

Opportunity 1 Revitalizing Main Streets Frequently Asked Questions

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OPPORTUNITY 1: Large Grants

1. Eligibility

Only government entities (including Universities, Downtown Development Associations, Business Improvement Districts, and Councils of Government) are allowed to apply for these grant opportunities.

1.2 Match

1. What are the required matching funds?

A 20 percent match is encouraged, but a lower match is eligible if a justification is provided. If a lower match is provided without justification, the scoring criteria shows how points will be deducted.

2. We've already implemented a project, can those funds be used for our match requirement?

No, the match expenses must be incurred after a contract with CDOT is executed. Documentation will be required with invoicing.

3. If the community is receiving CARES Act funding or ARPA funding through direct distribution, can these funds count toward the local match requirement?

Yes, CARES Act and ARPA direct distribution funding can count toward the match.

4. If the community is receiving other grant funding, can these funds count toward the local match requirement?

Yes, as long as they adhere to the other grant guidelines.

5. Can worker volunteer time be counted towards matching funds?

No.

6. Can the value of donated materials (in-kind) be counted towards matching funds?

Value on donated materials may or may not be counted towards matching funds depending on when the items were donated. If the materials were donated prior to project commencement, they would be considered ineligible for match because they would be counted as a cost previously incurred, and the grant cannot reimburse applicants for prior expenses.

7. Can a community count design costs toward their match?

Design can constitute a match as long as the design uses state or local dollars and takes place after the grant contract is finalized. Please include details of the design costs in the "description of the match" in Part 2 of the application. Note that the match expenses must be incurred after a contract is executed, so the project readiness criterion could be hindered by using design expenses as the match.

1.3 Programmatic Questions

1. What is meant by 'safety infrastructure'?

Unfortunately, in recent years Colorado has seen an increase in vehicle-caused pedestrian and cyclist fatalities. The purpose of this grant is to reverse this trend and to protect vulnerable users such as pedestrians, bikers, motorcyclists, transit users, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. Safety infrastructure therefore includes any project that:

- Reduces fatal and serious injury crashes on the transportation system, particularly among bicyclists and pedestrians

- Supports a transportation system that safely accommodates all modes of travel
- Improves transit access and bike and pedestrian safety and mobility
- Supports the development of connected urban/employment centers and multimodal corridors
- Provides safe access to opportunity and mobility for residents of all ages, incomes and abilities, including vulnerable users

2. Can a single jurisdiction submit multiple applications?

No. For Grant Opportunity 1, a jurisdiction may only submit a single application. Government entities may submit an application for Grant Opportunity 2 in addition to their single Grant Opportunity 1 application.

3. Are these funds subject to federal funding requirements?

Yes, although the specific federal requirements that apply to these ARPA funds are still being determined.

4. Do we need to submit a concept paper to our CDOT region prior to application?

No. However, applicants are encouraged to discuss feasibility with CDOT's regional staff in their application. CDOT region staff will conduct a technical review of the application after submittal. If CDOT concurrence will be required for the project, the applicant must submit a [Request for CDOT Concurrence Form](#) along with the application submission. Concurrence will be determined during the review process, not before.

5. Does a conceptual plan suffice to be eligible for this grant? To what extent are plans required?

A conceptual plan is a benefit to the grant application but not an absolute requirement. It is important that the review committee feels the cost estimates are reasonably accurate and that they understand the scope of the project. These are elements that a concept plan typically provides. But depending on the project, it may not be necessary for a successful grant application.

6. Do projects need to be designed to CDOT and FHWA standards?

For these grants, applicants are required to follow typical CDOT/FHWA standards including plan/spec reviews, ROW clearances, environmental clearances, utility clearances, etc. This is the case whether the project is on a state highway or on the locally-owned street system.

7. Can multiple local mobility improvement projects in the same area be submitted as one project?

Yes.

1.4 Application Guidelines

1. Can applications be submitted as a Word document?

Applicants are welcome to submit a Word document in addition to the fillable PDF. Be sure to clearly state each section in the Word doc. If using a Word doc, the application should still be completed. Write "See attached Word file" in the applicable blue PDF boxes. Please email cdotmainstreets@state.co.us if you are having problems completing the application.

2. Is there a word limit for each response?

A few question boxes state character limits, but if a limit is not stated then applicants may use as many words as they feel necessary.

3. The application refers to a Risk Assessment Form, where is that?

The [Risk Assessment Form](#) is linked here - and is posted on the Program Webpage under Additional Resources. Each applicant should submit a Risk Assessment form.

4. Our project impacts CDOT ROW, how do we get concurrence?

You do not need CDOT Concurrence prior to submitting your application. You should discuss high-level feasibility with your regional CDOT representative, and then submit a [Request for CDOT Concurrence Form](#). If CDOT concurrence will be required for the project, the applicant must submit a [Request for CDOT Concurrence Form](#) along with the application submission on May 14. Concurrence will be determined during the review process, not before.

1.5 Applicant Eligibility

1. Which cities/counties in Colorado are eligible to apply?

All of them! No jurisdiction is too small.

2. Are federal roads, inter-state highways, and freeways eligible for this project?

They could be, but there would be additional timing and requirements that could accompany federal infrastructure.

3. What is the definition of a jurisdiction who can submit an application?

An individual vendor (a single entity according to the SOS), which are typically governmental entities, can submit an individual application. A City and a County can each submit individual applications, but the committee will be looking for public support and coordination when making their evaluation.

4. Are universities eligible applicants?

Yes, universities can apply for funding as long as they can show usage and impact align with the intent of the program.

5. Do projects actually have to occur on a town's main street?

No, they should be in areas near or adjacent to the Main Street corridor or other important urban arterials where people work and live, while using multiple forms of transportation.

6. Can a Council of Governments apply for a multi-jurisdictional grant?

Yes, Councils of Government (COGs) are eligible to submit one or more applications on the behalf of their respective governments. However, only one application can be submitted per local jurisdiction, so if an application is submitted by a COG that benefits a local entity or entities, that is the only application that can be submitted for that local jurisdiction. A written letter of support from the local entity should be submitted along with the application.

1.6 Eligible Expense

1. Is project design an allowable/eligible expense?

Design is an allowed expense as long as the concept is clear for the review committee to score. Project readiness is part of the scoring criteria and projects need to be fully implemented with grant funding.

2. Is ROW acquisition an allowable expense for these grant funds?

Yes.

3. Can unincorporated county roads in high-density rural areas be eligible? Are "off-system" projects eligible?

Yes, "off-system" projects are allowed on local owned streets. We want these funds to go to roads that are used by pedestrians and/or cyclists, whether in rural or urban areas.

4. Is planning an eligible expense?

No. Given that the purpose of this grant is to produce tangible infrastructure, planning is ineligible.

5. Can Grant Opportunity 1 funds be used to supplement previously awarded Safer Main Streets funding?

Yes. However, the review committee is also considering regional and geographical equity as funds are awarded, so previous Safer Main Streets awards will be taken into account while scoring.

6. Can PM costs be included in total project costs?

Project manager costs can be included in the cost but it will not count as the LA match. You could get reimbursed for incurred costs like staff time but your accounting and billing has to be able for you to charge time to a specific project number, show the employee's breakdown of hourly rates, benefits hourly costs, and the number of hours the employee charged time to the project.

1.7 Scoring

1. Is there a minimum safety requirement?

Safety is one of the main criteria by which Opportunity 1 applications are judged, so it would be difficult for a project that had absolutely no safety benefits to do well in the review process. Prospective applicants who do not see a definitive safety benefit to their project are advised to look at the requirements for Grant Opportunity 2, which has a different focus.

2. There is not much safety data available for the project we are submitting. Are we still eligible to submit an application?

While data is part of the safety score, if you are able to describe proven safety measures that will be implemented (in Part 2), this can also help improve your safety score. Clearly define the safety need in Part 2, even if there are fewer crashes on record.

1.8 Timing

1. Will applications be reviewed together after the application deadline?

For Opportunity 1, all applications will be reviewed after the application.

2. How long will it take for these projects to be contracted?

These grant funds will be awarded through an IGA, which can typically take 4-6 months to execute.

1.9 Concurrence

1. Do concurrence and risk evaluation documents need to be submitted ahead of time?

While a risk evaluation does not need to be submitted when submitting the project application, it will be required when/if the project is awarded. This form is linked [here](#) for reference, and can be found on the [CDOT RMS website](#). Projects requiring CDOT concurrence (projects on a state highway or within the state rights-of-way (ROW)) must provide a [Request for CDOT Concurrence form](#) with the application submittal. This will undergo a technical review during the selection process. However, if awarded, some portions of the proposed scope may still need further review and changes before receiving CDOT approval.