

Florida Department of Transportation Requests for Waiver or Reduction of Project Match Requirements

Summary

Effective July 1, 2001 Section 5 of House Bill 1225, enacted during the 2001 Legislative Session, provides financial assistance to certain rural counties and communities. This legislation provides that, notwithstanding any other law, member agencies and organizations of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) shall review the financial match requirements for projects in rural areas. The Department of Transportation (FDOT) is a member of REDI. Counties and communities that meet certain statutory criteria may request a waiver or reduction of the match requirements for such projects.

Program Implementation

This program will be administered through Department Policy, and the Work Program instructions. The Office of Policy Planning will provide overall coordination. The Districts will be responsible for working with local project sponsors to resolve specific issues related to project scopes and funding.

Eligible Counties and Communities

To be eligible to request a waiver or reduction of match requirements, a county or community must meet the statutory definition of “rural” (s. 288.0656 (2) (b) F.S.) and such county or community must have three or more of the “economic distress” conditions identified in s. 288.0656(2) (a) F.S.

Section **288.0656(2)(b)**, Florida Statutes, defines a rural community as:

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or less.
2. A county with a population of 100,000 or less that is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or less.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or less and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (a) and verified by the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development.

Section 288.0656(2)(a), Florida Statutes, defines "economic distress" conditions as:

- low per capita income,
- low per capita taxable values,
- high unemployment,
- high underemployment,
- low weekly earned wages compared to the state average,
- low housing values compared to the state average,
- high percentages of the population receiving public assistance,
- high poverty levels compared to the state average, and
- a lack of year-round stable employment opportunities.

The following rural counties and communities have been approved by OTTED / REDI, and are currently eligible to request a waiver or reduction of project match requirements:

- District 1: Hardee, Desoto, Okeechobee, Highlands, Glades, and Hendry. The community of Immokalee (in Collier County) is also eligible.
- District 2: Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist, Columbia, Baker, Union, Bradford, Nassau, and Putnam
- District 3: Holmes, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun, Liberty, Gadsden, Franklin, and Gulf Walton, Wakulla, and Jefferson
- District 4: The communities of: Pahokee, South Bay, and Belle Glade.
- District 5: Flagler and Sumter

For fiscal year 2001 – 2002, all counties and communities which meet the definition of “rural” in section 288.0656(2)(b), F.S., are eligible to request a waiver or reduction under section 5 (4) of Chapter 201, Laws of Florida (2001), previously known as HB 1225.

As additional counties and communities become eligible to request waivers or reductions of project match requirements, the Office of Policy Planning will notify the Districts. Requests for verification of eligibility should be directed to:

Mary Helen Blakeslee
Office of Trade, Tourism, and Economic Development
Office of the Governor
2001 The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001
E-mail: maryhelen.blakeslee@myflorida.com
Phone: (850) 487-2568

Process:

- 1) A county or community must request a waiver or reduction in match requirements in writing. This request can be via a letter, note on the project application or the “Request for Match Waiver or Reduction” form.

For projects currently in the Department’s Adopted Work Program or projects where an application has already been submitted to the department, a letter or the Request for Match Waiver or Reduction form may be submitted to the Department requesting the waiver or reduction of match. For future project applications, it should be noted during the initial request, that the county or community is requesting a waiver or reduction in the match.

- 2) Only eligible counties or communities may request a match waiver or reduction. If a request is received from a rural county or community that is not currently eligible, they should be informed by district staff that they will need to request a determination of eligibility from OTTED, who will be responsible for verifying if the county or community meets the economic distress factors. As additional counties or communities become eligible to request waivers or reductions of project match requirements, the Office of Policy Planning (REDI Representative) will notify the Districts.
- 3) The requestor of the waiver or reduction of project match will forward the request form, letter, or project application, together with the required paperwork and supporting documentation to the appropriate District contact. (Please see the District contact list below.)
- 4) The District will review the request and work with the requestor to address issues related to the project, funding availability, and discuss any necessary scope adjustments. If the project is a statewide-managed project (e.g. SCOP), the District should coordinate the request with the appropriate statewide project manager.

Note: Normally, the projects in the Adopted 5-Year Work Programs are fully programmed to funding. Generally, there will be no additional funding opportunities to fund the entire cost of the project if the match is waived or reduced. Therefore, to protect the projects in the Adopted Work Program, program managers will work with the requestors to aid the requestor in waiving or reducing the match by reducing the scope of the project.

For future projects added to the Work Program, waivers or reduction of project match may lower the number of projects that will be funded through the existing program allocations. Waiver or reduction of match on future projects will be based on funding availability.

- 5) Donations of land as an in-kind match may be permitted. Additional funding will not generally be available to cover the amount of the match being waived or reduced. In these cases, the scope of the project will need to be reduced.

If a project is a federal aid project, the Department will soft match the project where soft match is allowable and available. Otherwise, the project's scope will have to be reduced.

- 6) When a project is selected to have the match requirements waived or reduced, a note shall be placed in the extra description field in the WPA system denoting the approval. Districts will input the applicable item group code on the WP03 screen in WPA. Use either item group WAIV for match waived or REDC for match reduced.

Questions pertaining to this program should be directed to Glenda J. Hunter, the REDI Representative in the Office of Policy Planning at (850) 414-4811 (SC 994-4811), E-mail: glenda.hunter@dot.state.fl.us

Florida Department of Transportation

Request for Waiver or Reduction of Project Match Requirements

Contact / Requestor: _____

County / Community: _____

(If this project is already in the Work Program, please note the project number and the project manager.)

Project Number: _____

District Project Manager: _____

Project Information:

Is the project in an area (county / community) that has been officially designated as eligible to request a waiver or reduction in project match requirements?

[Per s. 288.065(2)(a) and (b), F.S., referenced on page 2]

Yes: _____

No: _____

If no, a determination of eligibility is necessary before requesting a waiver or reduction of project match requirements.

Please send your request to:

*Mary Helen Blakeslee
Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development
Office of the Governor
2001 The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001
Email: maryhelen.blakeslee@myflorida.com
Phone: (850) 487-2568*

After a determination has been approved by OTTED, you are eligible to submit your request to the appropriate District Office (see attached contact list for your area).

District Contact List:

You may also access the FDOT contacts by Email: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/>

FDOT District Office Planning Contacts

District One – Bartow

[Debbie Hunt](#), Director for Planning and Public Transportation (863) 519-2322
[Michael Tako Nicolaisen](#), District Planning Manager (863) 519-2395
[John Starling](#), District Public Transportation Manager (863) 519-2386

District Two - Lake City

David Byrd, Director of Production
[James Dees](#), District Planning Manager (904) 961-7873
Phil Worth, District Public Transportation Manager (904) 360-5650

District Three - Chipley

[Marvin Stukey](#), Director for Planning and Public Transportation (850) 638-0250
[Dennis Wood](#), District Planning Manager (850) 638-0250
[Bobby Grice](#), District Public Transportation Manager (850) 638-0250
[Tommy Barfield](#), District Production Engineer (850) 638-0250

District Four - Ft. Lauderdale

[Gerry O'Reilly](#), Acting Director for Planning and Production (954) 777-4592
[Gus Schmidt](#), District Planning Manager (954) 777-4629
[Nancy Bungo](#), District Public Transportation Manager (954) 777-4492

District Five - Deland

Carolyn Hyland Ismart, Director of Planning and Public Transportation (407) 482-7852
Lennon Moore, District Planning Manager (407) 482-7854
Cheryl Harrison-Lee, District Public Transportation Manager (407) 482-7853

District Six - Miami

[Gary Donn](#), Director for Planning and Public Transportation (305) 377-5900
[Rafael De Arazoza](#), District Planning Manager (305) 377-5910
[Rene Rodriguez](#), District Public Transportation Manager (305) 377-5906

District Seven - Tampa

[Don Skelton](#), Director for Planning and Production (813) 975-6133
[Bob Clifford](#), District Planning Manager (813) 975-6436
[Harry Reed](#), District Public Transportation Manager (813) 975-6408

District Eight - Florida's Turnpike

Terry Denham, Director of Planning and Programming (407) 532-3999
Randy Fox, District Planning Manager (407) 532-3999