

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Community Transportation Grant Program?

The Community Transportation Grant Program is a five-year program providing \$30 million in total funding to municipalities across the province to plan, implement and operate community transportation services in their communities. The program builds on the \$3 million Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program introduced in November 2014, and expands to meet the growing need for transportation service that connects multiple communities across counties and regions, and inter-regionally.

The new program has two levels of funding:

- Maximum grant of \$500,000 in funding for local community transportation projects for a five-year period, and
- Maximum grant of \$1.5 million in total funding for long-distance scheduled intercommunity bus service for a five-year period.

The program aims to support the development and delivery of transportation service to communities that are not served or are underserved by public or private transportation systems because of their low populations and densities or due to declines in service once provided by a public or private carrier. Funding may go towards the capital and operating costs of starting up service and operating service through the program period.

2. Why is the government launching another Community Transportation Grant Program?

In 2014, the Ministry of Transportation launched the Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program (Pilot Program) to provide financial assistance to Ontario municipalities to deliver community-based transportation. The Pilot Program has helped 22 municipalities and their partner organizations to provide service to Ontarians with few transportation options. The program demonstrated the effectiveness of coordinating local services and sharing transportation resources in meeting the mobility needs of small and rural municipalities, as well as suburban areas underserved by regular transit.

Transportation continues to be a key factor in the ability of Ontarians to access medical services, to reach jobs, education and training, to participate in the community, and, in general, to achieve a quality of life. In recognizing the importance of transportation access to the lives of Ontarians, the province is releasing a new round of funding for community transportation initiatives.

3. What are the objectives of the new Community Transportation Grant Program?

The program has four objectives:

- Improve mobility options for individuals who do not have access to their own transportation, such as seniors, persons with disabilities, youth, persons living on low income, members of Indigenous communities, and others;
- Build or enhance capacity to better meet local, regional or intercommunity transportation demand, particularly where it is challenging or not feasible to provide conventional transit service due to population size or density;
- Create or contribute to networks of transportation services that can support local transportation hubs and that conveniently connect passengers to other communities and regions or to other transportation services; and
- Improve service delivery and service efficiency through collaboration, leveraging existing services, sharing resources and/or innovation through information technology.

4. Do projects have to meet all the objectives to be eligible?

No. However, in their applications, applicants are required to describe how their proposed project and service meet the program objectives. As part of the evaluation criteria, applications will be scored on how well the proposed project meets the objectives.

5. What is the difference between local community transportation projects and long-distance scheduled intercommunity projects?

Local community transportation projects must involve the participation of at least one community organization in developing and operating community-based transportation services. The service makes use of existing transportation resources by sharing assets, such as vehicles or drivers or by coordinating multiple local services. These services can be provided on-demand, by fixed-route, flex-route, shuttles, or a combination of service types depending on the needs and resources

of the community. Local projects may provide service to the general public or targeted groups, within municipal boundaries or across boundaries.

Long-distance intercommunity transportation projects aim to provide a regular, daily service along main highways that will connect local populations to other municipalities or regions, and to major destinations, such as hospitals, employment centres, or transportation hubs. Intercommunity projects are required to provide a basic level of service to the general public: a fixed-route, fixed-schedule service, five days per week, with two return trips daily where feasible, or a minimum of one return trip per day.

With the funding of local and long-distance scheduled service, the ministry hopes to encourage local community services to connect to intercommunity routes, and other transportation systems to bring about a network of regional services.

6. Is it a requirement for services funded by the program to charge fares?

The province recognizes that affordable service is key to meeting a community's mobility needs, especially in areas with few transportation options and a high proportion of seniors and other vulnerable populations. For local projects, fares may be subsidized or waived to support affordability. For long-distance intercommunity projects, fares may be subsidized, but cannot be waived. Applicants are required to propose a fare that is affordable to the community, and to provide information to support the proposed fare.

7. How much of the funding is allocated to long-distance scheduled bus projects?

The CT Program is not allocating a specific amount to long-distance projects or to local projects. This flexibility allows the province to fund the best projects that meet program objectives and serve community needs.

8. Won't long-distance projects compete with existing intercommunity services provided by the private sector or by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission?

No, the focus of the program is to fund projects in unserved or underserved areas. The program will not fund intercommunity routes that duplicate existing service provided by private or public carriers. However, projects that propose more

convenient service to meet unmet travel demand, such as daytime pick-up and drop-off times that are currently not available, will be considered.

9. Who is eligible to apply? Can municipalities that received pilot funding apply for new funding?

Incorporated Ontario municipalities (single, lower or upper tier) are eligible to apply to either level of funding or to both levels of funding. Yes, municipalities that received pilot funding are also eligible to apply.

Municipalities applying for local projects with maximum funding of \$500,000 are required to partner and collaborate with a community organization. Municipalities applying for long-distance scheduled intercommunity projects with maximum funding of \$1.5 million are encouraged to collaborate with municipalities or community organizations, but it is not an eligibility requirement.

10. Why are Indigenous communities not eligible for this funding?

The ministry has heard throughout the pilot program and through recent engagement with Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations that a similar funding program would help address the unique and challenging mobility needs of their community members, and would benefit their communities as a whole.

Ministry staff are assessing the input from the Indigenous engagement sessions that were undertaken across the province. The knowledge and experiences of Indigenous communities are informing the development of a non-municipal stream of the community transportation grant program.

The ministry is planning to launch a similar community transportation grant program with funding directed to Indigenous communities and not-for-profit organizations. We will be able to report on this initiative in the coming months.

11. Would a municipality have to apply again each year to receive the full grant?

No. In their applications applicants must request the full amount of funding required for the entire program period. Once an application is selected for funding, the total amount of funding that is approved will be paid to the grant recipient annually over the 5-year period. The payment of funds will depend on the submission of annual reports on project spending and service performance.

12. Can a municipality apply to both levels of funding?

Yes, a municipality may apply by proposing projects for either level of funding or for both levels of funding, but may only receive one grant per level of funding.

This flexibility allows municipalities to consider the full range of mobility needs in their communities and to propose projects that can best meet those needs. For example, a municipality may propose a local service within municipal boundaries and an intercommunity service to another region. The program is structured to encourage the development of connectivity between services.

13. Can private carriers apply for funding?

No, only municipalities are eligible to apply for program funding. However, the program provides municipalities flexibility in how service is implemented and delivered. Municipalities may choose to operate service directly or to procure services from a third party provider, such as private carriers, school bus operators or other transportation providers.

14. The program encourages municipalities to provide cross-boundary travel. Are Public Vehicle Licences required?

Yes, projects funded by the program will require a public vehicle operating licence under the Public Vehicles Act, if the service crosses the applicant's municipal boundaries. To support projects that provide intercommunity service, the ministry may consider recommending measures that would assist grant recipients to obtain operating licences. Operating licences are not required at the time of application, but are required at the start of the intercommunity service.

15. Does the program identify priority areas for long-distance scheduled intercommunity service?

Yes. The province is aware that many parts of southern Ontario have experienced significant declines in private sector intercommunity service in recent years. The long-distance component of the program puts a priority on projects that propose intercommunity service in southwestern and southeastern Ontario. These areas were identified through input received during engagement for intercommunity bus modernization in the summer of 2016. These areas are indicated in the appendix of the application guidelines.

The province has also announced a separate initiative that will expand intercommunity service in northern Ontario through the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. The Ministry of Transportation will work with the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines to ensure community transportation projects support and align with existing and planned intercommunity services in the north.

16. Are ferry services or rail services eligible for funding?

No, the program is intended to fund road-based transportation. Municipalities requesting funding for local projects have flexibility in the type of road vehicles that can be used, for example, accessible vans, taxis, school buses, or transit buses. This flexibility allows municipalities to use the size of vehicle that is appropriate to the service and their travel demand.

Long-distance intercommunity projects are required to use vehicles with 10 or more passenger seats.

17. How do municipalities apply for the grant?

Municipalities must apply through the Grants Ontario system. To apply, municipalities must be registered on the Grants Ontario system. All program materials, including the program guidelines and application forms are now available on the Grants Ontario website.

The complete application consists of all of the following:

- The Grants Ontario application form;
- The Community Transportation Grant Program application form;
- Project Work Plan;
- Project Budget; and
- Letters support from municipalities (required for long-distance projects only).

The completed application must be submitted online through the Grants Ontario system. More details on the application requirements and how to apply are in the program guidelines [\[link\]](#)

18. If a municipality wants to apply to both levels of funding, do they have to complete two applications?

No, the program application form allows an applicant to apply to both levels of funding with separate projects. The form contains separate sections to complete for local projects and long-distance intercommunity projects. Each project will be evaluated separately, with their own scores.

19. What is the deadline for applications?

Applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm on February 28, 2018.

20. How will projects be selected for funding?

Applications will be evaluated based on a number of set criteria, such as how well the proposed project meets the needs of their community and improves services, as well as a well-thought out work plan and budget. The evaluation criteria are detailed in the application guidelines. The ministry will fund a range of projects across the province that serve a variety of transportation needs.

Municipalities will be responsible for the grants and will be required to report on the status of their projects, as well as project spending, and the performance of the transportation service.

21. Will there be support to help municipalities complete the application?

Yes, for questions on Grants Ontario registration or for technical assistance on the Grants Ontario application process or how to submit applications, applicants may contact Grants Ontario Customer Service by telephone: 1-855-216-3090 or by email at GrantsOntarioCS@ontario.ca

For questions concerning the funding program, eligibility rules, policies, or application requirements, applicants may contact ministry staff by telephone at 416-585-7362, or by email at CTProgram@ontario.ca.

Applicants may also visit the Ontario Community Transportation Network, www.octn.ca where more information on community transportation concepts, on pilot projects, and other transportation resources can be found. Updates to the program, newsletters, and any notices of learning events and webinars, and information on how to connect to others in the network will also be posted on the OCTN website.