

# MOBILITY, ACCESS, AND TRANSPORTATION INSECURITY PROGRAM

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Mobility, Access, and Transportation Insecurity (MATI) program, funded by the Federal Transit Administration and managed by the University of Minnesota, seeks to support the planning and development of community-shaped, innovative demonstration projects that can help address issues of transportation insecurity. Transportation insecurity, an emerging concept in transportation, is experienced when a person cannot access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably. It is a goal of this program to include non-traditional groups such as community-based organizations or nonprofits as leads or key applicant team partners in order to incorporate the ideas and expertise of these groups into the shaping of solutions.

The program consists of one funding call, with two competitive selection and funding phases within that call. This RFP will lead to the selection of applicants that will participate in the program during a Phase 1 planning grant. A second competitive process will identify a subgroup of Phase 1 participants who will proceed to Phase 2 and receive additional funding to deploy a proposed demonstration.

Applicants selected in Phase 1 will have support from the MATI program team to develop a demonstration project plan and submit that plan for consideration of Phase 2 funding and deployment. Phase 2 demonstrations will include the development and execution of a research effort associated with the project and managed by the MATI program team.

### Required Expression of Interest:

Applicants **must** complete a basic expression of interest form by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on March 15, 2024. To access the form visit this [link](#).

To complete the form, applicants should have the following information on hand:

1. Identification of demonstration community
2. Identification of the transit agency that serves that community. (To be eligible to apply, applicants must be in a geography covered by a transit agency. The agencies themselves do not have to be on a proposing team. See the eligibility section for more.)
3. Identification of proposed team makeup
4. Identification of team lead
5. Description of proposed project idea

Expressions of interest will be reviewed to confirm basic eligibility and the project's fit within the MATI program. Applicants will be given a direct yes/no confirmation of eligibility and fit from the MATI team by April 1, 2024. **Applicants must submit the expression of interest in order to submit a full proposal.** Details provided in the expression of interest (such as the addition of a team member or organizational lead) may change, but applicants are encouraged to maintain the core of what is initially submitted to ensure eligibility. It is acceptable for different team members to submit the expression of interest form

and formal proposal as long as the content shared in the initial expression of interest and proposal remain generally consistent. The MATI program team reserves the right to reopen the expression of interest form after March 15 if needed.

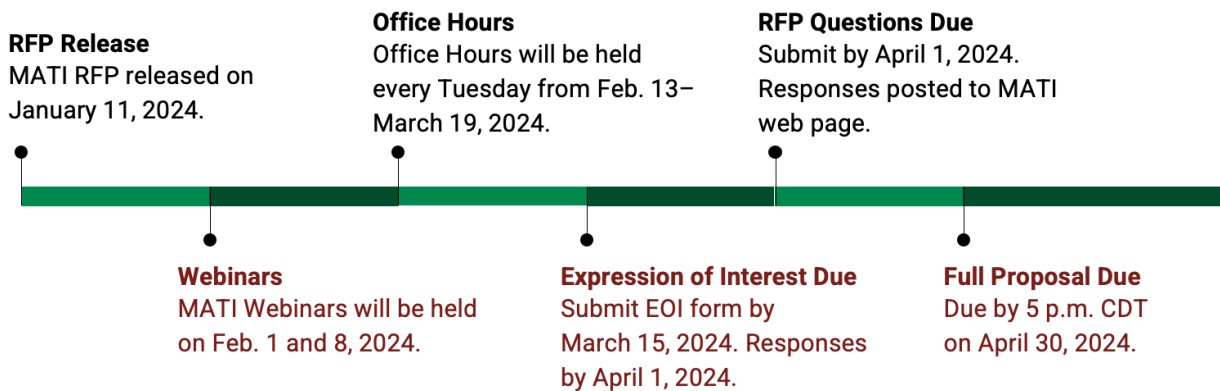
**Full Proposal Deadline:**

Final proposals are due by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on April 30, 2024, submitted via email to [andr0274@umn.edu](mailto:andr0274@umn.edu). Proposals must be submitted as a PDF attachment. Please write **MATI Proposal Submission** in the subject line. No exemptions or exceptions. Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt via email.

**Decision:**

If needed, the MATI team reserves the right to have a shortlist of finalists participate in an interview with the MATI team to aid with the final decisions. Selected applicants will be notified by June 14, 2024. Applicants that are not selected may request feedback. The MATI team will provide that feedback by no later than July 30, 2024.

**Figure 1. Initial MATI Submission Timeline**

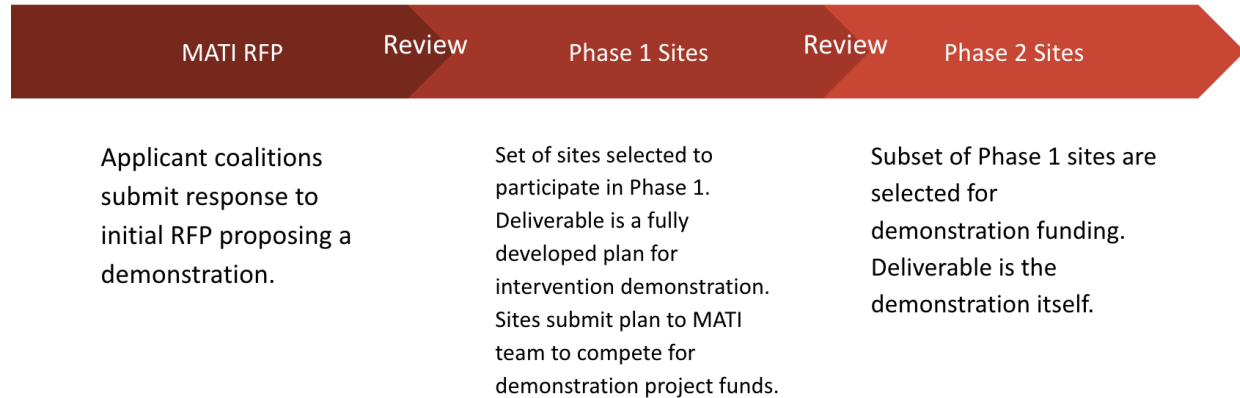


**Available Funding:**

The program consists of one pot of funding, with two competitive selection and funding steps. This initial RFP will lead to the selection of applicants into the program. Then a second competitive process will select from within the group of Phase 1 plans for demonstration funding (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Full MATI Program Process**

## MATI Process



There is \$4 million in total funding available to support applicants across both phases. The amounts allocated to each phase and selected applicants may vary depending on the number of awards, proposed scope, applicant match, or need.

Phase 1 (selected through this RFP) will fund up to 8 applicants. Selected applicants will receive up to \$150,000 to support the development and submission of a **plan** for a proposed demonstration project to address transportation insecurity. This phase will take 9–12 months.

Phase 2 (selected from among successful Phase 1 applicants via a second competitive process) will fund up to 4 applicants for **the full deployment** of the proposed demonstration. Selected applicants will receive up to \$700,000 over 24 months to launch the demonstration project.

Funding for the MATI program is provided by the Federal Transit Administration to the University of Minnesota via a cooperative agreement. Applicants selected to participate in the program will enter into an agreement with the University of Minnesota and will receive program funding directly from the University of Minnesota under that agreement. The University of Minnesota is responsible for federal reporting requirements for the MATI program, and all agreements with applicants will describe applicant responsibilities clearly.

### **Program Webinars:**

Two optional informational webinars will be held in February 2024. A recording of these webinars, along with any questions and answers, will be posted to the MATI website (<https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/MATI>). Registration for these webinars is available on the MATI program page.

**Webinar Dates:**

- Thursday, February 1, 2024 – 1–2 p.m. Central
- Thursday, February 8, 2024 – 2–3 p.m. Central

**Office Hours:**

Weekly office hours will be held starting on February 13, 2024. The purpose of these virtual drop-in meetings is for applicants to ask questions regarding the RFP. Office hours will be held every Tuesday at 12 p.m. Central. Applicants can use this [link](#) to join the office hours on any Tuesday between February 13 and March 19. Recordings of these office hours and pertinent questions and answers will be posted to the MATI website (<https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/MATI>).

**Other MATI Public Promotion:**

Members of the MATI program team may be able to present the same content as the webinars to other convenings or conferences to promote the program. Any other presentations of the MATI program and RFP will be recorded and any questions covered will be posted to the website for all to review.

**Questions Due Date:**

Any questions regarding this RFP are due to the MATI team via [andr0274@umn.edu](mailto:andr0274@umn.edu) by no later than April 1, 2024, at 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time. Questions and responses will be posted to <https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/MATI> along with any amendments to the RFP throughout the open RFP period. All questions will be posted with responses by April 5, 2024.

Applicants that have signed up for the MATI mailing list via <https://www.cts.umn.edu/programs/MATI> will be alerted to any changes to the RFP.

The MATI team will not review applications in advance, but technical questions may be submitted as described below via email or via a question at a webinar or office hours.

**Point of Contact:**

Beth Andrews, MATI Program Manager  
Research Administration Manager  
Center for Transportation Studies  
University of Minnesota  
[andr0274@umn.edu](mailto:andr0274@umn.edu)  
612-626-1745

**Alternate:**

Kyle Shelton, MATI Principal Investigator  
Director  
Center for Transportation Studies  
University of Minnesota  
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612-626-4061

**MATI Program Team:**

The MATI program team consists of PI Shelton and Program Manager Andrews, Co-PI Dr. Yingling Fan from the University of Minnesota, and teams from the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) and Toole Design Group. Members of the MATI program team are ineligible to participate on applicant teams and cannot discuss the RFP with potential applicants outside of the above identified channels.

Each section of this notice contains information and instructions relevant to the application process. Applicants should read this RFP in its entirety so that they have the information they need to submit eligible and competitive applications.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Section 1. Program Description	7
Section 2. Definitions	12
Section 3. Eligibility	14
Section 4. Proposal Requirements	16
Section 5. Proposal Evaluation	19
Section 6. Award Requirements	20
Section 7. Appendix – Budget Template	21

## SECTION 1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Mobility, Access, and Transportation Insecurity (MATI) Program is aimed at addressing transportation insecurity. Transportation insecurity is the condition in which people face material, systemic, and relational issues that contribute to their inability to access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably. In more basic terms, transportation insecurity may appear as a transportation challenge in a person or community's day-to-day experiences. Examples of transportation challenges or insecurity include:

- Missing or opting out of travel or daily trips.
- A lack of certainty about how one will reach needed destinations.
- Missing or limiting opportunities and experiences because of lack of resources or access to adequate systemic support.

Nationally, there are well-established policies and programs that aim to address food insecurity and housing insecurity, but not transportation insecurity. A growing body of [research](#) indicates that transportation insecurity is a significant factor in persistent poverty. The MATI program invites proposed demonstration projects from applicants that can address transportation insecurity issues in communities across the United States. These projects will be developed alongside a research plan that will allow for the MATI team to subsequently evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of these demonstrations. The ultimate goal of the program is to not only address transportation insecurity for communities participating, but also to share and scale effective demonstrations.

This program will consist of a two-phase process. This RFP solicits participation in the first phase of the program. Applicants selected in Phase 1 will make up the pool from which the demonstration projects will be selected in Phase 2. Applicants selected in Phase 1 will be tasked with developing a full deployment plan that addresses a critical transportation need for a priority population(s).

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Figure 3 displays the lead and secondary roles for MATI program team and applicant sites. These roles are explained in further detail below the figure.

**Figure 3. MATI Roles and Responsibilities**

MATI Roles	Task	Applicants and local partners	MATI Team	Federal Transit Administration	MATI Research Committee
	Funding				
	Program Management				
	Applicant Selection				
	Plan Development				
	Deployment and Management				
	Data Collection				
	Research and Evaluation				
	Program guidance and feedback				

■ Primary    ■ Secondary

**APPLICANTS**

If selected for Phase 1, applicants will have the support of the MATI program team to plan and develop a formal demonstration plan. **This formal demonstration plan is the primary deliverable for Phase 1.** It will also be the main element of the application for Phase 2 funding. MATI program team members will support the selected applicants, but the applicants will lead the planning process and development of the formal demonstration plan. Selected applicants must include a significant amount of community listening/engagement as they develop their proposed demonstration during Phase 1 of the project. While encouraged, community listening sessions are not expected to be completed before applying. As a part of the Phase 1 demonstration plan, the MATI program team will help applicants shape an appropriate research and evaluation component plan to track each demonstration project.

Phase 1 Demonstration Plan will include:

- Community needs/data assessment
- Summaries from community listening sessions/engagement
- Proposed demonstration project and ability to address gaps
- Research and evaluation plans, including a data collection plan

The primary Phase 2 deliverable will be the execution of the demonstration project itself and data collection (both quantitative and qualitative) around the performance of the demonstration. Applicants will need to support local data collection as a part of their demonstration. The structure and details of data collection will be directed by the MATI team in conjunction with applicants, but local data collection organized by the applicants will be critical. Applicants may include other universities or research entities on their team to help collect this information. However, the research team members



will not create their own independent evaluation or research processes; rather, they will assist in the execution of the research plans developed jointly between the applicant and the MATI program team.

### **MATI PROGRAM TEAM**

In Phase 1, members of the MATI program team will support communities in the development of the full plan. This includes the development of a rigorous research and data collection plan tailored to the proposed project. The MATI program team will clearly identify the types of information that each site will need to collect in order to support evaluation. This could include, but is not limited to, conducting a project as a randomized control trial, collecting qualitative data through interviews, or training community members on a travel diary.

In Phase 2, the MATI program team's role will be to support the shaping of the research and data collection plan, as well as conducting the final evaluation. The MATI team will conduct final evaluations of the demonstration using the data collected locally.

### **FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

The Federal Transit Administration is funding the MATI program through a cooperative agreement with the University of Minnesota. The FTA will support the MATI program team in shaping the MATI program's aims and will provide guidance on the overall program. The FTA will not participate in the selection of applicant sites for Phase 1 or 2.

### **MATI RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

The MATI research committee is a group of researchers and practitioners from across the nation that will support the MATI program team in shaping the program and its aims. This includes offering input into Phase 1 plans and supporting the development of research frameworks and data collection plans. The MATI research committee will not participate in the selection of applicant sites for Phase 1 or 2.

### **TOPICS AND PRIORITY POPULATIONS**

The MATI program encourages applicants to create teams and submit proposals that may address transportation insecurity through a range of sectors and topical areas. Proposed solutions may encompass a wide spectrum of possibilities—from the introduction of new transportation services like microtransit alternatives, to substantial improvements in the service quality of existing mobility choices, to changes to practices or programming of existing systems. While proposals may center transportation actions, they may also have a more nuanced interaction with transportation. Regardless of focus, the central aim of proposed demonstrations should be to reduce transportation insecurity in some form. The MATI program team is interested in any proposed solutions, but would specifically call out an

interest in proposals that promote the innovative use of partnerships, technologies, and new practices to address transportation insecurity. Proposals may weave these elements together.

There is no required modal focus (i.e., projects do not have to include public transit modes such as bus or rail). Examples of arenas where projects addressing transportation insecurity could be impactful include but are not limited to:

- Health care/public health
- Childcare and transportation for caregivers
- Employment
- Housing
- Access for people with disabilities
- Access to jobs, health care, education, food, or other opportunities
- Interconnected mobility modes and services
- Universal basic mobility/transportation wallets
- Systems integration (e.g., Medicare and medical transportation)
- Active transportation
- Cost of transportation
- Transportation for young people
- Service delivery for people aging in place
- Travel for recreation and social interaction
- Addressing climate change impacts
- Connecting peripheral or rural communities to services in urban areas
- Transportation during non-traditional travel times
- Transportation to co-located services
- Transportation during times of disruption, such as natural disasters

Proposing applicants will describe the priority population(s), which can include intersecting identities, that their demonstration is intended to positively impact. Examples include but are not limited to:

- People with low incomes (less than the 80% area median income)
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations
- People with physical or mental disabilities
- Neuro-diverse people
- Communities underserved by existing mobility options
- Single-caretaker households
- Families with children
- Seniors (age 65+)
- LGBTQ+ populations
- Women and people across the gender spectrum

- People who live in disadvantaged communities as defined by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) or [Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#)
- Communities facing historic disinvestment (redlining, segregation, etc.)
- People who travel frequently for health care
- People who are formerly incarcerated or recently released from jail
- People who are recovering from substance abuse
- People who are renters
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- People receiving public assistance
- People who are seeking employment
- People with multiple jobs or atypical work schedules
- Young people
- People who are migrants
- People without a car

## SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

- **Transportation Equity:** Creation of systems that offer fair and just distribution of the benefits and burdens associated with transportation services and infrastructure. Equity in transportation also includes: 1) Building a system that offers similar travel experiences (comfort, frequency, cost) to users no matter their mode or travel purpose; 2) Ensuring specifically that marginalized groups are provided with systems that enable them to overcome systemic and material barriers to mobility; and 3) Targeting interventions that consider the needs and abilities of a community and can evolve as factors change.
- **Transportation Insecurity:** The condition in which people face material, systemic, and relational issues that contribute to their inability to access needed services or destinations comfortably, conveniently, and affordably.
- **Mobility:** One's ability to reach all required/desired locations in the course of one's day by whatever modal choice desired or required.
- **Access to Opportunity:** One's ability to reach desired destinations (jobs, school, health care, parks) without a major obstacle or undue burden in cost, time, or safety.
- **Accessibility:** The ability of all persons to move freely through the public realm and to reach and enter all vehicles within a transportation system without difficulty.

### PROGRAMMATIC DEFINITIONS

- **Designated Recipient:** An entity enabled to receive federal transportation funds for the purpose of supporting a public transportation system. In formal terms, a designated recipient is named in accordance with the planning process under Sections 49 U.S.C 5303 and 5304, by the governor of a state, responsible local officials, and publicly owned operators of public transportation to receive and apportion amounts under 49 U.S.C 5336 to urbanized areas with 200,000 or more in population. Funding for urbanized areas with a population of between 50,000 and 199,999 is made available to a state's or territory's governor or governor's designee.
- **In-kind Contributions:** Non-cash contributions (i.e., property or services) that 1) benefit the proposed applicant, and (2) are contributed by non-federal third parties, without charge, to the applicant.
- **Local Government Authority:** A political subdivision of a state, or a public corporation, board, or commission established under the laws of a state.
- **Nonprofit Organization:** A corporation or association determined by the Secretary of the Treasury to be an organization qualifying under 26 U.S.C 501(c) as exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. 501(a), or which has been determined under state law to be a nonprofit and for which the designated state agency has received documentation certifying the status of the nonprofit organization. Nonprofit organizations are not necessarily a community-based organization.
- **Community-Based Organization:** Nonprofit, non-governmental, or charitable entities that are driven by community residents and serve a particular community geography. This can be shown

by the majority of the governing body and staff residing in the community served, the location of operating offices within the community, having a process for residents to identify the primary issues the organization works on, longevity and consistency of services to the community, and developing program design that brings residents directly into the process and into leadership.

- **Urbanized Area (UZA):** An area that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an “urban area” by the Secretary of Commerce with at least 50,000 or more persons. See 49 U.S.C. 5302

## SECTION 3. ELIGIBILITY

All applicants and proposed demonstrations must serve or primarily occur within a [census designated urban area](#) of at least 50,000 people that also has an [active designated recipient](#) for Federal Transit Administration Urbanized Area Formula Grants (49 U.S.C 5307). The designated recipient is not a required team member, but one must be present in the geographic area served by the demonstration. Applicants may propose a demonstration that is focused on a particular community within the broader eligible geography. Applicant teams may include eligible team members from outside an urban area and/or aim to serve residents of non-urban areas, but the proposed demonstration must be oriented around actions within the defined urban area. (e.g., connecting rural or suburban communities to services located only in an eligible urban area).

### ELIGIBLE TEAM MEMBERS

- Nonprofit organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Federally recognized Tribal Nations
- Local units of government (cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, other local governments or special districts)
- Public transportation agencies or other private transportation provider (e.g., micromobility or shared-mobility providers)
- State or territorial departments of transportation
- Non-transportation state or local agencies (e.g., housing, public health, or economic development)
- For-profit/private organizations providing a service to lead applicant
- Universities or other research organizations
  - These team members may contribute to the execution of an applicant’s research, data collection, and evaluation plans. These plans will be created in conjunction with the MATI program team and applicant team members will not conduct separate evaluation or research on a demonstration project.

### TEAM STRUCTURE

- Applicants may propose any team structure or division of tasks as long as the following criteria are met:
  - Nonprofit or community-based organization participants must represent at least 40% of the budget.
  - An applicant lead must be identified from the above eligible entities. That lead applicant member should have at least 30% of the proposed budget allotted to them.

- Team members that are not receiving funding through the proposed budget are not allowed to be the applicant lead.
- Any team member may participate in a proposal/support a proposal without having a dedicated budget. To be considered a committed partner without budget, a team member must document their intended participation and demonstrate dedication of internal resources/time, which may be considered an in-kind match.
- Applicants that consist of at least one nonprofit or community-based organization and a committed public agency/jurisdiction will receive greater consideration in review.

## SECTION 4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

### REQUIRED EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Applicants **must** complete a basic expression of interest form by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on March 15, 2024. To access the form, visit this [link](#).

To complete the form, applicants should have the following information on hand:

1. Identification of demonstration community
2. Identification of the transit agency that serves that community. (To be eligible to apply, applicants must be in a geography covered by a transit agency. The agencies themselves do not have to be on a proposing team. See the eligibility section for more.)
3. Identification of proposed team makeup
4. Identification of team lead
5. Description of proposed project idea (2,000 character limit, approximately 350 words)

Expressions of interest will be reviewed to confirm basic eligibility and fit of the project with the MATI program. Applicants will be given a direct yes/no confirmation from the MATI team by April 1, 2024.

**Applicants must submit the expression of interest in order to submit a full proposal.** Details provided in the expression of interest (such as the addition of a team member) may change, but applicants are encouraged to maintain the core of what is initially submitted to ensure eligibility. The MATI program team reserves the right to reopen the expression of interest form after March 15 if needed.

### FULL PROPOSAL

Please submit a complete proposal as a PDF. Documents must be in 12 pt, Times New Roman font, single-spaced, with margins of no less than 1 inch. Full proposals should not exceed 12 pages, not including any requested appendices or supporting documents. The proposal must include the following elements.

#### Project Statement

In four pages, please describe:

- What the project is and how it addresses transportation insecurity in your community.
- What the genesis of the idea was.
- What attributes of the project make it innovative.
- Which priority population(s) will be served by this project and what role various members of these populations will play in the planning and shaping of this demonstration proposal.
- How this project addresses a high-priority need in your community.
- Whether the idea is a new one or if work has already been done on this effort locally.
- The short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes the project might achieve if eventually selected for a Phase 2 demonstration.



## Proposal Team

In four pages, please describe:

- The proposing team.
- The lead organization and project manager (or proposed manager role).
- Description of any community-based organizations involved in the team and how they serve the geography within which they work.
- Role of all team members and how this division of labor will enable the applicant team to move this idea from proposal to demonstration.
- Projects this applicant team has worked on collectively before or the nature of collaboration, if new.
- How and why this partnership is prepared to lead a demonstration project.
- How the applicant team plans to resolve conflicts or issues within the team if/when they arise.
- Vision for how such a project might be sustained after the funding provided by the MATI program is concluded.
- The types of data collection, evaluation, and/or research partnerships team members have undertaken and been involved with on previous projects.
- The gaps your partnership would need support from the MATI team on in order to develop your proposed demonstration.

## Budget and Budget Justification

In four pages, please provide:

- A project budget of up to \$150,000 to support the development of the Phase 1 Demonstration Project plan. **See the appendix section for a budget template.** Phase 1 Budget must include include:
  - Budget for project manager to lead development of demonstration plan.
  - Budget for other team members to participate in the development of a demonstration plan.
  - Travel of likely 1 day, 2 nights, for project manager and 1 other team member to an in-person convening of selected MATI Phase 1 applicants in summer/fall 2024.
- Other eligible spending includes but is not limited to:
  - Community honoraria, reimbursement or food for engagement with community members, or translation services during planning for a potential demonstration.
  - Planning, engineering, or development of technical materials required for the development of a demonstration plan, either by existing team members or by subcontractors that can provide needed expertise.
- There is no match requirement for either phase of the MATI program. However, applicants may include matches (either in-kind or cash) from team partners. During the Phase 2 review, applicants with a demonstrated path to ongoing funding or a plan to achieve it may be given

preference. Any form of anticipated match should be noted in the application and in letters of support from matching partners.

- Letters of support from organizations providing the match should be included at the end of the proposal. They will not be counted against the 12-page limit.

## **SECTION 5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

Applicants' proposals for Phase 1 will be evaluated by the MATI team with a number of considerations in mind. Key review elements include the following.

### **PROJECT ELEMENTS**

- How the proposal identifies and serves a specific priority population(s).
- How the proposal identifies and proposes to address critical issues in transportation insecurity.
- The innovative nature of the project and its ability to offer new solutions to address transportation insecurity.
- Scalability/applicability of a proposed demonstration beyond the demonstration site.

### **TEAM ELEMENTS**

- Adequate inclusion of nonprofit or community-based organizations in the applicant team.
- Demonstrated commitment level of applicant team. This may be evaluated through pre-existing joint work, staff, or funding commitments in the proposal, or other demonstrations of durable commitments to a proposal and partnership.
- Level of community member buy-in and participation in the proposal and planned demonstration.
- The degree to which the proposal or proposing applicant team mesh with key priorities of the Administration, including those reflected in the President's January 20, 2021, Executive Order 13990 on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis, as well as Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Throughout the Federal Government.

### **FEASIBILITY, MATI PROGRAMMATIC FIT, AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS**

- The feasibility of implementation for the proposed demonstration within the parameters of the MATI program and budgets.
- The potential long-term sustainability of an applicant's partnerships and the potential for future funding/management of the proposed project.
- If the proposal may lead to a demonstration whose outcomes could be comparable to other MATI Phase 1 projects.

## **SECTION 6. AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

### **CONTRACTING**

Selected applicants will enter into an agreement with the University of Minnesota and will follow all the rules and regulations set forth in the overarching MATI agreement between UMN and FTA.

### **FAILURE TO DELIVER**

In the event a selected applicant is unable to complete critical milestones in either Phase 1 or Phase 2, the MATI program team and applicant will work together with the FTA to sustain or responsibly transition the affected effort.

## **SECTION 7. APPENDIX – BUDGET TEMPLATE**

The linked [budget template](#) can be downloaded and completed for the final submission.