

Application Instructions for MassDOT’s Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant Application

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Background

Introduction and Definitions

Thank you for your interest in the Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant! Applications will be open September 5 through November 7, 2025.

Microtransit refers to "a technology-enabled service that uses multi-passenger vehicles to provide on-demand services with dynamically generated routing. Microtransit services are traditionally provided in designated service areas. Service models include first mile/last mile connections to fixed route services; hub to hub zone-based services; the commingling of ADA complementary paratransit services with general transit service; and point-to-point service within a specific zone or geography," according to the Federal Transit Administration.¹

Last mile refers to solutions that bridge the gap between a rider's home and transit, or their destination (such as their workplace) and transit.

Through this project, MassDOT seeks to fund projects that use microtransit or last mile service in order to achieve a variety of important goals:

- expand mobility options for rural communities
- extend service to veterans, working families, older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals
- provide mobility choices to people with mobility needs
- extend equitable and affordable transportation mobility improvements in the commonwealth
- serve cities and towns that are taking meaningful steps to produce new housing and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development

For more information, please visit www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant or contact us at Rachel.L.Fichtenbaum@dot.state.ma.us or (857) 368-8584. We look forward to working with you!

Funding Amount and Source

MassDOT has \$10 million in state Education and Transportation Fund (ETF) funds available for this grant program.

Section 1596-2526 of the FY25 Supplemental Budget allocated \$10 million in state Education and Transportation Funding (ETF) for an operating transfer to the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund established in section 4 of chapter 6C of the General Laws for a program to support grants for capital microtransit initiatives and last mile transportation solutions including, but not limited to, providers that: (i) expand mobility options for rural communities; (ii) extend service to veterans, working families, older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals; (iii) provide mobility choices to people with mobility needs; and (iv) extend equitable and affordable transportation mobility improvements in the commonwealth; provided, that preference for grants shall be awarded to cities and towns that are taking meaningful steps to produce new housing and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development including, but not limited to, the multifamily zoning requirement established in section 3A of chapter 40A of the General Laws.

¹ <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/shared-mobility-definitions>

There is no prescribed timeline for this funding. When you apply, please specify your preferred dates for your MassDOT contract in your application, if awarded.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply:

- Transit authority (Regional Transit Authority or MBTA)
- Municipality or municipal department, including Council on Aging
- Private non-profit
- Transportation Management Association (TMA)

Additional Eligibility Guidance for Municipal Applicants

The receipt of grant funds is contingent upon the grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

How to Apply

You may apply for one or multiple projects. If at any point you are not sure how to answer a question or complete a step, we encourage you to reach out to us and we will help you brainstorm or troubleshoot. We provide technical assistance throughout the application process.

Here are the steps to prepare and submit your application:

Step 1: Prepare

- Visit www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant and download the budget template
- Fill out the budget template (if you are applying for multiple projects, fill out one budget for each project you are applying for). Make sure to answer the question at the bottom of the budget
- Prepare your answers to the organization and project questions listed in the appendix of this document
- Secure any letters of support and compile them into one PDF packet per project
- If you wish to include any additional attachments, compile them into one PDF packet per project

Step 2: Apply

- Go to the online form, linked from www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant. 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.
- Answer the questions. First you will get a set of questions that pertain to your organization. Answer about the organization that will receive the funds: this may be your organization, or your fiscal sponsor.

- After you finish the organization questions, you will get a series of questions about your project. If you are applying for multiple projects, choose one to start with.
- For each project, answer the questions and upload your attachments
- When you have submitted the information about your project and uploaded your documents, hit the “submit” button
- After you submit, you will see a “thank you” screen. You will get an email copy of your responses about 15-20 minutes after submitting.
- If you would like a full copy of your submission including attachments, email us and we can send that to you
- If you are applying for multiple projects, you can submit additional ones at the same link. Check the box to indicate you already filled out the organizational questions, and you will skip to the project questions.

All components you need are available online at www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant:

- Budget template – please download and fill this out
- Online form – once you are ready to submit your application, use the online form to submit your answers. You can save your work and return while answering questions, but do not upload any documents until you are ready to submit the final application

As always, if you have any questions, reach out anytime to Rachel at (857) 368-8584 or Rachel.L.Fichtenbaum@dot.state.ma.us.

Application Deadline and Technical Assistance

Applicants must complete the online form by November 7, 2025.

Applicants have 9 weeks to complete the entire application process. During this time, applicants may contact MassDOT staff for advice on project ideas, eligibility, application requirements, or anything else related to the application. Please reach out to Rachel.L.Fichtenbaum@dot.state.ma.us or (857) 368-8584 with any questions that arise.

Answering the Questions

Answer the questions asked, and be concise. If you are not sure what the question is asking or how to answer it, reach out and we will provide assistance.

How Much Funding to Apply For

There is no minimum or maximum. MassDOT has up to \$10 million total to disburse. MassDOT seeks to make up to \$10,000,000 in state funds available for allocation, but reserves the right to consider funding projects at a higher or lower amount than what was requested.

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.

Application Criteria

Threshold Review

First, MassDOT undertakes a threshold review to confirm that applicants are eligible to apply. In the threshold review, MassDOT confirms that the following criteria are met:

- Application is complete with all required forms and attachments
- Application was submitted on time
- Applicant certified and verified organization eligibility requirements
- Project is eligible
- If an existing grantee, the applicant's organization is fulfilling current work plan obligations, submitting quarterly and/or annual reports timely, and up to date on addressing any outstanding oversight review deficiencies
- If a new applicant, the applicant has enough resources and capacity to support and perform proper grant program and project management

Project Evaluation

Once the application passes the threshold review, MassDOT forwards the application to a team of external reviewers who assess:

- The need for the project and the benefit the proposed project will have
- The project design and plan
- Proposed monitoring and evaluation of the project
- The extent to which the project is regional and/or coordinated with other local agencies and transportation services
- Endurance and sustainability

As part of the review process, external reviewers will assess the extent to which applications incorporate program goals:

- Expand mobility options for rural communities
- Extend service to veterans, working families, older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals
- Provide mobility choices to people with mobility needs
- Extend equitable and affordable transportation mobility improvements in the commonwealth

Furthermore, preference for grants shall be awarded to projects serving cities and towns that are taking meaningful steps to produce new housing and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development including, but not limited to, the multifamily zoning requirement established in section 3A of chapter 40A of the General Laws.

In addition to the formal external review process, MassDOT may also seek insights from transit authorities, Regional Planning Agencies, or other stakeholders about proposed projects in their areas.

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 applicant agrees to open the shuttle to the general public. MassDOT is not obligated to award the entire \$10 million in response to this solicitation if the total requests that are deemed to meet the goal of the grant program are less than \$10 million.

Applicants 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 applicants in cases where more than one applicant submits similar proposals, and cost savings or other efficiencies may be realized through implementing the proposals as one project.

Budget

Eligible Project Expenses

- Both capital and operating expenses are eligible.
- Giveaways, incentives, and fare passes are not eligible.
- Expenses should be directly related to the proposed project. Organizations may take 10% for indirect or overhead expenses.
- If your expense does not fit into a pre-established line item on the budget template, reach out to us to discuss whether this expense is eligible.

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. For applicants seeking funding to purchase a vehicle, please note that the responsibility for procurement will be on the applicant; not on MassDOT. MassDOT will place a lien on any vehicle funded through this grant, unless the grant is awarded to a transit authority.

Applicants that are awarded funding will also be required to submit quarterly reports to MassDOT containing updates on project status and accomplishments as well as key metrics including ridership. Monthly reports may be required if the grant is used to purchase a vehicle.

Thank you

Thank you for your interest in the Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant Program! Please reach out at any point if you have questions or want technical assistance. You can reach us at Rachel.L.Fichtenbaum@dot.state.ma.us or (857)368-8584.

Remember to submit your application on time! The application is due November 7 through the online form that you can access at www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant. If possible, please submit before November 7.

Appendix

Here are the questions you will be asked. For multiple choice questions, the options are included in the text below. To submit, enter your answers into the online form available at www.mass.gov/how-to/microtransit-and-last-mile-transit-grant.

Part 1: Organization Questions

1. Name of your organization

2. Contact person name

3. Contact person email

4. Contact person phone number

Prior Project Submitted

Check this box if you have already applied for at least one project this cycle (Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant application), and have already answered the questions about your organization.

5. Legal name of your organization

(For example, the Bridgewater Council on Aging is the Town of Bridgewater)

6. Legal address

7. Are you registered in SAM.gov?

yes/no/not sure

7a. If so, when does your registration expire?

7b. What is your UEI number?

8. Are you a registered vendor of the Commonwealth?

yes/no/not sure

8a. Please list your vendor code.

9. Please select your organization type:

Transit authority (RTA or MBTA)

Municipality or municipal department, including Council on Aging

Private non-profit

Transportation Management Association

Other (please specify)

Financial Management

10. Please describe your organization's experience receiving and managing grant funds.*

11. Please answer the following questions about your organization's accounting system:

11a. Is it consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)?*

yes/no

11b. Can it segregate funds?*

yes/no

11c. Do you document your accounting system through written accounting policies and procedures that are approved by your board or your elected officials?*

yes/no

Civil Rights

12. Describe your process for handling discrimination complaints.*

yes/no

Procurement

13. Describe your organization's approach to procurement.*
14. Describe your organization's experience with procurement.*

Oversight

15. Is your organization currently subject to an audit or investigation? Please describe if so.*
16. In the past, has your organization had any finding from an audit or investigation? Please describe if so.*

Training and Safety

17. If you operate a vehicle that is funded by MassDOT, you must abide by the following requirements:
 - Keep vehicles and equipment in good operating condition, including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility features
 - Complete driver training requirements for all drivers who operate the vehicle, to include accessible lift use and passenger securement, defensive driving, disability awareness, CPR, first aid, and substance abuse awareness training

-We agree to abide by these requirements

-We do not have, and are not requesting, any vehicles through MassDOT

Part 2: Project Questions

Please answer all questions concisely. Put "N/A" or "not applicable" if the question does not apply to your project. Answers should relate specifically to the proposed project for which you are requesting funding, not to your general or overall service.

Summary

1. Unique name of your proposed project or service
2. 1-2 sentence summary of your proposed project
3. Cities and towns served by your proposed project
4. Total amount of funding requested
5. Service dates (dates for which you are requesting funding; for example, July 1, 2026-June 30, 2028)

Project Need, Benefit, and Design

6. Please describe your proposed project:
 - a. Days and hours of service
 - b. Service area (geography)
 - c. Estimated one-way trips per day
 - d. How will you serve riders who use wheelchairs?
 - e. How will you serve riders who speak languages other than English?
7. 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 riders and potential riders.
8. Please explain how your proposed project in #6 meets the need you described in #7.

Microtransit and Last Mile Questions

9. Please check off if your proposed project is microtransit, last mile, or both.
 - a. If microtransit, please describe how riders reserve trips and what technology is used.
 - b. If last mile, please list the transit stops and/or services that your service connects to.
10. Is your service open to the general public? If not, describe any eligibility criteria that restricts who can ride.
11. Riders often want to travel regionally, across municipal boundaries. Describe any regional aspects of your proposed service. For example, does it cover multiple municipalities, expand the service area of an existing service, or facilitate connections to a regional service?

Project Implementation

12. Please describe your implementation plan and a projected timeline for key steps and deliverables.
13. If you are applying for continued funding, please briefly describe the history and progress to date. If you are applying to launch a new service, please describe any planning work that is already underway.
14. What metrics will you track to evaluate your progress and any need for revisions? How will you use those metrics?

Partnership and Coordination

15. What other services are addressing similar needs in your region? Describe how you have researched whether there is already a program serving this need. How is your program different from other programs?
16. Describe any partnership with and/or outreach to transit authorities in the area for which you are proposing service.
17. Are you partnering with other organizations on this specific program? If so, describe the partnership. What will your organization do, and what will the other organization do?

Sustainability

18. Please describe any other funding sources you have secured or plan to use to support this project.
19. 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.
20. Describe any advisory or decision-making role that riders or clients will play in your project, if any. Describe any participation riders or clients have had in planning this program and/or developing this application.
21. Describe your organization's past experience and demonstrated ability to deliver projects.

Priority Populations

22. Does your program expand mobility options for rural communities? If so, list which rural communities are covered, and how they are served.
23. Does your program extend service to veterans, working families, older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals? If so, please describe how. Attach letters of support from any partner organizations that serve these individuals.

24. Does your program provide mobility choices to people with mobility needs? If so, please describe how. Attach letters of support from any partner organizations that serve these individuals.
25. Does your service charge a fare? If so, how much is the fare? Describe any reduced fare programs offered.
26. How will your program contribute to transportation equity?

Housing Preference

Answer the following optional questions if you would like to be considered for preference based on the relationship between your proposed service and housing. Preference for grants shall be awarded to applicants whose initiatives serve cities and towns that are taking meaningful steps to produce new housing and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development.

27. Please describe how your proposed project supports current or future housing developments. As support, in the uploads section please attach a letter from a city/town planner, city/town housing department, or other municipal official who oversees housing policy describing (1) how this proposed transportation service supports their municipal housing needs and strategy and (2) any planned land use changes or new housing developments to be implemented in the service area of your proposed transit service.
28. Please list any municipalities in your service area that are designated as Housing Choice Communities. You can find a list of designated communities at www.mass.gov/info-details/housing-choice-designation.

Other Funding

29. Check this box if you would like this proposal to be considered for Community Transit Grant Program operating/mobility management funding, if MassDOT deems that program to be a better fit for your project.

Attachments

1. Budget template
2. Housing preference letter (optional)
3. Other letters of support (optional)
4. Other attachments (optional)