Request for Proposals
2020 Ready-to-Launch Grants

- Has your community-based team developed a plan that involves an innovative transportation solution that improves the ability of low-income, elderly, and/or underserved community members to become more fully engaged in economic opportunities, improve their health and well-being, and/or become more integrated into their community?
- Has your team followed the [human-centered design process](#) in the development and testing of that plan to ensure that it will have the highest potential of success when implemented?
- Does your team have a high degree of confidence that the planned solution will effectively serve customers' needs, be operationally feasible, and be financially sustainable?
- Has your team developed a detailed operations plan for its solution and now is looking for funding and guidance in further testing that solution in a real-world application?

If your community can answer yes to any of these questions, then you are invited to apply for the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM)'s 2020 Ready-to-Launch Grants. Each grant of up to $75,000 will allow the community to continue testing its planned solution to allow low-income, elderly, and/or underserved community members to become more fully engaged in economic opportunities, improve their health and well-being, and/or become more integrated into their community. NCMM staff will provide technical assistance to the grantees throughout the implementation of these grants. The Ready-to-Launch grants are supported with funding from the Federal Transit Administration.

This application packet contains the goals and activities for the 2020 Ready-to-Launch Grants, as well as the necessary materials and instructions for submitting a complete application.

I. About the 2020 Community Mobility "Ready-to-Launch" Grants

Three communities will be competitively chosen to receive funding and technical assistance through the Ready-to-Launch opportunity.

A. Goals

- To allow communities to pilot an innovative transportation solution that will allow low-income, elderly, and/or underserved community members to become more fully engaged in economic opportunities, improve their health and well-being, and/or become more integrated into their community

- To guide communities in using this pilot opportunity to test and confirm the feasibility of innovative transportation solutions in real-world applications and learn where these solutions need to be further revised
- To provide communities with technical assistance throughout this pilot phase
- To guide community-based teams in gathering outcome data regarding their solution to use as they seek sustainable funding for long-term implementation
- To assist community-based teams in preparing to seek funding for a full-scale roll-out of their solutions

B. Target Population and Community

The target population will be the same or similar cohort of low-income, elderly, or underserved community members that the team focused on as they designed their solution in the planning phase. Applicants should fully describe their target population and why they chose that population.

Applicants will also define the "community" they addressed in their design process and will continue to address in this pilot phase. "Community" may include, but not be limited to, a formal or informally defined region, tribal nation, multi-county region, single county, city/town, neighborhood, or corridor. Note that the chosen community should present a manageable scope for the project; very large geographic areas may make the project more difficult to manage.

C. Focus Areas

Applicants must choose one focus area from among the three listed below:

- Assisting low-income, elderly, or underserved community members in becoming more fully engaged in economic opportunities
- Assisting low-income, elderly, or underserved community members in improving their health and well-being
- Assisting low-income, elderly, or underserved community members in becoming more integrated into their community

D. Eligible Lead Agencies

Eligible lead agencies must provide a DUNS number and be registered in the federal System for Award Management database. They must also be eligible recipients or subrecipients for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds under 49 U.S.C. Sections 5307, 5310, or 5311. Eligible subrecipients include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation. The applicant must have the capacity to successfully execute the project, and its partners should have the capacity to execute their roles successfully. The applicant should have no outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues that would make this a high-risk project.

E. Requirements for Applicants

Before submitting an application, the community-based team must be able to demonstrate the following regarding the solution it is proposing:

1. The solution being proposed is a new idea that grew out of the human-centered design planning process, not the expansion of an existing service.
2. The solution clearly addresses transportation equity with regard to the effect that transportation planning, investment, and operations have for low-income, elderly, and/or underserved individuals and supports the growth of transportation options to allow low-income community members achieve one of the following goals:
   a. become more fully engaged in economic opportunities
   b. improve their health and well-being
   c. become more integrated into their community
3. The community-based team that developed the solution did so with representation from the target population and at least one mobility professional from a public or nonprofit transportation agency.
4. The team can document that it used the human-centered design (or "design thinking") process or a similar process that involves the same activities, as outlined in the Creating Innovative Transportation Solutions course developed by NCMM. Those steps are also described further below.
5. The team can document that it has done initial testing of its assumptions related to the planned solution, in these three areas: 1) customer desirability, 2) operational feasibility, and 3) financial viability. Assumption testing is defined as the surfacing of key assumptions underlying the new solution concept and assessing their validity using available data and end user/stakeholder feedback.
6. The team has developed an operations plan that provides very detailed steps on exactly how the solution would be implemented.

F. Human-Centered Design Process

Applicants must provide documentation (written description, results, images, etc.) that its team engaged in the following steps of the human-centered design process:

- Implemented primary research with the target population related to one or more of the three focus areas for these grants: (1) becoming more fully engaged in economic opportunities; (2) improving health and well-being; and/or (3) becoming more integrated into their community. Primary research means research data gathered by the applicant from within the community, from the target population, and from those who serve the target population.
- Gathered secondary data related to the focus area. Secondary research means information gathered from previously conducted studies.
- As a team, analyzed the primary and secondary data to develop insights as to the needs of the target population and what type of solutions would work best for them.
- Implemented one or more idea-generation sessions to create 2-3 potential solutions, using the insights for inspiration.
- Tested the potential solutions with members of the target audience and other stakeholders to determine if the solutions: 1) would respond to the target audience's

needs and be readily adopted by them ("customer desirability" test); 2) could be operationalized ("operational feasibility" test); and 3) could attract and retain sustainable funding ("financial viability" test).

G. Questions

The main point of contact for the Ready-to-Launch grants is Amy Conrick, conrick@ctaa.org. All questions should be submitted in writing to this email address; responses will be posted at nc4mm.org/ready-to-launch-2020.

II. What to Expect During the 2020 Community Mobility "Ready-to-Launch" Grants

The Ready-to-Launch grants will support the three chosen communities through the pilot implementation of its solution.

A. Activities

The following are key activities in the teams' "Ready-to-Launch" projects:

- Accepted teams are assigned an NCMM facilitator.
- Facilitator works with the team to review the operations plan and identify any missing information. The team shares updated versions of the plan with their facilitator each month.
- Facilitator works with the team to develop performance metrics for pilot implementation of the project.
- Team continues to test their project in a real-world application their project and hold monthly calls with facilitator throughout the process.
- Facilitator is available to provide technical assistance to teams as they work through any obstacles they encounter.
- Peer-sharing webinars, hosted by NCMM, are available to all teams.
- Final report by the team following template provided by NCMM.

B. Timeline

Teams are expected to be prepared to launch their pilot implementation within four weeks of being awarded the grant. All activities must be completed by July 2021. A more detailed timeline is provided below.

August 26, 2020	RFP released
September 11, 2020	Deadline for questions to be submitted by potential applicants (submit questions to conrick@ctaa.org)
October 1, 2020	Deadline for RFP responses
November 1, 2020	Approx. date that grant activities commence

C. Eligible Activities under the Ready to Launch Grants

Each of the three chosen communities will receive up to $75,000, paid to the lead applicant. Funds will be distributed on a cost reimbursement basis.

The projects will:

- meet the transportation needs of elderly individuals and/or
- address transportation equity with regard to the effect that transportation planning, investment and operations have for low-income and underserved individuals

Eligible activities are those found under 49 U.S. Code § 5314 (a)(2) Technical Assistance. Examples of those activities are listed below:

1. Mobility management activities
2. Partnership activities that support cross-sector coordination
3. Operations of a new transportation service on a pilot basis to benefit the target audience
4. Integration of technology into transportation that serves the target audience
5. Contracted transportation service
6. Outreach to target audiences and cross-sector partners
7. Personnel costs related to implementing the pilot activities
8. Meeting/training/travel costs
9. Other direct costs, including office space rental/utilities (to be calculated based on personnel costs), telephone/fax, photocopying, printing, postage, project-related supplies
10. Indirect costs related to the staffing and other costs involved in testing the planned solution. Applicants should state their indirect cost rate as approved by the federal or state government in the application or if it will use a de minimus indirect rate.

Throughout the period of performance of the grants, NCMM will provide technical assistance, training, and support services to grantees that will enable their projects to successfully comply with human services transportation coordination requirements and to enhance the coordination of Federal resources for human services transportation.

D. Grantee Reporting Requirements and Performance Measurement

Applicants must commit to implementing, tracking, and reporting on their progress in meeting overall performance measures.

1. **Monthly activities**. Teams will participate in monthly phone calls with their NCMM facilitator, as well as participate in occasional peer-sharing webinars hosted by NCMM.

2. **Written reports**. Teams will complete a short report to accompany their monthly reimbursement requests, as well as a final report. Templates will be provided.

3. **Presentations**. Teams will be expected to help NCMM disseminate the results of the testing through virtual and (as appropriate) in-person events. However, the costs of any

such in-person presentation do not need to be built into the applicant's budget, as NCMM will cover the costs of this information-sharing with the mobility management field.

4. **Tracking of performance measures and key learnings.** The team should provide baseline data that demonstrate the scope of the problem. It should also describe the team's expected outcomes from the on-the-ground testing of the solution. NCMM staff will work with the team to craft detailed performance metrics, which the team will report on a monthly basis, reflecting what the team is learning about customer adoption, operational feasibility, and financial viability of the planned solution.

III. Application Review

A. Review Process

Ready-to-Launch grants will be awarded to qualified applicants, chosen through a competitive process and evaluated by NCMM's review committee, using the evaluation criteria specified below. NCMM will choose those projects receiving the highest recommendations by its review committee.

B. Initial screening criteria

All applications received will be screened by NCMM staff to determine that the minimum requirements noted in the application have been met. Only those applications that meet the minimum requirements will be forwarded for review. Initial screening criteria include the following:

- An eligible applicant must submit the application.
- Complete application, in a single PDF document, must be received by email by the deadline of October 1, 2020, 11:59 pm Eastern time.
- Total grant funds requested cannot exceed $75,000.
- The applicant has included a detailed operations plan.
- The applicant has provided documentation that it has followed the key steps, outlined above, of the human-centered design process in developing the planned solution.

C. Application scoring

Applications that meet minimum requirements will be sent to the review committee. They will then be rated on the basis of highly recommended (HR), recommended (R), and not recommended (NR) in the following areas:

1. **Scope of the Project and Target Outcomes**

   a. The proposed scope of the project will address a significant transportation challenge related to one of the three focus areas noted above.

b. The extent to which the team demonstrates that it followed the human-centered design process in designing and initially testing the solution.

2. **Commitment of Essential Partners.** The applicant provides a description of the lead agency and partners and their respective roles in the pilot of the solution. Each partner has indicated its commitment to fulfilling its stated role, fully described in the application, throughout the entire Ready-to-Launch project.

3. **Organizational Capacity**. The applicant provides evidence of the organization's capacity to undertake this project and complete all required deliverables within the grant period.

4. **Comprehensiveness of the operations plan.** The plan must include at least these elements:

    a. Synopsis of the challenge being addressed, including a description of the target population and the geographic area
    b. Short description of the solution, including any applicable services or products.
    c. Detailed, step-by-step plan for implementing the solution described in the operations plan (full plan to be attached to the application)

5. **Performance measure data.** The application includes baseline data gathered during the planning/research phase as the solution was developed, the applicant's expected outcomes from on-the-ground testing of the planned solution, and a general description of how it proposes to measure those outcomes.

6. **Budget**

    a. In applicant's budget, the projected costs and rationale for those costs are clearly explained.

    b. Projected budget is reasonable for the proposed scope of activities.

D. Selection

Project recommendations will be made based on the degree to which the applications meet each of the requirements described in Section C above. Overall ratings will be determined as follows:

- Applications rated as highly recommended (HR) will be those that receive "HR" in at least four areas noted in nos. 1–6, above, and receive no "NR" ratings.
- Applications rated as recommended (R) will be those that receive "HR" in at least three areas noted in nos. 1–6, above, and receive no "NR" ratings.
- Applications rated as not recommended (NR) will be those that receive "NR" in one or more of the areas noted in nos. 1–6, above.

In recommending final project selections, NCMM may also consider geographic diversity, diversity in the type of project, challenge addressed, and proposed solution, and potential that the project can serve as a model solution in the future.

Application Instructions

A. General Instructions

1. **Deadline for receipt of application**. October 1, 2020 11:59 p.m. Eastern time

2. **Directions for submitting application**. Email a single PDF file of your application to Amy Conrick, Director, National Center for Mobility Management, at conrick@ctaa.org. Only e-mailed applications will be accepted.

3. **Minimum requirements**. All of the requirements listed below must be met in order for an application to be forwarded to the review committee:

   - An eligible applicant must submit the application.
   - Complete application, in a single PDF document, must be received by email by the deadline of October 1, 2020, 11:59 pm Eastern time.
   - Total grant funds requested cannot exceed $75,000.
   - The applicant has included a detailed operations plan.
   - The applicant has provided documentation that it has followed the key steps, outlined above, of the human-centered design process in developing the planned solution.

B. Eligible Applicants

1. **Eligible applicants.** Eligible applicants are designated or direct recipients for FTA funds under 49 U.S.C. 5307, 5310 or 5311, or an eligible subrecipient of these funds. *Applicants should explicitly state how they are an eligible applicant.* Eligible subrecipients under FTA programs include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation. The applicant must have the capacity to successfully execute the project, and its partners should have the capacity to execute their roles successfully. The applicant should have no outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues that would make this a high-risk project.

2. **Project leads**. Each team must have an identified team leader who will serve as the main point of contact to coordinate with NCMM staff. The team lead will be a staff member of the applicant organization. Having a co-lead from another member organization is also encouraged.

C. Elements of the Application Package

The application package includes three sections:

1. Proposal narrative
2. Budget form and narrative
3. Attachments

1. Proposal narrative
Applicants who wish to have their proposal considered must follow the outline below and respond to all points.

a. <u>Title</u>. Project title

b. <u>Community</u>. Name of community in which the project will take place (e.g., northwest Florida, Johnson City)

c. <u>Funds requested</u>. Total amount of NCMM project funds requested (maximum $75,000)

d. <u>Lead organization</u>. The official legal name, address, telephone number, and DUNS number of the organization that is submitting the application and would be contracting with the Community Transportation Association of America on behalf of the NCMM.

e. <u>Eligibility</u>. A statement on how the lead organization qualifies as an eligible applicant.

f. <u>Person submitting the application</u>. Name of the person legally authorized to submit the application, answer questions about the application, and negotiate for and contractually bind the organization. Include address, phone, and email.

g. <u>Letter of commitment from the Executive Director/CEO of the applicant organization</u>. The letter should state the agency head's opinion regarding the project's value to the organization's overall mission and a commitment to continue to support the pilot implementation project if it is funded. (Note: Applicants that are unable to obtain a letter from the CEO/Executive Director should obtain a letter of support reflecting the organization's hierarchy and explain why the attached letter shows agency commitment.)

h. <u>Community description </u>(150 words or less). Brief description of the service area that will constitute the "community" for the project, including the geographic characteristics of the area, such as urban, rural, suburban, tribal, and frontier, and any other pertinent geographic characteristics (e.g., high elevations, limited access routes, remote areas, etc.). *Note*: "Community" may include, but not be limited to, a formal or informally defined region, tribal nation, multi-county region, single county, city/town, neighborhood, or corridor. Note that the chosen community should present a manageable scope for the project; as very large geographic areas may be more difficult to manage.

i. <u>Project description</u>. (500 words or less). An executive summary of the project that reflects the key elements of the transportation solution that will be tested.

j. <u>Target population description</u>. (150 words or less). A description of the full target population to benefit by the community's solution.

k. <u>Description of process through which the solution was developed (500 words or less)</u>. Written and visual documentation that the team has followed the human-centered design process, as outlined in 1.F., above.

l. <u>Partner information</u>. Please list project lead[s] first and designate them as such. For the lead and each partner organization, please include the following information:

      1) Name of primary contact
      2) Title and organization
      3) City/State
      4) Telephone
      5) Email
      6) Partner's role
      7) Commitment letter, written by the partner (i.e., no duplicated letters simply signed by partners will be accepted) explaining i) why the partner wants to participate in the project; ii) what its role will be in the project; and iii) what outcomes are most important to that partner organization.

m. <u>Consultants/contractors</u>. If consultants/contractors will be used to perform any of the work to be undertaken in the proposed testing of the solution, the individual consultant and/or consultant firm should be identified in the grant application and the reason(s) for using a consultant should be specified, including the specific functions the consultant will perform. If the consultant has not yet been selected, then a plan for selecting a consultant within the first month of the grant period is required, including assurances that the process will not delay grant activities.

n. <u>Performance metrics</u>. The team should provide baseline data that demonstrate the scope of the problem as it relates to the project's focus. It should also describe the team's expected outcomes from the testing of the solution and a general description of how it proposes to measure those outcomes. Once its application has been accepted, NCMM staff will work with the team to craft detailed performance metrics that will look at what the team is learning about customer adoption, operational feasibility, and financial viability of the solution.

2. Budget and Narrative

a. <u>Grant budget form</u>. An overall project budget should be provided that gives, at a minimum, the breakdown of proposed expenses. Each budget item proposed must be described in an accompanying budget narrative. All applicants must use the format in the chart below. (Note: not all applicants will have expenses in each line item; simply enter a zero in items that will not be used.) All contracts entered into as a result of this solicitation will be required to comply with all standard federal accounting requirements.

Item	Grant Funds	In-kind Funds (optional)	Total Project Funds
1. Direct labor salaries or wages			
2. Fringe benefits			
3. Travel			
4. Consultant/contracted services			
5. Meeting costs			
6. Direct costs related to the implementation of the pilot (give detailed listing)			
7. Other direct costs (give detailed listing)			
8. Indirect costs			
9. TOTAL GRANT BUDGET (requested funds not to exceed $75,000)			

b. <u>Grant budget narrative</u>. Provide justification for each of the budget categories above. Please note the following:

- Indirect costs. Please provide documentation regarding the indirect rate.

- *No In-kind support or local match is required.* However, if in-kind support will be provided by the applicant organization (e.g., supplementing project staff salaries) and/or key partners, please provide broad details on this type of support. In-kind support may include providing staff support, free meeting space, meeting refreshments, postage, etc.

3. Required Attachments

- Transmittal and commitment letter from lead agency
- Commitment letters from all partners essential to the project
- Documentation of the team's implementation of the human-centered design process in developing the transportation solution to be tested
- Operations plan for the transportation solution to be tested