FY 2025 5310 OPERATING APPLICATION

PART 1: Applicant Information

Legal Name of Applicant: Polk County Transportation

Applicant's Congressional District: District 11	Applicant's County: Polk County

Address: 2881 NC 108 E

City: Columbus	State: NC	Zip Code: 28722

Federal Taxpayer ID Number: 56-6000333

Doing Business As (DBA) Name:

If applicable (normally the transit system name, if different than applicant)

Applicant's Unique Entity ID(UEI): QZ6BZPGLX4Y9

Register your Entity or get a Unique Entity ID at:

Parent Agency UEI: County of Polk

Required only if different than Applicant

Applicant's Service Area's Congressional District: 11

If Service Area is included in more than one district, enter primary district only

Project's Service Area: Polk County and surrounding counties

List the county or counties that will be served by the proposed project.

Project Manager and Title:	Joshua Kennedy
Telephone:	Area Code: Phone Number: 828 894-2114

Fax:	Area Code: Phone Number:
E-mail Address:	Jkennedy@polknc.org
Website Address:	www.polknc.org

Current Vehicle Inventory: Vans 4 Vans/Lifts 4 Sedans or Minivans 4

Enter Number in Fleet

__ LTVs 3 LTVs/Lifts __ Buses __ N/A

Federal Financial Assistance Transparency Act (FFATA) mandates the disclosure of the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated officers of an entity if:

- The Applicant received 80% or more of its annual gross revenues in the preceding fiscal year from the federal government (all federal sources, not just FTA); and
- Those revenues were greater than $25M; and
- The public does not have access to the information through Securities and Exchange Commission or Internal Revenue Service filings as specified in FFATA.

Applicant should select "Yes" if they are subject to the reporting requirements of FFATA and "No" if they are not subject to Compensation Reporting. ☐ YES X☐ No Executive

Executive Compensation Reporting: If "Yes" is selected above, enter the Names and Compensation amounts for the top five officers of the Applicant.

	Full Name	**Total Compensation**
1		$
2		$
3		$
4		$
5		$

Section 5310 – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program

The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout the country, by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation mobility options available. Toward this goal, FTA provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas. A senior is an individual who is 65 years of age or older and the term 'disability' is defined in section 3(1) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102). All 5310 projects (Operating, Capital Purchase of Service, and Mobility Manager) are competitive and will be scored based on a set of criteria aligning with IMD's mission and goals. Funding for any given project is not guaranteed.

PART 2: Project Information

IMPORTANT: Applicants will be allowed to submit an unlimited number of applications for funding for their small urban and/or rural service area. Duplicate projects within service areas will not be funded. Applicants can apply for one year of 5310 funding only. If a project is selected, funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed. It will be necessary to reapply and go through another competitive process for subsequent funding.

***** All Community Transportation (CT) capital projects must be applied for on the Combined Capital application.**

A. Program Application

Funding Source **Project Type Operating**	Federal Section **Other 5310 Project**
Riders or Consumers will live in: Polk County	X☐ Rural area ☐ Small Urban area
Total Project Cost by Budget Type: $167,200	Operating
Total Federal Request **Match(es) not included** **$83,600**	Total Federal Request $83,600

A. SCOPE OF PROPOSED SERVICES

Instructions: Complete this table for the targeted population group/groups you plan on serving in the project. Put N/A if the population is not a target in this project. Definitions of each of these populations is included in Appendix A of the 5310 Overview.

	Elderly	Disabled
How many of the targeted population live in the area you propose to serve?	6600	2732
Of the number listed above, how many have the unmet transit need your project addresses?	1980	820
How many people with the unmet transit need will you serve through this project?	495	328
What is the source(s) of the information provided in the questions above?	US Census and LPC	NC State University for Emerging Issues
Is another agency or provider arranging transportation services for the populations identified above?	No	No

(1) Estimate the annual number of unduplicated passengers who will be served or the number of one-way trips that will be provided from the proposed project. 3300

Answer (unduplicated passengers): **Answer** (additional trips): 10,000

(2) How do the numbers of passengers and trips relate to the amount of grant funding requested? How is the cost of the trip determined? What factors were used?

Answer: Opstats rate to charge and will ration trips on availability of funds

PART 3: Project Description

IMPORTANT - *The FTA requires that projects receiving funds from the Section 5310 Program (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) be included in the locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan.*

INSTRUCTIONS – This application is for a "Section 5310 Other" project, line item **G-313, Transportation of Client/Others and G-621 Volunteer Reimbursement**. The project must fit into one of the three (3) criteria from the Section 5310 circular below to be a Section 5310 Other project:

Other Section 5310 Projects

Public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

▶ Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);

▶ Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance on complementary paratransit; and

▶ Alternatives to public transportation projects that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation.

(1) Increases or enhancements related to geographic coverage, service quality, and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(2) Additions or changes to physical infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, sidewalks, etc.), technology, and vehicles that impact availability of transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

(3) Actual or estimated number of rides (as measured by one-way trips) provided for seniors and individuals with disabilities as a result of other Section 5310 projects implemented in the current reporting year.

The application questions below must be answered based on one or more of the project scenarios listed above. Click on the **gray rectangle** and type each answer. If needed, the text will automatically wrap to the next row. The answer may wrap to the next page if necessary. NCDOT will use the answers the applicant provides to determine whether the project is worthy of funding. The details are important and applicants should provide detailed answers to these questions.

Section 5310 Projects (Other than the Traditional 5310 Projects)- based on Three Eligibility Criteria

Project Name	Polk 5310	

Describe Operating project to be funded. How will this project align with the goals of IMD listed below? ***Increase Access*** – *eliminate transportation barriers and ensure all North Carolinians have equal access to opportunities and services* ***Enhance Quality of Life*** – *offer a convenient network of multi-modal choices to enhance the quality of life for North Carolinians* ***Ensure Safety*** – *ensure all road users can travel safely by building complete streets and proactively correcting areas susceptible to crashes involving vulnerable road users* How will mobility options for residents be improved with the Operating program?	5310 funds can play a significant role in increasing access to public transit, addressing barriers to transportation, and ensuring equal access to services for all community members. 1.Expend Service Coverage to extend routes into underserved areas that may not have adequate access to transportation options. 2. Increase Frequency of Service and reduce waiting times. 3. Eliminating Barriers to Access subsidized fares, and help fill transportation gaps in service. 4. Ensuring Equal Access to Service in low income communities and people of color by directing resources to underserved areas. Funding can significantly enhance the quality of local transportation systems by supporting the development of convenient, multimodal transportation options. Funds will help ensure that the transit system is safe and reliable by addressing the safe alternative for vulnerable populations. By investing in our services by maintaining our vehicles, secure our facilities, increase the visibility of our services and supporting staff. These create a safer and welcoming environment for	

What activities will the grant funds be used for?	everyone. A safe and reliable transit option only enhances the quality of life for our community members but also encourages more people to use public transit, ultimately contributing to a safer, more sustainable community overall. See page 15 for narrative	
		FY 2025
Federal Amount Requested =	*$83,600*	*$*

State Amount Requested =		*$*
Local match amount =	*$83,600*	*$*
Total project cost =	*$167,200*	*$*

1. Provide a detailed description of your proposed project or service.

Answer: To provide increased availability to Medical and General Transportation trips to Polk County residents both in and out of county.

2. What is the applicant's organizational mission? Explain how this project fits in with the other services the applicant already provides.

Answer: Offering safe, reliable, door-to-door service inside the county and around the region to Rutherfordton, Spindale, Hendersonville, Asheville, Spartanburg and Greenville

3. Describe the intended service area that will benefit from your proposed project. Include pertinent demographic information about the service area in your answer. It should be clear from your description whether your project's targeted population lives in a small urban or rural area of North Carolina.

Answer: Polk County is a beautiful county located in the central Blue Ridge Mountains and foothills. The mountain slopes of the region experience a climatic phenomenon known as the "Thermal Belt". This is due to a temperature inversion that results in a belt, rather indefinite in width, within the frosts of the valley-or freezes of the higher altitudes -do not occur. Botanically, the area is rich in native flora. The thermal belt moderates the year-round temperatures resulting in cooler summers and warmer winters. This phenomenon allows for a longer growing season and a greater food growing potential than the surrounding counties. Polk County was one of the first counties in the state to complete a plan through NC Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (QDFPTF) to for local agricultural development and farmland preservation plans, i.e. a strategic approach to the future of the local agriculture. The percent of county land in farm sis 20.2%. Farmers grow crops, vegetables, fruits, nut, berries greenhouse and nursery items, and limited livestock.

The past two decades have seen an influx of retires into the county who locate from all parts of the U.S. drawn by the horse, the beauty and the climate. When aggregate income data is reviewed the relative affluence of the newcomers gives a false picture of the true extent of poverty among long-established residents. Polk County is designated as a Tier Two County although in reality there are many pockets of dire poverty within the county.

4. Describe the mobility options the seniors and/or individuals with disabilities in this service area have now and discuss how these are insufficient and/or inappropriate. **It is not enough to simply say the current transportation available does not meet the need, provide examples of how the need is not met.** If public transportation is unavailable to the targeted populations, how are they getting to life-sustaining, social and recreational activities without it?

Answer: In Polk County, mobility options for seniors and individuals with disabilities are limited, and this can create significant barriers to independence, access to essential services, and overall quality of life for these community members. Some of the key challenges that require further investment include Polk County's low density and a rural character, which requires a well- funded comprehensive and well-established public transit system. This funding will help to reduce the number of missing regular transit routes and assure specialized transit for those mobility challenges. Polk County's paratransit services provides specialized door-to-door transportation for individuals with disabilities. Further, being a rural community means a long distance between pick-up and destination locations. This becomes more pronounced as many medical services for our senior population are out of county. The cost of rural transportation is an added barrier the these funds will mitigate.

5. Provide information about the locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (LCP) used to prepare this project application.

Answer:

1	**Name of Plan/Title**	

Isothermal Regions: McDowell, Polk, Rutherford County LCHSTP

2	**Applicable Need, Strategy or Activity Included on Page Number(s)**	**Pg 15-17 Needs Assessment Pg 18-19 Strategies Pg 20 Summary**
3	**Plan Date**	**August 2018**

6. To be funded as an Other 5310 Project, the project must meet at least one of three qualifying criteria including:

   a. Does your project exceed ADA minimum requirements? **Answer:** Yes

   b. Does your project improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA complementary paratransit service? **Answer:** No

   c. Does your project provide alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and/or individuals with disabilities with transportation? **Answer:** NO

7. If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions in 6(a), 6(b) or 6(c) above, describe how your project meets this qualifying criteria.

Answer: Additional personal services as required by individual clients

8. Other 5310 Projects must be planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation needs of seniors and/or individuals with disabilities, although the service may also be used by the general public. Describe fully how seniors and/or individuals with disabilities will be targeted and how the general public will be part of the project.

Answer: We work closely with various other agencies in Polk County such as Senior Services, Health Dept, Thermal Belt Outreach, Sheltered Workshop and Vocational Rehabilitation to address client's needs.

9. Describe how the project will be coordinated with human service agencies, nearby jurisdictions and/or public and private transportation providers. Identify any partnerships

that will be involved in the implementation of the project. (i.e., vehicle sharing, scheduling & dispatching center, training, shared rides, shared costs)

Answer: We work with Foothills Regional Council and the Council on Aging to provide transportation Service to the Elderly and Disabled.

10. Describe the project plan in detail and provide a timeline and milestones for the completion of the project. This description should completely describe what you want to do and how you are going to do it **if** you receive the requested funding. Although they are not required documents in some cases, the applicant may want to attach with the application maps, pictures, marketing plans, draft brochures, charts, or graphs and/or route schedules that support the request for funding, demonstrate the need or illustrate the applicant's preparation. If the applicant is working in partnership with or coordinating with other agencies or organizations, letters of support from these agencies or organizations may be attached with the application. Your detailed answer should be one half to a whole page long.

Letter(s) of Support from applicant's RPO/MPO are required documents for the application.

Answer:

11. Describe the method that will be used to monitor and evaluate the success of this project and methods for collecting this information. List the measurable indicators of success.

Answer: CTS Routing System

12. Describe how the project relates to any federal or other programs that the applicant operates and, if applicable, how the applicant plans to use these resources to leverage this project.

Answer: Coordinate with ROAP and Title III funds

13. How will the applicant sustain the proposed service after the grant period or if funds are not available in subsequent years?

Answer: We would seek other funding sources available to us.

14. Describe the applicant's preparedness to manage the project and/or the applicant's technical capacity to provide the proposed transportation service.

Answer: Four Decades of experience in managing Federal, State and Local Transportation Grants and delivering transportation services to the residents of Polk County.

15. Describe the qualifications of the key personnel assigned to the project and the percentage of time each person will be involved in the project. Will the applicant need to hire additional personnel to support the project?

Answer: Transportation Manager has 18 years in Public Transportation, Operations Manager has 11 years with the Transportation Dept and operations assistance has 16 years in the department.

16. Describe how the applicant will manage risk and provide for the safe delivery of services.

Answer: All Transportation employees have annual safety training and are subject the Federal Drug & Alcohol random testing guidelines set by FTA.

17. Describe how the transit system intends to seek reimbursement for the services. If it is a trip-based reimbursement, service solely inside the urbanized area cannot be funded with 5310 funding through IMD. Monthly/quarterly document of trip origins and destination XY coordinates (truncated to 2 decimals points to protect privacy) will be required.

If it is a route-based reimbursement, the majority of miles and hours of the route must be outside the urbanized area. The typical route and deviation area must be submitted before service begins. Any changes in the route and deviation area need to receive preapproval.

Answer: We will bill quarterly based on trips provided either unit based or by mileage

Increase Access:

- 5310 funds can play a significant role in increasing access to local public transit, addressing barriers to transportation, and ensuring equal access to services for all community members.
    - 1. Increasing Access to Public Transit
        - Expand Service Coverage: Financial support allows Polk Transportation to extend routes into underserved areas and low-income neighborhoods that may not have adequate access to transportation options. This means more people can use public transit to reach jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services.
        - Increase Frequency of Service: funds will help increase the frequency of trips. This reduces waiting times and makes public transit a more reliable option for people who need to attend appointments.
    - 2. Eliminating Barriers to Access
        - Subsidized Fares for Low-Income Riders
        - Preventing "Transit Deserts" in Polk County, the 5310 funds can help fill gaps, ensuring that no one is left behind due to geographical isolation.
    - 3. Ensuring Equal Access to Services
        - Address Disparities in Service: Low-income communities and people of color are often disproportionately affected by inadequate public transit. These can help mitigate these disparities by directing resources toward underserved areas, ensuring that all groups have equal opportunities to access essential services like healthcare, education, and employment.
- In summary, these funds are a crucial tool for making local public transit more accessible, affordable, and equitable. By addressing financial, geographical, physical, and systemic barriers, these funds help ensure that everyone—regardless of ability or background—can access the services they need to live, work, and thrive.

Enhance Quality of Life

- Funding can significantly enhance the quality of local transportation systems by supporting the development of convenient, multi-modal transportation options.
    - 1. Development of Seamless Integration Between Modes: One of the key benefits of multi-modal transportation is the ability to connect different forms of transit in a way that's efficient, convenient, and user-friendly. Funds will be used to increase service opportunities that will enhance passengers ability to select molbilitiy options that fit their needs.
    - 3. Reducing Congestion and Promoting Alternatives: Offering multiple transportation choices through a multi-modal approach helps reduce reliance on personal vehicles, which in turn, alleviates traffic congestion and supports sustainable transport
    - 4. Improving Accessibility and Equity, by helping to create a more inclusive and equitable multi-modal transportation network by ensuring accessibility for all, including people with disabilities, seniors, and people with limited mobility.

Ensure Safety

- Funds will help ensure that the transit systems is safe and reliable by addressing by providing safe alternative for vulnerable populations. By investments in our services we are able to maintain our vehicles, secure our facilities, increase visibility of services, and supporting a well-trained staff. These create a safer, more welcoming environment for everyone. A safe and reliable transit option not only enhances the quality of life for community members but also encourages more people to use public transportation, ultimately contributing to a safer, more sustainable community overall.