New Freedom is a federally-funded grant program that provides financial support to local agencies and nonprofit organizations to offer specialized transportation services for individuals with disabilities that exceed the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Under MAP-21, the new law authorizing transportation funds, federal transportation programs have been reorganized and consolidated. The New Freedom program has been consolidated with the Section 5310 program to form a new Section 5310 program, which is now called Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. Services once eligible under the New Freedom Program are now eligible under the new Section 5310. SANDAG continues to provide administrative support to grantees awarded New Freedom funds from previous competitive grant cycles.

The Need
Individuals with disabilities are identified as

(Continued on reverse)
any persons with any physical, developmental (behavioral), visual, and/or hearing impairment(s). According to the 2012 American Community Survey, 9.6% of San Diego County residents identify themselves as disabled. Accessible transportation is a basic necessity to maintain a high quality of life, which includes fulfilling basic daily needs, access to healthcare, education, and work, as well as improving/maintaining mental and physical well-being. Local nonprofits and other agencies have used New Freedom funding administered by SANDAG to address the growing needs of the region and improve existing services.

Eligible Applicants:
- Local government agencies
- Tribal governments
- Social services agencies
- Private and public operators of public transportation
- Nonprofit organizations

Eligible Projects Include:
- Transit vouchers
- Mobility management
- Volunteer driver programs
- Fixed-route transit
- Rideshare/vanpool programs

Eligible Projects
New Freedom grants fund innovative and flexible programs that support the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities. New Freedom funds are directed toward meeting the needs of new or expanded programs (those in operation prior to August 2005 are not eligible). SANDAG required that New Freedom-funded projects address a very high or high priority as stated in the Coordinated Plan (sandag.org/coordinatedplan). The Coordinated Plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, among others, and provides strategies for meeting those needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Grant funding may be used for capital, operating, or mobility management projects.

Program Requirements
Applicants were permitted to request funding amounts between $30,000 and $200,000 per project. Passengers who are not disabled may be transported through the project, but at least 80 percent of trips are provided to disabled riders. Projects serve residents of San Diego urbanized areas. All projects have cost-sharing requirements. Projects are funded on a reimbursement basis, with grantees required to submit backup documentation along with progress reports. In addition to the progress reports, grantees are monitored through data collection and site visits.

For More Information
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