



# Grant Modernization Task Force

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January 12, 2022



# Agenda



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## 01. Introductions

Introduce project management team and program representatives.

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## 02. Objectives & Timelines

Review grant modernization background, task force objectives, and initial timeline.

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## 03. Survey Responses

Review survey responses received from subrecipients since December launch.

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## 04. Q&A

Discuss task force experiences and collect feedback on process.

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## 05. Closing

Review next steps and next meeting overview.

# Introduction

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## Caltrans

- Toby Fauver
- LaVerne Collins
- Maya Wallace
- Wendy King
- Courtney Williams
- Stefanie Acton
- Kathy Pongratz
- Michael Lange

# **Task Force Goals and Objectives**

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# Task Force Goals and Objectives

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## In today's meeting, we plan to:

- Review background and activities undertaken to date related to grant modernization
- Share the overall goals and objectives behind the decision to consolidate the application process
- Review highlights from the survey results that we've collected so far
- Get your feedback and take your questions
- Review a draft task force charter

# **Grant Modernization Background**

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# Grant Modernization – How Did We Get Here?

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## Improving Business Process and Customer Service

- Comprehensive needs assessment starting in 2018
- National best practices review in 2020
- Feedback from operators
- Need for comprehensive data collection
- Caltrans Planning & Modal Programs' strategic plan goals



# Incorporating Best Practices

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In 2020, Caltrans engaged Rockland Planning to conduct a review of Caltrans current practices, inventory best practices nationally, and make recommendations for DRMT grants management practices based on existing procedures and opportunities to improve grants management, data collection and analysis, and performance management.

Recommended best practices included:

- Process re-engineering coupled with implementation of electronic grants management
- Consolidation of similar/related programs applications and grant agreements
- Biennial applications and grant agreements



# DRMT Grant Practice Findings

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- Findings from the report:
  - DRMT manages over 7,000 transportation projects with a budget of over \$32 billion across 25 programs
  - Each program manages its own grant processes independently from the other programs although often customers are the same (local government agencies)
  - Programs rely heavily on paper, disparate spreadsheets, and siloed or legacy software to manage all aspects of the grants programs

# National Best Practices

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- The report also outlined “Options for Consideration” as a result of the findings and review of best practices in other locations:
  - DRMT Strategic Plan
  - Reengineer Grant Processes
  - Organize around grantees as opposed to programs
  - Develop a Data and Expert System Architecture
  - Define business requirements for the expert systems

# National Best Practices

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- “Options for Consideration” from the report cont’d.:
  - Standardize transit data and definitions across the systems
  - Organize data to feed expert systems
  - Develop executive dashboards by system, by class of system, statewide
  - Provide technical assistance to grantees

# Next Steps for DRMT

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- At the highest level, the goal of grant modernization is to streamline and digitize their grant agreements and applications across programs to improve:
  - Information collection and analysis for program management decision-making, and
  - Internal and external ease of use and efficiency
- This will require changes to existing processes at DRMT as well as new information technology tools to ensure success
- Leadership is engaged and supportive
- Work with DRMT staff to understand program needs and application process
- DRMT staff engaged to modernize and streamline application
- Customers (transit operators and other grantees) participation is critical

# Aligning with Departmental Strategic Goals

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In 2021, Caltrans Planning & Modal Programs division released a new strategic management plan meant to align with Caltrans departmental goals and to set the tone for Planning & Modal Programs to build an integrated multi-modal transportation system statewide. Consistent with the aims of the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP), the new strategic plan commits the division to a focus on streamlined business processes, improved customer service, and consistent data collection and management practices.

- Make use of technology to streamline processes where possible
- Use data to improve ongoing management, and support proactive strategy
- Reduce administrative burden and confusing processes for customers

# Why a Consolidated Application?

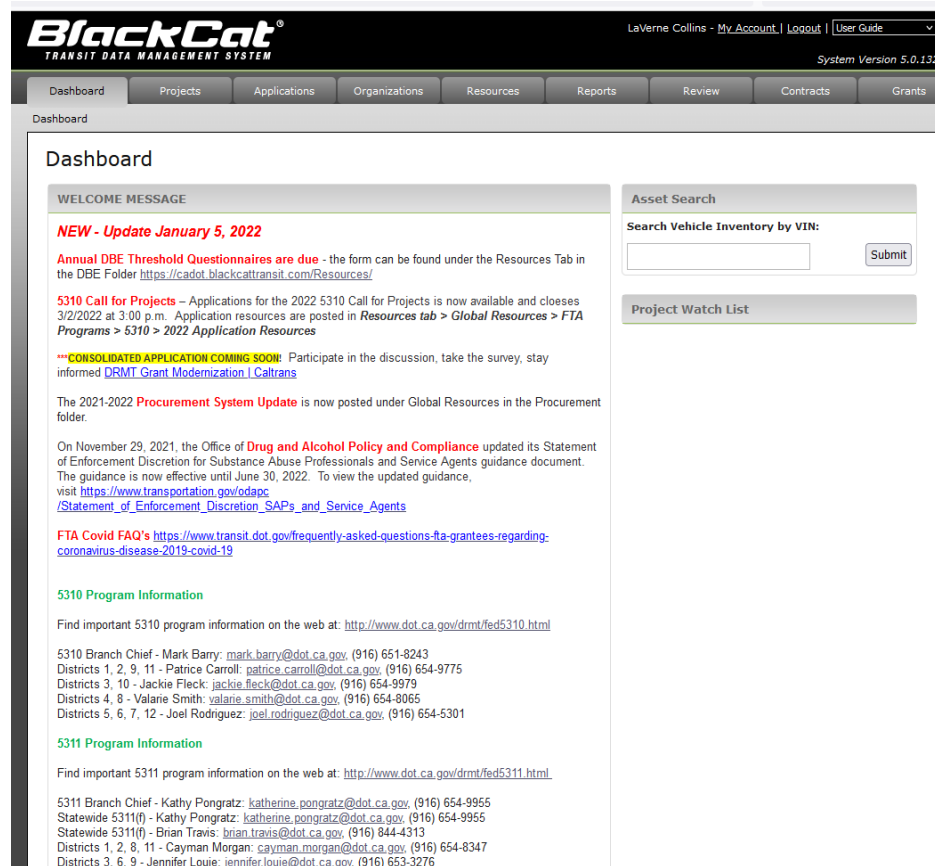
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A consolidated grant application reduces the administrative burden on agencies applying for funds, enables Caltrans to provide better customer service and technical support to applicants, and supports Caltrans' goals of increasing data-driven decision making.

Additional anticipated benefits include:

- Less time spent by agency staff completing the application
- Standardized data definitions, clearer instructions, and fewer redundant questions
- DRMT staff better positioned to respond quickly to requests and able to work with you across various grant programs
- The ability for Caltrans to leverage data to advance transit programs and policies

# Leverage Existing Technology



**BlackCat**  
TRANSIT DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

LaVerne Collins - My Account | Logout | User Guide

System Version 5.0.132

Dashboard | Projects | Applications | Organizations | Resources | Reports | Review | Contracts | Grants

### Dashboard

WELCOME MESSAGE

**NEW - Update January 5, 2022**

**Annual DBE Threshold Questionnaires are due** - the form can be found under the Resources Tab in the DBE Folder <https://cadot.blackcattransit.com/Resources/>

**5310 Call for Projects** - Applications for the 2022 5310 Call for Projects is now available and closes 3/2/2022 at 3:00 p.m. Application resources are posted in **Resources tab > Global Resources > FTA Programs > 5310 > 2022 Application Resources**

**CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION COMING SOON!** Participate in the discussion, take the survey, stay informed [DRMT Grant Modernization | Caltrans](#)

The 2021-2022 **Procurement System Update** is now posted under Global Resources in the Procurement folder.

On November 29, 2021, the Office of **Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance** updated its Statement of Enforcement Discretion for Substance Abuse Professionals and Service Agents guidance document. The guidance is now effective until June 30, 2022. To view the updated guidance, visit [https://www.transportation.gov/odapc/Statement\\_of\\_Enforcement\\_Discretion\\_SAPs\\_and\\_Service\\_Agents](https://www.transportation.gov/odapc/Statement_of_Enforcement_Discretion_SAPs_and_Service_Agents)

**FTA Covid FAQ's** <https://www.transit.dot.gov/frequently-asked-questions-fta-grantees-regarding-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

**5310 Program Information**

Find important 5310 program information on the web at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dgmt/fed5310.html>

5310 Branch Chief - Mark Barry: [mark.barry@dot.ca.gov](mailto:mark.barry@dot.ca.gov) (916) 651-8243  
 Districts 1, 2, 9, 11 - Patrice Carroll: [patrice.carroll@dot.ca.gov](mailto:patrice.carroll@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-9775  
 Districts 3, 10 - Jackie Fleck: [jackie.fleck@dot.ca.gov](mailto:jackie.fleck@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-9979  
 Districts 4, 8 - Valarie Smith: [valarie.smith@dot.ca.gov](mailto:valarie.smith@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-8065  
 Districts 5, 6, 7, 12 - Joel Rodriguez: [joel.rodriguez@dot.ca.gov](mailto:joel.rodriguez@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-5301

**5311 Program Information**

Find important 5311 program information on the web at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dgmt/fed5311.html>

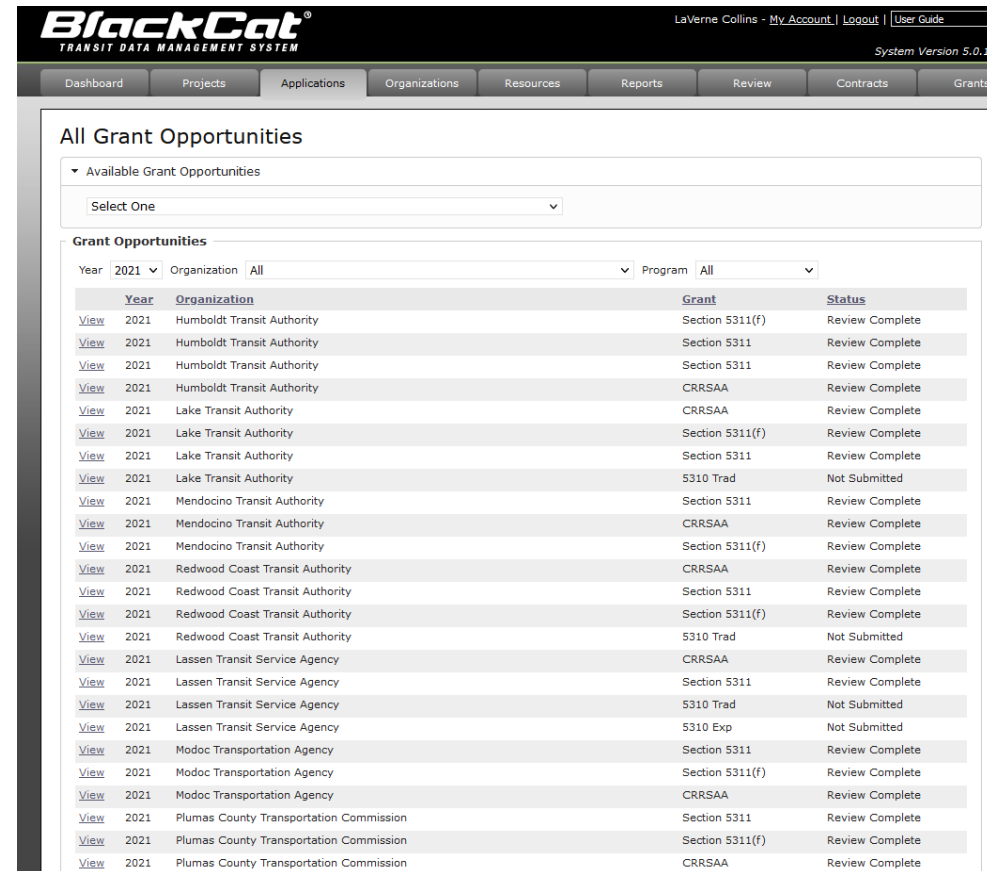
5311 Branch Chief - Kathy Pongratz: [katherine.pongratz@dot.ca.gov](mailto:katherine.pongratz@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-9955  
 Statewide 5311(f) - Kathy Pongratz: [katherine.pongratz@dot.ca.gov](mailto:katherine.pongratz@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-9955  
 Statewide 5311(f) - Brian Travis: [brian.travis@dot.ca.gov](mailto:brian.travis@dot.ca.gov) (916) 844-4313  
 Districts 1, 2, 8, 11 - Cayman Morgan: [cayman.morgan@dot.ca.gov](mailto:cayman.morgan@dot.ca.gov) (916) 654-8347  
 Districts 3, 6, 9 - Jennifer Louie: [jennifer.louie@dot.ca.gov](mailto:jennifer.louie@dot.ca.gov) (916) 653-3276

Asset Search

Search Vehicle Inventory by VIN:

Submit

Project Watch List



**BlackCat**  
TRANSIT DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

LaVerne Collins - My Account | Logout | User Guide

System Version 5.0.132

Dashboard | Projects | Applications | Organizations | Resources | Reports | Review | Contracts | Grants

### All Grant Opportunities

Available Grant Opportunities

Select One

**Grant Opportunities**

Year: 2021 | Organization: All | Program: All

Year	Organization	Grant	Status
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Humboldt Transit Authority	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Humboldt Transit Authority	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Humboldt Transit Authority	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Humboldt Transit Authority	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lake Transit Authority	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lake Transit Authority	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lake Transit Authority	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lake Transit Authority	5310 Trad	Not Submitted
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Mendocino Transit Authority	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Mendocino Transit Authority	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Mendocino Transit Authority	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Redwood Coast Transit Authority	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Redwood Coast Transit Authority	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Redwood Coast Transit Authority	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Redwood Coast Transit Authority	5310 Trad	Not Submitted
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lassen Transit Service Agency	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lassen Transit Service Agency	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lassen Transit Service Agency	5310 Trad	Not Submitted
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Lassen Transit Service Agency	5310 Exp	Not Submitted
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Modoc Transportation Agency	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Modoc Transportation Agency	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Modoc Transportation Agency	CRRSAA	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Plumas County Transportation Commission	Section 5311	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Plumas County Transportation Commission	Section 5311(f)	Review Complete
<a href="#">View</a>	2021 Plumas County Transportation Commission	CRRSAA	Review Complete



# DRMT Actions Taken in 2021

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- DRMT already makes use of an electronic grants management system – BlackCat – to manage its federal programs – 5310, 5311/5311f and 5339.
- DRMT staff met with Pennsylvania DOT to understand their grants management approach, which is consolidated, as well as integrated and managed by agency for multiple grants. A staff person is assigned to a transit agency and manages all federal and state grants/allocations for that agency.
- Working with Panther (the maker of BlackCat) to develop a combined grant for 2022 that incorporates 5311/5311f, 5339, LCTOP and SGR
- Reviewing, assessing and aligning call for projects, application, and funds disbursement timelines
- Ensuring that federal and state reporting requirements are met



# **Task Force Goals and Objectives**

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# Stakeholder Task Force

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## User Feedback and Guidance

- Understand all elements of process for users
- Include organizations of all types and sizes
- Incorporate suggestions and feedback on current version where possible and future applications
- Identify other pain points in the process and work to improve
- Develop overall grant management business rules and case management system that leverages combined grants, integrated planning

# Task Force Membership

## Task Force (Organizations Invited)

- Amador Transit
- Amma Transit Planning
- Angel View
- CALACT
- California Transit Association
- City of Chowchilla
- Culver City
- Eastern Sierra Transit Authority
- El Dorado Transit
- Fresno County Rural Transit Agency
- Golden Empire Transit District
- Kings Area Rural Transit
- Lassen Transit Service Agency
- Mariposa County Transportation Planning
- Merced Transit Authority
- Mobility Matters
- Monterey-Salinas Transit
- Morongo Basin Transit Authority
- Move Stanislaus
- Napa Valley Transportation Authority
- Orange County Transit Authority
- Plumas County Transportation Commission
- Riverside County Transportation Commission
- Sacramento Regional Transit
- SamTrans
- San Joaquin Regional Transit District
- San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District
- Santa Rosa
- Tahoe Transportation District
- Thousand Oaks
- Tri Delta Transit
- Tuolumne County Transportation Commission
- Victor Valley Transit Authority
- Yuba-Sutter Transit

# Task Force Objectives and Timeline

**January 26**

Preview and test application components and sign charter

**March 1, 2022**

Launch first phase of consolidated application

**February 9**

Testing and review of a final product

# Survey Responses

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# Survey Responses

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General feedback on the existing grant application process has been solicited through a survey that was shared via email and on the Caltrans website.

- 20 Responses received from agencies representing all current programs
- 91% of respondents listed the application to be the most challenging part of the current process
- 86% would like to see a consistent annual schedule
- Overall, respondents are supportive and enthusiastic about the prospect of a consolidated application, believe it would streamline the process of accessing funds administered by Caltrans, and reduce staff hours spent completing the applications
- Most respondents believe that moving to a 2-year cycle on a regular schedule would be a positive change, but would require more time (at least 3 months) to prepare for the application

# Survey Responses Continued...

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## Feedback on Current Process:

- Too many upload documents, poor formatting, unclear instructions on what is required, requests for duplicative information, and confusing forms were all cited as specific areas for improvement
- The application timeline is also a problem area: Inconsistent schedules year over year, changes to the application from one application cycle to the next, and long waits to receive payment were problems for the majority of respondents

# Survey Responses Continued...

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## What respondents would like to see in an improved process:

- One set of questions and uploads to apply for multiple or all grants at once
- Clear instructions, example documents, ample training opportunities, less redundant, better formatted upload docs
- A consistent annual schedule with more time to prepare and complete their applications (at least 3 months)
- Shorter turnaround for payment
- A timeline that aligns with other key funding dates (such as SCO apportionment announcements, FTIP planning cycles)



# Additional Questions for the Task Force

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## Questions:

- What are your biggest challenges with the existing process?
- What changes would you like Caltrans to make to the process?
- How would a consolidated application and 2-year cycle positively impact your agency?
- Do you anticipate any negative impacts from these changes?
- Additional feedback we haven't captured

**Q&A**



# Task Force Charter

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- Discuss contents of draft charter for Task Force
- The purpose of the stakeholders group is to provide meaningful input into the DRMT overall process re-engineering effort. The group will be consulted throughout the process at key milestone points to gather input on products, processes and other proposed changes.
- The team will meet on an as needed basis. Members will participate with ideas and feedback, treat each other with respect, listen to each other and work effectively as a team.
- The Stakeholders Team will work with DRMT on each phase of work to achieve positive outcomes that provide benefits for transit grantees, DRMT staff, Caltrans and other executives, legislators as well as the public.

# Thank you

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Questions? Comments?

[grant.modernization@dot.ca.gov](mailto:grant.modernization@dot.ca.gov)

