

## Solicitation Guidance Document for 2024 Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Phase 2 Grant

### Summary of Program

Moving Greater Minnesota Forward is a program of MnDOT's Office of Transit and Active Transportation that supports shared mobility programs and services to improved mobility choices in Greater Minnesota. It is the first innovative mobility incubator in the U.S. to focus on the dynamics and needs of rural, tribal, and small urban (less than 200,000 people) populations.

Moving Greater Minnesota Forward works to identify and support individuals and organizations with ideas to improve mobility in Greater Minnesota, from early idea development to real-world piloting to scaling success. The program is divided into three phases: Phase 1, Early Idea Development; Phase 2, Real World Testing; and Phase 3, Scaling Success. MnDOT will be awarding state funded grants of up to \$500,000 annually for shared mobility pilot projects under Phase 2 of the Moving Greater Minnesota Forward program.

### Solicitation Goals

The purpose of Phase 2 grants is to provide funding for demonstration projects of up to two years as a proof of concept for shared mobility projects in Greater Minnesota. The Phase 2 program seeks to help shared mobility projects that have successfully completed [Phase 1 of Moving Greater Minnesota Forward](#), or have completed similar work on their own, to implement their shared mobility idea in a real-world test that may be used to scale and expand their project after Phase 2 is complete.

### Application Calendar

- Monday, February 5, 2024: Phase 2 application opens
- Monday, February 12, 2024: Informational Webinar
- 11:59 PM, Tuesday, April 30, 2024: Phase 2 application closes
- Tuesday, May 28, 2024: Project selection finalized and award notices sent to applicants

### Eligible applicants

Grant applicant must provide proposal(s) for EITHER:

1) shared mobility projects that support services provided by transit agencies eligible to receive funding under Minn. Stat. [§ 174.24](#), subd. 2, as follows:

- legislatively established public transit commission or authority
- tribal government

- county or statutory or home rule charter city providing financial assistance to or operating public transit
- private operator of public transit; or

2) shared mobility project(s) that support active transportation, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 174.38, subd. 1(b) as “bicycling, pedestrian activities, and other forms of nonmotorized transportation.” More information about the types of shared mobility eligible projects is below.

Projects must be located in Greater Minnesota defined as the area of the state outside of the seven counties of the Twin Cities Metro area. Ineligible locations include the following:

- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Hennepin County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County
- Washington County

Multiple eligible organizations may apply on a single grant application but should indicate which organization is the lead and direct funding recipient.

## Eligible projects

Projects eligible for selection must involve the development of a new shared mobility service or improvement to an existing shared mobility service. Shared mobility is defined as a form of transportation in which transportation services are shared among users. Users may use the service at the same time or independently of one another. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Transit
- Van and carpooling
- Rideshare
- Carsharing
- Micromobility (bike, ebike, and scooter share)
- Microtransit
- Delivery service

Any use of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded vehicles must follow all required FTA regulations.

The goal of the Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Phase 2 program is to bring project ideas to market and implement pilots. Primary planning and engineering design should have been completed before applying for Phase 2 funding, and these expenses should not make up more than 20% of total project budget or project timeline. Any administrative costs should not exceed 10% of the total project budget.

## Funding sources and matching funds

Funding for Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Phase 2 pilot grants come from the Greater Minnesota Transit Fund, which states that “[t]he commissioner shall determine the total cost of any planning and engineering design, capital assistance, other capital expenditures, and other assistance for public transit services that furthers the purposes of section 174.21 for any public transit system receiving or applying for the assistance in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.” See [Minnesota Statutes 174.24, subd. 3c.](#)

Applicants are not required to provide matching funds with their application, but project funding is limited. Projects that include matching funds will be receive additional scoring points in the budget section. Matching funds may be local funds, other state funds, federal grants, and/or philanthropic grants.

Applicants may request Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Phase 2 funds while they are in the process of pursuing other funding sources, but projects that have secured match funding will be scored higher for project readiness in the Quality of Proposal section. Projects with secured match funding must include a letter of commitment from the entity providing these funds or an award letter from the funder indicating the applicant will receive these funds. If applicants are pursuing but have not yet secured matching funds, they must include the amount of matching funds they are pursuing, what organization(s) they are applying to, and timeline for match funding award including application deadline and expected award announcement date. They must also include a statement of whether they require these matching funds to proceed with their project, and if not, how they propose to scale their project if they do not receive the matching funds.

## Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to submit a scope of work document, quarterly reports for the grant period, and a final project report to MnDOT. The scope of work document will include a summary of their project, an outline of key milestones and deliverables and timeline of when these will occur, budget with quarterly spending projections, and list of key staff from the grant recipient organization and any project partners. Quarterly reports will include updates on funds spent, key milestones and deliverables, and any changes the project team needed to make to their initial scope of work. Key staff from the grant recipient organization will be expected to meet with MnDOT staff to review the scope of work document and final report and at least quarterly to review the quarterly report and answer any questions from MnDOT. The final report will be due within 90 days of the end of the grant period and will summarize the project accomplishments and setbacks, lessons learned, and planned next steps for the project.

## Components of application

The following is a summary of required and optional documents to include with your project submission. Attached documents should be in a PDF format. Please do not share any proprietary or protected intellectual property in your application.

- Required with submission
  - o Completed Phase 2 application
  - o Budget narrative document
  - o Letter of Commitment from applicant signed by authorized agent
  - o If applicable, Financial Documentation – See Financial Review Process Section below
  - o Affidavit of Noncollusion and Conflict of Interest Information- see below for details
- Optional documents
  - o Letter of Commitment from any application partners
  - o Letter of Commitment from match funder or award letter
  - o Letter of support from other organizations
  - o Planning and development documents for the project
  - o Market analysis surveys, interviews, or reports
  - o Visual representations of project

MnDOT is looking for projects that are an innovative new product or service, a first-time deployment of an existing shared mobility service in a Greater Minnesota community, an improved technology or business model for existing service, or the expansion of an existing service to a new demographic or community. Proposals should outline the market need for their product or service, who their intended customer and end user (if different) are, estimate market size for end users during the pilot, and what the current market alternatives are. Customers are the individuals or organizations that are paying for the service. End users are the individuals actually using the service. Applicants should explain any work they have done test or get feedback from proposed customers and/or end users to demonstrate that their solution is well aligned to address the problem or market need.

If the proposed project is intended to primarily or substantially serve historically underserved communities, the applicant should identify this population, how their project will serve a transportation need for the population, and what percentage of the end users of the project will come from this population. The application response should indicate how the applicant is determining that this population is historically underserved. Projects that indicate that they will service census tracts designated “Disadvantaged” under the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST), overall “Disadvantaged” or Transportation Insecurity “Disadvantaged” on the [US DOT Equitable Transportation Communities \(ETC\) Explorer](#), or “Disadvantaged” under the [Justice40 Initiative criteria](#) by the federal government will be considered serving historically underserved communities for this application.

## Scoring

Awards will be made through a competitive process using the following scoring criteria. The application review committee will be made up of staff from MnDOT, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Scoring category	Maximum number of points
Quality of Proposal	35
Quality of budget narrative	15
Match Funding	20
<u>Alignment with MnDOT priorities</u>	<u>30</u>
Total maximum base score	100

### Bonus points awarded on top of base score

Equity bonus	15
Geographic balance	5

### **Quality of Proposal/Project Readiness**

Proposals will be rated by their overall quality and project readiness. Project narrative submissions should describe of how their project will be implemented, including planning, launch, marketing, and maintenance of the service. Please include a timeline of key milestones and deliverables for the project from funding approval to the end of the proposed project reporting period. Applicants should outline the market need for their service, who their intended customers are, estimate market size for end users during the project, and what the current market alternatives are. Applicants should explain any community outreach work they have done and/or any market testing from proposed customers or users to demonstrate that their service is well aligned to address the problem or market need.

Applicants should demonstrate how ready their project is to implement. Depending on the proposal, they should explain any existing partnership agreements/contracts with project partners they have in place, match funding they have already secured, and summary of staffing and service plans. If any further infrastructure like vehicle charging, updates to local ordinances, or other changes are required before the project is implemented, the applicant must disclose these and explain how they are going to address these barriers to entry to stay on schedule. Applicants should share their experience implementing any similar projects previously and include the name, title, and relevant work experience of any key staff planned to work on this project.

Grant reviewers will rate how well the submission covers these requirements for a maximum of 35 points.

### **Quality of budget narrative**

Applicants must include a separate budget narrative in a PDF format with their application, using either MnDOT's budget narrative template or their own. The narrative should include a total project budget table including all proposed funding sources and a quarterly budget table that displays project expenses by quarter over the proposed life of the grant, no longer than 24 months. Please include any matching funds in the funding sources section of the total project budget, including what percentage of the total project budget these funds represent, and a description of the source of the match funding and whether the funding is secured.

In addition to the tables, the applicant must include a description of each project expense category and the method they used to determine this cost estimate. The following expense categories must be included in the budget submission: operations, software, vehicle purchase or leasing, marketing, staff salaries, and fringe.

Grant reviewers will rate how well the submission covers these requirements for a maximum of 15 points.

### **Match Funding**

Applicants should include any secured or planned matching funds in the funding source section of their budget narrative document. Submissions will receive 1 point per 4% of total project budget provided by matching funds up to a maximum of 20 points, or 80% of the total project budget.

### **MnDOT Priorities**

MnDOT is especially interested in projects that address the following needs:

- Services that complement existing public transit by providing first mile/last mile connections to transit services or by meeting a travel need public transit is currently unable to meet
- New shared mobility services to meet the needs of historically underserved communities not currently served by public transit
- Improved efficiencies or business models for existing shared mobility services that result in lower operational costs, increased revenue, lower greenhouse gas emissions, or improved service delivery
- Winterization models for existing shared mobility services
- Electrification of shared mobility services

Applicants should demonstrate how their project will address one or more of these priorities for the Moving Greater Minnesota Forward program. Submissions that demonstrate they address at least one priority will receive 10 points, and will then receive 5 points for each additional priority they address for a maximum of 30 points.

## Equity Bonus

Projects will received 15 additional points on top of their base score if they are proposing to serve one or more census tracts designated “Disadvantaged” under the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST), overall “Disadvantaged” or Transportation Insecurity “Disadvantaged” on the [US DOT Equitable Transportation Communities \(ETC\) Explorer](#), or “Disadvantaged” under the [Justice40 Initiative criteria](#) by the federal government.

## Geographic balance

MnDOT wishes to make distribution of Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Phase 2 grant funding geographically balanced throughout Greater Minnesota. MnDOT divides Greater Minnesota into [eight districts](#). If the project is the only submission from their MnDOT District, they will receive 5 additional point on top of their base score.

## Public Data

Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by MnDOT as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§ 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

## Application contact information

All questions and communications regarding the Phase 2 Moving Greater Minnesota Forward grants should be directed in writing to Elliott McFadden, the Greater Minnesota Shared Mobility Coordinator, at [elliott.mcfadden@state.mn.us](mailto:elliott.mcfadden@state.mn.us).

## **General Information**

**Responders must adhere to all terms of this RFP. All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the responder.**

### **MnDOT Not Obligated To Complete Project**

This RFP does not obligate MnDOT to award a Contract or complete the project, and MnDOT reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

### **Proposal Certifications**

By submitting a Proposal, responders warrant that the information provided is true, correct and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential Contract award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from Contract award and may subject the responder to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to MnDOT, by law.

### **Affidavit of Noncollusion**

Responders must complete the attached "Affidavit of Noncollusion" and submit it as part of the proposal.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Responders must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this RFP. This list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship and a discussion of the conflict. Responders must complete the attached "Conflict of Interest Checklist and Disclosure Form" and submit it as part of the proposal.

### **Organizational Conflicts of Interest**

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances, which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to MnDOT, or the successful responder's objectivity in performing the Contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the successful responder has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to MnDOT, which must include a description of the action, which the successful responder has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organizational conflict of interest is determined to exist, MnDOT may, at its discretion, cancel the Contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the Contract and did not disclose the conflict to MnDOT, MnDOT may terminate the Contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor," and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve MnDOT's rights.



## **Financial Review Process**

All Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher. In order to comply with [Policy on the Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations](#)

Please submit one of the following documents with your application, based on the following criteria:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit should submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 should submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 should submit their most recent certified financial audit.

## **Resolution**

Successful applicants will be required to submit a resolution in which the entity is authorized to enter into a grant agreement with the State and who is the authorized signer of such agreement.

## **Pre-Award Audit Process**

The successful responder will be required to submit pre-award audit information and comply with audit standards. Failure to do so may result in disqualification. The Office of Audit reviews various financial documents to assess the financial strength of a grantee or subrecipient.

## **Title VI Notice**

MnDOT, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) other nondiscrimination requirements and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement will be awarded without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, income-level, or LEP.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

**AFFIDAVIT OF NONCOLLUSION**

I swear (or affirm) under the penalty of perjury:

1. That I am the Responder (if the Responder is an individual), a partner in the company (if the Responder is a partnership), or an officer or employee of the responding organization having authority to sign on its behalf (if the Responder is an organization);
2. That the attached proposal submitted in response to the \_\_\_\_\_ Request for Proposals has been arrived at by the Responder independently and has been submitted without collusion with and without any agreement, understanding or planned common course of action with, any other Responder of materials, supplies, equipment or services described in the Request for Proposal, designed to limit fair and open competition;
3. That the contents of the proposal have not been communicated by the Responder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Responder and will not be communicated to any such persons prior to the official opening of the proposals; and
4. That I am fully informed regarding the accuracy of the statements made in this affidavit.

Responders' Firm Name:

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Authorized Signature:

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Print Name:

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Title:

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Date:

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHECKLIST AND DISCLOSURE FORM

**Purpose of this Checklist** This checklist is provided to assist responders in screening for potential organizational conflicts of interest. The checklist is for the internal use of responders and does not need to be submitted to MnDOT, however, the Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest form should be submitted in a separate envelope along with your proposal.

**Definition of “Responder”** As used herein, the word “Responder” includes both the potential Grantee and any sub grantees.

**Checklist is Not Exclusive** Please note that this checklist serves as a guide only, and that there may be additional potential conflict situations not covered by this checklist. If a responder determines a potential conflict of interest exists that is not covered by this checklist, that potential conflict must still be disclosed.

**Use of the Disclosure Form** A responder must complete the attached disclosure form and submit it with their Proposal (or separately as directed by MnDOT for projects not awarded through a competitive solicitation). If a responder determines a potential conflict of interest exists, it must disclose the potential conflict to MnDOT; however, such a disclosure will not necessarily disqualify a responder from being awarded a Contract. To avoid any unfair “taint” of the selection process, the disclosure form should be provided separate from the bound proposal, and it will not be provided to selection committee members. MnDOT’s Contract Management personnel will review the disclosure and the appropriateness of the proposed mitigation measures to determine if the responder may be awarded the Contract notwithstanding the potential conflict. MnDOT’s Contract Management personnel may consult with MnDOT’s Project Manager and Department of Administration personnel. By statute, resolution of conflict of interest issues is ultimately at the sole discretion of the Commissioner of Administration.

**Material Representation** The responder is required to submit the attached disclosure form either declaring, to the best of its knowledge and belief, either that no potential conflict exists, or identifying potential conflicts and proposing remedial measures to ameliorate such conflict. The responder must also update conflict information if such information changes after the submission of the proposal. Information provided on the form will constitute a material representation as to the award of this Contract. MnDOT reserves the right to cancel or amend the resulting Contract if the successful responder failed to disclose a potential conflict, which it knew or should have known about, or if the responder provided information on the disclosure form that is materially false or misleading.

**Approach to Reviewing Potential Conflicts** MnDOT recognizes that responder’s must maintain business relations with other public and private sector entities in order to continue as viable businesses. MnDOT will take this reality into account as it evaluates the appropriateness of proposed measures to mitigate potential conflicts. It is not MnDOT’s intent to disqualify responders based merely on the existence of a business relationship with another entity, but rather only when such relationship causes a conflict that potentially impairs the responder’s ability to provide objective advice to MnDOT. MnDOT would seek to disqualify responders only in those cases where a potential conflict cannot be adequately mitigated. Nevertheless, MnDOT must follow statutory guidance on Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

**Statutory Guidance** Minnesota Statutes §16C.02, Subdivision 10 (a) places limits on state agencies ability to Contract with entities having an “Organizational Conflict of Interest”. For purposes of this checklist and disclosure requirement, the term “Vendor” includes “Responder” as defined above. Pursuant to such statute, “Organizational Conflict of Interest” means that because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons: (1) the vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the state; (2) the vendor’s objectivity in performing the contract work is or might otherwise be impaired; or (3) the vendor has an unfair advantage.

**Additional Guidance for Professionals Licensed by the Minnesota Board of Engineering** The Minnesota Board of Engineering has established conflict of interest rules applicable to those professionals licensed by the Board (see Minnesota Rules Part 1805.0300) Subpart 1 of the rule provides “A licensee shall avoid accepting a commission where duty to the client or the public would conflict with the personal interest of the licensee or the interest of another client. Prior to accepting such employment the licensee shall disclose to a prospective client such facts as may give rise to a conflict of interest”.

**An organizational conflict of interest may exist in any of the following cases:**

- The responder, or its principals, own real property in a location where there may be a positive or adverse impact on the value of such property based on the recommendations, designs, appraisals, or other deliverables required by this Contract.
- The responder is providing services to another governmental or private entity and the responder knows or has reason to believe, that entity’s interests are, or may be, adverse to the state’s interests with respect to the specific project covered by this contract. **Comment:** the mere existence of a business relationship with another entity would not ordinarily need to be disclosed. Rather, this focuses on the nature of services commissioned by the other entity. For example, it would not be appropriate to propose on a MnDOT project if a local government has also retained the responder for the purpose of persuading MnDOT to stop or alter the project plans.
- The Contract is for right-of-way acquisition services or related services (e.g. geotechnical exploration) and the responder has an existing business relationship with a governmental or private entity that owns property to be acquired pursuant to the Contract.
- The responder is providing real estate or design services to a private entity, including but not limited to developers, whom the responder knows or has good reason to believe, own or are planning to purchase property affected by the project covered by this Contract, when the value or potential uses of such property may be affected by the responder’s performance of work pursuant to this Contract. “Property affected by the project” includes property that is in, adjacent to, or in reasonable proximity to current or potential right-of-way for the project. The value or potential uses of the private entity’s property may be affected by the responder’s work pursuant to the Contract when such work involves providing recommendations for right-of-way acquisition, access control, and the design or location of frontage roads and interchanges. **Comment:** this provision does not presume responders know or have a duty to inquire as to all of the business objectives of their clients. Rather, it seeks the disclosure of information regarding cases where the responder has reason to believe that its performance of work under this Contract may materially affect the value or viability of a project it is performing for the other entity.
- The responder has a business arrangement with a current MnDOT employee or immediate family member of such employee, including promised future employment of such person, or a subcontracting arrangement with such person, when such arrangement is contingent on the responder being awarded this Contract. This item does not apply to pre-existing employment of current or former MnDOT employees, or their

immediate family members. **Comment:** this provision is not intended to supersede any MnDOT policies applicable to its own employees accepting outside employment. This provision is intended to focus on identifying situations where promises of employment have been made contingent on the outcome of this particular procurement. It is intended to avoid a situation where a responder may have unfair access to “inside” information.

- The responder has, in previous work for the state, been given access to “data” relevant to this procurement or this project that is classified as “private” or “nonpublic” under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and such data potentially provides the responder with an unfair advantage in preparing a proposal for this project. **Comment:** this provision will not, for example, necessarily disqualify a responder who performed some preliminary work from obtaining a final design Contract, especially when the results of such previous work are public data available to all other responders. Rather, it attempts to avoid an “unfair advantage” when such information cannot be provided to other potential responders. Definitions of “government data”, “public data”, “non-public data” and “private data” can be found in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13.
- The responder has, in previous work for the state, helped create the “ground rules” for this solicitation by performing work such as: writing this solicitation, or preparing evaluation criteria or evaluation guides for this solicitation.
- The responder, or any of its principals, because of any current or planned business arrangement, investment interest, or ownership interest in any other business, may be unable to provide objective advice to the state.

**DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Having had the opportunity to review the Organizational Conflict of Interest Checklist, the responder hereby indicates that it has, to the best of its knowledge and belief:

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined that no potential organizational conflict of interest exists

\_\_\_\_\_ Determined a potential organizational conflict of interest as follows:

Describe nature of potential conflict:

Describe measures proposed to mitigate the potential conflict:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If a potential conflict has been identified, please provide name and phone number for a contact person authorized to discuss this disclosure form with MnDOT Contract personnel.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: