



Ventura County Transportation Commission

Access for All (AFA) Grant Program Guidelines

December 2022

Table of Contents

Overview	2
Background	2
Eligible Applicants	3
Eligible Expenses	4
Progress Reporting Requirements	4
Application Instructions and Scoring	4
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms	6
Appendix B: Eligible Expenses.....	8
Appendix C: Reporting Requirements.....	9

Overview

Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) is seeking proposals from eligible entities to increase on-demand transportation service for people with disabilities within Ventura County. This solicitation is a competitive selection that will result in the award of available state funds to eligible organizations after an evaluation and ranking of proposals and the approval of funding awards by the VCTC.

The Access for All Grant Program provides operating and capital assistance to establish on-demand transportation programs or partnerships to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, specifically wheelchair users who need a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). Eligible applicants include public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and private/commercial entities. Eligible projects must increase the availability of on-demand WAV transportation in the County of Ventura. Eligible entities may apply for up to \$249,713 and no less than \$50,000. Matching funds are not required.

Applications and supporting documents must be emailed to hmill@goventura.org by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2023. Questions and requests for clarification for this call for projects must be directed in writing to Heather Miller at hmill@goventura.org. The Application Form and Program Guidelines can be found on VCTC's website at <https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/grant-opportunities/>.

Proposal submissions shall constitute a firm offer to VCTC for 90 days from the date of this call for projects closing. Once submitted, proposals become VCTC's property. This call for projects does not commit VCTC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in preparing a proposal, or to procure or contract for services.

No person or entity submitting a proposal in response to this call for projects, nor any officer, employee, agent, representative, relative, or consultant representing such a person (or entity) may contact through any means or engage in any discussion concerning this contract award with any VCTC Board member or any VCTC employee during the period between the call for projects being issued and the date contract(s) are awarded. Any such contact would be grounds for disqualifying the proposer. Contact with VCTC staff during such time period must be limited to technical questions and discussions leading to best and final offers.

Background

In 2018, under the Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Access for All Act, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) established a TNC Access for All Program to incentivize expansion and accessibility of TNC on-demand services (such as Uber and Lyft) for persons with disabilities and those who need a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV).

The program is funded by collecting a \$0.10 Access Fee from each TNC trip originating in Ventura County and administered by Local Access Fund Administrators (LAFAs), such as Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and County Transportation Commissions (CTCs). In July 2022, the VCTC (Commission) authorized VCTC to serve as the Ventura County LAFA. The LAFA is

responsible for developing the AFA program for the region, engaging with community stakeholders, and establishing a process for procuring WAV access providers through a competitive solicitation. Access Providers are organizations or entities that can provide WAV service similar to that of TNCs but require additional financial resources to do so.

VCTC currently has \$249,713 in available funds from Cycle 2 (FY 2021) of the program. The CPUC requires the LAFA to award contracts to access providers by July 1 of the following year, and selected access providers must liquidate the awarded funds within 12 months. The following is the proposed schedule for the 2023 AFA RFP:

Call for Projects Proposed Schedule	
Approval of Access for All Guidelines by TRANSCOM	December 14, 2022
Approval of Access for All Guidelines by VCTC	January 6, 2023
Call for Projects Issued	January 9, 2023
Project Applications due to VCTC	February 10, 2023
Approval of Recommended Projects/Access Provider by TRANSCOM	March 8, 2023
Approval of Recommended Projects/Access Provider by VCTC	April 7, 2023
Contract Award	June 1, 2023

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for Access for All funds must directly provide, or contract with a separate organization or entity to directly provide, on-demand WAV transportation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

For the purposes of the Access for All Program, the CPUC identifies eligible Access Providers as transportation carrier[s] that hold a Commission-issued permit or a non-permitted transportation carrier that can provide documentation of the following with their application:

- **Background checks:** Carriers must perform background checks that meet or exceed what is required of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) under the TNC application form.
- **Insurance:** Carriers must have insurance equivalent to or higher than what is required of charter-party carriers under General Order 115.
- **Controlled substance and alcohol testing:** Carriers must be enrolled in a controlled substance and alcohol-testing program.
- **Secretary of State Registration:** Carriers must have their articles of incorporation filed with the Secretary of State.
- **Motor Carrier Profile with California Highway Patrol (CHP):** Carriers must complete the CHP 362 Motor Carrier Profile and obtain a CA Number from the CHP.

The approved non-permitted carrier shall submit a declaration to VCTC affirming compliance with each of the requirements and that each requirement is in effect during the term the carrier operates as an Access Provider. The Declaration is included in the application package.

TNCs may apply as Access Providers if they are providing new WAV service in the geographic area or the TNC certifies that the TNC’s collected fees during the Exemption Year were exhausted to provide WAV services.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible projects demonstrate improvements to response times for WAV service compared to the previous year and/or status quo in the county, the presence and availability of WAVs, and efforts to publicize and promote available WAV services to disability communities. Eligible expenses can include vehicle costs, partnership costs, marketplace costs, operational costs, and fare subsidies. A more detailed list of eligible WAV expenses is included in Appendix B.

For Access Providers that provide WAV services for a TNC, the Access Provider shall not use Access Fund moneys for trips that are compensated by a TNC. Accordingly, VCTC is permitted to request additional information from Access Provider applicants as necessary to sufficiently review the application. An Access Provider applicant shall disclose whether it is a current or former service provider for a TNC. The Access Provider applicant must demonstrate to VCTC that any Access Fund monies will not be used for services that are compensated by a TNC.

Ineligible projects and activities are those that do not align with program goals and objectives. The following activities and expenses are ineligible through the grant program:

- Administrative costs of persons employed by the Grantee for activities not directly related to the preparation and adoption of the proposed activity or activities;
- Costs for work performed prior to award notice to the Grantee;
- Claims or litigation costs.

Progress Reporting Requirements

Access Providers receiving funding are required to report on a quarterly basis (within 30 days after the end of each quarter) data related to the Program to VCTC. Reporting requirements are listed below, and templates are available for some requirements. Reporting templates for Access Providers can be accessed [here](#) (see Reporting Templates). For more information on reporting, see Appendix C.

- Number of Unique WAVs in Operation (Template)
- Number and percentage of WAV trips completed, not accepted, cancelled by passenger, cancelled due to passenger no-show, and cancelled by driver (Template)
- Completed WAV trip request response times (Template)
- Evidence of outreach (Template)
- Certification of Driver Training
- Report of WAV Driver Training Programs (Template)
- Certification of Inspection
- Number of complaints (Template)

Application Instructions and Scoring

Submit the application and supporting material to VCTC by 5:00 pm on February 10, 2023, via email to hmillier@goventura.org. The entire signed application (including the Safety Protocol Declaration Form) and all attachments must be included in the electronic copy, preferably in a single pdf file.

Applications are to be complete and final. The Application Form and Program Guidelines can be found on VCTC's website at <https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/grant-opportunities/>.

VCTC staff will screen applications based on requirements in the Eligibility section and prioritize funding to providers that can provide trips within the shortest response times (time between trip request and passenger pick-up time). However, if there are no applicants who can provide such on-demand service, VCTC will accept applications from other providers, so long as those providers' services do not follow a fixed-route or schedule. Applications will be scored based on the point value given to their applications. There is opportunity for VCTC to contract with multiple access providers. In that event, application scores will be used to apportion funding.

Application materials and attachments submitted to the VCTC in response to its FY 2023 Solicitation for Proposals for the Access for All Program are not considered confidential. Application contents and attachments received by VCTC are considered public records. Applicants should not include confidential information such as client names, addresses, specific medical diagnoses, telephone numbers, and other personal information.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Access for All (AFA) refers to the TNC Access for All Program, created by the California Public Utilities Commission to implement [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1376](#) or the Access for All Act (Hill: 2018). In this Call for Projects, AFA also refers to the VCTC Access for All Program.

Access Provider means an organization or entity that directly provides, or contracts with a separate organization or entity to provide, On-Demand Transportation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, as defined in Public Utilities Code Section 5431.5(a).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.).

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is a regulatory agency that regulates privately owned public utilities in the state of California, including TNCs. The CPUC was required to establish a program relating to accessibility for persons with disabilities as part of its regulation of TNCs under the implementation of SB 1376.

Direct Cost is an expense that can be directly assigned to a grant-funded project relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

Fixed-Route Transportation uses buses, vans, light rail, and other vehicles to operate a transportation service on a predetermined route according to a predetermined schedule.

Fulfilled Trip means a trip is requested by a rider, the trip is accepted by a provider, and the rider reaches their requested destination.

Grantee is an organization that has been awarded funding through the Access for All Grant Program and has entered into a grant agreement with VCTC.

Indirect Cost is an expense incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one grant-funded project that cannot be readily assigned to a specific grant, contract, or other activity, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

Net Project Cost is calculated as the Total Project Cost less any revenue generated through the project.

Non-scalable Project is a project whose Project Scope of Work cannot be reduced because doing so (a) is not possible, (b) would create an incomplete project that contributes little to the grant program goals or provides little value to those intended to benefit from the project, and/or (c) would have scored substantially differently in the competitive process with a reduced Project Scope of Work.

Notice to Proceed is the written authorization VCTC issues to a Grantee after a Grant Agreement has been executed to allow for a project to begin. The Notice to Proceed includes the date the Grantee can incur expenses that may be eligible for reimbursement.

On-Demand Transportation means a transportation service that does not follow a fixed route or schedule and the provider can fulfill trip requests within twelve hours.

Period of Performance is the total time interval between the start of an awarded project that has received a Notice to Proceed, and the project's planned end date as specified in the Grant Agreement or, if applicable, an amendment to the Grant Agreement.

Response Time is the elapsed time between when a trip is requested and when the passenger is picked-up.

Scalable Project is a project whose Project Scope of Work can be reduced and still further the grant program goals while providing significant value to the public intended to benefit from the project. VCTC staff will consider how the project would have scored in the competitive process if the Project Scope of Work were reduced. If the project would have scored substantially the same with the scaled-down Project Scope of Work and the scaled-down project would further the grant program goals and provide significant value to the public intended to benefit from the project, then the project may be scaled.

Total Project Cost is calculated as the sum of the grant award.

Transportation Network Company (TNC) is an organization, whether a corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, or other form, operating in California that provides prearranged transportation services for compensation using an online-enabled platform to connect passengers with drivers using their personal vehicles.

Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle (WAV) means a vehicle equipped with a ramp or lift capable of transporting non-folding motorized wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or other mobility devices, as defined in Public Utilities Code Section 5431.

Appendix B: Eligible Expenses

Table 3: Eligible WAV Expenses

Eligible WAV Expenses Adopted in D.20-03-007
Vehicle Costs
Lease/Rental/Purchase Costs
Rental Subsidies for Driver
Inspections
Maintenance, Service & Warranty
Fuel Cost
Cleaning Supplies/Services
Other (Describe)
Partnership Costs
Transportation Service Partner Fees/Incentives and/or Management Fees
Vehicle Subsidies
Consultants/Legal
Other (Describe)
Marketplace Costs
Recruiting
Driver Onboarding
Training Costs
Driver Incentives
Promo Codes for WAV
Other (Describe)
Operational Costs
Marketing Costs
Technology Investments/Engineering Costs/Enhancements
Community Partnership/Engagement Costs
Rental Management
Pilot Management
Wages, Salaries and Benefits (non-maintenance personnel)
Other (Describe)
Other (Describe)⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For example, ride fare subsidies.

Appendix C: Reporting Requirements

Quarterly Reporting as follows:

1. **Number of Unique WAVs in Operation** – by quarter and aggregated by hour of the day and day of the week. “In operation” is defined when a WAV: (a) is available to receive a trip request in that quarter/hour/day or (b) has accepted a trip request in that quarter/hour/day.
2. **Number and percentage of WAV trips completed, not accepted, cancelled by passenger, cancelled due to passenger no-show, and cancelled by driver** – by quarter and aggregated by hour of the day and day of the week.
3. **Completed WAV trip request response times** - in deciles, as well as broken out by Period A (time elapsed from when a trip is requested until the trip is accepted) and B (time elapsed from when a trip is accepted until the vehicle arrives). Response time is the elapsed time between when a trip is requested and when the passenger is picked-up (Period A plus Period B). For example, the Access Provider shall report that 10 percent of all trip requests originating in a geographic area and quarter were fulfilled in X response time minutes, 20 percent were fulfilled in X response time minutes, etc. In addition, the Access Provider shall report that the Period A time was X minutes for 10 percent of completed trips, that the Period B time was X minutes for 10 percent of completed trips, etc. Accordingly, to verify the Access Provider’s WAV response times, the Access Provider shall provide WAV trip response times in deciles, as well as Periods A and B in deciles, by quarter.
4. **Trip Completion Rate** – % completed WAV Trip Requests. Calculated by dividing total trips completed by total requested unique trips, multiplied by 100%.
5. **Evidence of outreach** - to publicize and promote available WAV services to disability communities, how the partnership promoted WAV services, and marketing or promotional materials of those activities.
6. **Certification of Driver Training** – Certification that all WAV drivers operating on its platform have completed driver training on transporting peoples with disabilities within the past three years, including sensitivity training, passenger assistance techniques, accessibility equipment use, door-to-door service, and safety procedures.
7. **Report of WAV Driver Training Programs** – List of driver training programs completed and number of WAV drivers that completed each training in that quarter.
8. **Certification of Inspection** - that all WAVs operating on its platform have been inspected and approved to conform with the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Transportation Vehicles within the past year.
9. **Number of complaints** - received related to WAV driver or WAV services, categorized as follows: securement issues, driving training, vehicle safety and comfort, Service animal issue, stranded passenger, and others.
10. **Funds Expended** – Itemized list of eligible activities funded through this program.
11. **Contract Information** – Identify the parties to the contract, the duration, the amount spent on the contract, and how the amount was determined.
12. **Safety Protocol Declaration Form** – Certify under penalty of perjury to comply with Safety Protocols.