

Florida Commission for the



**Transportation
Disadvantaged**

**Innovative Service
Development Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

February 28, 2024

Webinar Objectives



Promote awareness
of this funding
opportunity



Provide guidance on
quality grant
applications



Encourage innovative
projects that meet
program criteria



Webinar Topics

- Overview of the ISD Grant Program
- Questions to Consider for Project Ideas
- Overview of Application and Review Process
- Webinar Participant Feedback Session

Webinar Rules

- This is for Community Transportation Coordinators (CTCs) and other parties interested in developing an ISD project.
- This is the first of two training webinars.
- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the CTD website.
- All audio and phone lines are muted.
- Webinar participants should use chatbox to submit questions/comments.
- CTD will only respond to feedback regarding the ISD Grant program.



Overview of the ISD Grant Program

Background

2016-2019, CTD awarded approximately \$2 million (Mobility Enhancement Grant).

2019 Legislature appropriated \$10M to ISD Grant through Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES).

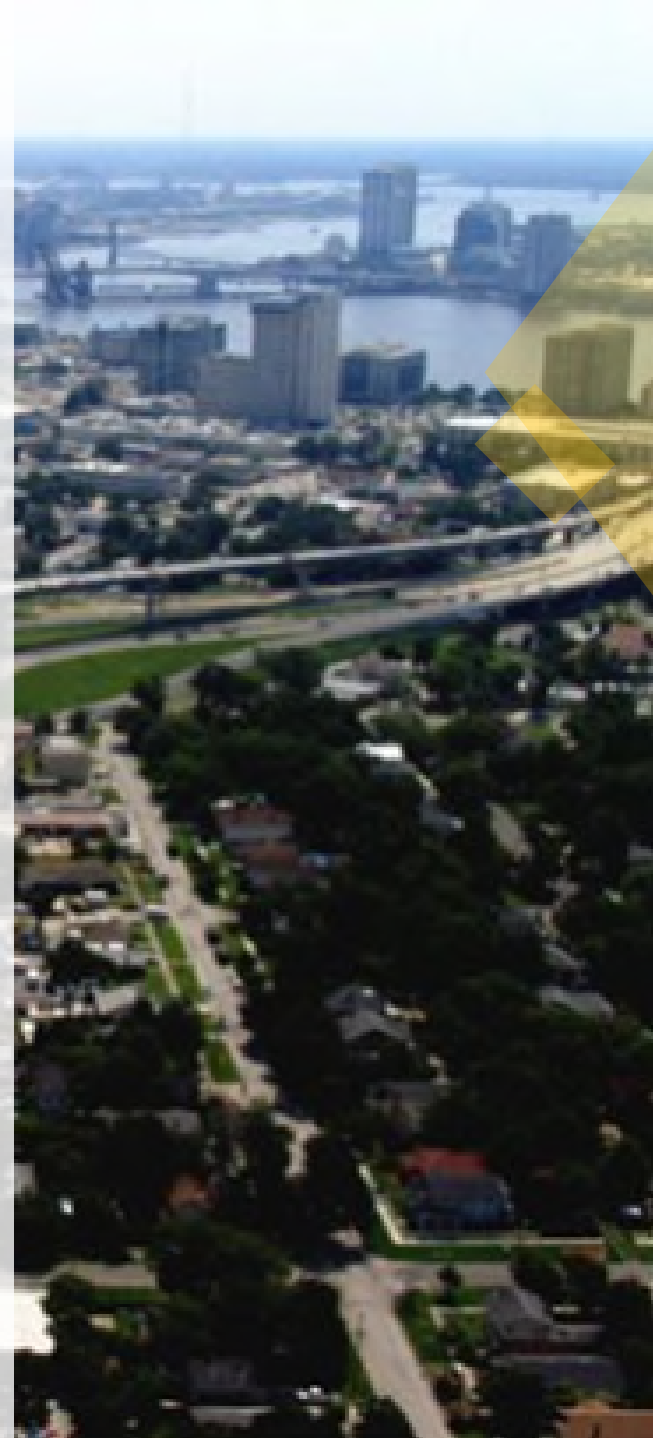
M-CORES funding was repealed in 2021 (unfunded in FY21-22).

2022 Legislature appropriated \$4M for FY22-23 and \$6M for FY23-24.

CTD policy approved December 11, 2023, limits projects for consideration for no more than 4 years.

2024 Legislature will determine final appropriation for FY24-25 by March 8, 2024.

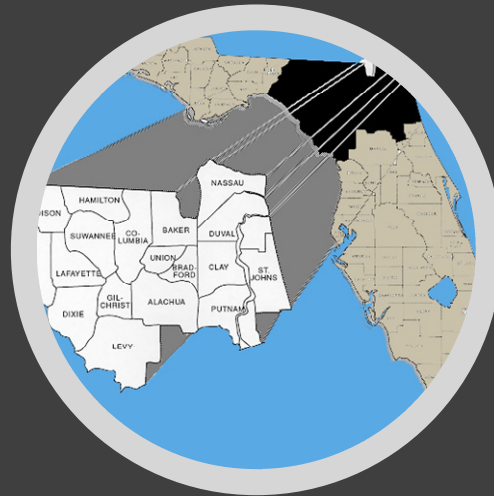
Anticipated to be significantly less than the current fiscal year.





ISD Grant Goals

- 1) Increase access to TD services, including extending service hours or serving an underserved population;
- 2) Enhance cross-county mobility; or
- 3) Reduce difficulty for TD riders accessing the fixed route system, if available in the community.




How are these goals “Innovative”?

Innovation is:

*“Turning an idea into a solution
that adds value
from a customer’s perspective”*

Nick Skillicorn

@improvides

 idea to value.com



Examples of “Innovative” Services

Including the use of TNCs and other non-traditional providers to reduce riders’ wait and travel times with paratransit services.

Expanding TD services (weekends/after hours, cross-county trips) increases riders’ access to certain critical activities.

Serving a segment of the TD population (low-income, developmental disabilities) addresses an unmet need.

Delivering a service at a lower rate and/or fare demonstrates whether the project is more cost-effective.

Providing “first mile/last mile” and fixed route connector options reduces demand/costs of paratransit services.

Who Can Participate in the Program?

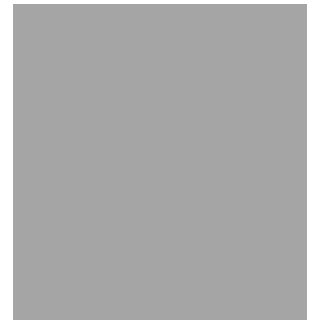
CTCs (defined in 427.011 FS) are only eligible to apply as a “direct grant recipient.”

The use of “non-traditional” transportation (subcontract) providers is encouraged, if available and appropriate.

Only one CTC can apply as a “direct recipient” of a multi-service area project, but other CTCs can be “partners.”

“Partners” can also include colleges, human service agencies, businesses, etc.

Riders must be determined “TD eligible” prior to being served by the project.





Requirements

A project can include multiple ISD Grant Goals, but should have one purpose (e.g., serve TD veterans to cross-county for VA hospital).

A project serving a single service area can be awarded up to \$750,000.

A project serving multiple service areas can be awarded up to \$1.5M.

CTD can only award one grant per service area.

All projects must include a 10% local match.

Funds shall only be used to reimburse trips to TD eligible riders (NOT capital equipment).



Other Requirements

All proposals for FY24-25 must be submitted to CTD by 11:59pm (EDT) on April 30, 2024!

Funding is contingent on Legislative appropriation and Governor's approval.

Services can begin on date of grant agreement execution, no earlier than July 1, 2024.

Grantees must submit monthly invoices to CTD for reimbursement.

Grantees must provide at least one presentation to CTD before June 30, 2025.

Funding Limitations to Consider

- Funding will be tight!
- Current projects will receive first consideration.
- Subcommittee may recommend different funding amount than what is requested by project.
- CTD will analyze invoice data (both ISD and T&E Grants) to help with determining need.



Project Time Limits

- CTD policy limits projects to a maximum of 4 years for consideration of ISD funding.
- Applies retroactively to projects that received funding in previous years (not including FY21-22).
- Projects that adjust or expand services from year-to-year will **NOT** be considered new projects.
- Grant recipients with expired funding can propose new project.





CTD Technical Assistance

“Cone of Silence” on CTD communications with applicants, except as provided below.

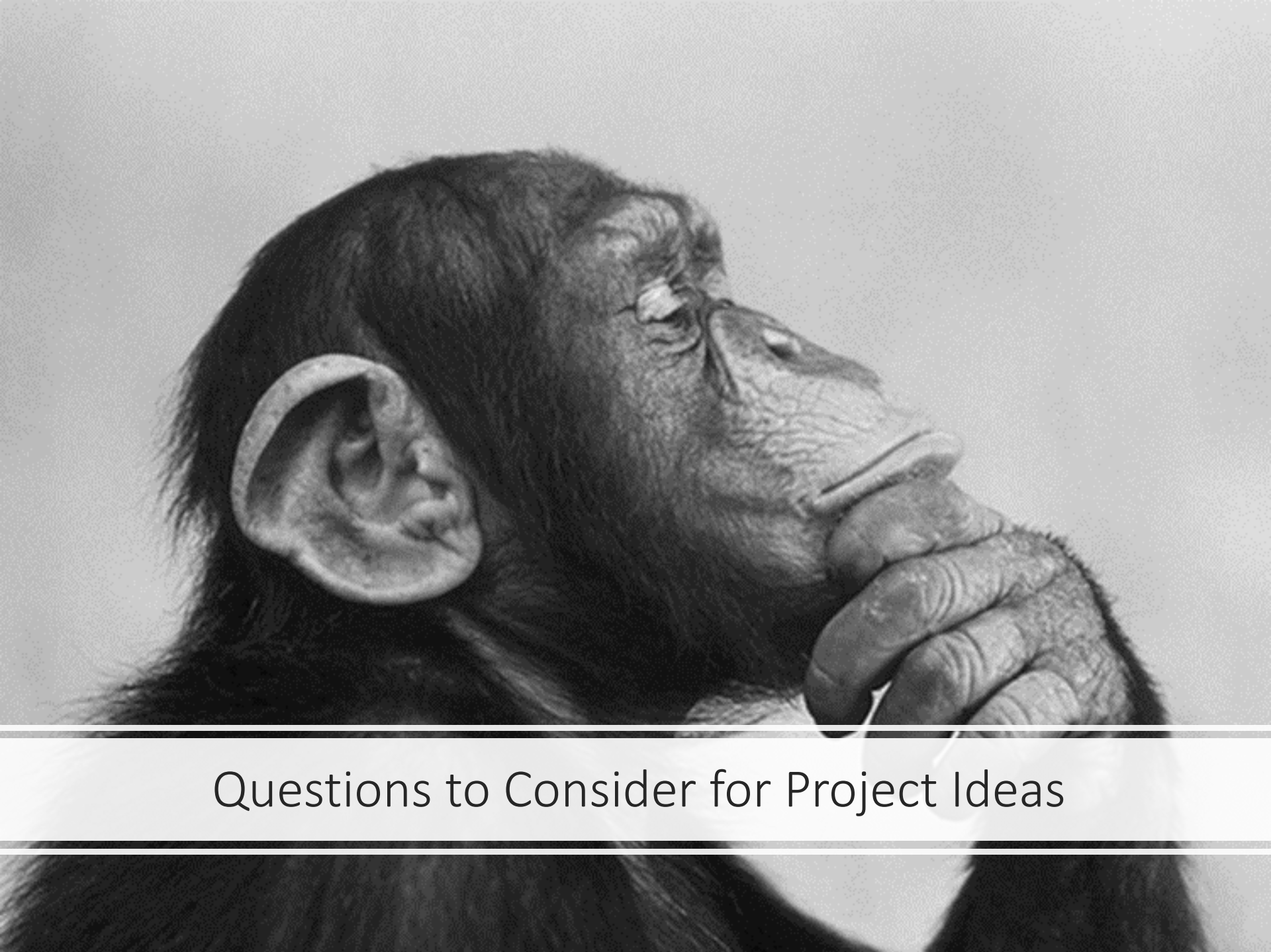
Two training webinars for guidance on developing project proposals and meeting program criteria.

Applicants may submit written questions to FLCTDGrantApps@dot.state.fl.us. Answers will be posted on CTD website.

“Early Bird” deadline for applicants to receive CTD feedback on proposals prior to final submission deadline.

Application and Approval Timeline

February 16, 2024	Release of Grant Program Manual and Application
February 28, 2024	1st Training Webinar
March 8, 2024	End of 2024 Legislative Session
March 29, 2024	Deadline to Submit “Early Bird” Applications
April 12, 2024	Deadline for CTD to Provide “Early Bird” Feedback
April 18, 2024	2nd Training Webinar
April 23 and 24, 2024	Current Year ISD Project Presentations to CTD
April 30, 2024	Deadline to Submit Grant Applications for FY24-25
May 16-17, 2024	Review Subcommittee Recommends Grant Awards to Full Commission
June 5, 2024	CTD Awards Grant Funding, Contingent on Legislative Appropriation and Approval by Governor



Questions to Consider for Project Ideas

Start with the Customers' Perspective

- What transportation barriers inhibit an individual's access to work, health care, social-recreation, etc.?
- Where does the local TD program fall short in meeting these needs?
- What evidence can be gathered to demonstrate how a project can address these "unmet needs?"
- How would the customer perceive the "value" of the new service (e.g., greater mobility, convenience, customer satisfaction, etc.)?





Ideas + Collaboration = Grant Funding

Other Questions to Consider

- Who are the key stakeholders that can be “partners” in the project?
- How can the partner(s) coordinate services for the customers of the project?
- Can the project utilize non-traditional providers, such as TNCs or taxis?
- What ideas are being tested? How can data verify or validate whether the ideas work?
- If the project succeeds, how could the idea(s) be incorporated with other TD services?



Develop a Lab Mentality

Funding intended to test new services that could be incorporated in the TD Program.

Projects may take longer than 12 months to determine whether services fulfilled ISD Grant goals.

CTD will give current projects first consideration in the review process, contingent on legislative budget authority.

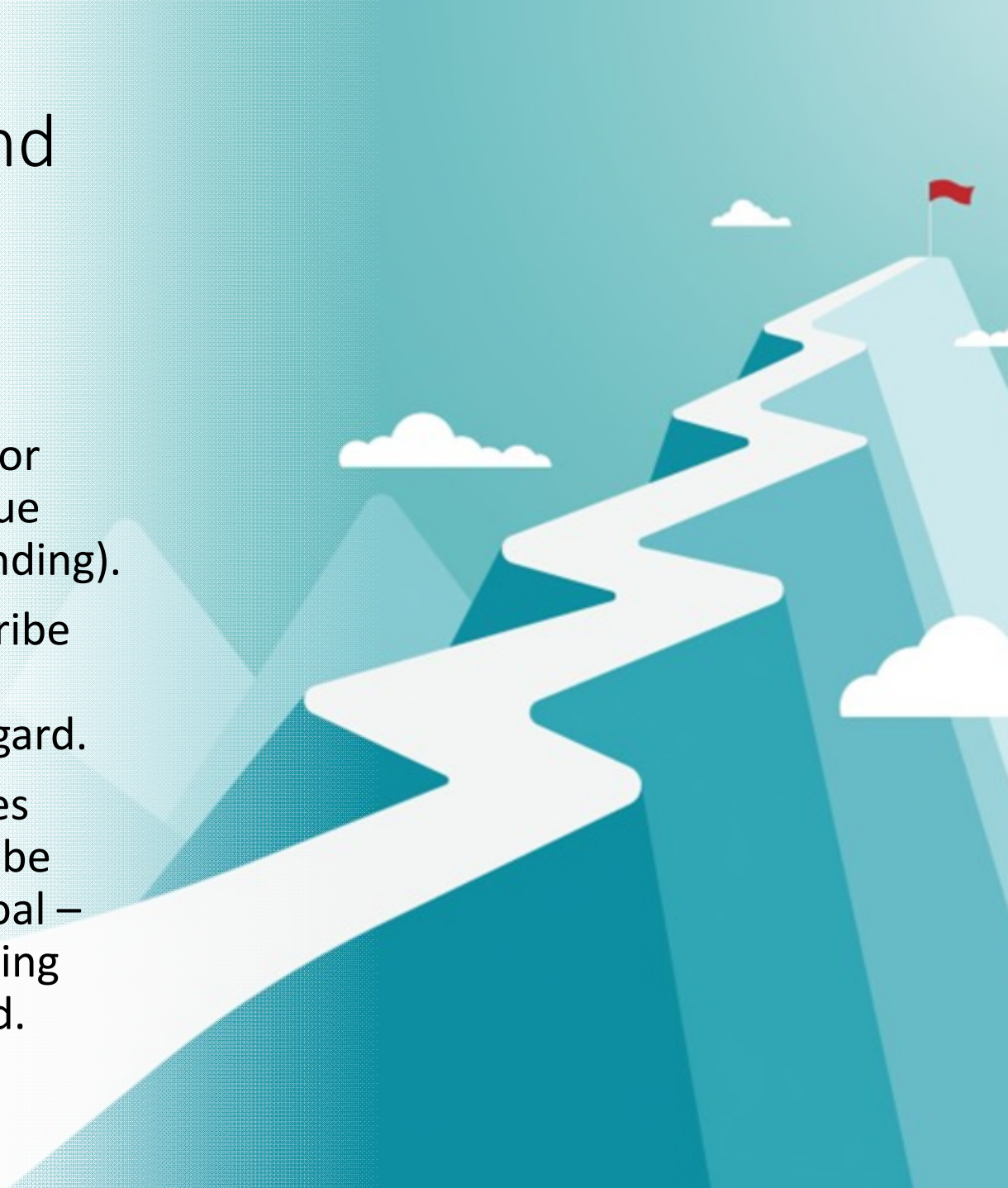
Grant recipients will be expected to provide at least one presentation to the Commission, including progress of project goals, any challenges with implementation, rider survey results, etc.

Thinking Beyond the Lab: Sustainability

It is important to plan for sustainability to continue project (beyond ISD funding).

Applicants should describe any planning efforts or actions taken in this regard.

Evaluating the outcomes (and whether they can be sustained) is the end goal – not necessarily continuing the project as proposed.





Applications

Grants

Overview of Application and Review Process

APPLYING FOR A GRANT



Application Instructions

Carefully review entire Grant Manual – CTD **shall not** accept applications incomplete or in a different format.

Clearly identify the service area(s), key staff, project start date, funding request (with local match).

Include detailed description in Project Scope, evidence of need, and how the services will support the ISD Goals.

Proposals must be **no more than** 15 pages long, including supporting documents.

Enlisting Help

Describe how CTCs may coordinate services within a regional project (i.e., eligibility, billing, etc.).

If project includes partnerships, include description of roles, contributions, etc.

If applicable, describe how a TNC or non-traditional provider will enhance the service quality, efficiency, cost, etc.

If there is an expected delay in services, please explain why.



**Grant
Funding
Opportunities**



Other Instructions

Provide a detailed expense budget to support \$ request.

Propose service rates and methodology used to determine (rate model).

Attach any letters of support, including county board resolutions.


Proposals serving multiple service areas (regional) can only be submitted by one applicant (i.e., CTC).

CTCs of an approved multi-county service area cannot request more than \$750,000, unless project expands its service area.

Sample Budget Breakout

PROPOSED PROJECT EXPENSE BUDGET (EXAMPLE)	
EXPENSE SOURCES	
Labor	\$
Fringe Benefits	
Services	
Materials and Supplies	
Utilities	
Casualty and Liability	
Taxes	
Purchased Transportation	
Miscellaneous <i>(Identify costs included in this line item)</i>	
Leases and Rentals	
Allocated Indirect Cost	
<i>Include any other expense items needed</i>	
Total Budget	\$

Expense items listed in table above may not cover all project expenses. CTC may identify additional expense items not identified to get total project budget.



Commons Pitfalls in
Writing Applications

Too much unnecessary information – difficult to determine purpose and objectives of the project or what is being tested.

Application does not follow the format or is submitted incomplete, which cannot be accepted.

Too many acronyms or terms unknown to reviewer.

Project appears to supplement existing services (e.g., Trip & Equipment (T&E) Grant invoice data).

Incorrect or inconsistent calculations.

Unclear eligibility determination, particularly for a subset of TD population.



How to Avoid these Traps

Be specific and to the point.

Complete the application early to allow time for proofing and checking calculations – Include outsiders to assist in review process.

Know your audience – describe technical terms and acronyms at least once in the scope.

Clearly describe how the project “adds value” or removes a barrier to existing coordinated system.

Identify source of local match in funding request (local tax, farebox, etc.).

Double check math on rates, budget, trip estimates, etc.

If project serves specific group (e.g., IDD), describe how partnering agencies will assist in determining eligibility.

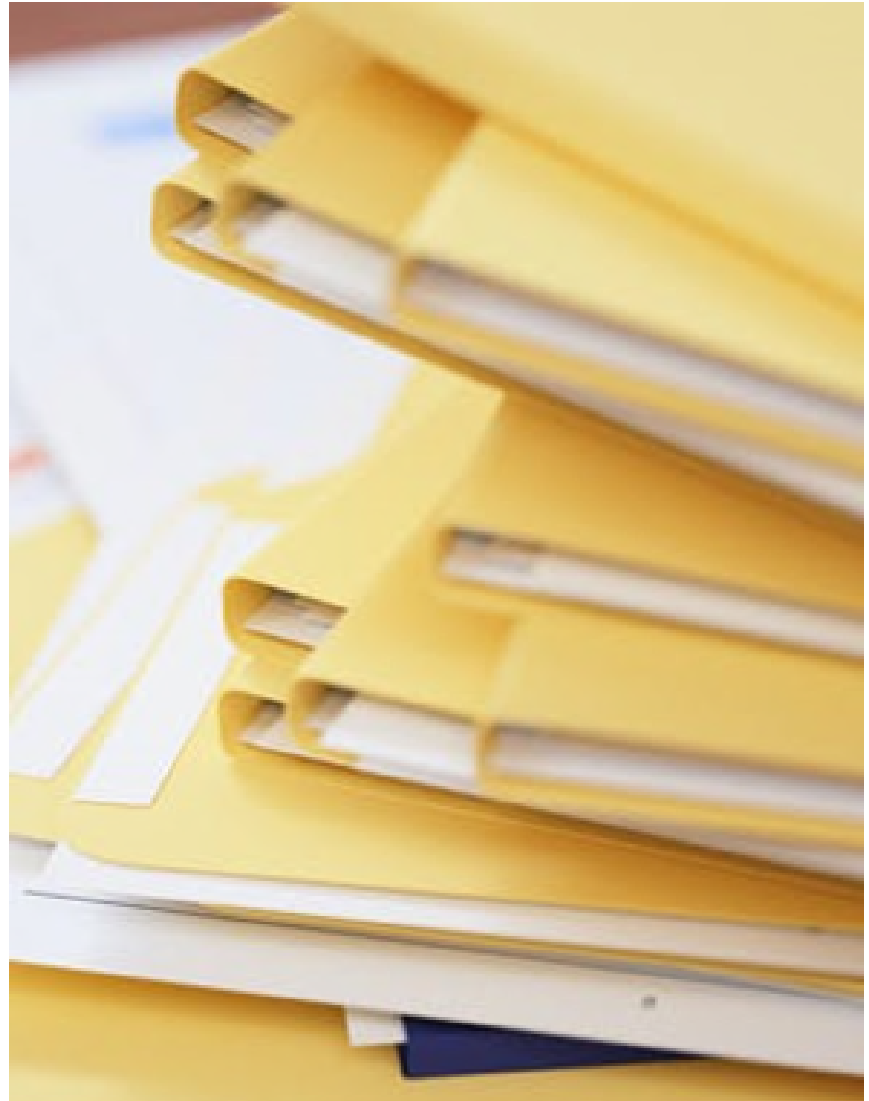
Evaluation

Applications will be reviewed based on the “evaluation criteria” provided within the Grant Manual.

CTD will examine invoice data from both T&E and ISD Grants as part of the evaluation process.

Subcommittee’s recommendations will be included in CTD meeting packet by May 29.

Commission will approve grant awards by June 5, contingent on Legislative/Governor approval.



Proposal A: VA Hospital

Key Claims

- Support cross-county trips to VA hospital.
- County has approx. 200 vets, 20% are TD (cites TDSP).
- CTC can only provide VA trips Tues/Thurs.
- ISD would increase trips to five days a week (est. 520 trips next year).
- Goal to serve 20 new TD riders to VA.

Evaluation

- Supports two ISD goals.
- Cites county stats in evidence of need.
- T&E invoice data shows trips occurring Tues/Thurs, with 10 unique rider names.
- Proposal outlines goals with new funding.
- Not previously funded under ISD Grant (new project).
- All required elements were provided (budget, rates, etc.).

Proposal B: Rural TD Trips

Key Claims

- Support new TD services in rural area of county.
- CTC provides limited trips to area due to urban service demands.
- Project would also support connector to fixed route in urban area.
- Goal to provide 500 trips to rural TD residents.

Evaluation

- Supports two ISD goals, but unclear how they relate to each other.
- Does not include evidence of need (est. TD rural residents, trip purposes, etc.).
- T&E invoice data found over 500 trips occurred in rural area last year.
- Provides estimated trip count, but unclear how they arrived at that claim.
- No budget was included.

Proposal C: Job Training

Key Claims

- Continue ISD project providing job training/employment trips.
- Add use of TNCs to improve on-time performance by 5%.
- Expand services for students through local college partner.
- Survey found 50 students would benefit from service.
- Goal to provide 20,750 employment trips next year with ISD funding.

Evaluation

- Supports one ISD goal, with expanded access to students.
- Includes survey data to expand services for students.
- Does not include data on current on-time performance.
- ISD data indicate over 10,000 trips (49% of funding expended) during first six months of the project.
- Unclear how TNC trips would be arranged next year.



Webinar Participant Feedback Session

