



## Community Rides Grant Q&A

The following document will track questions that National RTAP receives from the webinars and over email regarding the Community Rides Grant Program. This document is available on the Community Rides Grant webpage and will be updated as additional questions come in.

Updated: August 4, 2025

Date Posted	Question	Answer
July 31, 2025	1. How is the grant awardee selected? 2. What is the total funds available?	The grant awardees are selected by a committee that includes National RTAP staff. The total funds that are available is \$250,000, which will be divided among all the awardees.
July 31, 2025	Just clarifying- so the proposed project will be funded for a year, correct? If we wanted to continue the project, then we would we on our own?	This year's grant will be funded for a year. We will also offer future Community Rides grants. A goal of the Community Rides Grant program is to support local partnerships and rural transit solutions. The projects should have a business plan and a long-term funding strategy to sustain the transit solutions.
July 31, 2025	In regards to the budget document, is this our overall budget or just a budget for the grant project?	It is just for the community rides grant project. If additional funding is secured to support the project that should also be listed in the budget sheet.
July 31, 2025	Our town is looking at expanding our services by adding Saturday to our operations. Is this eligible for grant?	Yes, it would be eligible. You would still have to have a local partner and meet the other grants goals and requirements.
July 31, 2025	We are currently working on implementing a deviated fixed route. This is a new service and we hope to have it implemented this fall. Because we're already working on implementing the route, will	Think about other opportunities to expand on it past the fall. It has to have a new component to it. Implementing new technology or marketing solutions could be eligible, like a technology based scheduling platform if currently not available, signage, marketing, community

	this initiative qualify for this grant opportunity?	outreach, etc. These could be opportunities to enhance the deviated fixed route and build awareness and access to the transit service.
July 31, 2025	How many awardees were selected last year?	19
July 31, 2025	Can we ask for partial funding up to \$100,000 if the project is large and fund locally for the rest?	Yes. There is a question from our last webinar that addresses this. We hope to find a range of projects, smaller to larger. While there is no local match requirement, additional funding can be sought through partnerships to support the project.
July 31, 2025	So, if you only have \$250,000 in total funding, you are only giving out around 3-4 grants?	No. We hope to maximize the funding. It may be between 5-7 grants, but that is also contingent on the proposals that we receive.
July 31, 2025	What is the role of a local partner?	The partners make a stronger program. It is up to the project. The more they work together, the stronger the proposal. Examples, healthcare providers, employers, etc. They can be shared funders, provide information to their clients, work with you to assess need, or help implement stops at their facilities. If they can help you be successful or stop your project they are potential partners.
July 31, 2025	Would a regional partnership on a pilot program using volunteer drivers be an eligible project?	It would be if there is a local partner involved with 5311 funding, or one that is eligible for 5311 funding, and the primary target area meets the criteria of a rural area and the other RFP requirements.
July 31, 2025	Does RTAP have criteria of what qualifies as "rural"?	This was answered in the previous webinar. It follows the 5311 requirements of under 50,000 people. Please see the response below for additional details.
July 31, 2025	Can you use this in the renovation of an operations office?	No, this would not qualify under the Community Rides Grant. The goal of the grants program is to support local partnership building and meet local transportation needs for critical services like employment, healthcare, and education. If the renovation was needed so that

		<p>you could fit new roles into your space, or people who are separated were able to work together to implement a new work process or service strategy. The point of the grant is not to renovate space or purchase a vehicle, we want to help implement a new service strategy or partnership.</p>
July 31, 2025	<p>Follow up question... there are components of the deviated fixed route that we can't implement until 2026 due to budget constraints. We need to purchase new scheduling software to help with efficiency and expand our capability to accept various payment methods. Would this qualify for the grant opportunity?</p>	<p>Yes. The additional service and/or technology component would qualify this project provided there is a local partner and it meets the other requirements of the RFP.</p>
July 31, 2025	<p>We are running an expansion route currently during Ozone Free Fare to see if there is a need. We have determined that even without free fare, there is a need to continue it. Can we apply for Community Rides funding to help with the effort to continue the expansion route?</p> <p>It was not an existing route prior to the ozone free fare months. Could we use this funding to make it a permanent route?</p>	<p>Yes. This would be an eligible project provided it meets the other requirements outlined in the RFP.</p>
July 31, 2025	<p>Would a project that improves data collections, analysis, and donor relations by implementing software for an existing program qualify?</p>	<p>That would qualify under the Community Rides Grant Program provided it meets the other RFP requirements. For example, RideSheet scheduling platform adds a technology component to service and that qualifies under the grant program, so other technology that improves data collection, analysis and donor relations would also qualify.</p>
July 31, 2025	<p>Can it be tied to a program that's already being implemented such as</p>	<p>If it's already exists, it can't be used for that. It would have to be a new program or new aspect</p>

	congregate (any other program) or geared towards low income, vulnerable clients to increase to outreach and services	of the program (like new clients, new access to healthcare, a technology component, a marketing campaign, or community outreach, new local partner, to name a few). It would also need to meet the other requirements outlined in the RFP.
July 31, 2025	What about a program that provides transportation assistance to individuals? Is that an eligible project?	If there is a local partner involved and it meets a specific community need(s) along with the other RFP requirements, then it would be eligible. It should also be available to the community at large, rather than being restricted to specific individuals. There should be a target population for the service; students, seniors in an underserved area, or a work site not being served now.
July 31, 2025	Brainstorming here: Would an informational video used to train riders on how to ride transit and navigate current transit systems be eligible? Thinking of partnering with local transits to make the video inclusive.	Yes, marketing is an eligible activity.
July 31, 2025	Is a local funding match required	No a local funding match is not required
July 31, 2025	Clarification on eligibility form in the grants portal.	Question 1 on the eligibility form, if an agency receives or is eligible for 5311 funding. 5311 eligibility was added to the form, an agency doesn't need to be currently receiving 5311 funding as long as they are eligible and the project meets the other RFP requirements and goals.
July 24, 2025	Is \$250,000 the total amount of all awards the program will distribute?	<p>We are awarding a total of \$250,000 this year to be divided amongst the selected projects. Depending on the level of funding each project receives will determine how many projects we are able to select and fund.</p> <p>This is an annual award so we will be making this amount available every year.</p>

		<p>We encourage prospective grantees to think about their projects in funding phases. Could your project be broken down into discrete phases to help get things started? For example, for a larger scale project, Phase 1 could focus on strengthening local partnerships, building community awareness and support, or some other step needed to further the project idea. Subsequent project phases could move to project implementation and operations.</p> <p>Please keep in mind that there is no guarantee that a project selected in this round of funding using this phased approach would be selected in future annual funding opportunities.</p> <p>We also encourage grantees to think about this funding as an opportunity to support a particular aspect of a larger project. In the first Community Rides Informational webinar, River Cities Public Transit discussed how it was able to use a past Community Rides Grant award to support a particular aspect of a larger FTA Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) demonstration project.</p>
July 24, 2025	<p>Is the grant a direct award or a reimbursement for expenses?</p> <p>As it is a 12 month project, but if expenditure is not to full award, what happens with those remaining funds?</p>	<p>Reimbursement. We will pay for eligible expenses. FTA grants are all reimbursement.</p> <p>Selected projects will be awarded for up to 12 months of funding (January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026). Grant funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis after expenses are incurred. Monthly invoices must be submitted with proper documentation to be reimbursed (See RFP Award Information, page 12).</p> <p>Pages 17 and 18 in the RFP have additional information on eligible expenses.</p> <p>Any unused funds will be forfeited.</p>

July 24, 2025	So you could potentially award only two 100k awards and one 50k award?	Not likely. We had a spectrum of grant requests during our last Community Rides Grant program solicitation.
July 24, 2025	Are marketing projects eligible?	Yes. Marketing projects are an eligible expense.
July 24, 2025	Can the grant cover conference cost?	Yes. The grant can cover eligible conference costs and travel. Please reference pages 17 and 18 in the RFP for additional information on eligible expenses.
July 24, 2025	When you mention that this is not a grant for existing transit organizations, you are stating that in order to receive this funding your are starting a transit service from scratch?	Existing service. This grant is not to help you cover your existing operational expenses. New and/or experienced transit programs are welcome to apply!
July 24, 2025	Will this webinar be recorded to reference in the future?	Yes. We will have a link on the Community Rides Grant webpage and the Webinar webpage.
July 24, 2025	Do you know if there are any documents that provide more detail about funding restrictions or guidelines? If our agencies were to brainstorm a project where the PDC/MPO would be the transportation organization partner to meet that requirement, is it allowable for the 5311 agency to be the primary applicant and pass a portion of the funding through to the partner for completion of work activities?	As long as the subrecipient and target area for the work meet the definition of a rural area under <a href="#">Section 5311 guidelines</a> , there is a local partner supporting the project, and the proposal meets the other RFP requirements then this would be an eligible project under the Community Rides Grant Program.