Pilot Trip Reduction Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 2/14/2019

This document contains responses to frequently asked questions regarding the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Pilot Trip Reduction Grant Program (Program). It will be updated periodically as questions are received. For more information on the Program, visit www.baaqmd.gov/ptr.

Applicant Eligibility

1. **If my agency is not on the list of eligible applicants, how can I apply?**

   You can contact your public transit agency, congestion management agency, or metropolitan planning organization to sponsor your project.

2. **Is there a list of eligible applicants, including applicants who submitted a letter of interest last year?**

   A list of eligible applicants is posted on the Program website. Contact information of those who are seeking partnerships is also included in the document.

3. **I have received TFCA funds for a separate project (e.g., bike, signal improvement). Am I eligible?**

   Receiving TFCA funds for a **separate project** does not disqualify you from applying for funding unless the TFCA funds you received or will receive from the Air District exceeds $1.5 million per calendar year.

   An applicant who has received or will receive TFCA funds for any project(s) is limited to a total of $1.5 million TFCA Regional grant funds per calendar year. TFCA funds received through the County Program Manager Fund are not counted toward this limit.

   However, if the **specific project you are applying for** has received or will receive TFCA funds from the Air District or from the designated TFCA County Program Manager, then it is ineligible. In other words, projects that have received TFCA funds may not ask for additional TFCA funds for the same project scope.

Microtransit Service Eligibility

4. **Would projects that propose to expand existing shuttle services be eligible?**

   Fixed route, fixed schedule shuttle services are not eligible for funding under this program. Applicants seeking funding for existing fixed route, fixed schedule shuttle services are encouraged

to consider applying for the Air District's [Existing Shuttle/Feeder Bus and Regional Ridesharing Services Program](#).

5. **What is considered a significant expansion of an existing service?**

    An expansion of an existing service is only significant if it expands the service area territory and meets all other Program requirements (e.g., cost-effectiveness). Expansions by increasing headways or adding more vehicles to the same service area are not eligible.

6. **Are construction of park-and-ride lots eligible?**

    Projects that do not provide microtransit services (e.g., construction of park-and-ride lots, app development, mobility hubs) are not eligible under *microtransit services*. The purpose of the Program is to test the effectiveness of microtransit as a first- and last-mile service.

    However, applicants who are interested in applying for funding to support other types of trip reduction service projects are encouraged to contact the Air District before submitting a full application under *other trip reduction services*. A hard copy of the application must be received by 4 PM, March 5, 2019.

7. **Are routes that are fixed route with an on-demand schedule eligible?**

    Yes. Each route may be either a:

    - Fixed route, with an on-demand schedule
    - Flexible route, with a fixed schedule, or
    - Flexible route, with an on-demand schedule.

    Note that routes that are fixed-route, fixed schedule are ineligible.

8. **How is peak period defined? For certain job sites (e.g. hospital), need for transportation may not align with traditional bankers' hours.**

    Morning peak hours are 5 AM-10 AM and evening peak hours are 3 PM-7 PM. These periods are identified as congestion times and therefore are the key opportunities to improve air quality.

9. **A requirement is that the proposed project must either operate in an area where no similar service exists, or significantly expand an existing service. What is considered "similar service"?**

    For the purpose of this solicitation, "similar service" means that there exists, either currently or within the last three years, a direct, timed, and publicly accessible service that brings passengers to within one-third (1/3) mile of the proposed commercial or employment location from a mass transit hub. A proposed service will not be deemed "similar" to an existing service if the passengers' proposed travel time will be at least 15 minutes shorter and at least 33% shorter than the existing service's travel time to the proposed destination.

10. **Would electric bike share be deemed cost-effective as a first/last mile service?**

   This project is not eligible under *microtransit services*, but might be eligible under *other trip reduction services*. More information about the project is needed to determine its eligibility.

11. **Would Lyft Line, Uber Pool, and Uber Pool Express be eligible under *microtransit services*?**

   If the proposed project meets the Program requirements, these services would be eligible under *microtransit services*. More information about the project is needed to determine its eligibility.

12. **Are there any exceptions to the 12-month minimum operation requirement?**

   Applicants may propose an Operational Phase duration of less than 12 months only if their project is an expansion of an existing service. The proposed project must meet all other Program requirements (e.g., cost-effectiveness).

Eligible Areas

13. **If projects are partially within the shaded eligible areas of the map, but also serve areas outside the boundary, can applicants submit those projects?**

   If the major transit hub is in any of these eligible areas, then your project would meet this eligibility requirement. However, only trips reduced, and thus the emissions reductions, in these eligible areas are considered when calculating the cost-effectiveness of the project.

14. **How can you have average passenger trip length of 4.6 miles but can't have greater than 3 miles to the furthest pickup location?**

   The maximum distance is a radius of 3 miles from a transit hub. However, a vehicle may travel 4.6 miles because the path to transit may increase to pick up multiple passengers on the way to transit.

15. **Would you consider more than 3 miles for the "last-mile" connection? We have large worksites that are approximately 5-6 miles from the nearest transit hub.**

   This program is meant to support projects that provide cost-effective first- and last-mile connections to transit. Please contact us regarding your project prior to applying.

Funding, Eligible Costs, & Cost-Effectiveness

16. **What is the matching fund requirement? Can fares or TFCA County Program Manager funds be used as match?**

   The matching fund requirement is a minimum of 10% of Eligible Costs. Fares can be used as match, but TFCA County Program Manager funds cannot be awarded to the same project and thus cannot be used as match.

17. **Microtransit platform providers (e.g., TransLoc) provide a process where they assess the demand for microtransit service and then design the routes. The specific software allows dynamic changes**

based on demand. Would this initial study period be considered "feasibility & planning studies" and thus not be eligible?

This depends on the extent of planning that is needed to determine whether you have a project. If this assessment involves a relatively quick simulation to determine the routes to implement the project and occurs after the funding agreement is executed, then this can be considered as Eligible Cost. Applicants should carefully consider which costs they want to include as Eligible Costs without making the grant administration too onerous.

If this assessment is part of the planning process that would need to be completed prior to applying (and therefore before the funding agreement is fully executed) to determine whether you have a project, then it is not an eligible cost.

18. **If the project does not achieve the anticipated ridership and the final report shows the project was not cost-effective, would the grantee be required to pay back any funds?**

    If the project was implemented as required in the contract and the final report shows that the project was not cost-effective, the project sponsor would not be required to pay back funds. However, if the project was not implemented as required in the contract, funds would need to be repaid.

19. **Could you describe the cost-effectiveness calculation in more detail?**

    Cost-effectiveness will be calculated by Air District staff. The cost-effectiveness is calculated by dividing the amount of TFCA dollars awarded (not the total project cost) by the emissions reduced. Emission reduced is the difference between emissions generated without the project and the emissions generated with the project. Only TFCA dollars put into the project are used in the calculation, regardless of the total project cost. To put this into perspective, if an applicant is asking for fewer TFCA dollars (and thus will have more match funding) for a project with the same amount of emissions reduced, then that project is more cost-effective, and therefore more competitive and will be ranked higher.

20. **How do you estimate the cost-effectiveness of a project before you submit?**

    Once you have saved (and before you submit) your online application along with the required data, notify the Air District that you would like an estimate of your project's cost-effectiveness. Staff will review your draft application and contact you regarding your project's cost-effectiveness.

Vehicles

21. **What type of vehicles qualify for funding? Do they need to be ADA accessible?**

    Vehicles must have a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) that is 26,000 pounds or lighter. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their project meets all federal, state, and local regulatory requirements, including ADA. If your agency provides an equivalent service that is ADA accessible, project vehicles may or may not be required to be ADA accessible. Please check with your legal counsel on this topic.

22. **How does an applicant provide the Executive Order (EO) for new vehicles?**

Applicants should determine the make and model of the new vehicles before applying. The EO for all vehicles can be found online. Applicants may discuss vehicle options with Air District staff. Air District staff can determine whether the project is cost-effective based on each option. If the project uses existing vehicles, both registration and EO will be required.

Other Application & Administrative Requirements

23. **What would you consider to be a representative sample for the user surveys?**

The survey should sample potential users of the service (e.g., employees of the employment sites that the service will be serving, or residents of the service area) and the sample size should be large enough to assess statistical significance.

24. **What is the difference between a letter of commitment and a resolution?**

This depends on your agency's requirement. If your Executive Officer is authorized by your agency to commit matching funds and to apply, then the Air District would accept a letter of commitment. However, if your agency requires Board approval or Board action, a resolution is required.

25. **How long is the records retention period?**

The retention period is three years after Air District's final payment to the Project Sponsor.

26. **Is it acceptable to partner with multiple eligible candidates on more than one application?**

Any entity (e.g., congestion management agency) may partner with multiple eligible applicants on more than one application.

Note that:

- Each public agency is limited to a total of $1.5 million TFCA grant funds awarded directly by the Air District for all projects per calendar year. This amount may be adjusted for a project that involves multiple agencies. TFCA funds received through the County Program Manager Fund are not counted toward this limit;
- Since this program is competitive, the applications submitted may compete with each other; and
- Depending on the type of project you propose, the Air District may evaluate these applications as one project.