

Improving Transit for Our Future  
2014 Application for Funding

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

'Transit for our Future' funding aims to help established 5311 and 5307 transit providers implement the Three Cs: Coordination, Cooperation and Consolidation. Funding may be available for projects implementing any of the Three Cs. Allocations are awarded on a competitive basis. Funding will be available upon grant contract awards. You will be working with your Transit Project Manager (TPM) to discuss your ideas for this special grant application.

Applicants are encouraged to propose unique (non-duplicative) projects that address one or more of the following strategies:

**Coordination:** Working together in a formal relationship, perhaps focusing primarily on information sharing, in which all agencies retain their separate identities and authorities including control over the vehicles they own.

**Cooperation:** Joint decisions and actions of a group of agencies with formal arrangements (interagency agreements) to provide for the management of the resources of a distinct system.

**Consolidation/Partnering/Merging:** Vesting all operational authority in one agency that then provides services according to purchase of service agreements or other contractual relationships.

The companion publication, ***Collaborative Strategies for Improving Transit Systems: Guidance for Implementing Coordination, Cooperation, Consolidation*** describes in detail different types of projects that may be suitable. The descriptions are illustrative and it is not our intention to receive proposals that exactly replicate the examples.

**Application Preparation and Submission**

Applications must be submitted electronically. Applications will be received throughout the year and will be funded after review and final approval.

Project forms are available on the [MnDOT Greater Minnesota Transit Grants](#) webpage. Project application will be completed in a two (2) step process with approval after each step. Projects must address at least one of the Three Cs (coordination, cooperation or consolidation) to be considered for funding. All projects must demonstrate partnerships among one or more established 5307 or 5311 public transit systems to be considered for this grant. A signed Resolution, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) from the governing boards must be included with the application.

### **Technical Assistance**

Office of Transit staff is available to assist applicants and recipients requesting funding from 'Transit for Our Future' funds. Please contact your TPM assigned to your geographic area to help develop your project idea.

### **Eligible projects**

Projects implementing one or more of the Three Cs will be eligible for funding. Documentation of the partners will be required with a Resolution, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and must be submitted with the application. Applicants must request a minimum of \$5,000 for their project. Projects requiring less than \$5,000 may be included in the applicant's standard annual public transit grant.

### **Project Selection**

Contracts will be awarded based on review by a committee including Office of Transit staff. Projects may not be fully funded up to the dollar amount requested on the application. MnDOT's Office of Transit may contact the applicant if further clarification is needed on the submittal. MnDOT reserves the right to negotiate project scope and deliverables prior to finalizing contracts. Projects are selected on a competitive basis.

### **Selection Criteria**

- Project includes a minimum of two public transit partners with agreements to undertake one of the collaborative strategies
- The project clearly describes the collaborative strategies for partnering with another public transit system(s)
- The project enhances access within the service area.
- The project contains measurable milestones to gauge progress.
- Improves Federal compliance ability
- The budget request is appropriate to the size of project proposed.

### **Grant Contract Award**

Funding is available to current public transit grant contract holders. All established state and federal requirements will be applicable. Grant contract must designate a lead agency to receive the grant contract. Grant contract will be in effect from January 2014 – December 31, 2015 or as agreed upon by project members and Office of Transit staff. Transitional Consolidation grants may be shorter in duration.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Reporting requirements will include both fiscal reporting and project milestone reports as the project develops throughout the year. Grant recipients are required to report project implementation progress and performance each month during the contract period. Grant recipients are also required to submit additional information to the PTA database such as cumulative expenditures or ridership. The monthly report must be submitted electronically to your TPM for approval. Grant recipients that do not submit required reporting on time are subject to payment withholding until reporting requirements are fulfilled. Grant contracts are subject to cancellation for non-performance. Expenses will be reimbursed from approved Request for Funds submission on a quarterly basis.

## **Project Match**

Project Local Match will be 15% of the approved contract amount. Capital request will be funded at an 80/20% split. (Bus purchases will not be considered from this funding.)

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE IMPROVING TRANSIT FOR OUR FUTURE APPLICATION**

### **Application Contents**

All applicants must complete all the information as requested in the application.

### **Application Format**

Materials will be completed on forms in either the Excel or Word format and submitted to your project manager. Forms requiring signatures may be converted or scanned and saved as PDFs.

To start the application, contact your project manager to discuss the project, open the [MnDOT Greater Minnesota Transit Grants](#) page and open the Improving Transit for Our Future. There you will find the forms referenced in these instructions. Download and complete these forms (in either Word or Excel format) as directed. Once the application is completed, submit the forms to your project manager.

### **Cover Letter (PDF)**

All partners must be listed in the Cover Letter and each partner should sign the letter.

### **Resolution (PDF)**

Each partner should have a formal document recognizing the collaborative nature of the proposal. This may be in the format of a Board Resolution, a Memorandum of Understanding or an Interagency Agreement or some other formal document representing intent. The form should describe the partnership proposed and list the fiscal lead of the project.

## **Completing the Application Forms**

### **Project Description - Transit for Our Future, 2.0**

The purpose of the Project Proposal form page is to explain in brief detail what project you are proposing for the Transit in Our Future application. This must be a new project, not an activity in which you are already engaged. It must be a relationship between two or more public transit recipients. Explain as thoroughly as possible the Coordination, Cooperation or Consolidation activity(ies) you are planning. Complete steps 1-3 of the Project Development process and preliminary Budget Request form with your project manager's assistance. Submit the proposal for Office of Transit staff review and recommendation. Project proposals requesting less than \$5,000 or no cost projects should complete the Project Description form explaining the plan; inclusion in the 2014 Public Transit Grant may be possible.

### ***Project Overview:***

Describe the overall purpose of the project. Take time to explain the proposed project by answering the questions in the preliminary application. This is your overall goal statement. Any one of the collaborative strategies proposed may flow across the coordination-cooperation-consolidation continuum. The decision depends, in large part, on the relative formality in the partner relationship.

Projects will have different components. Some may require transition funding to cover such costs as re-striping buses, moving from one facility to another, and expenses for new staff recruitment and training. Other projects may also have ongoing operational costs that involve either additional staff or technology. Still others may involve service modifications that do not require much, if any, additional funding.

Preliminary budget information should be included in the Budget Request form. Complete the Excel spreadsheet and include with your application.

Presentation to Office of Transit Staff: The preliminary project proposal and budget will be reviewed by the Office of Transit staff at this time. Staff will formulate questions to be answered and request a complete application after the preliminary proposal is reviewed.

### **SCOPE OF WORK and BUDGET**

**The second phase of the application will include a complete scope of work be completed with a detailed budget. Resolutions, minutes or Memorandum of Understanding will be included with the application at this time.**

#### ***Proposed outcomes***

Describe in as much detail as you can AT THIS TIME what are the expected outcomes. Examples may include statements such as:

- “improved efficiency by coordinating long distance trips that pass through both partners’ service areas”
- “improved effectiveness through the sharing of administrative duties such as a single volunteer coordinator for all partners”
- “removing the artificial barrier of the county line to provide better access to next largest regional trade center”

#### ***Operational enhancements***

All three types of collaborative strategies may involve operational enhancements that will generate costs during the life of the grant. An example of such an operational enhancement might be a coordinated dispatch system that requires the purchase of new software or work stations, or installation of additional equipment in vehicles. Explain how the operational enhancements will benefit the partner organizations and ultimately create better transit service for residents of the partners’ areas.

#### ***Service modifications***

Modifying service delivery in order to provide greater access to destinations can take several different forms. Partners could share passengers, especially those longer trips that may cross previously defined service areas. Specific details on shared routes or hours of availability are to be outlined in the PTA Service Levels form.

#### ***Transition activities***

Some projects will require little funding; particularly those that involve sharing resources but not necessarily creating a new operational identify. However for projects consolidating transit systems a transitional budget should be prepared. The transitional budget will describe all costs that occur during the transition period. Costs associated with the transit system prior to

consolidation or the ongoing costs of a consolidated system should not be included in the transition budget request. Typically a transition grant will be in place for a few months prior to and a few months after the consolidation and will be treated as a separate grant so that it can be closed out when the transition activities are completed.

### ***Partners' Legal Relationship***

Describe in detail how the relationship between the partners is designed. This relationship is also described in the Cover Letter and the Resolution. Agreements between partners do not have to be legally executed at the time of application.

### ***Partners' Fiscal Relationship***

In general, there will be one partner who is the recipient of state and federal funding and depending on the relationship; the other partners will receive their funding, if needed, from the lead partner. Any revenue sharing arrangements generated from the proposed project should be described here.

### ***Evaluation Measures***

Standard measures such as cost per trip, cost per hour, and passengers per hour are appropriate here. However, it is important to remember that these are not isolated and must be used in comparison to the results the partners would have had in the absence of the project.

In addition, there are other measures that are less quantifiable, but equally as important. Examples of these may be increased frequency of service, increased number of origins and destinations, and expanded service hours, better compliance with federal and state regulations due to key expert staffing. Applicants may propose as many measures as they wish but there must be at least three.

Applicants should identify significant milestones so that progress towards final outcome can be measured. These milestones should be easily measured for progress toward the goal of the project.

### ***Final Application Steps***

The project team may be asked to present your project to Office of Transit staff for further clarification if needed prior to contract award.