

Florida Commission for the



**Transportation
Disadvantaged**

REVISED

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 PROGRAM MANUAL AND
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS 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 2025 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 2025-26 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). 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 May 12, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Questions relating to this funding opportunity are to be submitted in written format only to: FLCTDGrantApps@dot.state.fl.us. Questions will be accepted during the application period until May 12, 2025. Answers to questions received will be posted on the Commission's website (<http://ctd.fdot.gov/Grants.htm>).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I – Program Manual

1. Program Description
2. Award Information
3. Eligibility
 - A. Eligible Recipients
 - B. Allowable Expenditures
 - C. Local Match
4. Application and Submission
5. Application Review
 - A. Project Evaluation Criteria
 - i. Evidence of Need
 - ii. Project Description
 - iii. Project Innovation
 - iv. Demonstration of Proposed Outcomes
 - v. Other Required Application Elements
 - vi. Collaboration and Partnership
 - vii. Utilization of Non-Traditional Service Providers
 - B. Review and Selection Process
6. Invoicing
7. Florida Single Agency Audit Requirement

Part II – Application Instructions

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 may 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 FY2025-26. 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."

The goal of funding innovation is to explore and develop new ideas with the expectation that successful projects will eventually become a part of a system's standard services and remain sustainable. As such, projects were previously considered for ISD funding for up to four (4) years. However, at the March 31, 2025, Commission Business Meeting, Commissioners voted to temporarily suspend the 4-year time limit.

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. (Eastern Time) on May 12, 2025. 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 approved projects for FY2024-25 who are seeking funding to continue those projects will receive first consideration during the review process. Applicants requesting funds for projects that have already been funded for four years will still be considered, but these projects will not receive priority. Please note that updated applications and project proposals are required.

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 until the final application deadline. 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 June 2025 Commission's business meeting.

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. Other Required Application Elements (Required, 10 points)
 - a. Proposed Project Expense Budget/Funding
 - b. Proposed project service rate(s)
- vi. Collaboration and Partnership (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)
- vii. Utilization of Non-Traditional Service Providers (Encouraged, 5 bonus points)

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) complete according to all instructions in this manual and 2) received from eligible recipients by May 12, 2025, will be evaluated. Recommendations will be provided 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

March 17, 2025	Release Innovative Service Development Grant Program Manual and Application Package
March 27, 2025	Innovative Service Development Grant Program Workshop
April 11, 2025	Deadline to submit "draft" applications for feedback
April 28, 2025	Latest date for feedback on early submissions
May 12, 2025	Applications due to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
June, 2025	Commission Meeting
July 1, 2025	Earliest date grant agreements can be effective
June 30, 2026	All FY2025-26 grant funds will no longer be available
August 15, 2026	Final invoice due for FY2025-26 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, 2025.

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 review. To be considered, the Project Scope must be clearly written and address all required elements. The Project Scope shall be no more than twenty (20) 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. For those who are applying to continue a current-funded project, information addressing the status of the project is strongly encouraged.

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 recommendation, funding decisions are also contingent upon the availability of funds and are ultimately made at the Commission'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. Current funded projects should describe how the project is addressing service limitations or gaps.

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 hospital, employment center, educational/training location, or other life-sustaining activities. For current funded projects, provide the number of trips and riders the project has served to date. Any changes to the existing project should be clear and easy to identify.

Additionally, explain how the project will be, or is being implemented, including details on how existing and potential riders will be informed of the proposed service and how services are being or 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 will or will continue to (1) deliver services in a new or improved way that differs from the services already provided under the TD program, and (2) 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, 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; cross-county or regional connections; reduced travel times; etc.). For example, an applicant could propose to build upon its existing services by providing on-demand 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.**

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.

Current funded projects shall highlight achievements in meeting at least one of the program's objectives. This could include a summary of quarterly progress reports or other performance data as well as lessons learned. In addition, invoices will be reviewed by CTD to evaluate the provision of services and utilization of grant funds.

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.

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.

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 should be used to establish new project rates. Adding extra charges to the rates established by the approved rate model will not be accepted. 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.

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. For current funded projects that have an

established partnership, describe how the partnership supports the accomplishment of the project's goals. 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 proposing the use of non-traditional service providers such as transportation network companies (TNCs), taxis, or other services should outline how these providers will enhance, or continue to enhance, the current TD services. For instance, the use of TNCs could improve flexibility in accommodating last-minute changes to ride schedules, offer a more personalized customer experience, or improve rider safety and satisfaction.

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 people 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 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. The project 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 support scheduled and/or on-demand trips connecting riders to or from transportation hubs, such as fixed-route stops. Projects may focus on providing transportation between the hub and a final destination.