

# Enhancing Mobility Innovation NOFO

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Program Eligibility

**Q: My agency has already received FTA funding from another grant program. Can we still apply for this Enhancing Mobility Innovation funding?**

A: Yes, you are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Please note that Federal funds made available under an FTA award may not be used as the non-Federal contribution towards costs under another FTA award.

**Q: We are not an existing FTA funds recipient. Are we eligible to apply?**

A: Yes. You do not need to be an existing FTA grantee to compete for this NOFO. Please note that if you are not an existing FTA grantee, you will need to become one if selected for an award and will be responsible for compliance with any applicable Federal requirements, as noted in the NOFO.

**Q: My agency's service area includes both urban and rural areas. Should we apply as an urban or rural area?**

A: On the NOFO Supplemental Form, you may select multiple service area types (i.e., large urban, small urban, or rural) as appropriate for your Project Location.

### Project Partners

**Q: Can a private company or other organization be listed as a partner on more than one application?**

A: Yes. An organization or entity can be designated as a partner on multiple applications and may be part of multiple successful project awards.

**Q: My company already has a transit agency partner for this funding opportunity, which entity should submit the application?**

A: It is entirely your business decision which entity should serve as the applicant for this opportunity, so long as the lead entity meets applicant eligibility criteria under the NOFO. Only one entity will be the lead entity that will submit the application. If selected for award, that entity will enter into an agreement directly with FTA with the other entity a partner under that agreement.

**Q: My company would like to participate in the program as a project partner, but we do not know who to partner with. Can you help?**

A: FTA currently does not have a mechanism to facilitate partnering. However, we encourage all potential applicants and public and private partners to reach out to each other to form teams for this competition.

**Q: Can my organization submit more than one application within the same project areas, such as software development?**

A: An organization may submit more than one application. Each application should be submitted individually in grants.gov as separate submissions with distinct supplemental forms. Should an organization choose to submit multiple applications, it is advised that each application has different project titles to clearly indicate they are not duplications or resubmissions.

**Q: Is it required to have a partner?**

A: Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to identify one or more project partners with a substantial interest and involvement in the project to participate in the implementation of the project.

**Q: We are in the processing of forming partnerships. Can we indicate the types of partners we are looking for, without naming partners? Can we name partners after our application is selected for funding?**

A: Naming partner(s) is not required but encouraged in the application. Please note that if an application that identifies a partnership is selected for funding, the competitive selection process of this NOFO will be deemed sufficient to satisfy the requirement for a competitive procurement under 49 U.S.C. 5325(a) for the named entities. Such provision will not be applicable if partners are identified after the project selection.

## **Review and Selection Process**

**Q: Do certain review criteria receive more weight than others?**

A: The six evaluation criteria are equally weighted.

**Q: Has it been determined when project selections will be announced?**

A: We do not have a date when projects selections will be announced. Based on recent research program funding opportunities, we estimate that project selections might be announced 4-6 months following the application deadline, but the timing is subject to change.

## Project Structure and Requirements

### **Q: What is the period of performance of projects?**

A: The NOFO does not specify a project duration. Given that the notice seeks various project types, from software development, to development of novel operational concepts, to mobility innovation demonstration efforts, project durations will vary. Please note that one of the six evaluation criteria we use to assess proposals is the Project Implementation Strategy. This criterion considers the extent to which the applicant's proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete, including the project milestones and the overall project timeline. FTA will further consider if the project's implementation strategy addresses how the project will support FTA's independent evaluation efforts, data access, and sharing of project results.

### **Q: What is the expected start date of projects, if selected?**

A: Once project selections are announced, FTA works with the recipient to develop the Cooperative Agreement and award the funds. Typically, a project will start anywhere from a few weeks to a few months following the FTA announcement of project selections, depending on the recipient's project readiness. For instance, a recipient that is not a current FTA recipient will have to become one first (with a separate review and approval process required) before project funds may be obligated.

### **Q: What are eligible expenses and activities under the program?**

A: Eligible expenses for Enhancing Mobility Innovation projects are based on the program's authorizing statute (49 USC 5312) and government-wide cost principles for Federal awards (2 CFR 200.400–200.476). Furthermore, as Enhancing Mobility Innovation projects are research and development efforts, [FTA Research Circular 6100.1E](#) provides detailed guidance on administration of the program, including on eligible expenses (see Chapter V, "Financial Management"). Eligible activities include all activities leading to the development and implementation of the project such as planning, developing business models, obtaining equipment and services, acquiring or developing software and hardware interfaces to implement the project, and other project-specific expenses.

### **Q: Are in-kind expenses eligible to meet cost share requirements under the program?**

A: Yes. Per the NOFO, it is possible to use local match to meet all or a portion of the cost share requirements if the cost share meets criteria for eligible sources of non-Federal match as detailed in FTA Circular 6100.1E.

**Q: How will software developed under this program be handled?**

Software products developed under this program will be subject to applicable federal law, regulation, and the provisions of FTA's Master Agreement <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grantee-resources/sample-fta-agreements/fta-grant-agreements>, and may be disseminated to public transit agencies for their use.

## **Applying for the Enhancing Mobility Innovation Funding Opportunity**

**Q: Can I submit my application by mail or as an email attachment?**

A: No. For an application to be considered for funding, it must be submitted electronically through grants.gov.

**Q: What forms are required to apply? Can I include other information?**

A: Complete proposal submissions consist of three forms—SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, the [Enhancing Mobility Innovation Supplemental Form](#), and the one-page project overview. All documents can be downloaded at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Please only use the latest version available of the SF-424 found on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

A complete application must include responses to all sections of form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, the Enhancing Mobility Innovation Supplemental Form, and the project overview form. Applicants may include optional supporting information with their submission, such as letters of support, project budgets, or excerpts from relevant planning documents.

Please note that to apply you must submit your complete application including all forms through the grants.gov site, as we do not have the ability to accept proposals outside that system.

**Q: How do I access the Supplemental Form?**

A: The supplemental form is designed to be filled out digitally, and it must be opened using the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader (available free from Adobe's website) or another compatible PDF reader. The form may not load in all browser viewers, and you may receive an error message if you attempt to open the form in your browser. To view the form, right-click on "FY24-EMI-Supplemental-Form.pdf" from the [Supplemental Form page](#) and choose "Save link as...." Save the file to a convenient and easy-to-access folder location and then open the file on your computer using Adobe Acrobat Reader.

**Q: Where can I find the project overview template?**

A: The project overview template is in the zip file folder that can be downloaded on the grants.gov opportunity page in the “related documents” tab: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/355222>. Please ensure that you fill out all sections of the project overview, and ensure that the document does not exceed one page. Please attach the project overview to your application in grants.gov.

**Q: We did not see information on the maximum or desired page length for the proposal, beyond the two fillable pdf forms and the overview template. What is the page length for proposals?**

A: There is no page limit for proposals. Along with the SF424 form (which mostly requests administrative and organizational information), the Supplemental form is the main tool we use collect details on proposed projects. It is important that you are able to meaningfully convey your proposed project through the supplemental form. You may also attach additional materials in grants.gov to your application package, including planning documents, technology brochures, maps, letters of support, etc., but these are not required elements of the application.

*These FAQs do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. These FAQs are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Grantees and subgrantees should refer to FTA’s statutes and regulations for applicable research program requirements, as well as the Fiscal Year 2024 Enhancing Mobility Innovation Competitive Funding Opportunity, published July 1, 2024.*