

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-107672](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

FTA's CIG program supports transit capital projects that are locally planned, implemented, and operated. For fiscal year 2025, Congress appropriated \$3.805 billion in program funding for CIG projects.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act continued a requirement for GAO to biennially review FTA's implementation of the program. This report discusses: (1) technical assistance, including the programs, activities, resources, and services that FTA offers project sponsors throughout the CIG process and (2) the extent to which this technical assistance meets project sponsors' needs.

GAO reviewed reports since 2016 on the CIG program and FTA's website. GAO interviewed 10 project sponsors, FTA staff, and three stakeholders, including the Capital Investment Grants Working Group. GAO sent a survey to all 61 current project sponsors and received responses from 53 of them to determine the extent to which FTA's technical assistance meets project sponsors' needs and aligns with federal internal controls for external communication.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that FTA tailor its technical assistance for new and potential project sponsors to clarify program requirements, processes, and timelines in the early stages of a project, including before projects enter the CIG program. Additionally, GAO continues to believe that FTA should implement its July 2020 recommendation related to improving communication. DOT concurred with our recommendation.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Repko at repkoe@gao.gov.

June 2025

CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

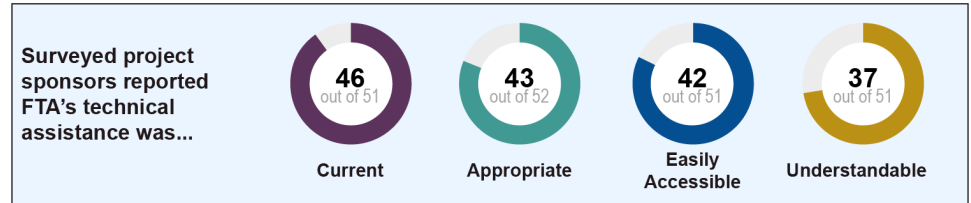
DOT Should Tailor Technical Assistance Provided to New and Potential Applicants

What GAO Found

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides Capital Investment Grants (CIG) for transit capital projects, such as new bus rapid transit systems or extensions to existing light rail systems. FTA offers technical assistance—including expertise, documents, events, and tools—to help project sponsors, which are typically transit agencies, navigate the CIG process. In recent years, FTA adjusted its technical assistance to help meet emerging needs. For example, given the increased interest in bus rapid transit projects, FTA convened a roundtable so that project sponsors could share lessons learned.

In response to GAO's survey, project sponsors reported that they use the technical assistance that FTA provides, and it largely meets their needs. Nearly all 53 responding project sponsors—across all experience levels within the program—said they accessed most of the agency's technical assistance resources. Most respondents characterized FTA's technical assistance as generally accessible, current, appropriate, and understandable.

Project Sponsor Survey Responses on the Quality of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Technical Assistance in the Capital Investment Grants Program



Source: GAO analysis of survey results. | GAO-25-107672

Although project sponsors reported that FTA's technical assistance generally met their needs, some project sponsors identified areas for improvement. First, more than a third of surveyed project sponsors reported that FTA's communication of its review timelines is not always clear. In July 2020, GAO recommended FTA improve its communication of review timelines and expectations with project sponsors. DOT did not concur with the recommendation, stating that it was in communication with project sponsors on a recurring basis. However, implementing GAO's recommendation could reduce the confusion that some project sponsors continue to experience with FTA's review timelines.

Second, 18 project sponsors that provided open-ended responses to GAO's survey and several stakeholders interviewed by GAO said FTA should improve its technical assistance for new and potential project sponsors regarding program requirements, processes, and timelines. For example, five survey respondents and one stakeholder mentioned it would be helpful for FTA to connect potential sponsors with other sponsors to share lessons learned. Better tailoring resources for new and potential project sponsors could improve project sponsors' understanding of program requirements and reduce the likelihood that they withdraw from the program or ask for an extension. Doing so may also help reduce project sponsors' overall project costs and the resources FTA expends on recurring reviews and follow-up communications.