

## Community Transit Grant Program 2023 (Ideas...)

The Community Transit Grant Program is MassDOT's annual funding opportunity for projects expanding mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. Transit authorities, municipalities, Councils on Aging, and nonprofits are eligible to apply for funding to operate a transportation service, for funding for "mobility management" projects such as travel training, or for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. We will use this newsletter to announce our grant schedule and training opportunities. In the meantime, check out our [website](#) for more information and examples of great work by past grantees. We also welcome you to [reach out anytime](#) if you would like to brainstorm whether your idea would be a good fit for this funding stream.

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<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-transit-grant-program-details-and-eligibility>

The Community Transit Grant Program is an annual, competitive grant program to expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. Transit authorities [MWRTA and?], municipalities [Sudbury, and?], Councils on Aging, non-profit organizations, and private operators of public transit (shared-ride) services can apply for funding to operate transportation services, support mobility management initiatives, or receive wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

**Annual schedule:** The grant typically opens in the spring, with applications due in late spring. Award announcements come in the fall, with funding available in January. Vehicles are typically delivered the following June - about a year after the application is submitted.

### Eligible projects:

All projects must center the needs of older adults and people with disabilities, and all projects must respond to a need identified in your region's [Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan](#). Three types of projects are eligible:

- Operating
- Mobility management
- Accessible vehicles

**Local match:** The grant requires a local match of 50% for an operating project, 20% for a mobility management project, and 20% for a vehicle or other capital.

**Funding streams:** The Community Transit Grant Program is MassDOT's consolidated grant program that awards two streams of funding:

- Federal 5310 funding - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
- State Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) funding

MAP funds are used only for vehicles, while 5310 funds are used for vehicles as well as operating and mobility management projects.

Strong applications and projects incorporate these best practices:

1. Respond to unmet local or regional transportation need
2. [Coordinate with partners](#) across sectors to build on – not duplicate – existing transportation options
3. [Include riders](#) in project planning, design, implementation, and evaluation
4. Prioritize transportation for older adults and people with disabilities while offering unused seats to the general public

You can apply to the Community Transit Grant Program for funding to operate a transportation service that expands mobility for older adults and people with disabilities:

- The grant can pay up to 50% of the cost of operating your service, so you need a local match to cover the other 50%.
- Fares or donations that you collect from riders cannot count towards your local match. Federal rules require fares to be deducted from the project budget.
- Each grant covers one year of operations. You can apply for continued funding after a year, but it is not guaranteed.

Types of operating projects could include:

- Demand-response above and beyond what transit authorities are required to provide through the Americans with Disabilities Act
- [Regionalized service among multiple Councils on Aging](#)
- [A community shuttle](#)
- [On-demand transportation](#)
- [Volunteer driver programs](#)

[Mobility management](#) projects are other ways of expanding mobility for older adults and people with disabilities, other than operating a transportation service directly. Examples include:

- Paying the salary of a staff person who helps older adults and people with disabilities learn about and learn to use local community transportation services

- Paying the salary of a [travel trainer](#), who helps older adults and people with disabilities learn to ride fixed-route public transit
- Capital expenses that expand mobility, such as software to allow a service to provide on-demand rides so riders can take trips without planning ahead
- Convening agencies to collaborate on community transportation issues, to create an environment that fosters coordination of services

*From MART application (2020 resubmitted):*

...The purpose of this project is to create an **On-Demand MicroTransit service to serve the communities** of Bolton, Boxborough, Littleton and Stow utilizing **existing** MART paratransit resources and 3<sup>rd</sup> party transportation providers. The service will efficiently provide on-demand shared rides (when possible) through a **pool of existing NEMT, Workforce and Public Transit resources to residents in the MAPC region** and beyond in areas such as Fitchburg/Leominster and Devens.

**Other funding:**

[Efficiency and Regionalization Grant Program](#)

- Funding for efforts to regionalize services
- Affiliated with the [Community Compact](#), which offers technical assistance to cities and towns that pledge to implement [best practices](#) such as transportation, age-friendly policies, and other topics

Usually annual; in 2022, opened in January and closed in February [Piloting a first mile/last mile service in Beverly](#)