

Oregon Department of Transportation - Innovative Mobility Program Microgrant Program Guidance

For general inquires, contact innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov

Apply online at [Oregon Department of Transportation: Innovative Mobility Program: Public Transportation: State of Oregon](#)

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1. Introduction

[The Innovative Mobility Program](#) (IMP) is a new initiative from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that aims to improve historically underserved communities' access to public and active transportation. Program goals also include reducing the number of trips Oregonians make by car and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The IMP is funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed by Congress in November 2021, as well as State of Oregon funding. The program has a total of \$20 million for grants, contracts, and administration. Innovative Mobility Program microgrants were created as a response to community feedback for a low barrier grant program that offers immediate funding.

1.1 Microgrant Program Goals

The Innovative Mobility Program was designed to increase social equity and mobility while reducing the effects of climate change. The core objectives of the program are to:

1. Improve **historically underserved groups'** access to public and active transportation.
2. Reduce the number of drive-alone trips.
3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ODOT takes a broad view of what "historically underserved" means. Examples include:

- Veterans
- People of color
- Tribal governments and Indigenous People
- People living with a disability
- Women
- Older adults (those over 65)
- Youth (those under 21)
- People who identify as LGBTQ+
- People living on low incomes
- People with limited or no English proficiency
- People experiencing homelessness
- Any group that has been historically excluded or whose needs have not been met by the existing transportation system.

1.2 Available Funding

Microgrants are available **for up to \$15,000** and are intended to support new and existing projects that meet program goals. The microgrant program will be open for grant applications in 2024 and 2026, with a \$350,000 funding allocation in 2024. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis from March 25 – November 29, or until the funding allocation is met. Although microgrant funding is not competitive, \$175,000 of funding will be reserved for nonprofits. The microgrant program will be closed December - February for staff to evaluate the program and make adjustments to better serve applicants.

Table 1.1 Microgrant Funding Cycles

Cycle Name	Year	Funding Allocation	Fund Termination Date
Cycle 2	March 25, 2024 - November 29, 2024	\$350,000	June 30, 2026
Cycle 3	March 2026 – November 2026	\$300,000	June 30, 2028

**Microgrants are closed December – February for staff to evaluate the program and make improvements. Cycle 1 was completed in 2023.*

ODOT reserves the right to increase or decrease the overall amount of funding available, depending on the progress of awards, level of demand, and other program needs. ODOT will communicate budgeting decisions regarding microgrants with 30 days’ advance public notice.

Award Distributions

- For projects under \$7,500, awards will be paid up-front with no requirements for reimbursement or match funding.
- For projects above \$7,500, awards will be disbursed in two payments. The first \$7,500 will be paid up-front and the remaining portion will be paid upon review and approval of a progress report. Match funding is not required.

If you have questions or concerns about the award distributions, please contact IMP staff at innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov and we will be happy to discuss options.

Funding Limitations

Organizations are limited to a total of \$15,000 per cycle. An organization can only apply for an additional microgrant if they have completed their previous project and reporting is approved by IMP staff. For instance, if an organization receives a \$5,000 microgrant for one project, they can apply for a second microgrant of up to \$10,000 once they have completed the first project. Alternatively, an organization that receives a \$15,000 microgrant for its first project will not be eligible to receive another microgrant during the same funding cycle since they will have met their funding limit. Organizations who do not submit reporting requirements or who are found to have misused funds may not be eligible for future IMP funding. To learn more about reporting, please review [What to Expect if Awarded a Microgrant](#).

Microgrant Cycle 1 Awardees

- If you were awarded a microgrant in Cycle 1, you must submit a progress or final report to be eligible for funding in Cycle 2.
- If you were awarded two microgrants in Cycle 1, you will not be eligible to apply for a microgrant in Cycle 2 until final reporting is approved from your 2nd project.

2. Eligibility Criteria

2.1 Eligible Organizations

The following entities are eligible to apply for a microgrant:

- Local, regional, Tribal, and state government agencies (excluding the Oregon Department of Transportation),
- Public schools, school districts, colleges, and universities,
- Transportation providers,
- Businesses providing community services,
- Nonprofits and entities with 501(c)(3) status,
- Organizations with fiscal sponsorship from a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status or public agency.

2.2 Organizations with Fiscal Sponsors

Organizations with fiscal sponsorship from a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or public agency are eligible to apply. A fiscal sponsor can expect to participate in IMP microgrants in the following ways:

- Grantees and their fiscal sponsors will enter into an agreement with ODOT that specifies legal and contractual obligations. Fiscal sponsors must review and sign the agreement. A copy of the grant agreement is available on the [IMP webpage](#).
- ODOT requires that microgrant applicants submit proof of insurance coverage before their grant agreement can be executed. Fiscal sponsors may provide insurance coverage, as applicable, for the duration of the project. Additional guidance on insurance requirements is available in [Section 3.2](#).
- Fiscal sponsors should be available to receive the grant award from ODOT and distribute funds to the applying entity in a timely and appropriate manner.

The entity that applies for and receives the IMP microgrant will be responsible for fulfilling the reporting requirements.

2.3 Eligible Projects and Activities

IMP microgrants can be used to fund a wide variety of projects and activities so long as they meet the goals of the program. The IMP encourages innovation, collaboration, and creativity in meeting the transportation needs of members of historically underserved groups. The following examples are provided as guidance on the types of projects and activities that are eligible but is not an exhaustive list. If you are unsure whether your proposed project or activity is eligible, please reach out to IMP staff for assistance.

- **Events and Education:** Microgrants may be used to support active and public transportation-related events and educational activities. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Open streets and bike rodeos
 - Safety education and awareness activities and programs to inform pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on pedestrian/bike safety
 - Trainings and lessons

- **Equipment and Materials:** Microgrants may be used to purchase equipment and materials that support public and active transportation, including but not limited to:
 - Helmets, lights, reflectors and other safety gear
 - Repair kits
 - Locks
 - Maps or other wayfinding materials
- **Lending Libraries and Shared Mobility Services:** Microgrants may be used to support the development of lending libraries and shared mobility services, including:
 - Bicycles, e-bikes, e-cargo bikes and adaptive devices for lending libraries and shared services (including operational support)
 - Scooters and e-scooters for lending libraries and shared services (including operational support)
 - Vanpool/carpool service subsidies
- **Minor Infrastructure:** Microgrants may be used to fund supportive infrastructure for active and public transportation. Infrastructure improvements must not be on ODOT right-of-way. Projects must comply with local and state environmental laws and regulations. Examples of projects include:
 - Improvements at or near transit stops, such as benches, lighting, etc.
 - Signage and wayfinding
 - Accessibility ramps
 - Micromobility parking and amenities, such as racks and lockers for bicycles, scooters, and skateboards
 - Pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure
 - Repair stations
 - Mobility hubs
- **Demonstration Projects:** Microgrants may be used to fund limited duration demonstration projects, including:
 - Temporary pedestrian/bicycle installations
 - On-demand shared ride services such as microtransit
 - Technology innovations to support public and active transportation
- **Planning Projects and Transportation Needs Assessments:** Microgrants may be used to fund small planning projects and/or transportation needs assessments aimed at better understanding the transportation needs of historically underserved groups.
- **Transit Passes and “Transportation Wallets”:** Microgrants may be used to purchase transit passes to be distributed to organizational beneficiaries, as well as “Transportation Wallets” that support access to public and active transportation services.
- **Marketing of Existing Services:** Microgrants may be used to publicize or market existing services. This could include printed materials or updates to improve accessibility of information.
- **Translation and Culturally Specific Materials:** Microgrants may be used for translation and for the creation and promotion of culturally specific materials that promote services or products that are aligned with IMP goals.
- **Chartered Transportation (\$5,000 Award Limit):** Microgrants may be used to fund chartered transportation (e.g., private buses, shuttles, etc.) for one-time events depending on the

destination and purpose of the trip. Applicants will be asked to describe the importance of the trip and what the consequences will be if this transportation gap is not filled. Chartered transportation projects have an award limit of \$5,000.

- *Please note that funding to support chartered transportation for school-related events is limited to schools that receive Title I-A funding for the 2023-24 school year.*

Microgrant project funding may also be used as supplemental funding for a larger project that meets the eligible criteria. Organizations must demonstrate proof of secured supplemental funding.

2.4 Restrictions on Use of Funds

The following restrictions apply to the use of grant funds:

- **Giveaway distribution limits:** Items purchased as giveaways that directly support the scope of your project have an item cost maximum of \$50. These are items that beneficiaries can take home and do not have to share. For example, helmets can be distributed at a bike rodeo event, but each helmet must be \$50 or less. If an item has a value of more than \$50, it may be lent to the individual if the applicant retains ownership and title over the item. **(updated - 4/5/2024)**
- **Incentives:** Payment in the form of cash gift cards only may be used as an incentive for participation in an activity directly related to the scope of the microgrant-funded project. (For example, a cash gift card can be used as an incentive for completing a transportation survey.) Incentive amounts should be commensurate with the activity occurring and incentives should be included in the proposed project budget.
- **Staff time:** Microgrants may be used to fund operational and administrative expenses directly related to the scope of the project. Examples of eligible forms of operations include staff and contractor time whose scope of work is directly related to the project (e.g., bike mechanics providing repair services for an event) and installation expenses (e.g., installation of bike racks). Requests for operational expenses and staff time must be clearly outlined in the application and documented in grant reporting. ODOT staff will request documentation on the number of staff, hours worked, the amount paid, and the connection to the project. Due to the limited funding of this grant program, this should not be considered an opportunity for ongoing support. General operations that do not have a connection to the microgrant project will not be funded.
- **Raffles or contests:** Grant funds cannot be used to purchase materials or goods to award as prizes in a raffle or contest.
- **Lobbying:** Grant funds cannot be used to directly influence legislation or public policy, participate or intervene in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office, or induce or encourage violations of law or public policy.
- **Marketing or promotion of services not currently operational or funded:** Microgrants cannot be used to pay for materials that promote or raise awareness of proposed services that are not currently operational or that have not already secured the full funding required to make them operational in the future, or for materials designed to influence policy or decision-making.
- **Any other cost not addressed above, not included in the grant scope of work, or not previously approved by ODOT.**

ODOT will pursue corrective action, as appropriate, for grantees who misuse grant funds or conduct activities outside of the agreed-upon scope of work. Misuse of funds will disqualify an entity from receiving any additional IMP funding in the future.

3. Application Process and Timeline

3.1 Application Preview

To apply for a microgrant, organizations must complete an [online application](#) available on the [IMP webpage](#). You are not required to create an account to access the application. All application questions can be previewed by visiting the [application form](#).

The following information is required to complete the application:

- Name of organization/entity.
- Contact name, title, email, and phone number.
- Amount requested (up to \$15,000).
- Description of the proposed activity and an estimated project timeline.
- A budget demonstrating how the funds will be spent. The project/activity must be commensurate with the amount of funding requested.
- Description of the activity or project's intended outcomes and how historically underserved groups will benefit from the activity/project.
- Description of how the applicant will track social/demographic information on beneficiaries of the grant.

Project Scope and Budget

All applicants will be required to submit a [project budget using the IMP template](#). The template contains instructions and provides an example budget. You will be asked to list expenses related to your project and include an estimated cost. You must submit the template as an attachment in the online application. If you have questions about how to complete the budget template or if you would like assistance on developing project estimates, please contact IMP staff and we will be happy to assist you!

Additional Application Requirements

Additional application requirements may be required in certain cases.

Nonprofits/private applicants

- Nonprofit applicants will be required to submit proof of 501(c)(3) status, such as an IRS Determination Letter, *at the time of application*.
- Nonprofit/private applicants will be required to submit a Certificate of Insurance (COI) to ODOT *after project approval*. For more information, see [Section 3.2: Insurance Coverage](#).

Minor infrastructure projects

Applicants interested in using a microgrant to conduct a minor infrastructure project, such as purchasing and installing bike racks, lockers, signage, etc., will need to submit additional documentation to demonstrate:

- Location(s) for installation
- Confirmation that proposed location(s) follows all applicable local, state, and federal government guidelines, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. *
- Whether a permit is required for installation, and if so, whether the permit has been obtained. **
- That the materials selected are allowable by applicable government guidelines (e.g., bike rack types).
- Materials selected and their estimated cost.
- Amount requested for installation (if applicable).

*IMP cannot fund projects that would install unpermitted items or infrastructure that would impede local traffic in the right-of-way. Projects must comply with all local and state environmental laws and regulations.

**IMP microgrant project approval does not replace or supersede other necessary permit processes or approvals that may be needed for your project.

Chartered transportation projects

Applicants interested in using a microgrant to support chartered transportation for a one-time event must answer the following questions in the application:

- Explain the importance of the trip/activity.
- Explain what the consequences will be if this transportation gap is not filled.

3.2 Insurance Coverage

IMP microgrant insurance requirements were determined at a program level and based on factors like industry standards, program structure, and project scope. As outlined in the grant agreement, ODOT requires that grantees have Commercial General Liability, Automobile Liability, and Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability insurance coverage for the duration of the grant. To demonstrate proof of coverage, **all nonprofit and private applicants are required to submit a Certificate of Insurance (COI) and supporting documentation to ODOT before a grant agreement is executed and grant funds are made available.** A COI will be requested after receiving notice that your application is approved.

The [IMP Microgrant Insurance Guidelines](#) explain the types of insurance coverage and the minimum coverage limits set within the grant agreement that are needed to receive a microgrant award. If you have concerns about this requirement, please reach out to IMP staff as soon as possible.

3.3 Application Timeline

Applicants can expect to receive a funding decision within 8 weeks of application submission. *The timeline is dependent upon email responsiveness, complexity of application, and staff capacity.*

Applicants are encouraged to apply for funds well in advance of when funds are needed. (For instance, if

you would like to use funds to support a one-time event, plan to submit an application several months in advance.) To learn more about the evaluation and review process, please review [Section 4](#). To learn more about the process upon award, please review [What to Expect if Awarded a Microgrant](#).

Application Process

1. Application is submitted through the online form.

Maximum timeframe: 10 business days

→ **2. IMP staff pre-screen application for eligibility and completeness. Applicant is notified of pre-screen status. If application is deemed complete, it will be sent for evaluation by the microgrant review committee.**

Maximum timeframe: 15 business days

→ **3. Application is evaluated by review committee.**

Maximum timeframe: 15 business days

→ **4. Applicant receives a funding decision.**

3.4 Language Translation

IMP staff are in the process of translating microgrant materials into additional languages. To request materials in a specific language or obtain individual assistance with the help of an interpreter, please contact IMP staff at innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov.

3.5 Technical Assistance

IMP staff are available to provide technical assistance with the microgrant process. We can help with things like brainstorming, project scoping and budgeting, and more. Please contact IMP staff at innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov to schedule a meeting or sign up for a meeting through our [booking page](#).

4. Application Evaluation Process and Criteria

The application evaluation process is broken down into two steps: application pre-screening and review committee. Applicants can expect to receive a funding decision within 8 weeks of application submission. A minimum of \$175,000 will be reserved for nonprofits.

Step 1: Pre-screening

IMP staff will pre-screen the application for eligibility and completeness within 10 business days of submission. IMP staff are checking 1) to ensure that there is an affiliation with an eligible entity, 2) if applicable, documentation is provided, and 3) that the proposed project is eligible for funding.

Application questions will be reviewed for completeness to ensure that if it moves forward, the review committee can make an informed decision.

- Applicants will be notified if information is missing or if the project/entity is deemed ineligible. The applicant will be asked to submit missing documentation before the application can go to the review committee. Documentation must be received within 10 business days. IMP staff are available to provide technical assistance and work to resolve any issues.
- Applicants will be notified if the application from the eligible entity is complete and will be evaluated by the microgrant review committee.

Step 2: Application Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria.

1. Does the proposed project demonstrate how it meets the goals of the program? (See [Section 1.1: Microgrant Program Goals](#))
2. Does the applicant reasonably demonstrate how the proposed project supports historically underserved groups? (See [Section 1.1: Microgrant Program Goals](#))
3. Has the applicant sufficiently shown how they will track and measure project outcomes, including social/demographic data?
4. Is the proposed project commensurate with the award amount requested?

The applicant will be notified within 15 business days on one of three outcomes:

- **Application Approved** - The applicant has met all criteria and has provided a clear description of the project, the intended outcomes, and how outcomes will be measured and tracked.
- **Applicant Invited to Revise and Resubmit** – The applicant has not met all criteria and/or fully demonstrated how the project meets the goals of the IMP program. Applicants will be invited to revise and resubmit with the option to receive technical assistance from IMP staff. Applicants will have 20 business days from the notification of non-approval to revise their application and resubmit. If an applicant does not revise and resubmit with the designated timeframe, the application will be closed.
- **Application Denied** – The applicant has not met all criteria and demonstrated how the project meets the goals of the IMP program. Applicants will be invited to receive technical assistance from IMP staff to brainstorm other eligible project ideas.

Please refer to [What to Expect if Awarded a Microgrant](#) to learn more about the microgrant process after receiving an award approval notice.