



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

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# **Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative**

## ***Application for Funding Guidance***

*Fiscal Year 2022*

**Mid-Cycle Grant Application**

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## TRANSIT RECOVERY MARKETING INITIATIVE

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative provides funding for marketing the availability and safety of transit services to bring back riders that stopped using transit or are hesitant to use transit because of COVID-19 or its variants. DRPT allocated \$2M in the FY22 SYIP to support this initiative through a mid-cycle application process.

These application guidelines provide an overview of the Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative, identify program goals, eligible applicants, describes projects that qualify for funding, and specifies terms and requirements.

### PROGRAM GOALS

1. Strengthen public confidence in transit services
2. Increase ridership on public transportation

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

DRPT is developing a statewide marketing campaign that will consist of a unified message to most appropriately attract riders back to Virginia transit systems, reiterating the presence of safety measures, and providing explanation on why public transportation is a safe and viable option. As part of the marketing campaign, DRPT is developing a marketing toolkit for use by DRPT and public transportation partners. The research and development of messaging and marketing tools are funded through FTA's COVID Research Demonstration Grant program.

The marketing toolkit assets will be available through DRPT's [transitva.org](https://transitva.org) site. Transportation agency partners will be directed to a campaign page to download editable marketing content. The marketing toolkit will include a guide on how to use the toolkit, marketing collateral, including traditional and digital advertisements, and a media plan. The advertisements will be customizable, and DRPT will provide assistance placing image and logos on request.

The Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative is intended for public transportation agencies and regional or local transportation organizations that will partner with DRPT and use the marketing toolkit developed by DRPT. Having a common message across Virginia will maximize impact on the recovery of transit ridership. This initiative provides one-time funding to implement marketing campaigns designed to support COVID recovery.

Marketing campaigns may include mass media, such as, print and radio, direct mail, email, social media, and online advertising. Marketing should be broad enough to reach a large segment of potential riders, and targeted to reach potential riders in a specific area, corridor or transit route.

Although this funding opportunity is open to individual agencies in the organization categories listed in the Eligible Applicants section, a regional approach is encouraged and desired. A regional agency, in partnership with local transit and other local transportation agencies, providing a region-wide marketing campaign, will be more effective at reaching a larger audience and encouraging riders to return to transit.

DRPT also has staff and bench consultant resources available to help with the planning, customizing and placement of advertisements.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative funding may be awarded to the following organizations:

- Public Transportation Service Providers
- Planning District Commissions
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Local Governments
- Transportation Management Associations

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXPENSES

Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative funding may be awarded for the following marketing projects and expenses:

- Paid placement of print media advertising in local newspapers or magazines
- Paid placement of online advertising
- Paid social media advertising
- Paid placement of advertising on local and regional radio and television stations
- Direct mail marketing
- Customizing of DRPT's transit recovery marketing toolkit materials as allowed under this initiative
- Printing of DRPT's transit recovery marketing toolkit materials

## INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXPENSES

The following projects and expenses are ineligible for Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative funding. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it shows the major expense items that cannot be part of the application.

- Expenses already funded through a state, federal or other funding sources
- Marketing and promotion of anything other than bus or rail transit
- Marketing that does not use DRPT's transit recovery marketing toolkit
- Design, development, printing, and distribution of bus and rail schedules
- Development and placement of public notices
- Development and placement of announcements of service and fare changes
- Fare buy-downs
- Capital purchases and rentals
- Transit operations and maintenance
- Promotional items and gift cards
- Meals, food, and beverages

## FUNDING AND APPLICANT MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

The total amount of funding available for this initiative is \$2M, as shown in DRPT's FY22 SYIP. With limited funding, applicants should make reasonable requests for funding. Regional partnerships among transit, commuter assistance and other transportation agencies is encouraged to maximize the use of funds.

**To maximize the impact of this initiative across Virginia, DRPT may award funds in an amount that is less than the requested amount in the application.**

The Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative provides state funding up to eighty percent (80%) of eligible project expenses. The applicant must provide a twenty percent (20%) match from non-state or federal funds.

The governing board of an applicant agency must commit to providing the local matching funds. Attach a signed or adopted resolution or letter that commits to funding the local match to the application in OLGA.

## APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA & PROCESS

Applications will be evaluated against the goals of the grant program. Applicants are advised to provide as much detail, support information, and data as possible.

Application scoring rubric:

Category	Points
Use of DRPT's Marketing Materials	20
Marketing Methodology	10
Coordination with Other Agencies	15
Budget	10
Schedule and Timeline	5
Total Points Possible	60

## APPLICATION SCHEDULE AND REQUIREMENTS

The application period for the Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative begins September 1, 2021 and ends November 1, 2021.

Submit applications through DRPT's Online Grant Administration ([OLGA](https://olga.drpt.virginia.gov)) website at: <https://olga.drpt.virginia.gov>. DRPT will not accept applications in any other manner than through OLGA.

Applications for the Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative will use the Mid-Cycle Grant Application. Follow these instructions for a Mid-Cycle Grant Application.

Login to OLGA. After successful OLGA login, the Main Menu will appear. Select the **Grant Applications** option to view the list of application types. Select **Mid-Cycle Grant Applications** to continue with the application process. (See Figure 1.)

### Additional Application Requirements

Enter **Transit Recovery Marketing Initiative** as the **Project Name**.

Provide details of exactly how the grant funds will be spent. Be specific and include a schedule of marketing activities.

The application in OLGA has limited space to provide a detailed description of activities and budget. Therefore, applicants are required to attach additional documentation to provide details of the **marketing activities** and a **Budget Detail**.

The required **Budget Detail** must include the following:

- **Expense Categories** (e.g. Advertising Placement, Media Buy, Professional Services/Contractor Staff Time, Agency Staff Wages)
- **Budget Amount** for each Expense Category
- A **detailed explanation** of how the budget will be spent in each Expense Category

Contact your DRPT Program Manager if you have questions regarding the information needed for the application and the application process.

Figure 1



## POST-AWARD PROJECT EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this initiative will be measured by comparing ridership data from the months before the implementation of the marketing campaign to the same months during and after the campaign. DRPT will monitor before and after ridership data using the data transit agencies enter into OLGA. Therefore, it is imperative that transit agencies keep their ridership data current by entering their performance data in OLGA each month.

If an applicant chooses to conduct a route specific project through this initiative, the applicant will provide before and after ridership data on the specific project route(s) to the DRPT Program Manager.



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