

## **OVER-THE-ROAD BUS PROGRAM**

The Over-the-Road Bus program is designed to assist operators of over-the-road buses to finance the incremental capital and training costs of complying with the Department of Transportation's final rule regarding accessibility of over-the-road buses required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Eligible projects include the incremental cost of adding a lift to a new bus, retrofit of a bus to add a lift, and training.

In FY 2005, applications were reviewed and selected on a competitive basis. Several factors were considered: (1) the need for over-the-road bus accessibility in the areas served, (2) the extent to which the applicant demonstrates innovative strategies and financial commitment, (3) the extent to which the operator acquires equipment required by the final rule prior to any required timeframe, (4) the extent to which financing the costs of compliance presents a financial hardship for the applicant, and (5) the impact of accessibility requirements on the continuation of over-the-road bus service, with particular consideration of the impact of the requirements on service to rural areas and for low-income individuals. Other factors, such as fleet size and prior year funding, were also considered.

A total of \$6.6 million was obligated for the program in FY 2005. The projects selected provided funding for 59 awardees for the incremental cost of adding lifts to new vehicles, retrofitting vehicles, and training employees in the use of accessible equipment. The \$6.6 million obligated during FY 2005 included projects selected in previous fiscal years. In FY 2005, the Federal share of a grant under this program was 90 percent for all providers.

Because the Over-the-Road Bus program provides funds to intercity bus providers, the service area for any grantee may include any or all of the population categories used to report FTA obligation data: large, medium, or small urbanized areas, or non-urbanized areas. As defined by "intercity", the service provided by any grantee always includes more than one area. Since the funding cannot be tied to any particular area or population category, obligations cannot be reported that way. For this program, obligations are reported by grantee. In the summary tables (by state), the obligations are listed according to the state in which the grantee's headquarters office is located.