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**1. Introduction**

[The Innovative Mobility Program](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/Innovative-Mobility-Program.aspx) (IMP) is a new initiative from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that aims to improve access to public transportation, reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips Oregonians make by car, and reduce the climate impact of travel by lowering greenhouse gas emissions. The IMP has a special focus on equity and helping historically excluded groups to get to where they need to go more quickly, cheaply and safely. ODOT is offering micro-grants to help meet these needs.

The maximum dollar amount for each micro-grant is $5,000 per project award. Local, regional, Tribal and state government agencies (excluding the Oregon Department of Transportation), public schools, school districts, universities, transportation management associations, public transportation providers, businesses providing community services, and 501(c)(3) registered nonprofits are eligible to apply.[[1]](#footnote-1) Organizations are limited to two grants in a 12-month period. The micro-grant program is a rolling grant program and has no deadline for application. Grants for eligible projects will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until the initial funding allocation of $800,000 is exhausted. ODOT reserves the right to increase or decrease the overall amount of funding available, depending on the progress of awards and other program demands, but will only do so with 30 days’ advance public notice.

Applicants are required to demonstrate how their project supports historically excluded groups, increases social equity, and reduces the climate impact of travel. You can find out more about how the State of Oregon approaches social equity [here.](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/Commission/Documents/2021-09_Item-2_Directors-Report_Attachment-A_DEI-Action-Plan.pdf)

ODOT is taking a broad view of what constitutes a “historically excluded group.” Applications that are targeted to the needs of the following groups will meet this portion of the eligibility criteria:

* Veterans
* Black, Indigenous and People of Color
* Those living with a disability
* Women
* Those over 65
* Those under 21
* Those who identify as LGBTQ+
* Those living on low incomes (earning less than $30,000/year for a family of 4 or $15,000/year for a single person)
* Those with limited or no English proficiency

In addition, ODOT will consider applications that address the needs of any other social or demographic group that has been excluded or whose needs haven’t been met by Oregon’s existing transportation system.

**2. Eligibility Criteria**

**2.1 Eligible Organizations**

Local, regional, Tribal and state government agencies, public schools, school districts, universities, transportation management associations, public transportation providers, businesses providing community services, and 501(c)(3) registered nonprofits are all eligible to apply.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Organizations are limited to two grants in a 12-month period. No organization may apply for two grants for the same project. Similar, but distinct projects, (for example, two outreach or education events) will be eligible for separate grants.

Any organization applying for their second grant must first show that the initial project has been delivered, or is being delivered, in accordance with the IMP’s goals of equity and reducing the environmental impacts of travel. Micro-grant recipients must also demonstrate that **all monies** from the first grant have been spent in line with project goals before an application for a second grant will be awarded. Details on reporting requirements can be found in section 4 of this document.

**2.2 Eligible Activities**

The following types of projects will be eligible for IMP micro-grants if they are focused on the needs of historically excluded groups, promote social equity and support environmental sustainability:

* Community Events (e.g., Sunday Streets, Open Streets events)
* Safety education and awareness activities and programs to inform pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on pedestrian/bike safety
* Maps (for pedestrians/bicyclists/transit)
* Signage for pedestrian or bicycle routes
* Bicycle helmets (tied to safety promotion)
* Bicycle parking (bike racks or lockers)
* Bicycle repair station (air pump, simple tools)
* Bicycles and e-bikes for bike lending libraries

The IMP aims to encourage innovation and collaboration in meeting the transportation needs of members of historically excluded groups. For this reason, ODOT staff cannot anticipate all of the types of projects for which organizations might apply. These guidelines are intended to help applicants with a proposal that does not easily fit into the categories above to understand if it will be eligible for an IMP micro-grant.

**2.2.3 Marketing of existing services**

Micro-grants may be used to publicize or market existing services only where the marketing is targeted to a social or demographic group that has been historically excluded AND it is for a service or product that meets the Innovative Mobility Program’s equity and climate goals. Micro-grants may not be used for marketing or lobbying for services that are not currently operational or funded (see section 2.2.4 of this document).

**2.2.4 Translation and culturally specific materials**

Micro-grants may be used for translation and for the creation and promotion of culturally-specific materials that promote services or products that are in line with the Innovative Mobility Program’s equity and climate change mitigation goals.

**2.2.5 Minor infrastructure projects**

Micro-grants may be used to fund, in whole or in part, minor infrastructure projects such as accessibility ramps, benches by transit stops, safety and information signage. These projects will be considered eligible for micro-grants if a clear demonstration is made that the primary beneficiaries will be members of historically excluded groups.

**2.2.6 Equity and reducing the climate impact of travel**

The ideal micro-grant application will meet the twin goals of increasing equity and decreasing the climate impact of travel (as measured by any of the following metrics: reductions in single occupancy vehicle use, vehicle miles traveled, or greenhouse gas emissions from transportation).

ODOT recognizes that members of historically excluded groups are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and disproportionately burdened by the costs of climate change mitigation measures. In cases where a micro-grant application meets the equity goals of the IMP but does not meet its climate goals, achievement of the equity goal will be prioritized. In cases where a micro-grant application meets the climate goals of the IMP, but does not meet its equity goal, ODOT staff will work with the applicant through the process outlined in section 5 “Revisions Process” of the guidance document to identify changes to the proposal that would enable it to meet the equity goal. If this is not possible, applicants will be encouraged to apply for ODOT’s Transportation Options sponsorship [here](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Programs/Pages/TO-Program.aspx).

**2.2.7 Research**

Micro-grants may be used to fund, in whole or in part, research aimed at better understanding the transportation needs and behaviors of historically excluded groups. However, projects that contribute towards graded coursework will not be eligible for micro-grants.

Any research conducted using micro-grants must be shared with ODOT and ODOT reserves the right to use the research in policy-making, communications and engagement, and similar activities. ODOT commits to crediting the authors whenever it makes use of research conducted using micro-grant monies.

**2.2.8 Preparation for the IMP competitive grants program**

IMP micro-grants may be used to assist organizations in preparing applications for the IMP competitive grants program. Eligible preparatory activities include:

* Costs related to convening partners including room rental, lunch, and facilitation costs if in person and technology costs, if virtual.
* Research, including focus groups and surveys.
* Equitable engagement participation incentives (if delivered as gift cards, discounted travel vouchers or similar non-cash incentives).
* Printing costs.
* Translation and interpretation services.

**2.3 Ineligible Activities**

**2.3.1 Day-to-day operations**

IMP micro-grants cannot be used to offset the regular, scheduled costs of running/maintaining a program or project. This includes salary, rent, bill payments, fuel costs and other day-to-day expenses.

**2.3.2 Cash payments to individuals**

Micro-grants cannot be used to make cash payments to individuals. If grants are intended for use in subsidizing travel, this must be done through the pre-purchase of passes, credits or tickets and a receipt for the purchase must be included in the post-grant wrap up report.

**2.3.3 Donations to individuals if the donated item has a value of more than $100**

Micro-grants cannot used to purchase items intended for donation to individuals if the donated items have a value of more than $100 dollars. However, items with a value of more than $100 dollars may be lent to individuals if the applicant retains ownership and title over the item.

**2.3.4 Lobbying or for the marketing or promotion of services that are not currently operational or funded**

Micro-grants may not 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 future. Micro-grants may not be used for materials designed to influence policy or decision-making.

**2.3.5 Funding for organizations that are in receipt of an IMP competitive Grant or contract**

Application or receipt of a micro-grant will not prejudice future applications for competitive grants or contracts. However, organizations that are successful in securing an IMP competitive grant or contract will not be eligible for micro-grants while the competitive grant or contract is ongoing.

**3. Application and Application Evaluation**

Innovative Mobility Program micro-grants are **not** competitive grants. Grants for eligible projects will be issued on a first come, first served basis until the initial funding allocation of $800,000 is exhausted.

Applications are available on the [IMP website](https://www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/Innovative-Mobility-Program.aspx) and must be submitted to the email address listed on the application form.

Once submitted, applications will be assessed in a two-stage process, “project assessment” and “application assessment”. In order to progress through the project assessment stage, the application **must** be:

* From an eligible entity
* For a project that is eligible under the program guidance
* Targeted to the needs of a historically excluded group

In addition, the proposed project must reduce the climate impact of travel, except in the situation outlined in section 2.2.6 of the program guidance, “Equity and reducing the climate impact of travel”. If an application does not meet these requirements it will not be approved. If an application meets these requirements, it will progress to the second stage of assessment.

In order to progress through the second stage the evaluation process, the application **must**:

* Clearly demonstrate how the project meets the program goals
* Include metrics for assessing project impact
* Include plans for the collection of social/demographic data

Evaluation will be conducted by ODOT staff. Three individuals will independently evaluate the application and come to a consensus one of the following decisions:

* **Application approved** – the application meets all criteria under project assessment and application assessment guidelines.
* **Application conditionally approved** – the application meets all or nearly all criteria, but evaluators need minor clarification, information, or documentation from the applicant. Once the applicant provides the requested information or documentation, the application will be formally approved. If the applicant does not provide the requested information or documentation within 30 calendar days, the application will not be approved and the applicant will be invited to reapply.
* **Applicant invited to reapply** – the proposed project may meet IMP goals, but the application is missing significant information. Applicants will be invited to reapply as detailed in section 5, “Revisions Process” of this document.
* **Application denied** – the applying entity is not eligible for a micro-grant, the proposed project does not meet IMP goals, and/or the applicant has requested funding for ineligible activities.

ODOT commits to evaluating all applications within 30 days of receipt and will inform applicants of the outcome within 40 days of receipt.

**4. Required Reporting**

Reporting on IMP micro-grants is intended to enable transparent and accountable expenditure of public funds, help ODOT improve the design and accessibility of the IMP micro-grant program and future IMP programming, and help ODOT track the equity and climate outcomes of micro-grant funded projects.

It aims to strike a balance between ensuring that funds are spent in a responsible manner that furthers the IMP’s equity and climate goals and minimizing the burden on applicants. Acceptable forms of reporting include:

* Receipts or invoices for equipment or services procured as part of the grant.
* A short (1-2 page) outcome report including pictures, testimonials from those who benefit from the grant and/or any metrics that demonstrate how the grant met program goals.
* Any other reasonable evidence that demonstrates how the money from the grant has been spent, what outcomes it has resulted in, and that the applicant, in good faith, met or attempted to meet the project description.

Applicants must submit a report to ODOT within 60 days of project completion if the project includes an event or the installation of signage/infrastructure and 60 days from purchase if the grant is for equipment or communications/marketing materials. Eligible entities will not be eligible for a future micro-grant until reporting is submitted and approved.

If the amount requested by the applicant is not spent in full and the amount of the remainder is less than $200, ODOT staff will work with the applicant to identify other eligible activities on which the money can be spent. If the amount is greater than $200, applicants must return the full amount to ODOT via bank transfer or check.

**5. Application Revisions Process**

If an application is evaluated and not approved, applicants will be informed in writing of the reasons why this decision was made within 40 days of receipt of the application. Applicants will have **60 days** from when notification of non-approval is sent to revise their application or provide additional information. If a grant is found to be ineligible because it does not meet the equity requirement of the program, applicants will be directed towards the ODOT’s Transportation Options sponsorship program. The limited number of Transportation Options sponsorships available do not have an equity requirement, but they are only available as reimbursements for expenses already incurred rather than as up-front grants for future work.

1. Private schools are eligible to apply for a micro-grant if they have 501(c)(3) status. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Private schools are eligible to apply for a micro-grant if they have 501(c)(3) status. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)