

**Q & A from STIF Discretionary and Statewide Transit Network Application Overview Webinar – September 28, 2022**

1. If the QE is the applicant, does the application go to QE approval twice? Before applying to ODOT, and then once ODOT sends for feedback?

**A: The STIF rules require QEs to review and provide feedback on applications for projects that would be implemented within their area of responsibility. How the QE handles review of project proposals *prior* to submittal to ODOT is up to the QE.**

2. Can you use Discretionary or STN funds as match to a federal project?

**A: Yes. However, the other funds needed to complete the project must be secured *before* a discretionary STIF grant can be awarded. In other words, the other sources of funding for the project cannot be uncertain as that could result in ODOT funding a project that will not be completed if not supported by other proposed fund sources.**

3. Is this the only process to apply for 5311 Funds? Have 5311 funds been bundled in this process under STIF D historically?

**A: The 5311 Formula funds are done through a separate process that will be released October 5. The 5311(f) Intercity Bus funds are distributed through a discretionary process and are included in this solicitation. 5311(f) projects are for long-distance (at least 20 miles), non-commuter intercommunity services.**

4. Is ODOT or the applicant responsible for submitting the STIF Discretionary project application to the local ACT for review?

**A: ODOT will make the applications available to the ACTs for review. The ACT process for providing feedback on those applications is up to the ACT. RTCs will visit ACT meetings to provide guidance and answer questions, as needed.**

5. Can you submit multiple LOIs for each type of funding?

**A: Yes. You only need to submit one LOI per project. Selection of fund source will be possible as part of the formal application.**

6. Are LOI required for projects that intend to use funds for ONLY a vehicle purchase?

**A: No.**

7. What about planning, design and engineering for a facility. There probably won't be complete information yet to select capital/construction projects. How should this type of project be handled?

**A: Yes, LOIs are required for this type of project. Provide a summary of the desired outcomes for the planning, design, or engineering project. Additional detail can be provided in the formal application.**

**Additional RTC feedback: Recommended you complete an Independent Cost Estimate (ICE). RTCs suggest you complete this type of project in phases. Phase I planning, design, etc. Phase II site selection and environmental review, Phase III site prep and construction.**

8. Is application approval "all or nothing", or can some projects/tasks be approved but not others?

**A: No, it is not "all or nothing." The Selection Committee and/or PTAC may recommended funding only part of the award request. For this reason, it is important for the applicant to carefully answer Question 17 on minimal project cost; this will let the Selection Committee know that the applicant would still benefit from a partially funded award.**

9. Am I understanding this correctly that a LOI is needed for all projects for all STIF and 5311 projects, excepting vehicle and building purchases?

**A: An LOI is required for all STIF Discretionary, STIF Intercommunity, and FTA Section 5311(f) proposals, except for vehicle-only applications. It *is* required for building purchases. It is *not* required for 5311 Formula.**

10. What kinds of attachments are you expecting with the application? Please provide examples.

**A: Helpful attachments might include documents related to site planning, design, and mapping, environmental impact reviews, route information and graphics, feasibility studies, community engagement and survey results, letters of support, and other documents that provide helpful context on the proposed project. If the project involves construction or real property purchase or improvement, the applicant *must* provide proof of ownership interest in the property in question.**

11. Do QEs have to approve and submit 5311(f) applications? Can't a PTSP provider submit?

**A: No, a QE does not need to approve 5311(f) applications. PTSPs, non-profits, and for-profits may submit an application for 5311(f) funding.**

12. Can you use STIF Discretionary funds to purchase a dispatch software system such as Trip Spark?

**A: Yes.**

13. Can STIF D/STN funds be used to supplement funding previously award under 5311? Is this classified as a "vehicle purchase" since it is not entirely being used for the purchase?

**A: This would still fall under "vehicle purchase." Yes, this is an eligible expense under these programs, but a reminder that this is a competitive grant program; funding is not guaranteed.**

14. I am trying to complete an application for our company. I have never done this before. What kind of information do I need to submit on our application? We just purchased a WC accessible bus and are purchasing it without assistance how do I go about getting assistance in the future?

**A: Non-profits and for-profits may only apply *directly* for 5311(f) funds. A Public Transportation Service Provider (defined in OAR 732-040-0005(26)) may apply for STIF Discretionary or Intercommunity funds on behalf of these entities (i.e. sponsor the project) and contract with the non-profit or for-profit to complete the project deliverables.**

15. Regarding rolling stock, please confirm there is no preference for low or no emission vehicles.

**A: ODOT does prefer and highly encourages purchase of low or no emission vehicles, where feasible. It is not a requirement for this solicitation.**

16. Due to the supply chain issues the buses have been delayed so we can extend the grant agreement for the buses but not the operating part of the Pilot Project. So I just want to confirm that we should resubmit the operations portion as a new project for STIF-D since we will not receive buses until 2024.

**A: Grant extensions for delays in vehicle delivery are possible. Grants will not be extended for to allow use of operating funds but the applicant may reapply for funds to implement the service.**

17. Can active transportation infrastructure projects be funded if they provide links to public transit?

**A: Yes. Eligibility of active transportation and other pedestrian related projects will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should clearly demonstrate in their application how the project will directly improve access to and use of public transit.**

18. Any advice on how to have multiple staff working on the application?

**A: Once saved, an application will always be reachable using the same hyperlink. This link may be shared with all contributing staff. Only one individual should work on the application at any given time, saving their progress before another staff member accesses the application.**

19. We received funding from the STIF program in 2020. Our project is making progress, but it has been affected by delays due to COVID and some of our transit agency partners migrating to new CAD/AVL systems. Due to these delays, we may need to request a no-cost extension until December 2023. Will this affect our eligibility to request STIF funding in this upcoming cycle?

**A: Probably yes. If a project is extended beyond the current biennium, eligibility to apply to continue that project in the upcoming biennium could be affected. Costs identified in the application should reflect only what is expected to be completed during the upcoming biennium.**

20. Is transit facility equipment eligible like shop/maintenance equipment, office furniture, etc.?

**A: Yes. As long as the equipment will be used to support public transportation services for the duration of its useful life, it is an eligible STIF expense.**

21. How accurate do our cost estimates in the LOI need to be? What happens if the cost estimate we submit in our final application is different than the LOI?

**A: Provide your best estimate of the total project cost in the LOI. The project intent may not change between the LOI and application. It is okay if the cost estimate shifts between the LOI and application.**

22. If STIF Discretionary from last cycle will not fully fund our new bus barn, can we apply for the additional funds needed because of rising costs?

**A: Yes. This is an eligible cost.**

23. Could STIF be a possible source of funding to supplement shortfalls in funding in other programs, such as the Rural Veteran's Transportation fund?

**A: Services eligible for STIF funding must be open to the general public. An exception exists, however, where the limited eligibility service is shown to be included in a planned and coordinated community transportation program.**