact Fluturi Demirovski at Fluturi.Demirovski@rtachicago.org or 312-913-3239 or Robert Morris at Robert.Morris@rtachicago.org or 312-913-3236Welcome to the FY2024-2025 Application for the Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. Please follow the instructions and complete all information on the following pages to apply. If you need to take a break from your application, please click "Save and Resume Later." You will be provided with a link to copy or email to yourself where you can resume your application anytime within 30 days.The final step of this application includes several documents to be downloaded, signed, and re-uploaded as part of your application. Please complete this step before submitting your Section 5310 application.Learn more about the Section 5310 Program and view previously selected projects at https://www.rtachicago.org/region/section-5310 .

Description Area	Applicant Information
Project Title	Metra Digital Station Displays Expansion
Applicant's Legal Name	Commuter Rail Division of the RTA d/b/a Metra
Contact Person	Brian Stepp
Address	547 W Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL 60661
Telephone #	(312) 322-2805
Email	BStepp@METRARR.COM
Applicant Fiscal Year Begins	January
Applicant Fiscal Year Ends	December
SAM #	QNMFBR7SVDB1
Request Type (Check all that apply)	Capital Existing Project
Organization type (Check all that apply)	Public Operator

Description Area	Section 1: Applicant questions
Description Area	The following questions should be answered for all projects, unless otherwise noted.1. Check what goal(s) from the Human Services Transportation Plan(HSTP) and strategies from the On To 2050 Plan this project is designed to address to meet the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities (check all applicable boxes below):
Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)	Goal #1 - Establish Mobility Mgmt and Travel Training Network (pg 71) Capital Project
On To 2050 Plan	Make Transit More Competitive Ensure Equitable Transit Access
Description Area	Details: Human Services Transportation Plan
Description Area	Details: On To 2050 Plan

2. Provide a detailed description of your project. Explain what you are requesting funding to provide; why the project is needed; and how the project will support strategies for goals selected in questions #1. Please be concise. (Project Description Narrative [+/- 500 words]):

Metra is requesting section 5310 funding to purchase and install 130 digital station display signage systems at 40 of Metra's 243 stations. The new station displays are Metra's next generation of video monitor boards that display real-time train tracking information, arrival times, and travel alerts. These signs provide visual information that is a requirement to be compliant with ADA law as it pertains to transit stations, and they are particularly beneficial for people with hearing impairments and seniors with disabilities.

Using prior section 5310 funding, Metra is already deploying a baseline of two station displays at all 243 stations across the regional rail network to ensure ADA compliance. Additional funding from this round of section 5310 funds would allow us to install additional signage at 40 stations with higher ridership and other considerations such as platform length and entry points. This includes five stations that would receive an extra-large (XL) package of five additional display signs and 35 stations that would receive a large (L) package of three additional displays.

These new station displays will replace existing Visual Information Systems (VIS) at Metra stations throughout the region. Currently, the existing VIS displays are black rectangular boxes with scrolling red text seen at the majority of Metra stations. The vendor of these VIS displays has gone out of business and the units are no longer supported. Metra has exhausted all backup materials and equipment from the original VIS signs and had to replace a VIS sign at a station in fall 2022 with the last VIS sign that was in Metra's technology lab.

The Project will make it easier for passengers with vision and hearing impairments to use Metra, as well as non-disabled riders. The new station displays are easier to read for passengers with impaired vision thanks to larger text and consistent display. In addition, estimated wait times for Metra trains traveling in both directions from the station will be displayed, making bi-directional travel easier by providing more information. The displays will complement Metra's audio announcements by syncopating visual information with audio messages, such as arrivals, delays, and safety information, to riders at the station.

The new station displays will further help reduce passenger anxiety by offering real-time train arrival and departure estimates as well as important messages regarding displays, construction, and other relevant information for utilizing Metra. and passenger stress when making connections with CTA, Pace, and other services on timed schedules. The new station signs will not display commercial advertisements so as to focus on delivering important information and limit information overload. Moreover,

consistent communication with Metra riders will be ensured to reduce the functional barrier for people to ride Metra's affordable transit service.

The Project is necessary to further the objectives of the RTA's Human Services Transportation Plan. The new station displays help meet the HSTP's first goal, Establish Mobility Management and a Travel Training Network. While the Project will not create a network of mobility managers, more informative digital displays will assist in vastly improving mobility management. The Project further aligns with CMAQ's ON TO 2050 Plan, by improving the accessibility of Metra's stations, thereby making transit more competitive, and ensuring equitable access.

3. What entity is currently or will operate the service? Does your agency enter into agreements with service providers? (Operating Projects Only)

N/A

4. How does this project improve access to other transportation services that go beyond the project's geographic boundary?

The new station displays will not only display tracking information and travel alerts for Metra trains but also have the capability to include transfer options for CTA and Pace service. In addition, estimated wait times for Metra trains traveling in both directions from the station they are located will be displayed, making bidirectional travel easier by providing more information. This will help make systemwide connections easier to access and understand. Once riders are more comfortable taking Metra, they may be more comfortable making connections between service providers and shifting their mode of transportation for a greater variety of trips.

Earlier this year, Metra launched a survey and held public outreach events to ask riders what they think about potentially renaming lines to make the system easier to understand for new and occasional riders. Metra is also in the early stages of a larger systemwide signage and wayfinding project, which will replace a variety of wayfinding, identification, and informational signs that have been installed over the years with redesigned signs that have a common appearance and use common language. It makes practical and economic sense to also consider changing the line names as part of this effort.

5. How will seniors and individuals with disabilities be given priority on all project activities, if the service is not limited to those individuals?

Phase 2 of this Project will install visual improvements at 40 stations, which are crucial for those with visual and auditory impairments to access Metra service information. Seniors and individuals with disabilities will benefit most from the Project, because barriers to transportation services will be removed, making it easier for them to access affordable and sustainable transportation.

6. Describe how the project will be marketed to serve seniors and individuals with disabilities and promote public awareness? Include information on how populations with Limited English Proficiency will be apprised of the project and whether marketing materials will be available in other languages.

Making transit accessible for everyone and prioritizing system accessibility is an essential part of Metra's vision, as outlined in Metra's new 2023-27 Strategic Plan My Metra, Our Future. We know we can't be My Metra for all unless our trains and stations are accessible for everyone. The new station displays are easy to read, and information is transmitted in plain language. Moreover, the signs display the same verbiage as what is announced in the voice message, making it for populations with Limited English proficiency easier to understand. The large format station displays are between 42 inches and 55 inches, several times larger than the current, outdated VIS signs. The new station displays are capable of showing more simplified language and highly legible iconography showing real-time train tracking.

The Project aligns with Metra's efforts to become fully accessible for everyone and promote public awareness. Metra has published a Guide for Customers with Disabilities, as well as a Station Guide for the Visually Impaired and a Station Accessibility map. In addition, Metra is encouraging its passengers to request a reasonable modification of Metra policies, practices, and procedures to accommodate a disability. To further raise public awareness, Metra has also established an ADA Advisory Committee to provide Metra with recommendations on its compliance with the ADA, facilitate a dialogue between Metra and the disability community, and increase the use of Metra's services by people with disability. Improved accessibility due to the new station display installment will be communicated at the Committee and through all of Metra's information channels to raise public awareness and inform the target group.

7. How will this project coordinate with public transportation providers and /or other human service agencies? If the project will not include coordination, provide a detailed explanation.

Metra is coordinating its schedule with CTA and Pace. Further, Pace's Feeder Bus routes are coordinated with Metra. The Project will complement Metra's coordination with other public transportation providers, by installing interagency signage at 40 stations. The new station displays are entirely customizable to display any graphic image that is programmed, and therefore capable of showing connecting services to CTA and Pace, as applicable. Finally, there is broad cooperation and strong support for the Project among the service providers and the City of Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD).

8. Describe your organization's experience, technical ability, and capacity to successfully and efficiently manage federal grants? Identify which staff will be administering this grant and what experience they have managing federal grants. Please include the percentage of time the person(s) will spend managing this grant.

Metra appreciates support from the prior round of RTA's Section 5310 grant program. If Section 5310 funding from this round is awarded, Metra's Grant Management Division will provide oversight of purchase requisitions before 5310 funds are expended. Metra has consistently provided quarterly progress updates in a timely fashion, which illustrates our ability to implement the program and utilize the funds.

The team is staffed with veteran employees of the transit and grants industry and is responsible for tracking approved grant contracts, financial oversight, and meeting the reporting requirements to funding agencies. Metra has a successful track record managing hundreds of local and federal grants of various amounts and has consistently demonstrated an ability to meet federal grant reporting and administrative requirements.

Metra's Grant Management Department is responsible for ensuring that Metra fully complies with grant agreement provisions, applicable Federal and state statutes, regulations, and other applicable requirements and directives. Grant Management coordinates grant management and communicates grant activity progress with funding agencies including, but not limited to, the USDOT, FTA, FRA, DHS, IDOT, RTA, and grantors of discretionary grants. Grant Management Division prepares and submits quarterly and annual reports to grantor agencies related to expenditures (e.g., SF-425), project progress, lobbying, land use, and expenditure of "Associated Transit Improvements" funds. Further, staff from the Grant Management Division coordinate with local FTA staff and attend quarterly meetings with the FTA to discuss the advancement of projects and the expenditure of FTA funds.

The Grant Management Division creates detailed account codes and monitors the progression of each project to ensure the timely expenditure of funds for each of Metra's capital projects. Throughout the life of a capital project, the Division maintains critical information in Metra's financial accounting system for each capital project, including project description and scope, expected completion dates, change orders, purchase requisitions, committed and remaining budget amounts, and grant funding sources. The Grant Management Division provides grant-related guidance to Metra's implementing departments on an ongoing basis and holds ten Project Status Meetings each month to maintain internal coordination and appropriate funding levels throughout the critical path of each project.

Metra's Diversity Business Enterprise Department and the Grant Management Division coordinate to ensure all FTA-funded capital projects over \$250,000 comply with federal Disadvantaged

Business Enterprise program regulations per 49 CFR part 26. Metra's Grant Management Division has post-award reporting requirements and manages the submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone Progress Reports in FTA's electronic grants management system quarterly. Metra will submit copies of the substantial deliverables identified in the work plan to the FTA regional office at the corresponding milestones.

Description Area

Mobility management consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers carried out by a recipient or subrecipient through an agreement entered into with a person, including a government entity, under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (other than Section 5309). Mobility management does not include operating public transportation services. Mobility Management used for staff position is intended to build coordination among existing public transportation provider and other transportation service providers with the result of expanding the availability of service.

9. Detail your Mobility Management efforts for your operating or capital project. This questions applies to all applicants, regardless of use of Section 5310 funding for Mobility Management.

While the Project will not create a network of mobility managers, more informative digital displays will assist in vastly improving mobility management by offering clearer messaging to riders and better coordination with other service providers.

Description AreaSection 2: Performance measures

Description Area

This section details performance measures associated with each project type and Human Services Transportation Plan goal area. Performance measures will be used to monitor and assess each project's progress, improvements and overall effectiveness towards improving transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities. Each applicant is required to provide baseline data and projections (where applicable) for each Human Services Transportation Plan goal area associated with the project application. Successful applicants will be required to report quarterly on each associated performance measure. Data will also be used to evaluate future Section 5310 project applications (for ongoing operating projects).

Description Area

Goal #1 Establish Mobility Management and Travel Training Networks
Description Projects that support this goal are largely tied to operating projects. Because of this, performance measures are tied to progress made with operating projects.
Potential Performance Measures: New partners added to Section 5310-funded operating projects. Increase in hours and geographic coverage of operating projects.

Description Area

Number of partners

Description Area	Section 2(Cont'd): Performance measures
Description Area	Goal #2Expand Service Areas and HoursDescriptionProjects that support this goal are operating projects, many of which are existing projects previously funded by Section 5310. Existing projects are expected to provide data (where available) for previous years as well as projections in each area. New project applications are required to provide projections only.Potential Performance Measures:Extend service area boundaries.Extend hours of operation for night/early morning.Current and projected ridership.
Description Area	Number of individuals to be served by your project annually
Description Area	Annual Ridership(All projects)
2023 Total	0
2024: Total	0
Projected 2025: Total	0
Projected 2026: Total	0
Description Area	Provide the days and hours of operation
Description Area	Core service area: Specify municipal and county areas covered
Description Area	Special destination: Trips outside of core service area (if applicable)(Please list locations)
Description Area	Inter-county transfers or services

Description AreaSection 2(Cont'd): Goals

Description Area

Goal #3Coordinate Fare Media and Implement Capped Fares for Certain TripsDescription:Projects that support this goal are largely policy changes related to operating projects.Potential Performance Measures:Longer distance trips are more affordable.Number of agencies that accept the common fare media.New funding sources identified to support the reduction in fare revenue for longer-distance trips that are provided for a capped fare rate.

Description Area

Goal #4Coordinate Volunteer Driver Support ProgramsDescription:Projects that support this goal are new or existing operating projects.Potential Performance Measures:Trip calls are converted from undeliverable turndowns (outside area or hours) to be filled by a volunteer.Stability of or growth of screened and trained volunteer driver pool.Volunteer hours of service.

Description Area

Goal #7Explore Collaboration / Consolidation of Similar ServicesDescription:Projects that support this goal are planning projects or activities carried out by a mobility manager.Potential Performance Measures:Feasibility of collaboration among human service agencies is exploredIf determined to be more cost effective, agency transportation program administration functions will be consolidated.If determined to be more cost effective while preserving quality of service, vehicles will be purchased by a single lead agency and all trips will be scheduled and dispatched from a central office.Cost savings achieved through collaboration.Quality of service is maintained or improved after collaboration.Agencies secure funding to replace or partially replace ongoing Section 5310 program awards.

Description Area

Goal #8Establish Regional One Call / One Click ServiceDescription:Projects that support this goal are planning projects to conduct feasibility studies or capital funding to implement software.Potential Performance Measures:Total usage and frequency of usage by customers.Accuracy of transportation information.Types of trips planned.Customer satisfaction

Description Area

Goal #9Create an Accessibility Infrastructure DatabaseDescription:Projects that support this goal are planning projects to conduct data collection and or/ create a database.Potential Performance Measures:Completion of databasePercentage of regional inventoried / number of communities inventoriedUsage of database

Description Area

Capital Infrastructure ProjectsUndertake a new Section 5310 related capital infrastructure project.Description:Projects that support this goal are capital projects that:a) Exceed the minimum ADA requirements,b) Improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA-complementary paratransit service, orc) Provide alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation.Potential Performance Measures:Number of riders impactedNumber of stations or bus stop facilities improvedDollars spent on improvements

Please explain how you will collect and report on identified performance measures for this project and identify any additional performance measures that will be used.

The Project's performance will be measured by the monthly ridership that is impacted, the number of stations improved, the total dollars spent on improvements, and the percentage of stations with new station displays. The prior round of section 5310 funding enables Metra to increase the percentage of stations with updated station displays to 87%, totaling 210 stations, while the remaining 33 stations will receive the new station displays as a part of larger station rehabilitation and reconstruction projects.

As of September 2024, the average weekday ridership served by the 40 stations in Phase 2 of this project totals 36,132 riders that will benefit from additional station displays to better serve their stations. See the Attachment, "Station Locations and Details" for information regarding station ridership as well as the estimated budget per station. Finally, the dollars spent on improvements would sum up to almost \$5 million, inclusive of the \$4 million request and Metra's \$1 million match sourced from PAYGO funds.

Metra tracks monthly ridership data by station, as well as ADA accessibility and new station display integration per station. Additionally, data can be gathered through reporting from Metra's Capital Delivery and Grant Accounting departments. Metra hosts monthly meetings to review project statuses in each district as well as systemwide projects where these metrics are reported on. Moreover, this Project will be added to RTA's quarterly status calls.

For CTA, Metra, and Pace Applications Only - Please describe how you will incorporate regional rider needs and interagency collaboration into your proposed project. For example, digital signage showing information for all agency services at locations with interagency transfers.

The new station displays will not only display tracking information and travel alerts for Metra trains but also indicate transfer options for CTA and Pace. In addition, estimated wait times for Metra trains traveling in both directions from the station they are located will be displayed, making bidirectional travel easier by providing more information. This will help make systemwide connections easier to access and understand.

Description Area	Section 3: Budget requestIf a funding source is not applicable respond with "0."
Description Area	Operating expense year 1 request
Description Area	Operating expense year 2 request
Operating Year 1 Federal 50%	0
Operating Year 1 Local 50%	0
Operating Year 2 Federal 50%	0
Operating Year 2 Local 50%	0
Description Area	Capital expense year 1 request(Infrastructure improvements computer software/hardware, cameras, tracking or routing software, etc.)
Description Area	Capital expense year 2 request(Infrastructure improvements computer software/hardware, cameras, tracking or routing software, etc.)
Capital Year 1 Federal 80%	4000000
Capital Year 1 Local 20%	1000000
Capital Year 1 Federal 80%	0
Capital Year 2 Local 20% Match	0
Description Area	Mobility management expense year 1 request
Description Area	Mobility management expense year 2 request
Mobility Year 1 Federal 80%	0
Mobility Year 1 Local 20%	0
Mobility Year 2 Federal 80%	0
Mobility Year 2 Local 20%	0

Provide the detailed methodology used to develop the above budgets. (applies to all applicants).

The budget estimations are based on actual and observed costs from Phase 1 of the project. Additionally, Metra's capital delivery department, IT department, and PMO Controls departments have reviewed current construction costs and generated estimates by station location.

Metra has issued a purchase order agreement for the Phase 1 of the project, which was approved by Metra's Board of Directors on April 21, 2023. The vendor, based in Rockford, IL, is able to fulfill any number of unit purchase orders. The contract is compliant with federal requirements. Therefore, Metra has the contractual mechanisms to purchase new station display signs as soon as funding is available with an expected fulfillment time of two months. The software and technology behind the data that is pushed to VIS signs has already been purchased and installed by Metra with other funds. Section 5310 funds will solely be used for the physical VIS sign displays, mounting brackets, electrical connections, and the laboring crews that will install the VIS signs.

Description Area	Certifications & Board Resolutions
Description Area	Please download and fill out the forms listed below. You can download the PDF versions of the listed forms here. Local Share Certification; Certifying Authority; Title VI Plan Certification (New Applicants Only); EEO Certification; Single Agency Audit Certification; Traditional Project Certification Eligibility-Units of Local Government (New Applicants Only); Private Non-Profit Organizations-Certification Eligibility; Approved Board Resolution (authorizing application submittal and name of authorized official)
File	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/17917786957
Please provide an explanation for any certificates that are not completed and uploaded with the application	A governing board resolution is in process and will be in place before any agreement is completed. Moreover, Metra is not a new applicant, therefore the Traditional Project Certification Eligibility Units of Local Government do not have to be attached. Further, the Private Non-Profit Organization Certification Eligibility is not applicable for Metra. As discussed with RTA program staff and Heather Mullins, Metra's Board of Directors will pass a new Board Resolution specifically for the application submittal as needed and after RTA's evaluation of this application and its merit for funding consideration.