

Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Grant Program - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Eligibility

1) Can local agencies apply if non-profits operate within their boundary?

Yes, cities are eligible but are required to hold a public hearing and notify any non-profits operating within their area about the proposed project. OCTA encourages cities and non-profits to coordinate prior to the hearing to determine if there is interest in partnering together and explore the potential of providing coordinated service to create efficiencies. Please provide support letters to document partnerships and attach them to the application(s) as applicable.

OCTA staff will be reviewing these partnerships on a case-by-case basis to identify any potential conflicts and evaluate the benefits of the service.

2) Is it possible for public agencies to hold a public meeting after the application deadline of May 31, 2024?

No, public agencies must hold a public hearing and provide the required materials listed in the EMSD Guidelines, and in Part IV of the capital and operating applications. If an application is submitted before the public hearing is held, then the application would be submitted ahead of the required coordination with the local non-profits. As such, the submitted project would not have considered the comments and/or project ideas from local non-profits.

3) Do the EMSD goals apply to all types of projects?

Yes, please refer to the EMSD guidelines for the program goals which apply to all projects.

4) Is infrastructure eligible under EMSD?

No, infrastructure projects are not eligible.

5) Is there a limit on indirect costs?

Yes, there is a 10% limit on indirect costs.

6) Can funds be used in coordination with Project V – Community-Based Circulators Program?

Yes, the funding can be used in coordination with Project V. However, EMSD funds may only be used to support transportation needs for seniors or individuals with disabilities. The EMSD funds are not intended to be a substitute for non-M2 funds required as a match for Project V program.

7) Can we contract with a private service to provide trips with wheelchair accessible vans or buses?

Yes, EMSD funding may be used to provide contracted service to support transportation needs for seniors or individuals with disabilities.

8) Can we contract with OCTA to provide additional transportation so that we can meet the objectives of regularly planned day trips?

No, applicants cannot contract with OCTA under the EMSD program. OCTA provides transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities through the OC Bus, OC Flex and OC ACCESS services.

9) Can we apply for additional grant monies to fund mobility services and staff training we might need?

Yes, you can request funding to support mobility services and staff training. These opportunities are available under the mobility management portion of the capital application. Please see the operating application for eligible mobility management projects.

10) We operate adult day centers and residential care facilities throughout the county. Are we eligible to request funding to support new service to transport our clients?

Yes, if you want to request vehicles for new service, you should submit a capital application. The 2024 EMSD Call for Projects will only support operating assistance for existing services.

11) Our clients are covered by Cal Optima, and we bill them for the days that they attend adult day centers. Should we categorize the Cal Optima reimbursement as passenger revenue?

The CalOptima revenues should be listed as CalOptima fees on line "c" of the Annual Operating Budget table and similarly in the local match table. You could add a note to the table if you want to provide more information about the fee.

12) Can we request funding for drivers and a transportation coordinator?

Yes, funding can be requested for drivers and a transportation coordinator under the operating application.

13) Can we request funding for gas and vehicle maintenance?

Yes, gas and vehicle maintenance are eligible costs as part of the overall operation of the program and should be included in the budget table. If awarded, expenses are verified through the reimbursement process.

14) Can we request a vehicle that is not listed in the capital grant application?

Yes, you may request a vehicle which is not specified in the capital grant application. Please contact program staff to discuss prior to application submittal as not all vehicles' requests are eligible. If the vehicle is deemed eligible after discussion with OCTA staff, provide one or more quotes of the requested vehicle and use the "other" category of the table to make your request.

15) Can parents ride as caregivers to assist disabled minor riders?

Yes, parents can ride for free as caregivers. However, this is at the discretion of the operator.

16) Does OCTA or the applicant verify eligibility?

An awarded applicant will be required to verify eligibility of their senior or disabled clients. Applicants are required to certify that funds will be used to support transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities as part of the application submittal. OCTA may elect to review eligibility during program implementation.

17) Can we request both replacement and expansion vehicles?

Yes, applicants may request replacement and expansion vehicles. Per the EMSD Guidelines, the total request may not exceed \$1,000,000.

Grants

18) What is the local match for capital and operating projects?

The local match for capital projects is 10% for vehicles and equipment and small capital purchases and the local match for operating projects is 20% for the operating assistance project type and 10% for the mobility management project type. See a more detailed list of eligible activities for each category in the guidelines.

19) Can the grant funds be used for existing operating projects or are they for new projects above and beyond our current service levels?

Grant funds can be used for continuation of services or continued service projects under the operating assistance project type. Please be sure to describe how the continued service will be improved, enhanced, or updated with EMSD funding and how your agency plans to sustain the service beyond the funding period. The 2024 Call for Projects will not fund operating assistance for new services.

20) Can grant funds be used for a taxi voucher program?

No, grant funds awarded through the EMSD program cannot be used to fund a taxi voucher program.

21) Can the grant funds be used for computers and cell phones and other IT equipment to operate a service?

Yes, this type of equipment is allowed under the capital project type as an equipment request; however, will have a minimum request of \$100,000 so you must be able to meet this threshold by requesting enough quantity or after having requested vehicles that go towards meeting the minimum.

Additionally, equipment requests between \$10,000-\$99,000 are allowed as a standalone capital equipment purchase application.

Accountability Measure

22) What is the purpose of the accountability measure?

The accountability measure was included in the 2024 call for projects and should be expected to be carried over into future cycles as a way to assess project delivery performance for returning applicants.

Application

23) For operating applications, is additional narrative needed under C1 – Program Performance Indicators? (Page 9 of the application)?

No, not directly in the tables, but questions that follow ask for a description what is being proposed.

24) Are applicants able to apply for one-year funding or should the budget cover a two or three-year program?

An applicant can apply for one, two, or three years of funding. The budget should cover a two-year period if requesting two years of funding and a three-year period if requesting three years of funding.

25) For Q3 under Part I – Project Need (applicable to both application types), does the response need to include available non-profit, public transit or paratransit services throughout Orange County or the region within our organization?

The response should include available public transit and paratransit service within the geographic area that your organization serves.

Submittal

26) Are electronic signatures allowable or do the required signatures within the application and letters of support need to be signed and scanned as part of the application?

Yes, electronic signatures can be used.

27) Can the application and attachments be submitted as a PDF?

Yes, submittal of a PDF package is preferred. Word files are provided on the website for ease of use. When uploading the application documents, please fill out the required information and upload each application type separately. When uploading your application, please specify the project type (capital or operating), project title, requested funding amount, etc. per the instructions.

28) Can hard copy applications be submitted or can applications be submitted via email?

No, applications will only be accepted electronically via a specific folder for your agency through an OCTA SharePoint site location. You can obtain access to your agency's unique folder by contacting program staff or by email at octaemsd@octa.net

Applications will not be accepted or considered in any other form or through an alternate method and must be submitted following the application templates found on the programs webpage.

Post-Award

29) What final insurance requirements are included in the cooperative agreement with OCTA if a project is awarded?

The following insurance requirements are required as part of the cooperative agreement and are subject to change at the time of award:

1. Commercial general liability (includes products/completed operations, independent contractors, contractual liability, personal injury liability, property damage) minimum limit \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 general aggregate.
2. Automobile liability insurance to include owned, hired, and non-owned autos combined single limit of \$1,000,000.
3. Workers' compensation with limits as required by the State of California including a waiver of subrogation in favor of OCTA, its officers, directors, employees, or agents.
4. Employers' liability with minimum limits of \$1,000,000.

30) What State and Federal reporting and other requirements are included in the cooperative agreement with OCTA if a project is awarded.

The following State and Federal reporting and other requirements are required as part of the cooperative agreement and are subject to change at the time of award:

1. Required drug and alcohol programs and related reporting.
 - Required programs and reporting, explained in more detail on **page 10** of the guidelines, are expected to be reported quarterly due no later than the 21st of the month following the close of each quarter.
 - All drug and alcohol testing data and related certifications are expected to be submitted on an annual basis no later than April 21st of each following year.
2. Required driver training for vehicle purchasing.
 - Required for applicants requesting vehicles under the capital application only.
3. Required maintenance for vehicles and equipment purchasing.
 - Required for applicants requesting vehicles and equipment under the capital application only.

31) What is the earliest date our project can start after being awarded funds?

You may begin invoicing and similarly start your project once the contract agreement between OCTA and your agency has been executed.

Vehicle Purchasing

32) Can purchasing assistance be offered during the reimbursement process of purchasing vehicles less than \$100,000 similar to that offered for purchasing vehicles \$100,000 or more?

Yes, OCTA will be removing the \$100,000 reimbursement limitation to offer ease of purchasing vehicles directly without waiting for reimbursement.

33) Can we purchase used paratransit vehicles with awarded EMSD funds?

Yes, used vehicles may be purchased with awarded grant funds with an applicable reduction in awarded funds and so long as the vehicle(s) meet certain parameters, that includes the following:

1. Less than three years old;
2. Less than 65,000 miles;
3. Vehicle is under warranty;
4. Solicit quotes from multiple vendors;
5. Mechanic inspections prior to purchase;
6. Fully ADA compliant – ramps, tie downs, and other safety features; and
7. EMSD award is reduced based on purchase price of individual vehicle, and 10% match provided accordingly.

34) Do all vehicle requests have to be of the same category?

No, applicants requesting vehicles can decide to request multiple traditional combustion engine vehicles, ZEVs, or ZEBs at their desired quantities that best suit their agencies need vehicle procurement plan. Vehicles can also be of different sizes. Note the total vehicle request must not exceed the maximum allowable amount for capital applications of \$1,000,000 per agency and must not exceed a combined capital and operating allowable amount of \$1,500,000 per agency.