Public Transportation Division
Transportation Options Program
2023 Scholarship Procedure

NOTE: This is the application guidance for conference scholarships from the Transportation Options Program (TO Program). The TO Program shares a Cognito application with PTD's Transit Assistance and Training Program funded by Rural Transit Assistance Program (TAP) funds, but TAP scholarships have different limits and requirements. For guidance on applying for a scholarship with TAP funds, visit: Oregon Department of Transportation : Public Transportation Provider Training : Public Transportation : State of Oregon

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transportation Division (PTD) Transportation Options Program (TO Program) scholarships provide financial assistance to transportation options providers to attend state or regional conferences each year. These opportunities are to attend courses or conferences providing training in the transportation options/transportation demand management field. This program supports expenses such as conference registration, travel (train, bus or automobile) and per diem lodging expenses, excluding meals and incidentals, of persons traveling to training.

GUIDELINES

Funds are not to be used for salaries or other administrative purposes. Any staff member of a transportation options provider who receives funding from the Transportation Options Program or one of the TO Program grantees is given priority for scholarships. Scholarship applications are accessed online and sent to the Transportation Options Program Manager.

For conferences within the state of Oregon or within twenty miles of the state border (for example, the Washington State Rideshare Organization conference in 2023), each provider agency may receive up to two (2) scholarships. The provider agency is responsible to determine which of their staff will be receiving those scholarships.

For the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) Conference in Seattle, WA in 2023 only, each provider may receive up to two (2) full scholarships if the provider is an active member of ACT, and one (1) scholarship if the provider is not a member of ACT.

With limited funds available from the Transportation Options Program, there will not be TO Program scholarships available for other out of state conferences except on a very limited case-by-case basis.

For providers who are also eligible for scholarships under PTD's Transit Assistance and Training Program, you may also apply for scholarship funds using the same Cognito form as the TO Program scholarships. Providers will be subject to different limits and reimbursement rates for the TAP scholarships.

The amount received by each applicant is determined by the number of scholarships provided to the applicant within a calendar year, the relevance of the training to the applicant's role in their agency, and availability of funding. Each provider organization may only receive scholarship funding for two (2) different conferences in 2023 and each organization may only receive a maximum of $5,000 in total scholarship funds for all employees, with limited case-by-case exceptions at the discretion of the Transportation Options Program Manager. Scholarship applications should be received no later than 30 days prior to the training or conference and award is based on funding available.

The TO Program will not pay for air travel and encourages providers to plan to take a bus, train or carpool to conferences wherever possible. If no reasonable other travel is available, mileage reimbursement will be included in the scholarship amount.

Conference registration/tuition will be paid out at the discounted "early bird" registration amount with limited exceptions, so providers are encouraged to apply at least 30 days prior to the early registration deadline.

PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

Applying for TO Program Scholarships must be done at least 30 days prior to training and the applicant will provide the following:

1. Complete the shared TAP/TO Program Scholarship application ensuring you are answering the questions completely.
   a. Why the training is important and applicable to your role in your agency.
   b. List the need for the scholarship assistance.
   c. A list of all costs associated with the training including:
      i. Training announcement, conference brochure, or meeting agenda that includes the location, cost and schedule.
      ii. Hotel estimate or receipt and the total nights of stay. Reimbursement is limited to the current GSA per diem rate plus tax.
      iii. If parking is on the hotel receipt, note parking costs in the supplemental travel field section of the application form.
      iv. If planning to travel by bus or train, an estimate for the fare cost for the trip.
      v. If planning to travel by car, screenshot from a mapping program showing driving distance.
2. Submit completed Cognito form and it will be forwarded to the correct PTD staff for review. **Questions**? **Contact Hope Estes, Transportation Options Program Manager, at hope.estes@odot.oregon.gov.** (If your agency does not have a W9 on file with ODOT, you will need to complete this item prior to payment being made for your employee)

PROCESS FOR PTD FOR TAP SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

1. PTD will review and return an answer to your scholarship request within seven business days.

2. PTD will email a signed copy of your scholarship application with an estimated amount to be paid. All scholarship estimates are based on information recipient provides. Estimates should fall no more than 10-15% above or below the actual costs.

3. Recipient will acknowledge acceptance of the scholarship by scholarship form. Manager of employee must also sign the scholarship form.

4. Once PTD receives the scholarship form with signatures, recipient will be emailed a reimbursement request form for submission upon completion of their training/event. By signing scholarship document, the applicant also agrees to the scholarship program as outlined in this TO Program Scholarship Procedure. The applicant is also certifying that they will attend the training/event and that it provides a direct benefit to their position at their transit agency.

PROCESS FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR TO PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

Reimbursement for the training must be submitted and no later than 60 days after the training/event is completed and applicant will provide the following:

- A completed the TO Program Scholarship Cognito Reimbursement Form.
- All required back-up receipts to show justification of the expense. Expenses should be within 10-15% of the amount of the estimates submitted. If not, please note why costs were higher or lower than estimated. Reimbursement form should detail actual expenses with supporting documentation listed below.
  - Scholarship application form
  - Training registration invoice, cost and agenda/schedule
  - Hotel receipts (will only be paid the GSA per diem rate for the location and the dates of the training/conference.
  - Parking receipts
  - Mileage based on the screenshots shared with the application o Receipt for train or bus travel
  - A short 3-4 sentence description of the training received at the conference
- Submit completed Reimbursement Form, with all supporting documents attached, **no later than 60 days** after the training/event is completed. **Send all documentation through the Cognito form and it will go directly to Training Coordinator or designated employee: Questions, please email Hope.Estes@odot.oregon.gov**. PTD will review your reimbursement request and submit payments to ODOT Finance no later than two weeks after all documentation has been received. Payment will be made only to the applicant agency/organization and the employee will not receive funding directly from PTD for scholarships.