

## **MOBILITY ON DEMAND ON-RAMP PROJECT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **A. Program Overview**

The Shared Use Mobility Center (SUMC) is seeking proposals from providers of public transportation for the Mobility on Demand On-Ramp program: 12 months of in-depth technical assistance and support for entities that provide public transportation to advance ideas for mobility on demand (MOD) solutions. The On-Ramp has been developed through a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration.

The On-Ramp program is a unique opportunity for those with promising ideas in on-demand mobility to receive expert assistance to develop their ideas into vetted business plans through a comprehensive process involving supported engagement, peer mentoring, research, and other supportive activities.

SUMC intends to select up to six applicants through a competitive process to participate in the On-Ramp program. Each participant will receive support to develop a business plan from which its project could be launched. Though the On-Ramp project does not include pilot or implementation funds, successful completion of the On-Ramp process will position each participant to pursue such funds from a variety of sources. The business plan developed through the program will define the mobility needs to be addressed, describe a potential solution, and identify strategies to implement and fund the solution.

Participants will receive support to:

- Conduct workshops in their communities to determine local mobility needs and parameters of possible projects
- Participate in a national community of practice with peer agencies and related experts as well as in-person workshops
- Utilize research and analysis support from SUMC and related experts
- Collaborate one-on-one with peers and other resources to meet challenges
- Develop a feasible MOD business plan

### **B. Activity Details**

Participants will engage in the following activities supporting the development of their MOD business plans.

1. **Informational Site Visit and Technical Assistance Planning.** Members of SUMC's assistance team will initially visit each participant's community to interview the lead agency, meet partners and other community stakeholders, build understanding of needs and resources, and discuss possible technical assistance activities. From this, SUMC will create a technical assistance plan in collaboration with the participant.

2. **Local Workshop.** Following the initial site visit, SUMC will collaborate with the participant to conduct an on-site workshop, bringing in an expanded set of local stakeholders, mobility providers, outside experts, and FTA liaisons. Activities will be determined from the technical assistance plan, but are likely to include collaborative planning activities, panel discussions, and facilitated design conversations. This workshop will be designed to present applicable best practices and lessons learned from other MOD experiments, cultivate partnerships, build a shared commitment to the service concept, and refine the MOD service idea.
3. **Peer-to-Peer Exchanges.** SUMC will conduct peer-to-peer exchanges by convening the On-Ramp participants with FTA and other federal partners, outside experts, and grantees from the initial round of FTA's MOD Sandbox Demonstration Program. Needs common to the On-Ramp participants will be addressed through knowledge sharing and interactive sessions.
4. **Business Plan Creation and Refinement.** The main intended outcome of this program is to cultivate a particular MOD idea from a concept into an implementable business plan that meets a clearly identified mobility need, has received input from community stakeholders, and can be supported by the participant agency. The business plan will refine the mobility needs to be addressed; describe an MOD service solution; assess the solution's feasibility, risks, and potential benefits; and identify strategies to implement and fund the solution.
5. **Ongoing Technical Assistance.** Ongoing technical assistance will also be provided throughout the program to facilitate development of an MOD business plan. The assistance team will work with the participants to identify challenges areas. Forms of assistance will be tailored to these challenge areas and can include modeling, research, analysis, templates for partnership agreements, identifying funding sources, and more.

## C. Eligibility Information

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are providers of public transportation, including public transit agencies, state or local departments of transportation, and federally recognized Indian tribes. The applicant must have the ability to carry out the proposed project in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

### Potential Partners

Applicants are encouraged to identify potential partners for their proposed ideas, although this is not a requirement. Eligible project partners under this program may include, but are not limited to:

- Private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, including shared mobility providers, software developers, and technology system suppliers;
- Operators of transportation services, such as employee or residential shuttle services, airport connector services, university transportation systems, or parking or tolling authorities;
- State or local government entities;

- Other organizations that may contribute to the success of the project team, including consultants, research consortia or not-for-profit industry organizations, and institutions of higher education.

### **Eligible Ideas**

SUMC, in partnership with FTA, is seeking bold and innovative ideas from eligible applicants interested in identifying and addressing mobility needs through emerging technologies, applications, practices, and service models in concert with existing public transportation systems and resources. Eligible activities include those leading to the development of an innovative business plan that integrates MOD and transit.

Ideas must be in an early stage of development, where continued community conversation and focused technical efforts over the course of a year can lead to a viable MOD business plan. They must not be mature enough where, for example, sophisticated service plans have been formed or a community is simply looking for ideas to fund an already planned service.

Eligible ideas should consider how to address key principles of public transportation such as:

- accessibility for persons with disabilities, including persons who use wheelchairs, and for older Americans;
- affordability for individuals with lower incomes;
- impacts on the local community;
- broad access to mobility options for all travelers;
- payment options that can accommodate all users, including the unbanked; and
- provisions for leveraging the system for emergency transportation needs.

Note that the On-Ramp program provides only technical assistance toward the preparation of a business plan for a transportation project, including identification of possible funding sources. This program does not provide any direct funding for the projects themselves, nor does selection for this program indicate that FTA guarantees funding for implementing the business plan as developed.

## **D. Proposal Information**

### **Proposal Content**

Include the following items in your proposal:

1. **Mobility Need.** Describe the mobility need you want to address in this program and why meeting this need is critical for potential users and the community you serve. Highly rated proposals will show an understanding of a well-documented mobility gap and its importance in your community.
2. **Project Idea.** Describe the project idea, how it would meet your identified mobility need, how the idea formed in the community, and the degree to which it has been tested before (if at all), in your community or elsewhere. The idea and potential solution should be innovative and outside the parameters of traditional public transportation service.

Also describe how the project would respond to key principles of public transportation described in the Eligible Ideas section above. Highly rated proposals will articulate how the MOD idea relates to the mobility need described. They will show a degree of initial planning, a rationale for an innovative solution, a clear intent to transform the current mobility context in your community, and consideration of key principles of public transportation. They will also show that the idea is at an appropriate and early enough stage to benefit from this program.

3. **Community Support.** Describe support from any potential project partners and stakeholders garnered within the community to date, and ideas for future community outreach as part of this project. Highly rated proposals will be able to document initial support from such stakeholders and describe plans for further outreach.
4. **Agency Support.** Demonstrate support within your agency, particularly among strategic staff or leadership, for your project idea. Highly rated proposals will have institutional backing, which will increase the likelihood that a solution and subsequent business plan developed in this program will be implemented.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals must contain the four content areas listed above, though you may include additional information. Proposals must be a maximum of five pages, single-spaced, in 11- or 12-point font. Any letters of support from outside entities will not be counted against the page limit. Proposals not meeting these requirements will not be evaluated.

Applicants must submit proposals to SUMC by 11:59 pm ET on March 21, 2018, via email to [OnRamp@sharedusemobilitycenter.org](mailto:OnRamp@sharedusemobilitycenter.org), with "On-Ramp Proposal" and your agency's name in the subject line.

### **Review and Selection**

Proposals will be reviewed by an independent outside panel of MOD practitioners recruited and convened by SUMC. SUMC will announce the selected participants in the spring of 2018.

### **More Information**

SUMC will host a public informational webinar on at 2pm ET February 21, 2018 (<http://bit.ly/onramp-webinar>), describing the program and the application, review, and selection processes. For further information, see the On-Ramp FAQ page at <http://bit.ly/onrampfaq> or contact SUMC at [OnRamp@sharedusemobilitycenter.org](mailto:OnRamp@sharedusemobilitycenter.org).