

Program overview

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Public Transportation Division is responsible for administering the Regional Mobility Grant Program, which is part of the state's Transit Mobility Program (RCW 47.66.030).

This competitive grant program is available to cities, counties, transit agencies and port districts. WSDOT will select transit-mobility projects that (a) are cost-effective, (b) reduce delay for people and goods, and (c) improve connectivity between counties and regional population centers. The transit-mobility projects recommended to the Legislature for Regional Mobility Grant funds must be consistent with local and regional transportation and land-use plans. The grant funds projects such as:

- Inter-jurisdictional service – projects that improve connectivity between counties and regional population centers.
- Park and ride lots – projects for regional corridors that enhance the efficiency of moving people between jurisdictions and modes of transportation.
- Rush-hour transit service – projects that increase capacity on congested corridors at peak travel times.
- Improved connectivity and efficiency – projects that improve modal connections, enhance corridor efficiency, and reduce delay for people and goods.

Projects that align with the grant programs goals generally receive higher scores. Will the proposed project:

- Enhance the efficiency of regional corridors in moving people between jurisdictions and modes of transportation?
- Reduce delay for people and goods?
- Address energy-efficiency issues?
- Support the movement of freight and goods as they relate to economic development and regional significance?
- Reduce rural inaccessibility?
- Leverage other funds?
- Resolve safety and security issues?

Limits on four-year projects

- WSDOT will limit recommended projects requiring funds after June 30, 2017, to **no more than \$15 million** of the available funding for 2017–2019.
- All projects that extend beyond June 30, 2017, must deliver significant project milestones (as defined in Chapter 2, Section 12) that date.
- If selected four-year projects meet their project-delivery obligations, these projects will receive priority in the 2016 project recommendations to the Legislature and will not need to be resubmitted for funds in 2017.

Which organizations are eligible to apply for the Regional Mobility Grant funds?

Cities, counties, ports and public transportation benefit areas in Washington State are eligible to apply.

What types of projects are eligible?

Equipment

All equipment purchased using Regional Mobility Grant funds must support the passenger transportation services outlined in the grant application. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Passenger service vehicles
- Communications equipment
- Computer hardware and data systems
- Dispatching software
- Multimodal enhancements, such as bicycle racks
- Security equipment

Construction

Capital construction projects may include costs associated with preliminary engineering, project-level environmental assessment and documentation, final design, real estate purchases, and construction. A projects corridor planning, alternatives analysis, major investment studies and corridor analysis costs do not qualify as eligible expenses. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Park and ride lots
- Passenger transfer centers
- Bus-only or HOV lanes
- Bus shelters and rail stations
- Transit access improvements
- Transit signal priority and queue jumps

Operating

Regional Mobility Grant funds may be used to pay for incremental operating costs of new or expanded service, including labor, benefits, supplies, fuel, insurance, rent, utilities, contracted services and maintenance costs. An operating grant may not be used for depreciation of vehicles purchased with grant funds or costs associated with expenses incurred for timeframes outside of the grant period (such as pre-paid insurance coverage). Examples include but are not limited to:

- Activities and services either directly provided or purchased by the applicant. Regional Mobility Grant funds are to be used to help establish viable new or expanded transportation services that provide a measurable public benefit.
- Operating assistance must support new transit services and/or the incremental cost of expanding existing transit services. New or expanded transit service cannot appear on timetables before the grant proposal deadline.
- Grant-supported operations must begin no later than Oct. 1, 2015.
- Other funding sources must ultimately replace Regional Mobility Grant funds as the new services become part of the baseline transportation network. Operating assistance for a particular service will be limited to four years. Grant-funded services that started during the 2013–2015 grant cycle are eligible for grant funds through June 30, 2017. Grant-funded services that start during the 2015–2017 grant cycle will be eligible for grant funds through June 30, 2019.

Examples of eligible operating grants include but are not limited to the following:

- Operating assistance for new bus routes, new express service, new or expanded “feeder” service, and service that both increases frequency and reduces headways.
- Operating assistance for new community connections or multi-jurisdictional transportation corridors.