Vehicle Trip Reduction Grant Program

Q&A - Last Updated on January 14, 2020

The Program is no longer accepting new Transportation Services projects. Applications for Bicycle Facility projects are still being accepted.

This document includes questions received by the Air District regarding the Vehicle Trip Reduction Grant Program Guidance ("Guidance") since December 11, 2019, and responses.

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General Eligibility

Q1: Is there a list of eligible applicants to partner with?

For Pilot Service projects, see Appendix A in the Guidance for a list of eligible applicants. For all other project categories, all public agencies in the Bay Area are eligible to apply. The Air District does not maintain a contact list of public agencies for this purpose.

Q2: Is a public school or a local city eligible to apply to this Program?

Yes, public schools and local governments (e.g., cities) may apply as a lead applicant for all project categories except for Pilot Services.

Q3: Is an agency eligible to apply if it hasn't satisfied all current obligations specified in a funding agreement for a different TFCA-funded project, e.g., has missing reports, or if it received a finding from a prior audit?

No, all applicants must be in good standing with the Air District to be eligible. This includes meeting all applicable contractual requirements for any project funded by the Air District, not having failed a TFCA fiscal or performance audit in the past 3 years, and being in compliance with all local, state, and federal air quality regulations.

Q4: Can an agency cancel or change the scope of a previously funded TFCA project and reapply for funding through this Program?

No, previously funded TFCA projects, regardless of whether or not they were or are going to be cancelled or modified, are not eligible for funding from this Program.

Application & Award Process

Q5: Will applications received by the deadline be evaluated as a group?

Yes, applications received by the initial deadline of 4 PM, September 10, 2019, will be evaluated, scored and ranked on a competitive basis.

Q6: What does "commence" mean in the Guidance?

For purposes of this Program, “commence” means a tangible preparatory action taken in connection with the project’s operation or implementation, for which the project sponsor can provide documentation of the commencement date and action performed. Examples of “Commence” actions include, but are not limited to, the issuance of a purchase order to secure project vehicles and equipment; commencement of shuttle/feeder bus and ridesharing service; or the delivery of the award letter for a construction contract.

Q7: How is cost-effectiveness calculated? And how can a project improve its cost-effectiveness?

The calculation is: the amount of TFCA funds requested or awarded divided by the total criteria pollutant emissions reduced by the project. Air District staff will be calculating this value using the information submitted in the project application. Factors that may help improve your project's cost-effectiveness score are described in Table 4 of the Guidance.

Q8: What are the minimum roles and responsibilities of the applicant as lead agency?

The lead agency is responsible for submitting the application and all required documentation. If the project is selected for an award, the lead agency will become the "Awardee/Project Sponsor" whose responsibilities include signing the Funding Agreement and ensuring all contractual requirements and obligations are met (insurance, record keeping, match funds, reporting, etc.)

Q9: Should copies of letter of support or partnership agreements be included in applications?

Yes, copies of letters of commitment or partnership agreements describing each partner's level of involvement of the proposed project should be submitted with the application. Note that applications may be rejected if copes of letters of support/commitment or partnership agreements from essential project partners are missing.

Q10: Do all project partners need to attend a pre-application workshop to meet the requirement of attending a workshop?

Although all project partners are encouraged to attend a pre-application workshop, only a representative of the lead applicant is required to attend a workshop. The purpose of the pre-application workshop is for interested parties to be aware of the key requirements and obligations and to provide them the opportunity to ask questions.

Q11: Is pre-application data required for all projects including those that do not yet exist?

Yes, pre-application data is required for all project categories. See Table 2 in the Guidance for specific requirements. If the application contains any assumptions, provide documentation (e.g., relevant excerpts from reports, studies) that supports and clarifies the assumptions.

Q12: Can applicants use different survey questions than those shown in the Guidance?

Maybe, so long as the results of the survey/questionnaire provide the same level of detailed information (in the form of raw data) that would be obtained using the sample survey or questionnaire provided in the Guidance. More questions may be added for the agency's own use.

Q13: Is there a required minimum number of responses for the user survey results?

No, but the sample size should be large enough to satisfy statistical significance.

Q14: Should resolutions, letter of commitment, or both be included in the application? Will drafts be accepted?

Each applicant is responsible for following their agency's internal procedures with respect to submitting grant applications and committing agency funds and resources for a proposed project. Applicants should follow their own procedures for determining whether the person who will sign the letter of commitment has the authority to submit a grant application on behalf of their agency, or whether a resolution is required to authorize the agency's submittal.

If resolutions are required by the applicant's agency, a draft resolution will not be accepted. Signed resolutions must be received by the Air District within 30 calendar days after the initial application deadline for applications submitted during the competitive phase and must be included in applications that are submitted after the competitive deadline.

Note that the Air District will be reviewing applications to ensure that all referenced partners have submitted a letter of support or resolution and may reject applications that have any missing documentation from essential partners.

Q15:If the project will undertake both a CEQA and NEPA analysis, can applicants submit just the CEQA clearance for our environmental approval?

No, applicants must complete all required applicable environmental approvals before applying. If the project is exempted, please submit the categorical/statutory exemption.

Q16:What does it mean to be in a CARE Area or PDA?

Although projects are not required to be located in CARE area and/or PDAs, projects that are will be prioritized for funding.

To determine whether a project is located within a CARE area or PDA:

- ***Bicycle Facility projects,*** the proposed path or equipment must be installed ***within*** an area designated by the Community Air Risk Evaluation Program (CARE) as being an Impacted Area, and/or within an area designated as a Priority Development Area (PDA).

- ***Transportation Service projects,*** either the commuters served, or the ***mass-transit hub,*** must be located within a CARE Impacted Area and/or PDA.

Implementation & Operations

Q17:Where can the implementation reports, operation reports, reimbursements forms, and other reports be found? How will they be submitted?

The Air District will post the report forms online. Reports may be submitted electronically, and hard copy reports will also be accepted.

Q18:If awarded, how does a project acknowledge the Air District as a funding source?

The Air District must be acknowledged in printed and electronic materials describing the project. Examples include, but are not limited to, acknowledgement in brochures, handbooks, newsletters, press releases, and by affixing the Air District logo on any equipment funded through the Program or vehicles and/or equipment being used to provide the TFCA-funded service. Copies of the Air District logo will be provided along with the funding agreement for this purpose.

Funding & Eligible Costs

Q19:How can applicants know how much TFCA funding their project qualifies for?

Consider the following factors when estimating the amount of funding requested:

1. The requested amount plus funding from other sources may not exceed the actual cost to launch and operate the project for the duration of the proposed project term.
2. The requested amount may not exceed 90% of the total eligible cost, i.e. the Project Sponsor commits to providing at least 10% of the total eligible costs ("matching funds") from a non-Air District source.
3. The requested amount plus all other TFCA Regional Fund awards may not exceed $1.5 million; per agency per calendar year.
4. The requested amount cannot be below $50,000 but should be as low as possible to make a project more competitive.
5. In addition, for electronic bicycle locker, each bicycle parking space created qualifies for up to $2,500 if located at transit stations, and $2,000 for all other locations. For secure bicycle racks, each bicycle parking space created qualifies for up to $75.

Q20:Can this grant funding be used in conjunction with other grants?

Maybe. This grant funding may be used in conjunction with other grants and funding sources as long as the other funding sources do not take credit for the emissions reduced from the proposed project. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that there are no conflicts with their use of matching funds. An example of a funding source that may not be used in conjunction is the TFCA County Program Manager Fund.

Q21:What is the anticipated date the funding agreements are expected to be sent to awardees?

Generally, proposed funding agreements will be sent to awardees for signature within 30 calendar days after an application has been approved for award. This may take between 60 to 90 days after the date the complete application was submitted. For more information, see Table 5: Tentative Schedule of the Guidance.

Q22:What costs are eligible for marketing and outreach materials?

Eligible marketing and outreach costs include hourly labor and materials costs, e.g., printing, postage. All proposed costs must be directly and solely related to the project and must be itemized and described in the application.
Applicants requesting funds for outreach and marketing must submit documentation of estimated labor costs with their application, including a statement of duties and salary documentation for each staff member assigned to the project, hourly rate, and allocation of time to each of the duties. Alternatively, applicants can propose specific marketing events for which they will be seeking reimbursement from the Air District, and a line item budget. Project sponsors of all awarded projects will be required to submit documentation with all reimbursement requests clearly showing the actual time spent by staff or contractor on marketing activities and staff's hourly rate.

Q23:Are the costs for conducting surveys, reporting or supplemental performance validation considered eligible for reimbursement?

No, neither costs associated with completing the application nor administering selected projects are eligible for reimbursement. For a list of eligible costs and examples of ineligible costs, please refer to pages 13-14 of the Guidance.

Q24:Are the maximum cost effectiveness limits in table 3 the same as project funding limits?

No, the maximum cost effectiveness limits, provided in Table 3 of the Guidance, refer to the maximum funding amount that can be awarded *per ton* of emissions reduced from the project. Cost effectiveness is determined by Air District staff using project data provided in the application.

Q25:Will there be any more TFCA funding this calendar year?

This the only solicitation anticipated to be offered for trip reduction projects this fiscal year (ending on June 30, 2020). TFCA also currently is accepting funding for projects that deploy medium and heavy duty zero emissions vehicles and charging infrastructure for fleets. A solicitation for light duty zero-emissions vehicles and publicly available infrastructure may open later this fiscal year.

Transportation Service Projects

Q26:Why do all transportation service projects require a financial sustainability plan?

Since TFCA funding is not able to fund proposed service perpetually, applicants must demonstrate how any project will be sustainable on an ongoing basis.

Q27:Do transportation service projects need to run exactly from 5–10 am and 3–7 pm to qualify?

No, a project may operate outside of hours of peak commute (5 am-10 am and 3 pm-7 pm) or part of the hours of peak commute. However, only trips reduced during hours of peak commute (and resulting emission reductions) will be considered as part of the cost-effectiveness calculation and only services provided during those hours are eligible for funding.

Q28:For Pilot Service projects, are both a User Survey and a Questionnaire required to be submitted for the application?

No, applicants may submit either a User Survey or a questionnaire for Pilot Service projects. However, an application with a questionnaire that does not contain complete supporting documentation are considered incomplete and will not be considered for award.

Q29:How many User Survey responses are required to be submitted for the application?

We recommend applicants to gather a statistically significant number of surveys to better represent their usage or potential usage. A larger number of survey respondents also helps supports the projects' demand.

Q30:What is "on-demand" and "new technology" for Pilot Service projects?

An o*n-demand system* can be either a fixed route with an on-demand schedule, a flexible route with a fixed schedule, or a flexible route with an on-demand schedule.
N*ew technology* is a system that facilitates on-demand transportation service (e.g., a mobile app).

These systems are expected to enable a pilot service project to provide more reliable, convenient, and efficient first- and last-mile connection services to mass transit as an alternative to fixed-route, fixed schedule shuttle services, and thus encourage more commuters to switch from single-occupancy driving to using public transportation.

Q31:For Existing Ridesharing, can you clarify what are "financial transit" subsidies?

There are many different types of financial transit subsidies. For example, a financial transit subsidy can provide a per ride incentive that reduces the cost for each trip taken or be provided to reduce the cost of monthly transit pass. To be eligible for TFCA funding, programs that offer financial transit subsidies must be available to the general public; they may not be limited only to employees of the project sponsor organization.

Q32:What does the executive order for engine or retrofit device mean and require?

An Executive Order is issued by the California Air Resource Board to certify an engine family in combination with one or more evaporative families. The information in the Executive Order is used to calculate the cost-effectiveness of a project. More information about Executive Order is available at https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onroad/cert/cert.php#3 .

The engine tag ID, which can be found on the engine, may be used to look up the executive order specific to the engine. These executive orders can be found via the link available on the application. The link will open up the relevant CARB webpage explaining how to find the executive order for your vehicle type or device. Information on how to search for an executive order is available at https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onroad/cert/cert.php#4.

Here are the links for the engine and retrofit device:
https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onroad/cert/cert.php#6
https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/diesel/verdev/vt/cvt.htm

Q33:For Existing Shuttle Services, what information is needed to be included in a Letter of Concurrence from Transit Agencies?

Letters of concurrence should contain the following elements: 1) be from a transit agency that provides service in the area of the proposed route, 2) contain a statement that the proposed service does not conflict with existing service.

Bicycle Facility Projects

Q34:Why are Class-II and -III bikeways not eligible for this Program?

Given that TFCA funding is limited, recent studies and reports show that protected bikeways are more effective at encouraging motor vehicle drivers to switch to bicycling than Class-II and -III bikeways, so funding is currently limited to projects that are most likely to maximize emissions reduction.

Q35:Is conversion of an existing Class II or III bikeway to a Class-I or IV bikeway eligible?

Yes, as long as the project also meets all other Program requirements.

Q36:Are bicycle rack replacements eligible? What about skateboard and scooter racks?

The replacement of existing bicycle racks is not eligible. Although the funding may not be used to install parking that is exclusively for skateboards or scooters, it may be used for them so long as the racks can also accommodate bicycles.

Q37:For bicycle equipment that has a maintenance agreement, can the grant funding be used for maintenance costs after implementation?

No, maintenance costs are not an eligible cost for bicycle facilities. More information regarding eligible costs for bicycle facility project is available on page 13 of the Guidance.

Q38:How detailed should bicycle rack and locker location descriptions be in the application?

Bicycle facility locations should be identified at the address-level. A map is required to help clarify the location is required as part of the application.

Q39:Is there a pre-application data collection requirement for bicycle racks & e-lockers?

No, there is no pre-application data collection required for bicycle racks and e-lockers.

Q40:What do “daytime population” and “nighttime population” mean?

See https://www.census.gov/topics/employment/commuting/guidance/calculations.html for information on daytime and nighttime population.

Q41: Are there any recommendations on how the pre-construction counts should be conducted and what's required?

Pre-construction counts are required to establish a baseline before the project is constructed and will be used to compare results from post-construction counts from awarded projects. Pre-construction counts may be conducted manually or using automatic machine counters.

Pre-construction counts should be conducted during the week of September 9 through 15, 2019, for at least two hours on each day**:**

RECOMMENDED: 5-7 PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, and 12 noon – 2PM on Saturday.
SECONDARY: 7 AM to 7 PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, and Saturday.

The Air District will accept pre-construction counts conducted on a different period as long as the methodology follows the guidance in the *National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project: Instructions*. **Results from counts may be submitted after the initial application deadline *but must be received by the Air District no later than September 24, 2019*.**

For new bikeways, the pre-construction bike count may be conducted at the closest adjacent roadway to the proposed bikeway or the existing bikeway the new bikeway is connecting to.

At a minimum, the pre-construction counts must count bicyclists and may include counts of other types of active modes of travel as long as the results are differentiated by mode (e.g., cyclists, pedestrians, scooters).

Screenline counts are required and intersection counts are optional. Although the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Screenline Forms asks surveyors to identify the gender of the bicyclists and pedestrians, it is not relevant for the purpose of this Program. Therefore, results submitted to the Air District should not include gender information.

For more information on how to collect counts please refer to the *National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project: Instructions* and *Forms.*

While Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data is required to be submitted with the application, motor vehicle counts are not required but may be submitted with the application (as Additional Information) to substantiate the need for the proposed project.

Q42: Are there any specific requirements for the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data for the bikeway's adjacent/parallel to major arterial, such as methodology or date of count? How recent does the AADT need to be?

The purpose of AADT data is to estimate the amount of potential single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) drivers that would switch over to biking. The Air District **does not** expect an applicant to complete a traffic study to obtain this number. An applicant may contact the local city or county traffic engineering department, public works department, or community development office in the area where the street is located to find the most recent AADT data. Other places this data may be found include state transportation agencies, CEQA documents, and city general plans. Please include information on when this data was collected. *Data from within 18 months is recommend but older data may be accepted if more recent data is not available.*

Q43:Do applicants need to project the future bike volumes for the application?

No. Projections of future bike volumes are not required as part of the application, however applicants may respond to the optional question in the application about anticipated demand and how on-road vehicle emissions will be reduced. Air District staff will use other required data and information that is submitted via the application (i.e., AADT) to estimate potential bike volumes.