FY 2027-2028 Massachusetts Transportation Management Association (TMA) Grant Program Application Instructions

Prepared by the MassDOT Rail and Transit Division

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Program Description and Goals

This grant opportunity provides funding to established Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in Massachusetts to support a variety of activities, including the operation of new and/or existing bus, shuttle, and transit services and marketing activities to promote transit and non-single occupancy vehicle (non-SOV) travel, among others.

MassDOT seeks to award roughly $3,000,000 of State funds as part of the FY27 round of funding for the Massachusetts TMA Grant Program. We anticipate awarding another $3,000,000 through the FY28 round of funding.

The goals of the Massachusetts TMA Grant Program are to:

- Reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Facilitate mode shift
- Increase transit ridership
- Increase walking and bicycling trips
- Improve access to jobs and other critical destinations, especially for those who currently lack adequate access, older adults, and people with disabilities

The means through which these goals will be achieved may include a variety of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, such as sustainable travel pilot projects and micromobility services; service planning; and marketing and outreach activities such as commuter incentive programs and on-site commuter education, among others. More details on eligible project types can be found below.

Enacting Legislation

The Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill passed on June 21, 2022 included a total of $25 million in funding for grants to transportation management associations (TMAs) for “the marketing and promotion of existing and new park-and-ride and existing and new carpooling and van pooling alternatives; (ii) the operation and coordination of bus and shuttle services between existing transportation facilities, major employment centers and commercial and retail centers; and (iii) the underwriting of active marketing and outreach programs to support such services.”

This funding will be awarded to Massachusetts’ eligible TMAs using a competitive process that is anticipated to be on an annual basis. If new TMAs form in future years, they will be considered eligible under this program as well.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this program include the existing TMAs in Massachusetts. If new TMAs form in future years, they will be considered eligible under this program as well.

TMAs must be recognized as a TMA by July 1, 2026 to be eligible for the FY27 funding; if a TMA is close but not fully recognized by July 1, 2026 MassDOT will consider eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

This program encourages applicants to work collaboratively to build partnerships and lasting improvements to public transit including but not limited to formalizing relationships, convening partner agencies, planning and coordinating service, and leveraging resources with partner agencies. Examples of potential partners include community stakeholders, such as employers, healthcare providers, community organizations, and chambers of commerce to help ensure effective implementation of TDM measures. This program also encourages applicants to engage with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the appropriate Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), municipalities, and other organizations working to enhance community transportation.

Eligible Project Types

Through this program, MassDOT will fund projects that include, but are not limited to, the following categories and subcategories.

1. **Service operation:**
    a. Bus or shuttle service
    b. Micromobility services
    c. Other
2. **Vehicle Procurement:** Grants for capital costs to purchase fleet vehicles. It is important to note that these procurements must be made by the applicant and not by MassDOT.
3. **Commuter Services and Marketing Activities:** Programmatic and administrative projects to encourage mode shift:
    a. Commuter benefit plan design and consultation
    b. Development of parking cash out programs
    c. Development and administration of commuter surveys
    d. Emergency ride home programs
    e. Marketing of transportation alternatives
    f. On-site commuter education
    g. Bicycle tune-up events
    h. Commuter incentive programs[1]
    i. Transit pass administration[2]
    j. Other TDM strategies that are consistent with the program's goals

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

- Operating and capital expenses are eligible in each category.
- Incentives and giveaways are not eligible expenses.
- Any vehicles purchased must be electric, hybrid, or use an alternative fuel source such as hydrogen or CNG.

[1] Costs related to administering an incentive program are eligible; the cost of incentives themselves are not eligible expenses for this grant funding.
[2] Costs related to administering a transit pass program are eligible; transit passes or fares themselves are not eligible for this grant funding.

Application Process

Application Timeline

Applications are due Friday, April 10, 2026.

How to Apply

1. Prepare your answers to the questions listed below in the "Application Questions" section of the appendix. **New this year:** we suggest **target lengths** for each answer, to encourage answers that are concise. We do not have any character limits to ensure you have the space you need to fully explain your idea; however, we ask that you not repeat information within the application. If you explain something in question 5, please do not also explain it in question 6, for example.
2. Go to www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-transportation-management-association-grant and download the budget Excel sheet.
3. Fill out the budget Excel sheet.
4. At least one letter of support is required. If you would like to submit multiple letters of support, please combine them into one PDF package.
5. If you would like to submit optional additional attachments, please combine them into one PDF package.
6. When you have prepared your answers to the questions and have the budget finalized, go to www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-transportation-management-association-grant and fill out the online application. You will answer the application questions using the online form, and upload your budget, letters of support, and optional attachments through the online form.
7. **New this year:** our online form now has a **"save for later"** button. If you hit save for later, it will generate a URL you can use to get back to your form. This URL is available for 30 days, so make sure to return to the online form again within 30 days to keep it active. You can save while working on the questions, but once you upload any documents you will no longer be able to save your work.
8. When you have inputted the information about your project and uploaded your documents, make sure you see a green checkmark next to each upload. When you do, hit the "submit" button to submit your application.
9. After you submit, you will see a "thank you" screen. You will receive a copy of your responses by email around 15-20 minutes after submitting. If you have any difficulties, contact us at massdottransitgrants@dot.state.ma.us. We will be able to confirm whether or not we received your submission.
10. Applications are due April 10, but we recommend submitting early.

Application Questions

All application questions are listed in the appendix. Prepare your answers ahead of time. When you are ready, copy them into the online form, upload attachments, and hit submit.

Support and Technical Assistance

Once the application period has been announced, MassDOT will provide support and technical assistance to prospective applicants throughout the application process and grant period, including the following:

- Holding one or more virtual information sessions during the application period
- Providing information and technical assistance to support applicants as appropriate

If you have questions, we welcome you to reach out to us anytime at massdottransitgrants@dot.state.ma.us.

Selection and Awards

Project Selection

All applications will be reviewed and scored by a review committee made up of staff of MassDOT Rail and Transit and Office of Transportation Planning, and may also include external partners familiar with TDM strategies, workforce development, and/or community transportation. In addition to the total score, MassDOT will also consider geographic coverage in determining awards. MassDOT may also consider other factors such as an applicant's past performance, and input from transit authorities and Regional Planning Agencies in the proposed service area.

MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division may contact the applicant if further clarification is needed on the submittal. MassDOT reserves the right to negotiate project scope and deliverables prior to finalizing awards and contracts. Projects may receive partial funding. Projects may also receive conditional funding, where funding is conditional upon terms set out by MassDOT at the time of grant award announcement; for example, MassDOT may offer to fund a proposed shuttle only if the TMA opens the shuttle to the general public. MassDOT is not obligated to award the entire $3 million in response to this solicitation if the total requests that are deemed to meet the goal of the grant program are less than $3 million.

TMAs may submit a joint proposal that provides services across service area boundaries or funds a best practice that has joint benefits and whose implementation can be more cost effectively achieved through a joint effort. Similarly, a single grant may be awarded to multiple TMAs in cases where more than one TMA submits similar proposals, and cost savings or other efficiencies may be realized through implementing the proposals as one project.

Scoring

Scoring will be based on a 50-point scale:

- **Project Need (questions 2 – 5).** Application shows that the project is rooted in a need faced by the area represented by the applicant TMA and proposes a project that directly addresses this need while staying true to the TMA Grant Program goals – 15 points

- **Evaluating success (questions 6 – 9).** Application contains measurable milestones, performance metrics, and an evaluation plan to gauge success based on the key performance indicators (KPIs) and description of how the project will prioritize social equity – 15 points
- **Deliverability (questions 10 – 11, and budget).** Applicant has a realistic and robust plan in place, including an implementation plan and budget, and is taking steps to sustain the project over time – 10 points
- **Commitment and coordination (questions 12 – 16).** Applicant demonstrates that they have both strong existing partnerships and demonstrated support from the community, and are taking steps to complement not duplicate existing transportation options – 10 points

Grant Contract Award

After awards are made, project funding will be provided contractually, and on a reimbursement basis. All established state requirements will be applicable. The term dates of the grant contract will be negotiated post-award. Applicants that are awarded funding will also be required to submit quarterly reports to MassDOT containing updates on project status, KPIs (including specific KPIs required by MassDOT), schedule, budget, and other activities as deemed necessary. For vehicle procurement projects, please note that the responsibility for procurement will be on the applicant; not on MassDOT.

Please note that FY27 funds will be on one contract; FY28 funds, if awarded, will be on a separate contract.

Project Duration

FY 27 funds must be expended no later than June 30, 2027. Funds will not roll over past June 30, 2027.

FY28 funds must be expended between July 1, 2027 and June 30, 2028. Funds will not be available before July 1, 2027, and will not roll over past June 30, 2028.

If you are applying for a vehicle, please indicate the delivery timeframe; if the vehicle will not be delivered before June 30, 2027, please apply for FY28 funds instead of FY27 funds.

Amount Available

MassDOT seeks to make up to $3,000,000 in FY27 state funds available for allocation, but reserves the right to consider funding projects at a higher or lower amount than what was requested.

MassDOT seeks to make up to $3,000,000 in FY28 state funds available, although we likely will not award the full amount in this round in order to reserve some for new ideas that arise in the coming year. We anticipate opening another FY28 grant solicitation cycle in February 2027.

The amount available is subject to change, depending on MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan.

Number of Awards

There is no minimum or maximum number of awards. Projects will be selected on merit based on the weighted selection criteria, as well as attention to geographic equity.

Questions

If you have questions, please reach out to MassDOTtransitgrants@dot.state.ma.us. Thank you and good luck – we look forward to working with you to promote mode shift, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and expand mobility.

Appendix

Standard KPIs

If awarded, you will be required to report quarterly on any of these KPIs that are relevant to your project. You are welcome to report on additional KPIs as well.

Category	Metric
Rider & Participant Surveys	# survey responses
	# survey responses from target groups (for example, 2nd and 3rd shift worker responses)
	# respondents reporting that the project or service made a difference in their commute
	# riders engaged in mode shift (as reported by survey)
	# riders interested in sustaining mode shift (as reported by survey)
	# riders who do not have access to a personal vehicle
	# single-occupancy vehicle trips replaced (based on self-report through survey)
	# bike riders reporting increased confidence (as reported by survey)
Engagement & Outreach	# events hosted or attended
	# promotions of service in newsletters/other materials
	# website view/clicks
Ridership	# unduplicated passengers/clients
	# one-way trips
Stakeholders	# meetings with partners
	# meetings with potential partners
	# new partners acquired
Other	# bike repairs completed
	# requests unable to be filled

Application Questions

Important note: please use this appendix to prepare your answers. However, your final answers will be submitted through our online form, not uploaded as an attachment.

Applicant Overview

1. Legal name of your organization
2. Organization type: 501c3, 501c4, 501c6, Other (please specify)
3. Are you a registered vendor with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts? Yes/no
   If yes, please enter your vendor code.
4. UEI number if registered with sam.gov
5. Legal address of your organization including 9-digit zip code
6. Website, if applicable
7. Contact person name
8. Contact person email (enter twice)
9. Contact person phone number
10. Unique name of your proposed project
11. Cities and towns/geography to be served by your proposed project
12. Project summary (1-2 sentences)
13. Total amount of funding requested to be expended in State Fiscal Year 27 (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027)
14. Total amount of funding requested to be expended in State Fiscal Year 28 (July 1, 2027-June 30, 2028)
15. Have you received grant funding from MassDOT in the past 5 years? Yes/no
    If no, describe your organization's past experience and demonstrated ability to deliver projects. (Aim for 1 to 2 paragraphs)

Project Narrative

Project Type

1. Please select among the project type(s) below which category your project fits into. This list is not meant to be exhaustive; please specify in the "other" field below if your project type does not fit into the categories specified.

Project Category	**Type an X if your project fits into this category**
Shuttle, Bus, or Transit Service	
Micromobility Services	
Service planning	
New vehicle purchase	
Vehicle replacement	
Commuter services and marketing activities such as emergency ride home, marketing of transportation alternatives, etc.	
Other (please specify):	

Project Details

2. **Project Summary**. Please provide a specific and concise overview of the proposed project. Aim for: 1 to 4 paragraphs that briefly explain the proposed project. Do not go into detail about any content that is contained later in your application.

2a. **Project details.**

For shuttle, bus, and transit service ONLY:

a. Days and hours of service
b. Service area (geography)
c. Is the service open to the general public? If not, describe eligibility criteria
d. Are there any restrictions on trip purpose?
e. Will you charge a fare or donation? If so, how much?
f. How will you serve riders who use wheelchairs?
g. How will you serve riders who speak languages other than English?

For vehicle replacement projects ONLY:

h. Information on the vehicle(s) proposed to be replaced
    i. Type of vehicle
    ii. Fuel type
    iii. Year
    iv. Mileage
i. Information on the new vehicle(s) proposed to be purchased
    i. Type of vehicle
    ii. Fuel type
    iii. Year
    iv. Estimated delivery date according to the dealer or manufacturer, assuming you initiate the purchase in July 2026

For new vehicle purchases ONLY:

j. Information on the new vehicle(s) proposed to be purchased
    i. Type of vehicle
    ii. Fuel type
    iii. Year
    iv. Estimated delivery date according to the dealer or manufacturer, assuming you initiate the purchase in July 2026

For commuter marketing services ONLY:

k. Is the service open to the general public? If not, describe eligibility criteria
l. How will you serve commuters with disabilities?
m. How will you serve commuters who speak languages other than English?

3. **Goals.** How will your project advance the TMA Grant Program's goals? Aim for: 1 to 4 paragraphs.

   The goals:

   - Reducing single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
   - Facilitating mode shift through increasing active transportation and transit trips
   - Improving access to critical destinations

4. **Project Need**. Please describe the need. How do you know it is a need? Cite any needs assessments; surveys; plans such as Comprehensive Regional Transit Plans (CRTP), Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP), or Coordinated Human Service Transportation (CHST) Plans; and anecdotal data that point to this being a need for commuters or potential transit riders. Aim for: 2 to 5 sentences

5. **Project History**. Is your proposal for a new idea or continued funding for an existing project? If you are applying for continued funding, please briefly describe the history and progress to date. If you are applying for a new project, please describe any planning and outreach that has already occurred or is underway. Aim for: 1 to 2 paragraphs

Evaluating Success

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are tools to measure our progress towards our goals.

6. **Success**. If your project is successful, what will the outcomes be? (Aim for 1 to 5 sentences)
7. **Quarterly KPI reporting**. Refer to the KPI table in the appendix earlier in this document. If awarded, you will be required to report quarterly on any of these KPIs that are relevant to your project. Will these standardized KPIs capture your progress? If not, what additional KPIs do you plan to track to measure your progress towards your desired outcomes? Aim for: 1 sentence per additional KPI
8. **Rider/participant surveys**. In order to truly measure mode shift, we need to survey riders/participants to get baseline data and find out what other mode they would be using if not for your shuttle, and/or how your programming has affected their behavior. Please describe how you will survey your riders and/or participants. Include the content, timing, and frequency of the surveys. Also indicate whether this type of survey is something you already do or whether it will be new to your TMA. Aim for: 1 to 2 paragraphs
9. **Social Equity**. Please indicate whether, to what extent, and how your project will provide access to underserved populations to support social equity. Note any community organizations you are partnering with to expand access to underserved communities such as low-income workers, workers with disabilities, workers who speak languages other than English, etc. Aim for: 1 to 8 sentences

Deliverability

10. **Implementation Plan**. Please describe your implementation plan and a projected timeline for key steps and deliverables.
11. **Financial Sustainability**. What steps are you taking to make sure your program can endure over time? For example, describe any other funding sources you are leveraging or exploring, and your work to build community support for your program. Aim for: 1 to 2 paragraphs

Commitment & Coordination

12. **Other Funding**. Please describe any other funding sources you have secured or plan to use to support this project. Aim for: 1 to 3 sentences per funding stream
13. **Other Ongoing Related Projects**. What other services are addressing similar needs in your region? Describe how you have researched whether there is already a program serving this need and any steps taken to coordinate or collaborate with other services. How is your program different from or complementary to other programs? For proposed new shuttle or bus service, as part of your response, please reference whether the proposed project would overlap with existing transit service. Aim for: 1 to 4 paragraphs
14. **Partnerships**. Are you partnering with other organizations on this specific program? Describe the partnership. What will your organization do, and what will the other organization(s) do? Aim for: 1 to 2 sentences per partner
15. **Transit Collaboration.** Describe any conversations you have had with local transit authorities about this project, and any outreach efforts you have made to engage your transit authorities in your service area on this proposed project. Aim for: 1 paragraph
16. **Community Support**. Please describe the support for this project within your community, including from the municipalities served. As part of your application, at least one letter of support is required. Aim for: 1 to 3 paragraphs

Uploads

- Project budget – please use the Excel template provided.
- Letters of support – at least 1 letter of support is required, but you are encouraged to submit multiple letters of support. Please combine all letters of support into one PDF package.
- Other attachments (optional) - you may upload additional attachments if you wish. Please combine all additional attachments into one PDF package. Include a table of contents if there are multiple attachments combined together.
- Make sure that the combined file size for all your attachments does not exceed 20MB