Request for Proposals

Community Mobility Design Challenge 2022

Information and Application Package

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Applications for this opportunity are due July 15, 2022

A vibrant community is one where all residents are empowered to achieve their economic, health, and social goals. The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) recognizes the vital role transportation plays in all activities that support the empowerment of individuals in each of these areas. Yet often community transportation systems lack the resources and/or strategies to provide the level of mobility to residents that they would like.

NCMM's Community Mobility Design Challenge 2022 grants, with funding from the Federal Transit Administration, will support communities in designing innovative transportation services that address the personal well-being of community members who face transportation barriers to achieving their economic, health, and social goals.

The Design Challenge up to $25,000 is the first in NCMM's series of three grants. The second grant opportunity, or the Learning Launch grants up to $20,000, enable teams to refine and test the solutions they created during the Design Challenge to ensure they are operationally feasible, financially viable, and, above all, responsive to customers' needs. The third grant opportunity, or the Ready to Launch grants, provide up to $75,000 in funding to then pilot the tested solutions. Teams are well positioned to apply for the second and third grant opportunities after completing their Design Challenge activities.

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1. About this Grant Opportunity

1A. Quick Look

Who is eligible?

The applicant organization must be a nonprofit organization or a government agency that is able to receive, or be a subrecipient of, federal funding. Teams who have previously received an NCMM Design Challenge grant are not eligible to apply for this opportunity.

Do we need to suggest a solution in our application?

No, in fact in your application, please do **NOT** suggest a specific solution for this opportunity. Instead, during the human-centered design process used with this grant, we will work with you to analyze your community's needs and create a solution that you know will respond to and be used by customers.

What is the application deadline?

July 15, 2022

How much funding and support will we receive?

Up to $25,000 plus intensive technical assistance throughout the grant

How many grants will be awarded?

NCMM plans to select four communities.

1B. Goals

The goal of the NCMM Community Mobility Design Challenge 2022 is to enable multi-sector community teams to develop promising mobility solutions that are inspired and informed by the results of community research. Communities should be entering the Design Challenge with a clear, well-researched understanding of the needs in their community, *not a proposed solution*. Once the work of this Design Challenge 2022 is complete, teams will have designed a solution and determined its feasibility, potential effectiveness, and financial sustainability.

The goal of Design Challenge 2022 is to

- Support communities in creating mobility solutions for community members who face transportation barriers in advancing their personal well-being. Teams will address underserved populations that currently do not have access to equitable transportation because of income or minority status, location, time of travel, a pre-existing condition, or other reason.

- Support the development of cross-sector partnerships that work together on transportation solutions for the community that benefit both customers and the agencies/organizations who serve them.
- Prepare communities to apply for future funding opportunities to implement community transportation solutions, such as federal transit funding, NCMM funding, and other types of federal, state, and local funding.

1C. Approach

For the Design Challenge 2022, applicant teams will use several activities and tools from the human-centered design approach to create a sustainable, customer-responsive solution to a transportation issue in their communities. Human-centered design is grounded in the exploration of a problem from multiple customers' perspectives. For the purposes of the Design Challenge 2022, "customers" will include community members who face transportation barriers in advancing their personal well-being as well as other stakeholders whose services to the community are impacted by a lack of transportation resources (e.g., human service agencies) or who can impact the availability of transportation (e.g., funders, community partners).

The human-centered design approach values consideration of a wide range of innovative solutions, as well as the testing and iterating of those solutions. This approach can be divided into these phases:

- Phase 1: Examining the question and planning the research
- Phase 2: Conducting the research and uncovering insights
- Phase 3: Generating ideas and concepts for prospective solutions
- Phase 4: Testing assumptions about the prospective solutions

Teams will receive training, facilitation, and direct technical assistance throughout the project for the effective use of this approach. Applicant teams are encouraged to learn more about human-centered design through the National Center for Mobility Management's free Creating Innovative Transportation Solutions e-learning course.

1D. Challenge Areas and Focus Question

Challenge Area

Each team will indicate in its application which of the challenge areas listed below it has chosen. Examples of each have been given, but these are in no way intended to limit a community's interpretation of a challenge area; in fact, these challenge areas are intentionally broad to allow communities to match their project with one of their top priorities.

"Our team will address community members who face transportation barriers in advancing their personal well-being as they attempt to . . . [choose one area from the four options below]

1. Access economic opportunity (e.g., training, education, jobs)
2. Access health-care–related destinations
3. Access community and peer support opportunities (e.g., substance use peer recovery groups, behavioral health peer groups)
4. Address social determinants of health (https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health)

<u>Focus Question</u>

Teams will also be asked to create a one-sentence focus question on their issue. The focus question should clearly and succinctly outline the specific opportunity the applicant is looking to address within the chosen challenge area. The focus question should be more specific than just a re-statement of the team's challenge area and should reflect the target population, the target community, and the specific problem to be addressed (e.g., "How can we improve access to behavioral health services for Medicaid-eligible residents in El Paso County?"). The focus question should also be narrow enough in scope and specific enough that it provides the team with a direction for research and potential action.

1E. Define the Target Population and Target Community

<u>Target Population</u>

Applicant teams will choose a specific target population of community members who face transportation barriers in advancing their personal well-being. Teams will address underserved populations that currently do not have access to equitable transportation because of income status, minority status, location, a pre-existing condition, time of travel, or other reason. Teams are encouraged to be as specific as possible in defining their target population; as applicable, include information about age, disability status, ethnicity, and income status, as well as how the target population's needs relate to the chosen challenge area.

<u>Community</u>

Teams will also define the "community" they will be addressing. "Community" may include, but not be limited to, a formal or informally defined region, tribal nation, multi-county region, single county, city/town, neighborhood, or corridor. Note that the chosen community should present a manageable scope for the project. Applicants should take into consideration the feasibility of gathering representative primary data (interviews, observations) and defining how their solution would have a measurable impact in that community; for very large geographic areas (e.g., states), this may be more difficult, thus a statewide project is not optimal for the Design Challenge opportunity.

2. Team Composition and Eligibility

2A. Lead Organization

The lead organization will submit the application on behalf of its multi-sector community team and, if selected, will ensure the timely completion of all grant activities and requirements.

Lead organizations must be eligible recipients or subrecipients for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds under 49 U.S.C. Sections 5307, 5310, or 5311. Eligible subrecipients include state or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation. The applicant must have the capacity to successfully execute the project, and its partners should have the capacity to execute their roles successfully. The applicant should have no outstanding legal, technical, or financial issues that would make this a high-risk project. In the application, the lead organization and its partners must indicate that they have the capacity to successfully execute the project.

Lead organizations must be registered in the federal System for Award Management database (https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/index.jsf) and provide their DUNS number or unique entity identifier (UEI) with their application.

2B. Team Lead

The team lead must be a staff member of the lead organization. The team lead will convene the team and maintain the team's momentum during the duration of the project, as well as serve as the main point of contact with NCMM staff. All teams are encouraged to have a co-lead from another organization. In particular, if the lead organization is not a transportation entity, we encourage the inclusion of a co-lead who is a transportation professional.

2C. Team Composition

The team must consist of a multi-sector partnership, with membership drawn from organizations most relevant to the focus question the team will address. Each team should have a minimum of five and a maximum of ten members from a diverse group of partner organizations.

At a minimum, you team must be comprised of:

- At least one transportation professional (e.g., public transportation provider of bus, van, vanpool, carpool, or bike-sharing services; mobility manager; transportation management association; volunteer transportation program; rideshare coordinator; transportation planner)
- At least one individual customer from the target population (e.g., end user)
- At least two members drawn from community-based organizations relevant to the mobility challenge to be addressed. For example, applicants proposing to improve mobility access for individuals seeking access to peer support groups must include a

representative from a related provider or case management organization; likewise, applicants proposing to improve access to healthy food must include a representative from a food access program.

Additional team members may be drawn from the following:

- Case management services (e.g., social worker, care coordinator, community health worker, education advisor)
- Local advocates
- Local elected or public agency officials
- City or county departments
- Technology sector
- Others who would round out the team's experience, network, and skills

2D. Time Commitment by Team Members

Teams should expect to make a significant time contribution to this project. The payoff is that the teams will emerge with a solution to their identified challenge that is closely tied to the community, is positioned well for future funding, and has a high potential for success. The following is an estimate of the time commitment:

Pre-application

- Attending the pre-application webinar, gathering the team, choosing the focus area, creating the challenge question, and gathering data on community needs to include in the application – 5 hours (each team member)

After application acceptance

- Conducting primary research (interviews and observations) – 5 hours (each team member)
- Attending in-person "sensemaking" workshop to understand the data – 8 hours (each team member)
- Attending in-person "idea generation" workshop to develop prospective solutions – 8 hours (each team member)
- Testing assumptions embedded in the prospective solutions – 20-40 hours across all team members
- Preparing a project plan and project pitch for the chosen solution – 20 hours across all team members

3. Grant Activities and Details

3A. Grant Timeline

June 15   Request for proposals (RFP) announced

June 23   Webinar for potential applicants (1:00 PM ET)

July 15   Applications due by 11:59 pm ET

Early September   Accepted applicants notified

February 2023   Projects completed

3B. Pre-Application Activities

Before submitting an application, team members will complete the following activities:

- Assemble a coalition (see 2C)
- Choose a challenge area (see 1D)
- Create a focus question (see 1D)
- Identify needed primary research. As a team, identify the types of primary research (e.g., interviews, observations, other original research) needed to gain a deep understanding of the experience of the target population and those organizations that serve them. The direction of the research should be informed by the focus question. Applicants are asked to describe who they would interview and or observe, naming the type and number of end users as well as the name and number of stakeholder agencies/organizations as well as the position title of individuals from those agencies/organizations; specific names are not necessary. NCMM will assist with conducting the primary research during the grant.
- Identify secondary research applicable to the focus question. Applicants will be asked to summarize data from existing secondary research. They should also identify additional secondary research (e.g., Census data, community assessment, surveys, reports, studies, and other data sources) to be attached to the application.
- Attend pre-application webinar. Team lead(s) (and preferably other team members) will participate in a pre-application webinar conducted by NCMM. We will cover the key activities of the grant, review the application process, and discuss key elements of human-centered design. Register here https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-LKBQjzWRFuXekBSXSFZKQ.

Questions during the application period can be addressed to William Reckley, reckley@ctaa.org; answers will be posted on the NCMM website, www.nc4mm.org/design-challenge-2022

3C. Grant Activities

Accepted grantees will be paired with an NCMM facilitator, who will conduct the in-person activities and host monthly phone calls with the team. NCMM will also host periodic all-team webinars.

The grant activities will take place over approximately 8 months. The following are key milestones in the teams' projects:

- Month 1. Implementing contract with NCMM and planning primary research and planning primary research (with help from NCMM).
- Month 2. Conducting primary research and gathering additional secondary data. The team's activities will kick off with community interviews/observations. NCMM will provide guidance on how to conduct this research, and in some instances, take part in the research. Additional needed secondary data that emerge as what is learned during the primary research, will also be gathered.
- Month 3. Sensemaking session. The team's NCMM facilitator will conduct an on-site, one-day "sensemaking" session, in which the team explores the data it gathered, discusses insights from the research phase, and develops conditions that a solution must meet to be successful. These conditions become the team's "design criteria" for the rest of the phases of the grant.
- Month 3. Idea generation session. The team's NCMM facilitator will conduct an on-site, one-day "idea generation" session using the team's design criteria, culminating in the team's development of 2-3 concepts for prospective solutions. The facilitator will also help the team plan how it will test their assumptions embedded in those concepts.
- Months 3-4. Fine-tuning solution concepts
- Months 5-6. Assumption testing. Teams will begin to vet each concept by identifying and testing the make-or-break assumptions it has in three areas: 1) customer desirability, 2) operational feasibility, and 3) financial viability. Based on findings in the assumption-testing phase, teams will modify their concepts for solutions and eventually narrow down to the most promising concept.
- Month 6. Planning and presenting team pitch. Teams will develop a project pitch describing their journey as they developed the solution.

3D. Grantee Reporting Requirements

Applicants must commit to implementing, tracking, and reporting on their learning about their proposed concepts and the application of the human-centered design process through the following activities:

- Monthly reports. Teams will complete a short report every month to accompany their reimbursement requests. Templates will be provided.

- Monthly activities. Teams will participate in monthly phone calls with their NCMM facilitator, as well as participate in periodic webinars hosted by NCMM.
- Presentation of team's journey in developing the chosen solution (team pitch)
- Completion of post-grant survey
- Participation in post-grant interview with NCMM's evaluator

3E. Funding for Successful Applicants

Each of the four chosen teams will receive up to $25,000, to be paid to the lead organization. Grant activities that can be funded include the following:

- Stipends to cover costs of team member participation, including time and travel for participatory design/co-design sessions, additional research with individuals, stakeholder meetings, and other post-application data-gathering activities
- Personnel costs related to project activities
- Expenses related to convening the team and/or larger groups of partners
- Development of prototypes, or low-cost visual representations of concepts, to share with partners and customers. This activity may include the cost of consultants and vendors, such as graphic designers and artists. The funds cannot be used for marketing purposes.
- Production of the final presentation for the team pitch session

Note that the funds **cannot be used to purchase consultant services** to fully implement the work of the Design Challenge project; applications that propose such a use of funding will not be selected. There is no substitute for the knowledge and experience team members gain when they work together to solve issues of mutual importance. Consultants can be used for activities such as conducting secondary research and creating visual prototypes of potential concepts.

4. Application Evaluation Criteria

4A. Review Process

- Screening. All applications received will be screened to determine that the minimum requirements noted below have been met. Only those applications that meet the minimum requirements will be forwarded for review.
- Review Process. Applications will be assessed by a review committee, drawn primarily from outside reviewers with relevant expertise. NCMM will submit for funding projects that received the highest recommendations by its review committee. NCMM will also strive to ensure diversity among the chosen applicants. All final decisions for which applicants will be funded will be made by the Federal Transit Administration.

4B. Screening Requirements

In order to be considered, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Complete application is received by email by the deadline.
- The application is submitted as single PDF document.
- The application addresses all required elements.
- The lead organization meets eligibility requirements and the lead organization or similarly composed team has not previously received an NCMM Design Challenge grant.
- The lead organization is registered in the federal System for Award Management database (https://www.sam.gov) as being eligible to receive federal funds.
- Total grant funds requested do not exceed $25,000.
- The team has not already designed or implemented a solution for the need identified in the application.

Only the applications meeting these requirements will be sent to the review committee.

4C. Application Scoring

Applications will be rated by the review committee on the basis of highly recommended (HR), recommended (R), and not recommended (NR) in the following areas:

1. Team leadership:
   a. The proposed lead organization submitted a letter with all required elements, and has provided evidence of its capacity to undertake this project and lead the team in completing all required deliverables within the grant period.
2. Commitment of Core Team Members:
   a. The team members represent the key partners related to the mobility challenge to be addressed, and include at least one customer/end user from the target group and at least one nonprofit or public transportation provider.
   b. Each individual team member has provided a **personalized** statement indicating his/her interest in and commitment to solving this chosen mobility challenge.
   c. Each individual team member articulates a role for themselves (e.g., bringing their network to the table, offering unique skills and experiences) in participating with this project.
3. Understanding of the mobility challenge and the target population to be addressed. The team has demonstrated its understanding of the challenge through the following components in its application:
   a. An actionable focus question to direct the team's work
   b. A well-defined target population
   c. A well-defined community
   d. Citing of sufficient data to demonstrate that the team has a solid understanding of the mobility challenge to be addressed.
4. Scope of the Project and Target Outcomes. The proposed scope of the project (e.g., target population, potential impact), as described in the application narrative, will address a significant mobility challenge in terms of the total numbers or percentage of the target population that would be impacted by the implementation of the project.

5. Budget.
   a. The projected costs and rationale for those costs are clearly explained.
   b. Projected budget is reasonable for the proposed scope of activities.
   c. The applicant has not included a significant amount of funding for consultant activities that would substitute for the team members' participation in all key activities of the project.

4D. Selection

The review committee will make its recommendations based on the following guidelines:

- Applications rated as highly recommended (HR) will be those that receive "HR" in at least four categories, and receive no "NR" ratings.
- Applications rated as recommended (R) will be those that receive "HR" in at least one category and receive no "NR" ratings.
- Applications rated as not recommended (NR) will be those that receive "NR" in one or more categories.

5. Application Instructions

5A. Application Instructions

Deadline for receipt of application: July 15, 2022, 11:59 PM ET.

Directions for submitting application. A complete application will be a single PDF document, combining all of the above components. Application packages should be emailed to William Reckley, reckley@ctaa.org, by the submittal deadline. Applications submitted via other methods will not be considered. Questions during the application period can also be addressed to William Reckley, reckley@ctaa.org; answers will be posted on the NCMM website [nc4mm.org/design-challenge-2022].

5B. Minimum requirements.

All of the requirements listed below must be met in order for an application to be forwarded to the review committee for consideration:

- Complete application is received by email by the deadline.
- The application is submitted as single PDF document.
- The application addresses all required elements.
- The lead organization meets eligibility requirements and the lead organization or similarly composed team has not previously received an NCMM Design Challenge grant.
- The lead organization is registered in the federal System for Award Management database (https://www.sam.gov) as being eligible to receive federal funds.
- Total grant funds requested do not exceed $25,000.

- The team has not already designed or implemented a solution for the need identified in the application.

6. Application Package

After completing the pre-application activities, please complete the following application. The application package includes three sections:

> A. The grant application proposal narrative
>
> B. The grant budget form and accompanying budget narrative
>
> C. Lead organization commitment letter

6A. Proposal Narrative

Applicants who wish to have their proposal considered must follow the exact outline below and include all elements in the outline. Applicable sections of the application information included above are noted in parentheses.

1. Name your community (e.g., northwest Florida, Johnson City, Washington & Lee Counties)
2. Total funds requested. Total amount of NCMM project funds requested (maximum $25,000). No local match dollars or in-kind contributions are required apart from the team members' time, effort, and commitment to the project
3. Lead organization. The official legal name, address, and telephone number of the organization that is submitting the application and would be contracting for the grant. Lead organization must also provide their DUNS number or unique entity identifier (UEI) with their application. (Section 2A)
4. Person submitting the application. Name of the person legally authorized to submit the application, answer questions about the application, and negotiate for and contractually bind the organization. Must be employed by the lead organization. Include address, phone, and email.
5. State the challenge area your team has chosen from the list provided in section 1D. If teams are interested in applying for more than one challenge area, they may submit an additional application. However, each selected applicant will be funded to respond to only one challenge area. (Section 1D)
6. Describe your focus question and indicate how you feel the scope of the focus question is actionable. (150 words or less; Section 1D)
7. Describe your target community in detail. (150 words or less; Section 1E)
8. Describe your target population in detail. (150 words or less; Section 1E)
9. Describe the team's understanding of the problem (750 words or less; Section 3B) The team should summarize the problem it will address, summarize anecdotal and other first-hand information on the problem, summarize data from existing applicable secondary research, and any other information to help reviewers determine their level of understanding. In this section, it should be clear that the team has consulted and/or

represents those closest to the problem who have deep first-hand knowledge of the problem. The team should also identify needed primary research (to be conducted after team is accepted as an NCMM Design Challenge grantee.

10. Who are your team members? (Section 2B and 2C). Please list team lead[s] first and designate them as such. For each team member, please include the following:

- Name
- Title and Organization
- City and State
- Phone number and email
- A personalized brief statement (no more than 150 words each) from each team member that explains why the member wants to participate in the project; indicates their commitment working with the team on its chosen mobility challenge for the *entire* planning grant process and participate in all activities; describes the team member's expertise, experience, and/or insights related to the team's chosen community mobility challenge the member will bring to the team; and identifies the personal and professional strengths the member will bring to the team's project. This statement should be written by each individual. **Statements that have been clearly duplicated and simply signed by team members will not be accepted**.

B. Proposed Budget

1. Grant budget form.
   An overall project budget should be provided that gives, at a minimum, the breakdown of proposed expenses. Please use the following table for creating your own proposed budget form. Each budget item proposed must be described in the accompanying budget narrative. Not all applicants will have expenses in each line item; simply enter a zero in items that will not be used. All contracts entered into as a result of this solicitation will be required to comply with all standard federal accounting requirements.

Item	Grant Funds	In-kind Funds (optional)	Total Project Funds
1. Direct labor salaries or wages			
2. Fringe benefits			
3. Contracted/consultant services			
4. Travel			
5. Meeting costs			
6. Other direct costs (specify)			
7. Indirect costs			
8. TOTAL GRANT BUDGET (requested funds not to exceed $25,000)			

Grant budget narrative – Describe specifically how the funds in each line item in the table above will be used. If the organization will be using an indirect rate greater than 10% ("de minimus rate"), please provide documentation by the organization's cognizant federal or state agency for that indirect rate.

If *optional* in-kind support will be provided by the applicant organization (e.g., supplementing project staff salaries) and/or key partners, please provide details on this type of support. In-kind support may include providing staff support, free meeting space, meeting refreshments, postage, etc. In-kind support is encouraged but not required.

C. Commitment Letter

Please submit a one-page letter with your application on behalf of the lead organization, signed by an official or officer who is legally authorized to answer questions about the application, as well as negotiate for and contractually bind the organization. The purpose of this letter is to assure application reviewers that key staff will have adequate time to support the project and assure its success.

The letter should briefly describe the applicant's organizational staffing plan for the project, including the name and title of the person who will have overall day-to-day responsibility for the project and for coordination and contact with the NCMM. The letter must also state that the application is valid as submitted for a period of up to 180 days from the submittal due date.