

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$24.9 Million To IDOT For Paratransit Vehicles

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SPRINGFIELD – Gov. JB Pritzker announced today that the Illinois Department of Transportation has been awarded a total of \$24.9 million in two grants from the Federal Transit Administration for new battery-electric paratransit vehicles and paratransit vehicle replacements. The investment will help expand and improve services, providing additional transportation options, reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing quality of life throughout the state.

“Here in Illinois, we are taking bold action to reach our ambitious clean energy goals and tackle the climate crisis head on—from passing landmark climate legislation and strengthening our electric vehicle ecosystem to expanding workforce development opportunities and investing in historically underserved communities,” said Gov.

Pritzker. “This \$24.9 million in funding from the Federal Transit Administration advances that critical work—all while making sure Illinoisans up and down the state have access to the clean transit services they need and deserve.”

Of the total \$24.9 million awarded, IDOT received \$12.3 million from the FTA’s Low or No Emission Vehicle Program to deploy 50 battery-electric paratransit vehicles, including associated charging infrastructure, to five large urban, four small urban and 15 rural public transit agencies. The new vehicles will expand service throughout the state with minimal impact to the environment. As required by the federal program, 5% of the award will go to workforce development and training, providing a positive impact on local economies.

“Public transportation is an essential service in all of our communities, whether rural or urban,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “The paratransit vehicles provided by these grants are key to our continued efforts to ensure everyone has safe, equitable access to the transportation they depend on while reducing emissions and their harmful impact on the environment.”

The project is supported in part by a \$1 million fiscal year 2023 Congressional-Directed Spending award from Sen. Dick Durbin and Sen. Tammy Duckworth. The total \$13.3 million in federal funds will be supplemented by \$3.3 million from Illinois’ Downstate Transit Improvement Fund.

With this funding, 50 vehicles will go to participating transit agencies throughout the state: Champaign County (one vehicle), Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (two vehicles), City of Decatur (four vehicles), City of DeKalb (two vehicles), City of Galesburg (two vehicles), City of Quincy (two vehicles), Connect Transit in Bloomington-Normal (two vehicles), DeKalb County (two vehicles), Greater Peoria MTD (two vehicles), Jackson County MTD (two vehicles), Jersey County (two vehicles), Jo Daviess County (two vehicles), Kendall County (one vehicle), Lee County (two vehicles), McLean County (one vehicle), Pace Suburban Bus (two vehicles), Rock Island County (two vehicles), Rock Island MetroLINK (two vehicles), Rockford MTD (two vehicles), Shawnee MTD (three vehicles), South Central Illinois MTD (three vehicles), St. Clair County Transit District (three vehicles), Warren County (one vehicle) and West Central MTD (three vehicles).

“Electric vehicles enable a cleaner future, and they also create jobs across the state,” said Sen. Durbin. “These federal funds provide Illinois’ transit systems with the critical resources they need to deploy the latest technology and maintain reliable, affordable services for Illinoisans.”

“Transitioning to electric vehicles—and other green energy sources—puts us on the path to a healthier environment while opening up new avenues for economic growth and job creation in our state,” said Sen. Duckworth. “With this federal support, we’re able to help modernize Illinois’ public transit by replacing and rehabilitating bus fleets across the state with low-pollution, energy efficient models.”

At \$12.6 million, the second grant will fund a minimum of 130 standard fuel paratransit vehicles for 33 small urban and rural public transit agencies across the state. Part of IDOT’s Consolidated Vehicle Procurement program, the new vehicles will replace those that have outlived their useful life, particularly in areas of high demand due to large proportions of seniors, people with disabilities and zero-car households, as well as Equitable Transportation Communities as defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This grant is also matched with \$3.1 million from Illinois’ Downstate Transit Improvement Fund.

The new vehicles will preserve existing transit services essential to Illinois residents, while reducing maintenance costs and harmful impacts to the environment.

The grants are part of a \$1.7 billion FTA investment to fund 130 projects in 46 states and territories, including buses, related equipment, and transit facility projects.