



2020 Innovations in Accessible Mobility Grant Frequently Asked Questions

(General questions and excerpted questions from the March 13th Teleconference)

UPDATE

The due date for Grant Applications has been extended to 5:00 pm Eastern time on May 1, 2020.

Q: Given the current coronavirus situation, what happens with the timing of this grant if interpersonal interaction is limited? Will there still be a May start date and November end date?

As noted above, we are extending the deadline for receiving grant applications to May 1 for now, with an anticipated award date of June 15. We are also making adjustments to other key dates (specified below) and will consider additional changes in response to changing conditions. The date for convening a grantee orientation and training meeting in Washington DC will be determined, and applicants are expected to include funds for participating in an in-person meeting in their proposed budgets.

Q: Can you provide the award date?

We now expect to announce the grants by June 15.

Key Dates (revised)

May 1, 2020:	Application Due Date
June 15, 2020:	Grant award announcement/grantees begin their work
TBD:	Grantee orientation and training, Washington, DC
December 15, 2020:	End date of grant activity

Q: Would a proposal to develop and implement an innovation in response to the coronavirus be considered for funding?

Yes, such a project would be considered (we have also noted this change on the NADTC website). Obviously, this situation is having a significant impact on community services, reducing the demand for transportation and in some cases, creating transportation gaps due to the suspension of services. There are opportunities to develop creative responses to the current crisis and we want to encourage communities to propose innovative projects that respond to emergency declarations and specific conditions in their communities that are impacting the health and well-being of older adults and people with disabilities. NADTC's expectation is that funded projects must be sustainable, that is, innovations designed to make lasting changes in the grantee community and its ability to respond to future emergencies, and have the potential to be replicable in other communities across the U.S.

Q: What if we have already begun to implement an innovation in response to the coronavirus?

We understand that you cannot wait for grant funding to make needed changes or try different approaches in your programs and that transportation providers are, of necessity, responding to new and different challenges every day. Remember that we characterized this grant opportunity as "ready to launch" and assume that some new approaches and program changes will have been tried but lack funding to continue or need additional funding to fully implement. We would consider such new approaches that are being tried in response to the current situation or approaches and programmatic changes that were tried before the coronavirus that have been put in place again in response to current conditions to be appropriate for funding, as long as applicants intend to implement innovations that are sustainable in the community and have the potential to be replicated. [Read the RFP for a more thorough description of the expectations for these grants.](#)

General Questions

Q: Will this be an annual grant?

Future funding to support grant-making by NADTC is contingent on funding from appropriated by Congress and approved by the Federal Transit Administration.

Q: Is the two-day kickoff workshop a required budget element and can you just expand on the cost and purpose? How many people from staff should be expected to attend?

Yes, it is required of all grantees and it will be held in Washington, DC. At this point, the dates of the meeting are to be determined. The cost will vary from place to place depending on where you are traveling from. Keep in mind the following costs: round-trip airfare, ground transportation, and hotel for 2 nights (assume approximately \$250/\$300 per night per room). Be sure to include cost of travel to DC and participation in this meeting in your budget. We expect 1 person from the grantee agency to attend the workshop.

The meeting has several objectives: to orient the new grantees to NADTC, FTA and the grant as a whole, including our vision for the projects; to become familiar with the reporting

requirements; and lastly, to give grantees the opportunity to meet each other and learn about the other projects that are being supported.

Q: Who reviews the applications?

NADTC uses a roster of independent reviewers from communities around the country, including reviewers who work in transit agencies, other transportation provider agencies, aging organizations and disability organizations. NADTC strives to bring together a diverse group of professionals representing different experiences, knowledge and perspectives. Each grant is reviewed independently by three reviewers, using the RFP as a guide. Applicants need to present a strong case to reviewers that the idea/approach/program innovation you are proposing fits the review criteria specified in the RFP.

Q: What do you mean by letters of commitment from partner organizations?

Evidence of involvement in the development of the proposed innovation and letters of commitment from three (3) key partners must be included in the grant application, as specified in the RFP. A letter of commitment goes beyond a support letter and denotes a willingness to be a partner and supporter of the proposed innovation, to work with the applicant by providing, for example, in-kind support or supplemental funding, being willing to promote the work and serve in an advisory capacity to ensure the success of the proposed innovation. If the applicant is a transit agency, then letters of commitment must be included from a major aging organization and a critical disability organization in the community representing organizations that have worked collaboratively or are willing to coordinate with the applicant agency. It is important to carefully consider including letters of commitment from the organizations that are most important to be at the table, those that are willing to work with the applicant agency to implement the proposed innovation.

Eligibility Questions

Q: Is a non-profit agency that provides travel training services eligible even if they're not directly providing the actual physical transportation.

All applicants must be direct providers of transportation services to be eligible. Functions like travel training and mobility management are potential innovations this grant will support, but these should be functions of the transportation provider or functions of an agency with whom the applicant (transportation provider) plans to partner.

Q: Can the development of an app or some kind of technology be considered an eligible innovation?

The amount of funding for these projects will likely be insufficient to support development of an app or a major technology purchase. A proposal to use all of the funding for such a purpose would not be funded. Innovations to be funded through this grant are expected to do more

than purchase something new but are expected to create a sustainable program change that will improve transportation accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities. That said, applicants may have developed partnerships for developing an app or implementing other technologies that could be tested as part of an innovation project.

Q: What do you mean by innovation? Can I use this funding to expand services, like increase the number rides provided?

The definition of what we mean by innovation is on page 4 of the RFP. We're talking about creating more programmatic solutions, not simply increasing the number of rides or doing more travel training. While the innovation does not necessarily have to be "cutting-edge" or something that no one has tried, it should be something that is clearly innovative - that has not been done before - in the applicant community. A proposed innovation should represent an investment in improving the overall transportation service structure. For example, ride sharing is certainly something that would be acceptable, but just providing X number of rides in a ride sharing situation is not what we are talking about. If, however, you plan to offer older adults and/or people with disabilities the opportunity to use the ride sharing service so they can have better access to medical care or healthy food or to have more opportunities for socialization and interaction with folks in their community, that would be a potentially fundable innovation.

Q: Do you have to be a 5310 recipient to be eligible for this grant?

We don't require applicants to be 5310 recipients. The Section 5310 Program – Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities – is funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and can be used by communities in creative ways to increase the availability and accessibility of transportation. Unfortunately, this resource is underutilized in some places. NADTC encourages organizations to apply for this funding when the opportunity is available and works with grantees to help them identify funding opportunities, including Section 5310 if they are not already a recipient, that can provide ongoing support for their successful program innovations.

Q: What if my transportation service only provides rides to my organization's clients...are we eligible for funding?

Transportation services must be available to the broader target population: older adults and people with disabilities. It is unlikely that we would fund a proposal to serve solely an organization's clients.

Q: We have an existing program we would like to expand with this grant funding. Our program has been in existence for many years and we would like to expand our service to include more people. Does our project qualify?

You cannot use these grant funds to only expand an already existing program. Review the program goals and objectives outlined on page 2 of the RFP and the definition of innovation on

page 4. Examples of innovations are provided on page 5 of the RFP. Instead of just expanding an existing program, is there a new and creative service that you could implement to reach a broader population in the community? Think about ways to differentiate your grant project from your program already in existence or ways in which you could improve it and be sure to justify how what you are proposing to do through this project is sufficiently different.

Implementation Questions

Q: Can you clarify the six months grant time frame?

The grant period will begin on June 15 and extend for six months, ending on December 15, 2020. Grantees will be expected to spend all their funds and complete their work plan by the end date. Final monthly reports will be due from grantees on January 15, 2021. We recognize it's a very tight time frame, one of the reasons why we characterize these grants "ready-to-launch."

Q: Regarding the last two outcomes listed on page 12 of the RFP, "improve the quality of transportation services" and "increase user satisfaction," do you see these two outcomes as outcomes for expansion of pre-existing services more so than offering something for a brand-new service?

You can use any of the four outcomes to measure progress and improvement in your community's transportation system or a particular program, as well as the impact of the proposed innovation on older adults and/or people with disabilities. For purposes of this grant solicitation, you are required to choose at least one, but more than two, of the four outcomes listed to denote the impact of your proposed innovation on the community and the target population.

Q: What documentation will need to be submitted on a monthly basis to receive the monthly reimbursement from the grant?

Grantees are required to complete a financial report that specifies their monthly expenditures in the categories identified in the final approved budget (see the budget form for the categories). The financial report must be accompanied by a monthly program report that tracks progress on achievement of the output measures and outcome measures which are adopted by the grantees and approved by NADTC at the beginning of the project. NADTC Grant Managers provide extensive instruction on reporting, review each submitted report promptly and clarify any issues with the grantee prior to submitting the monthly report for payment.

Budget Questions

This section includes questions related to allowable expenses. Keep in mind that applicants should look at overall expenditures, the percentage of the budget that is consumed by each specific cost and ensure that one item or activity does not use all of the total budget. Use

space in the narrative of the application to document how the items and activities in your budget meet the required elements of the grant project. Keep in mind that the project lasts 6 months and be sure to include information on project sustainability in your narrative, including your plans to access new funding or utilize funding sources such as the Section 5310 Program to sustain your work.

Q: How is the indirect cost rate established?

Applicants should put their indirect cost rate approved by the federal or state government in the application. If your proposal is selected, we will collect documentation from you to justify the indirect rate as part of budget negotiation.

Q: Can we use the grant money for promotional materials?

Yes, grant funds may be used for promotional materials. Please reference the budget section on pages 15 and 16 of the RFP where the allowable expenses are outlined.

Q: I understand that the grant is not available to fund capital expenditures. Does that include gasoline?

In the transit industry, fuel is typically considered an operating expense and would be an acceptable expense. If you propose spending grant funds on gasoline, you need to be very clear about why you want to use funds from this small grant for that purpose and how you intend to pay for fuel after the grant has ended.

Q: Is a wheelchair lift an acceptable expense?

Wheelchair lifts are considered capital expenses and would not be eligible in this grant.

Q: Is the contract cost-based or performance-based?

This grant is a reimbursement contract based on both accurate reporting of monthly expenditures following the approved budget and monthly performance reports.

Q: Does this project require a match?

No, matching funds are not a requirement in this project. However, if the applicant organization will be contributing funds to the project, the amount of funds to be provided must be specified in the budget categories listed on the Budget Narrative Form, available on the NADTC website and in the grant application portal.

Q: Can I use these funds to purchase a vehicle?

Funds cannot be used to purchase or lease a vehicle.

Q: Can we use this grant to hire and fund a travel trainer/mobility manager/other staff position?

Grant funds may be used to hire a Travel Trainer or Mobility Manager, as long as those positions support implementation of the proposed innovation. These grant projects are meant to be “ready-to-launch” on Day 1, so applicants should carefully consider the short time frame of the grant, the amount of time it would take to select and hire a new staff position and how much of a contribution new staff would make to the project. This grant must be used to support the implementation of a program or service or provide rides and may not be used for planning and program development activities. If staff are hired to carry out allowed activities, be sure to outline how the work of the staff member is going to support grant activities. Please see the guidance for documenting staff support in the RFP on pages 13 (5.5) and 14 (Budget, Personnel costs).

Q: Will projects less than \$30,000 be considered for funding?

Yes, \$30,000 is the maximum amount of funding to be provided to a community and projects totaling less than \$30,000 will certainly be considered.

Online Application Portal

Q: I am having trouble accessing the Online Application System/downloading the RFP/downloading the application. What do I do?

Contact Heather Edmonds at contact@nadtc.org for issues related to access of the online system or to receive help in downloading pieces of information from the website. An instructional guide on how to use the system is available on [our website](#).