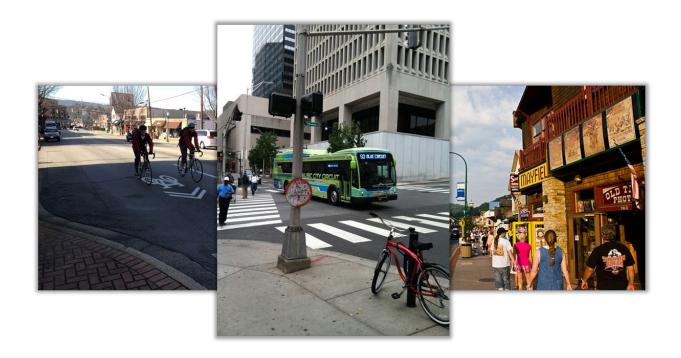


Multimodal Access Grant

2024 Guidelines



Notices of Intent to Apply must be received by Monday, May 13, 2024, at 11:59 PM (Central)



Multimodal Access Grant 2024 Guidelines

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Multimodal Access Grant 2024 Guidelines

Multimodal Access Grant Program

Multimodal facilities are an essential transportation need for people across Tennessee. With half of all trips in the United States occurring within three miles or less, walking, bicycling, and transit facilities are central to the continued growth and success of our towns and cities. In 2013, TDOT set aside state funds to create the Multimodal Access Grant in order to support the transportation needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit-users through infrastructure projects that address accessibility and existing gaps along state routes and at transit hubs.

Applicants awarded via the competitive Multimodal Access Grant process may receive up to 90% or 95% in State grant funds, depending on the Distressed and At-Risk economic status of the county in which the project is located. Applicants are responsible for a minimum 5% (Distressed and At-Risk counties) or 10% (all other counties) local match. The State portion of a Multimodal Access project may not exceed \$1,187,000 for Distressed and At-Risk counties, or \$1,125,000 for all other counties.

The Multimodal Access Grant is a competitive grant and submission of a project application does not guarantee a project will be awarded funding.

Eligibility for the Multimodal Access Grant Program

Applicant Eligibility

Cities, Counties, and Towns in Tennessee are eligible to submit applications for the Multimodal Access Grant. Awarded applicants will sign a grant agreement committing the Municipal or County government to a reimbursable five or ten percent (5% or 10%) local match and ongoing maintenance responsibility for the completed project.

To be considered for award, local agencies must be current on any payments owed to the Department on any other project. Upon review of submitted Notices of Intent to Apply, Department staff will reach out to make payment arrangements as needed. Applications will not be accepted from local agencies having any unresolved unpaid balance owed to the Department.

Communities may work with a consultant, MPO/RPO, or external agency to develop a project application, but the municipality or county is viewed as the lead agency for the project. At least one municipal or county representative should be identified as a contact to be included in all correspondence throughout the application process.

Additionally, applicants using consultants at the application phase are advised to consult the *Local Government Guidelines for the Management of Federal and State Funded Transportation Projects* on the Local Programs Development Office's <u>Documents and Forms</u> page. This manual describes the process for procuring consultant services if awarded.

Eligible Improvement Types

Multimodal Access Grant funding is available to improve transportation access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users along State Routes using the following improvement types:

- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian crossing improvements, including high-visibility crosswalks, curb ramps, signs and pavement markings, signalization, and median refuge islands
- Bicycle facilities (including on-road bike lanes/cycle tracks)
- Multi-use paths (pedestrian plus bicycle traffic) located within the transportation corridor. All such paths must be a minimum of 10-feet wide.
- Transit stop amenities (shelters, benches, sidewalks, curb ramps, lighting)
- Complete streets, road diet, or traffic calming measures
- Bicycle, pedestrian and transit-related improvements that address requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Pedestrian-scale lighting (will not rank highly as a standalone project, but is eligible as a project component)
- Other improvements which improve access for multimodal users

Note that utility relocation is *only* eligible as a reimbursable cost if the utility is located on private property, or if the need to move the utility is identified in an urban revitalization plan.

Ineligible Improvement Types

Project elements below are ineligible for the Multimodal Access Grant. If proposed as part of the project, the application will be considered ineligible and not proceed to scoring.

- Components that primarily benefit motor vehicles such as widenings, additions of turn lanes, and traffic signalization
- Operating costs
- Rolling stock
- Preventative maintenance
- Recreational or non-transportation infrastructure

Scope of Work Requirements

All projects must:

- Be new multimodal facilities or rehabilitation of existing multimodal facilities*
- Address a transportation need
- Be located on a state route (small deviations for connectivity are permissible)
- Contiguous, where all improvements are connected along a roadway
- Include construction phase (may also include planning, design and right of way phases)**
- Meet ADA and PROWAG (Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way) standards

^{*}Projects only upgrading or rehabilitating existing infrastructure are less competitive than those building new connections.

^{**} While all listed phases of work are eligible, projects having already completed significant preliminary engineering or that are ready for construction are likely to be more competitive.

Funding Considerations

Reimbursement Funding Structure

The Multimodal Access Grant is a reimbursement program. Awardees are required to pay 100% of all project invoices up-front, prior to seeking reimbursement from TDOT of the 90% or 95% state share. Funding will be capped at the amount initially awarded for a specific project.

Match Requirements

Multimodal Access projects located in economically Distressed or At-Risk counties can receive up to 95% in State funds up to a maximum of \$1,187,500. Multimodal Access projects located in all other counties can receive up to 90% in State funds up to a maximum of \$1,125,000. The applicant is responsible for a minimum 5% or 10% match, depending on the economic status of the county in which the project is located. The local match must be a cash match and project sponsors must indicate an ability to contribute the budgeted local match in the application.

If construction costs for an awarded project exceed the original estimate provided in the final application, the grantee will have the following options:

- 1. Request a scope reduction to fit within the budget,
- 2. Secure additional funds to complete the project, or
- 3. Cancel the project. In this case, the grantee shall be obligated to repay TDOT for any expenses invoiced against a project that is cancelled before completion.

Avoiding Overages through Identification of Potential Scope Reductions

Applications which identify possible scope reductions (or phasing within the project limits) will be scored favorably. These applications illustrate an ability to modify project scope if initial budget estimates are insufficient while still providing meaningful infrastructure improvements.

Competing in Multiple Multimodal Access Grant Cycles

Awarded applicants may apply for additional funding in future years of the program to fund later phases of an awarded project, or they may compete for funding for an unrelated project.

Resubmitted applications may be given favorable scoring status if those applications were highly ranked, but not awarded in the previous submission. Non-awarded applicants are encouraged to consult the Office of Multimodal Planning to identify strategies to improve the application competitiveness.

Applicants who have received prior awards may lose points in the scoring process if they have a locally managed project through TDOT that is facing significant delays or other project delivery challenges.

Application Process

Notice of Intent to Apply

Submitting a Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI) is the first step in competing for a 2024 Multimodal Access Grant award. The NOI collects general project information and allows the Office of Multimodal Planning to assess whether the project fulfills minimum eligibility requirements. The NOI form and detailed instructions for completing this document are posted on the Multimodal Access Grant website.

Applicants must submit their completed NOI via an e-mail to tdot.multimodalplanning@tn.gov. NOIs must be received by May 13, 2024, at 11:59pm Central.

After review by the Office of Multimodal Planning, applicants will either 1.) be invited to submit a full application, or 2.) be notified that the project does not meet basic eligibility requirements.

More detail regarding the NOI review process can be found in the NOI instructions document, but eligibility at this stage will consider:

- 1. Whether project is on a State Route
- 2. Whether the project is primarily for transportation, and
- 3. Whether the full scope of the project benefits bicyclists, pedestrians and/or transit users.
- 4. Whether the local agency is in good financial standing with TDOT.

Invitation to Apply

If a project is considered eligible after NOI review, the applicant will be invited to submit a full application via <u>eGrants</u>. Full applications will request significant additional information. If a project is awarded, the submitted application will serve as the foundation for a contract for the awarded project. As such, applicants should develop the application as much as possible when submitting the project. A PDF template of the updated 2024 application will be posted on the Multimodal Access Grant website when eligible applicants are invited to apply.

The NOI review does not assess project competitiveness, and an invitation to submit a full application does <u>not</u> imply that a project will be awarded. Being invited to apply simply means that the project is eligible to compete for funding. Full applications will go through a formal scoring process to determine the most competitive project submissions. Based on funding availability, only a portion of invited applications are expected to be awarded.

Supporting Documentation

When submitting a full application in eGrants, there will opportunities to support the application with relevant materials, including project maps, detailed project budgets, planning documents supporting the need for the project, identification of supportive policies adopted by the

municipality, and any other relevant information.

The Multimodal Access Grant is a reimbursable program. Local governments are required to pay 100% of all project invoices up-front prior to seeking reimbursement of the 95% or 90% state share.

In addition to the types of supporting documentation described above, applications are required to be accompanied by a letter of support from the county or municipal Mayor or legislative body which includes a written acknowledgment of the 5% or 10% local match, and future maintenance responsibility.

Project Selection

Selection Process Overview

Applications that do not enter requested data for all required fields, provide all required supporting materials, or that include ineligible items will be removed from consideration. Complete applications will enter a formal scoring process, with two primary components: 1.) Feasibility Review, and 2.) Scoring Committee Review.

Feasibility Review

Before reaching the scoring committee, applications will be reviewed for feasibility. The feasibility review criteria are discussed on page 10 and 11. In summary, this feasibility review will look at:

- The technical ease of the project, including impacts to bridges or other structures, significant right of way acquisition needs, rail line impacts, significant grade or drainage challenges, or the need for significant utility relocation
- The political, community and planning support for the project
- The financial feasibility, including review of the budget against scope and timeline. This review will include consideration of whether project risks have been identified and adequately mitigated against in the budget
- Relevant local experience. This will include consideration of applicant's prior project management, including number, scope and outcomes

The 2024 application includes space for applicants to discuss strategies for managing any identified challenges. Applicants who identify strategies for addressing these concerns will be prioritized over those without strategies identified.

Applications with feasibility concerns at the feasibility review stage may be removed from consideration without entering the scoring committee process.

Scoring Committee Review

Applications that are complete and have no major feasibility concerns will be reviewed by a scoring committee. The scoring criteria are discussed on page 12 and 13. In summary, the scoring committee will look at:

- The safety benefits of the project. The committee will look for identifiable safety benefits from the proposal
- The connectivity benefits of the project. The committee will look for evidence that the facilities will be used to link users to places they want to go
- The demonstrated local priority given the project. The committee will look for evidence that there is local support for the proposal now, and that multimodal facilities have been planned

• The Economic impact of the project. The committee will look for evidence that the proposal will benefit the area in ways other than safety and connectivity, such as whether diverse and under-resourced populations will benefit

Membership of the scoring committee will not be advertised publicly, but will include primarily TDOT staff from various professional backgrounds, including at minimum both planning and engineering perspectives.

Applicants **should not** assume members of the scoring committee will have knowledge of the project or of the community in which the project will be constructed. *Any safety or connectivity needs faced by the community that are viewed as broadly known, or obvious, should still be described in the application at the appropriate level of detail, with the assumption that scorers will have no prior knowledge of the need.*

The final scoring committee recommendations will then be escalated to the Commissioner of Transportation for review and approval.

Scoring in MPO/TPO and RPO areas

The scoring committee will be divided into two sub-committees. One subcommittee will score projects submitted by communities in MPO/TPO areas. The other will score projects submitted by communities in RPO areas. Projects from MPO/TPO areas will compete with other projects from MPO/TPO areas, and projects from RPO areas will compete with other projects from RPO areas.

Scoring criteria will be similar across the MPO/TPO and RPO scoring categories, but scoring weights will differ slightly. The MPO/TPO-area scoring process will place additional weight on projects supported by prior planning efforts and adoption of supportive policy, and RPO scoring will place higher weight on economic development.

Geographic Balance

Scoring results will be the primary factor determining awarded projects. However, in support of TDOT's role as an agency supporting the entire State of Tennessee, final project selection may also consider the geographic distribution of awards across the State.

Feasibility Review

Criteria	Guidance
Technical - Does the project have significant technical difficulties? Does the application adequately address them?	Describe whether this project has any technical challenges, how they will be overcome, and any expected impact on timeframes. Describe any preliminary work that has been undertaken. Describe what liaison will be required. Describe whether the project overlaps with any other projects. Examples of typical technical difficulties include modifications to bridges and structures, railroad coordination, moving utilities, right-of-way acquisition, and drainage issues. Almost all projects will experience at least one of these, so showing a demonstrated understanding of the issues
Political, Community and Planning Support -	and a plan to overcome them can still result in a favorable review. Demonstrate the support the project has at multiple levels, including impacted people, the community and large, and elected and non-elected officials.
Does the project have strong support at multiple levels? Is this project identified in State and/or Local	Provide documents showing the applicant has robust community engagement, both generally and specifically for this project. Include supporting planning documents (or relevant pages) that show
Plans? Has the municipality adopted policies supporting multimodal	alignment of the project with state and local plans, as well as coordination between local agencies. Examples of supportive plans include local neighborhood or community
infrastructure? Has the project received robust public input?	plans, comprehensive plans, corridor studies, major thoroughfare plans, MPO plans, TDOT Long Range Plan, TDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, etc. Include any supportive multimodal infrastructure policies.
	Examples of supportive policies are: Complete Streets Policies, Vision Zero Policy, Developer Sidewalk Requirement Ordinances, etc.
Financial – Is the project budget complete, robust, comprehensive and	Provide a budget that is detailed, complete, and realistic. Where challenges are identified in the application, ensure the budget reflects those challenges, and covers the cost of mitigation.
realistic? Are identified challenges adequately funded? Is the project feasible	Where site photos illustrate a barrier or challenge, ensure the budget includes the necessary work to remove or mitigate that issue. Ensure the budget includes the cost of everything proposed in the
within the proposed timeframe?	application narrative, drawings, and renderings. Ensure that the budget accounts for inflationary costs at the future targeted construction letting date.
Local Experience - Does the applicant have a good track	If applicable, applicants with experience of previous project partnerships with TDOT will be reviewed for ease of delivery, outcomes, and speed of delivery.

record with similar projects, skilled staff, and access to necessary skills to	Applicants without previous TDOT project experience will not be penalized in this section but should demonstrate other applicable project management experience, staffing skills, and project completions.
ensure prompt project completion in accordance with statutory requirements?	Where project proposals have unique challenges, applicants should identify the staff resources and skills they have access to that will help address these issues.

Full Scoring Criteria

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Criteria	Guidance	MPO/ TPO Areas	RPO Areas
Safety - Does project address a history of bicycle or pedestrian crashes, or other unsafe condition for multimodal users?	Illustrate how this project will improve any unsafe condition and enhance pedestrian or bicyclist safety by 1.) documenting relevant crash history, 2.) describing unsafe conditions that exist 3.) supporting the description of unsafe conditions with data (police reports, school reports, photos, road safety audits, etc.), and 4.) clearly explaining how the suggested project countermeasures address the identified safety need.	30	30
Connectivity - Will the project contribute to an integrated transportation system linking activity centers such as transit, residential neighborhoods, low- income housing, medical centers, schools, retail, parks, & employment centers?	Demonstrate how the project will link the community's trip origins and destinations, clearly listing specific origins and destinations served by the project. Including a map that shows connections between various activity centers/residential is highly recommended. This map may also show land uses, identify landmarks, or otherwise include notations which help scorers understand the improved connectivity.	30	30
Local Priority – Is this project identified in State and/or Local Plans? Has the municipality adopted policies supporting multimodal infrastructure? Has the project received robust public input?	Include supporting planning documents (or relevant pages) that show alignment of the project with state and/or local plans, as well as coordination between local agencies. Applications that show comprehensive planning efforts will be prioritized. Projects with community support as documented at community meetings or other outreach efforts will be prioritized. Projects in communities with supportive multimodal infrastructure policies generally will also be prioritized. Examples of supportive plans include local neighborhood or community plans, comprehensive plans, corridor studies, major thoroughfare plans, MPO plans, TDOT Long Range Plan, TDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, etc. Examples of supportive policies are: Complete Streets Policies, Vision Zero Policy, Sidewalk Development Ordinances, etc.	25	15
Economic Impact - Will the proposed project support economic development? Will it	Applicants should explain how this project will specifically aid economic development in the community and support this argument with data when possible.	15	25

serve economically disadvantaged populations?	Additionally, applicants should describe whether the project addresses a transportation need for an economically disadvantaged population. Economically disadvantaged populations should be identified through data including Census Block Group data, or other services designated to assist specific disadvantaged populations. Identify potential origins and destinations connected by the proposed infrastructure that will connect useful services for economically disadvantaged populations. Applications from Distressed or At-Risk Counties, or those projects that	
	fall within an Opportunity Zone will be prioritized in this scoring category but should still give a full faith effort to answer these questions.	
	Maximum Points:	100

Attachment A: Post Award Information

Project Management Grant	Awarded projects will be locally managed and will follow the TDOT Locally Managed Projects Process. A successful grantee may opt to procure a consultant to manage any aspect of the project. Projects falling within Distressed and At-Risk counties may be offered TDOT Delivery of projects. After the award is made, the project sponsor will enter into a Grant Agreement with
Agreement	TDOT. The Grant Agreement identifies the responsibilities of both parties and establishes the required match to be paid by the sponsor agency. By entering into the agreement, the sponsor agrees to follow TDOT requirements and assume responsibility for the long-term maintenance of the project.
Local Project Manager	Sponsors are required to have a local project manager. Local project managers are responsible for the day-to-day management and administrative duties and advancing the project to completion. Sponsors can contract with a TDOT pre-qualified consultant. The cost of local project management by a consultant is an eligible project cost and should be included in the project budget. TDOT assigns a Program Monitor to each project who collaborates with the sponsor throughout the development of the project. TDOT Local Programs Monitors will provide the local project manager with technical assistance in such areas as funding eligibility, procurement, right-of-way acquisition and environmental permitting to keep the project moving forward in a timely manner and to ensure that federal and state laws, policies, and standards are met.
Environmental Documentation	The project will require an approved TEER document as outlined in the <u>Tennessee</u> <u>Environmental Procedures Manual</u> . TDOT will be responsible for completing the required environmental document and will submit applicable charges to the project for reimbursement by the grantee.
Design Standards	Projects must be in accordance with the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Rights of Way Guidelines (PROWAG), TDOT Design Standards, and all applicable state and federal statutes, standards, specifications and guidelines. Please refer to TDOT's Multimodal Project Scoping Manual and TDOT Roadway Design Guidelines-Section 9 (Multimodal Design).
Right-of-Way (ROW) Acquisition	Any ROW to be acquired must be done in compliance with the policy set forth under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. For more information, refer to Local Government Guidelines for the Management of Federal and State Funded Transportation Projects. For projects within the state highway ROW, municipalities are required to coordinate with TDOT's Regional Excess Land Committee.
Time Frame	Projects developed through the Multimodal Access grant program will vary in the time that it takes to have a completed project. A typical project will take 36 months from the time a grant agreement is signed until they go to construction.

Local Government Guidelines for the Management of Federal and State Funded Transportation Projects - All projects are developed in accordance with TDOT's Local Government Guidelines for the Management of Federal and State-Funded Transportation Projects. This guidebook can be found online at:

 $\underline{https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/programdevelopment/localprograms/documents-and-forms/LGG_Manual.pdf.}$

Attachment B: MPO/TPO Contact Information

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