

Florida Commission for the



**Transportation
Disadvantaged**

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25
PROGRAM MANUAL AND APPLICATION
FOR THE
INNOVATIVE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Issued By:

FLORIDA COMMISSION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED

605 Suwannee Street, Mail Station 49

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

850-410-5700

<http://ctd.fdot.gov/>

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund is administered by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD), pursuant to Section 427.0159, Florida Statutes (F.S.). The purpose of the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund is to provide a dedicated funding source for the operational and planning expenses of the Commission in carrying out its legislative responsibilities.

The CTD anticipates receiving funding from the 2024 Florida Legislature (Legislature) to continue the administration of the Innovative Service Development (ISD) Grant program. These funds shall be awarded on a competitive basis to Community Transportation Coordinators (CTCs) that apply for ISD Grant projects for Fiscal Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). The funds are intended to support more cost effective and time efficient services to the transportation disadvantaged. These services may include increasing access to certain activities within the community (such as providing weekend or after-hours services, targeting a particular segment of the TD population that is underserved in the area, etc.), enhancing regional cross-county mobility, and/or reducing barriers to access public transportation, if available in the community. Funding for this grant program is also contingent upon final approval by the Governor.

Applicants should not propose to use grant funds for services that are already being provided utilizing the Trip and Equipment Grant, or merely to supplement existing operational costs.

Applicants are advised to carefully read this entire program manual for instructions and guidance prior to submitting proposals for funding consideration. The manual includes the Commission's expectations for both new and current projects, the criteria that will be used to identify exemplary projects for funding, and the process to apply for funding.

DEADLINE: Complete proposals must be submitted to the Commission by April 30, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Questions relating to this funding opportunity are to be submitted in written format only to: FLCTDGrantApps@dot.state.fl.us. Unlike previous years, questions will be accepted during the application period until April 30, 2024. Answers to questions received will be posted on the Commission's website (<http://ctd.fdot.gov/Grants.htm>).

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PART I - PROGRAM MANUAL

1. Program Description

CTD announces the potential availability of competitive funding to support Innovative Service Development (ISD) grant projects. Funding is contingent upon final approval by the Florida Legislature and the Governor. The Commission seeks proposals for pilot projects that support services that are more cost effective for the program and time efficient for riders.

It should be emphasized that not all innovations require an entirely new idea. Most often, innovation refers to a change in something already established, especially by introducing methods or ideas that ***add value*** in some way. For the purposes of the ISD Grant Program, innovation is defined as “Doing something in a new or improved way to enhance an eligible rider’s mobility.” Proposals may include ideas that have already been implemented elsewhere; the key element is that the project should introduce something that is new or improved *to the local community*.

Because of the focus on enhancing an eligible rider’s mobility, ISD grants cannot be used to fund services that are already provided utilizing the Trip and Equipment Grant or to supplant or replicate existing operations. Rather, proposals should demonstrate how funds can be used to

modify or expand existing operations to fill a gap, reach a new market, or otherwise improve service quality within the TD Program. Additionally, the grant may be used to fund new service options that are not offered within the existing service portfolio of the CTC.

CTD's goal for the ISD grants is to identify and test promising mobility access solutions that can be applied in other communities. Applicants must have the ability to yield data demonstrating project outcomes related to at least one of the following program objectives:

- Increase a transportation disadvantaged person's access to daily activities that could include employment, education, medical and shopping, etc.
- Enhance regional connectivity and cross-county mobility; or,
- Reduce the difficulty in connecting transportation disadvantaged persons to a transportation hub and from the hub to their final destination.

Grant recipients will be expected to provide at least one presentation to the Commission that highlights any lessons learned and includes actual vs. expected outcomes about the progress of services delivered for this project. Recipients will also be required to conduct a minimum of one customer satisfaction survey during the grant fiscal year. Funded projects have the potential to be showcased in various statewide and national reports and forums. To increase the likelihood of project success and sustainability, applicants are strongly encouraged to work collaboratively and leverage partnerships.

2. Award Information

Submitting an application does not guarantee a grant will be awarded nor does it ensure that the grant will be funded in the amount requested. If the project funding is adjusted, the applicant will be contacted to confirm that the proposed project is still viable and can be completed with the amount awarded. A CTC may apply for one or more projects under the ISD grant program for FY2024-25. However, a CTC shall not receive more than one award for a designated service area. The maximum award amount is \$750,000 per project within a single-service area. A project proposing transportation within multiple service areas resulting in regional mobility is limited to a maximum of \$1,500,000 per project. An existing designated multi-county service area is not considered as "multiple service areas."

Applicants should be mindful that successful innovations will improve effectiveness and/or efficiency to the degree that the innovation eventually becomes self-sustaining. Indeed, the purpose of funding innovation is to test and incubate new ideas that have strong potential to become mainstream solutions. Considering this, a project may only be considered for ISD funding for up to four (4) years.

3. Eligibility

A. Eligible Recipients

A Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) who has an executed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP). The recipient of these funds will be referred to as the Grantee.

B. Allowable Expenditures

These grant funds are for the specific purpose of funding a portion of passenger trips provided to eligible individuals who are transportation disadvantaged, as defined in s. 427.011(1), F.S. The grant recipient shall provide service before seeking payment. A trip funded under this grant is considered a one-way trip that is not paid for by any other federal, state, or local government program for an eligible individual who meets the definition of transportation disadvantaged.

There shall be an approved eligibility application for each rider who receives trips funded by this grant. Documentation which supports the eligibility determination shall be maintained by the grant recipient as part of the rider's eligibility file. This documentation must be maintained for a minimum of five years after the grant ends. Personal care attendants (PCAs), escorts, and companions of eligible individuals are recognized as a cost of doing business and should be accounted for when determining a rate structure.

All expenditures must be documented, reasonable, necessary, and related to the project. The purchase of capital equipment is not eligible for reimbursement under this grant program. Trips provided prior to grant agreement execution cannot be charged to the project nor will the Commission retroactively execute a grant agreement.

C. Local Match

Funding from this grant program provides ninety-percent (90%) of project costs, with the applicant providing a ten-percent (10%) cash match generated from local sources. No state or federal government revenues are acceptable as local match.

Examples of cash generated from local sources include local appropriations, dedicated tax revenues, private donations, net income generated from advertising and concessions, contract revenues, and rider fares.

4. Application and Submission

Complete proposals must be emailed to FLCTDGrantApps@dot.state.fl.us by 11:59 p.m. E.D.T. on April 30, 2024. Applicants are urged to submit their proposal(s) as far in advance of the deadline as possible to allow time to resubmit in the event that additional information or clarification is needed.

Applicants may submit more than one proposal. A separate application package for each proposed project is required. A CTC shall not receive more than one award for a designated service area.

Applicants with current approved projects (FY2023-24) who are seeking funds to continue those projects will be given first consideration in the review process. Updated applications and project proposals are required. Information obtained through the project presentations provided in April 2024 may be considered a part of the evaluation.

Part II of this manual provides instructions for the grant application form and the project scope.

Applications that are incomplete or do not follow the instructions will not be considered. A proposal submission may contain additional supporting documentation as attachments. Every proposal must consist of the following:

1. Innovative Service Development Grant Application
2. Project Scope, following the instructions outlined in this manual
3. Proposed Project Expense Budget

Application packages may be revised and resubmitted via email up to the application final deadline. The latest update received electronically will be reviewed by the subcommittee for final consideration. Application packages submitted early for feedback must be resubmitted by the final application deadline to be considered. Final award decisions are scheduled to be approved at the Commission's business meeting scheduled for June 5, 2024.

5. Application Review

A. Project Evaluation Criteria

The Commission will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria:

- i. Evidence of Need (Required, 15 points)
- ii. Project Description (Required, 15 points)
- iii. Project Innovation (Required, 25 points)
- iv. Demonstration of Proposed Outcomes (Required, 35 points)
- v. Collaboration and Partnership (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)
- vi. Utilization of Non-Traditional Service Providers (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)
- vii. Other Required Application Elements (Required, 10 points)
 - a. Proposed Project Expense Budget/Funding
 - b. Proposed project service rate(s)

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the responsiveness of a project to any and all criteria with the most relevant information that the applicant can provide, regardless of whether such information is specifically requested in this manual.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals that are 1) full and complete according to all instructions in this manual and 2) received from eligible recipients by April 30, 2024, will be evaluated by a subcommittee of the Commission. The subcommittee will provide its recommendations to the Commission for final award decisions. The Commission reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and may provide reduced funding or fund only part of a proposal.

If awarded, the Commission expects the Grantee to implement the proposed project (including services provided) on July 1, or shortly after the execution of the grant agreement (whichever is later). Once the Commission has approved the award and the amount, a grant agreement will be forwarded to the applicant for execution. Prior to the execution of the grant agreement, a complete application package with original signatures shall be mailed to:

Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
605 Suwannee Street, Mail Station 49
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

Project Timetable

February 16, 2024	Release Innovative Service Development Grant Program Manual and Application Package
February 28, 2024	Innovative Service Development Grant Program Workshop
March 29, 2024	Deadline to submit "draft" applications for feedback
April 12, 2024	Latest date for feedback on early submissions
April 18, 2024	2 nd Grant Workshop for final guidance based on reviews of early submissions
April 30, 2024	Applications due to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
May16-17, 2024	Review Subcommittee Meeting
June 5, 2024	Commission Meeting
July 1, 2024	Earliest date grant agreements can be effective
June 30, 2025	All FY2024-25 grant funds will no longer be available
August 15, 2025	Final invoice due for FY2024-25 grant funds

6. Invoicing

The Grantee shall invoice the Commission for each month that services are provided. The Grantee will make every effort to submit invoices within 30 days after the month of service provision. Timely invoicing is extremely important for all grantees but especially those who are seeking funds for additional years. The invoice data is reviewed as part of the application process. Invoices related to this grant agreement shall be completed on the invoice form(s) provided by the Commission and submitted in accordance with the Commission’s most recent Invoicing Procedures for the Provision of Transportation and Capital Equipment unless otherwise notified by the Commission.

7. Florida Single Agency Audit Requirements

Grant recipients of state financial assistance awarded by the Commission will be required to comply with Section 215.97, Florida Statutes.

PART II APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are advised to carefully read the entire program manual for instructions and guidance prior to submitting proposals for funding consideration. Applications that are incomplete or do not follow the required instructions will not be considered.

Grant Application Form Instructions

LEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT: The full legal name of the applicant's organization, not an individual. Name must match the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and the information that is registered with MyFloridaMarketPlace (www.dms.myflorida.com).

FEDERAL EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: The number used by all employers within the United States to identify their payroll and federal income tax. Name must match the FEIN and the information that is registered with MyFloridaMarketPlace.

REGISTERED ADDRESS: This should be the grant applicant's mailing address as registered in MyFloridaMarketPlace and will be the address on the grant agreement. This address shall also be consistent with the address associated with the applicant's FEIN.

CONTACT PERSON, PHONE NUMBER AND E-MAIL ADDRESS: Provide the name of the person who will be the point of contact for this grant, their phone number, and email address.

PROJECT LOCATION: Provide the geographical location(s) of the proposed project. The location can be a single county or multiple contiguous counties. Projects will not replace or supplant transportation services provided by a CTC in their respective service area unless the affected CTC is unable to provide the service or the project is to serve a target population that is not currently being served.

PROPOSED PROJECT START DATE: The start date shall be July 1, 2024, or the date of grant agreement execution, if later than July 1, 2024.

Project Scope Instructions

This is a competitive grant application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that each section provides sufficient information for the review subcommittee. To be considered, the Project Scope must be clearly written and address all required elements. The Project Scope shall be no more than fifteen (15) pages, including any attachments/exhibits such as maps, etc. Letters of commitment or memoranda of understanding (MOU) from project partners will not count against the page limit. The project scope shall include a narrative of the proposed project description as outlined below.

Proposals will be evaluated on a 100-point scale, according to the points assigned to each evaluation criterion. "Collaboration and Partnership" and "Utilization of Non-Traditional Service Providers" are encouraged, but not required. Proposals that do not include either of these components will not be penalized; however, those that do will have the opportunity to earn 5 bonus points each, for a maximum total score of 110 points. While project scores play an important role in guiding the review subcommittee, funding decisions are also contingent upon the availability of funds and are ultimately made at the subcommittee's discretion.

EVIDENCE OF NEED (Required, 15 points)

Begin by describing service limitations or gaps within the current transportation system and the resulting mobility access challenge(s). Be specific, including details regarding the scale or urgency of the challenge and the size of the specific populations that are affected. Applicants may provide documentation or evidence of the challenge(s), such as from a locally developed Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP), other planning document, or other supporting information. DO NOT attach an entire TDSP or other supporting document. Please only cite passages from the document that have relevance to the proposal, along with references to specific page numbers.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Required, 15 points)

Provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including the service area and type(s) of service that will be offered; the estimated number of trips and riders the proposed project will serve (including an explanation of how this was determined); and potential or planned destinations such as a veterans' hospital, employment center, educational/training location, or other life-sustaining activities.

Additionally, explain how the project will be implemented, including details on how existing and potential riders will be informed of the proposed service and how services will be requested and provided. If the proposed service will utilize a transportation hub to connect customers to the broader transportation system, explain the efforts of coordinating schedules between the services and how the rider will transfer between the two systems.

Lastly, explain the process for ensuring riders are eligible to receive Transportation Disadvantaged services. Include how rider eligibility will be determined and, if not by the applicant, what organization will be determining that a rider is transportation disadvantaged, pursuant to Chapter 427, Florida Statutes.

PROJECT INNOVATION (Required, 25 points)

Explain how the proposed project (1) delivers services in a new or improved way that differs from the services already provided under the TD program, and (2) is designed to enhance an eligible rider's mobility to access activities within and outside of their community. ISD grants cannot be used to fund services that are already provided utilizing the Trip and Equipment Grant or to supplant or replicate existing operations. Mobility enhancement may include modifying or expanding existing operations to fill a gap (such as extending hours of operations), reach a new market (i.e., target an underserved segment of the TD population, such as individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities), or otherwise improve service quality (reduce wait times, enhance customer services, etc.). The information provided should clearly identify what is being tested (on-demand service; new hours/days of service; cross-county or regional connections; reduced travel times; etc.). For example, an applicant could propose to build upon its existing on-demand services by providing trips that cannot be pre-scheduled, such as hospital discharge, medical trips at early-onset of illness, or pick-ups from late medical appointments. Additionally, the grant may be used to fund entirely new service options that are not offered within the existing service portfolio. Note: Proposals may include ideas that have already been implemented elsewhere; the key element is that the project should introduce something that is new or improved *to the local community*.

DEMONSTRATION OF PROPOSED OUTCOMES (Required, 35 points)

Describe the proposed project's intended outcomes, and how they will address at least one of the following program objectives. It is not necessary to address more than one objective, nor will projects receive additional points for doing so.

- **Increase a transportation disadvantaged person's access to daily activities that could include employment, education, medical and shopping, etc.;**
- **Enhance regional connectivity and cross-county mobility, or**
- **Reduce the difficulty in connecting transportation disadvantaged persons to a transportation hub and from the hub to their final destination.**

Recipients shall provide an annual "check-in" report, which may include a presentation, to the Commission that highlights progress toward project outcomes, lessons learned since implementation, and how challenges and barriers were addressed. Therefore, applicants must show the ability to collect performance data (including data obtained from customer satisfaction surveys) to demonstrate actual vs. intended outcomes. Provide details regarding the specific performance data that will be collected and analyzed and whether your agency has verified that the data is in fact available for collection. As an example, an applicant could describe how reporting tools from scheduling software and on-board technology will be used to calculate ridership data and on-time performance.

Project sustainability is always a concern when trying something new. However, it is important to plan for the sustainability of a new project to ensure its continuation. Describe any planning efforts or actions taken to address sustainability. Remember, evaluating the outcomes of the project and determining whether those outcomes can be sustained at some level is the end goal – not necessarily continuing the project exactly as proposed.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)

By pooling resources and sharing risk and responsibilities, sound partnerships increase the likelihood of project success and sustainability. If the proposed project is collaborative, describe key project partners, their specific role in the project, and how the collaboration increases the project’s long-term sustainability and success. A partnership includes a “commitment” from all parties which could include funding and/or assistance in implementing the project such as eligibility determinations, capturing and reporting project outcomes, marketing, etc. A letter supporting the project would not be considered a partnership. Applicants may further strengthen their proposals by attaching letters of commitment, cooperative agreements, MOU, or other evidence of strong commitment from partners. Examples of partnerships could include other purchasing agencies (Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Elder Affairs, etc.), local programs serving the targeted riders (CareerSource centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, local state college, etc.), and/or private businesses (grocery stores, medical centers, construction sites, etc.).

UTILIZATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)

Projects that propose including the use of transportation network companies (TNCs), taxis and other non-traditional service providers should describe how such services include a description as to how such service will add value to the existing TD services. Examples could include how the use of a TNC would increase the efficiency (i.e., demand-response time) in meeting scheduled pick-up and drop-off times for the customer, improve rider-safety of serving more vulnerable populations, etc.

OTHER REQUIRED APPLICATION ELEMENTS (Required, 10 points)

Proposals will also be evaluated based on the adequate provision of information regarding the project’s proposed budget and service rates (including how the proposed service rates were determined), as well as the proposed timeline, project personnel, and local matching funds. The project budget should include all anticipated expenses for the project and should not be limited to only the contracted transportation expense line item. If contracted transportation is the only expense item identified in the proposed budget, justification on how other expenses (such as labor, indirect (administrative) costs, etc.), must be provided. A budget worksheet is provided for convenience. CTCs are encouraged to edit/update in accordance with their expense/budget items.

If your current TDTF rates do not meet the costs for services for this project, the rate model tool may be used to establish project rates. If a different methodology has been used to establish proposed service rates, support documentation demonstrating how the rates were determined must be provided.

Project Budget, Funding, and Proposed Service Rates

- A. Provide a Proposed Project Expense Budget that supports the total amount of funding requested. The project budget should include all anticipated expenses for the project and should not be limited to only the contracted transportation expense line item. If contracted transportation is the only expense item identified in the proposed budget, justification on how other expenses (such as labor, administrative costs, etc.), must be provided. An example budget worksheet is provided for convenience. CTCs are encouraged to edit/update

in accordance with their project's expense/budget items. All expenses must be allowable, reasonable, and necessary.

- B. Provide the proposed project service rate(s) by mode and unit of service (trip, mile). If your current TDTF rates do not meet the costs for services for this project, the rate model tool may be used to establish project rates. If a different methodology has been used to establish service rates, support documentation demonstrating how the rates were determined must be provided. Rate(s) for services will be finalized prior to grant execution.

Project Timeline

Provide a project timeline. This should identify the project start date, project implementation date and any major milestones (e.g. procurement of an operator or equipment, hiring personnel, beginning of on-the-road services, etc.). For a project that includes procuring an operator, make sure to consider the length of time required to complete the procurement process. This may impact the amount of funding requested for the first year.

Project Personnel

Provide the name, current title and summary of work experience for each key staff member who will work on the project. Do not include individual resumes.

Local Match

Identify the source of the local match and when such funds will be available.

ATTACHMENT I Project Ideas

Below is a list of ideas for potential projects. NOTE: the below is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

- **Projects designed to improve access to and from employment, training, and educational activities** by extending service hours for late-night shift work or return from evening classes. Further illustrations can include the utilization of flexible services that directly connect to employment and educational destinations. Project proposals may coordinate the activity with partner agencies and organizations to target a specific facility or destination. Examples of service types include those designed with on-demand transportation providers or using dynamic scheduling applications to assign on-demand trips with an existing fleet.
- **Projects that incorporate partnerships with other purchasing agencies to coordinate transportation services for a specific TD population.** For example, an applicant can partner with a workforce development program to coordinate transportation for eligible riders to access job training sites or post-secondary educational programs. A partnership may also include a human service agency serving a specific population, such as persons with developmental disabilities or individuals living with low-income, where transportation has been identified as a barrier to accessing the agency's program.
- **Projects designed to expand service hours with scheduled off-peak service options beyond the current service hours or days of the week.** This could include utilizing a TNC, taxi company, or other transportation provider to deliver spontaneous trips or trips reserved less than 24 hours in advance. This may also include services offered during non-traditional hours, such as on-demand trips for riders who commute to and from late shift employment sites.
- **Projects designed to address urgent and unplanned trips.** The service can be targeted to address last-minute medical appointments, job interviews, or calls to work; hospital discharge; dialysis; or cancer treatments. Delivering transportation services without excessive scheduling time can be provided by micro-transit services, on-demand services that can be delivered with TNCs, or by using software to assign an existing fleet. The project services should improve the scheduling lead time to allow same-day trips, ideally within one hour or less.
- **Projects designed to improve access to regional destinations by expanding service coverage to cross-county destinations.** This may include scheduled and/or on-demand services that expand the service area beyond the customer's county of residence to regional destinations such as specialized healthcare facilities, educational institutions, or other services not available in the local community.
- **Projects that make use of a transportation hub to seamlessly connect customers to the broader transportation system.** ISD grant funds can be used to provide trips via scheduled and/or on-demand services that target a specific geographic area or segment of the TD population. Examples of this type of service include on-demand services that connect veterans' hospitals, healthcare complexes, or educational institutions to a transportation hub.