



# Final Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program

## Call for Projects

### Program Website

[www.sandag.org/flexiblefleets](http://www.sandag.org/flexiblefleets)

### Program Contact

SANDAG Grants Distribution Team

[grantsdistribution@sandag.org](mailto:grantsdistribution@sandag.org)

### Eligible Applicants

- Federal, state, and local governments
- Tribal governments
- Transit districts
- Military institutions

### Eligible Services

- Carshare
- Micromobility
- Microtransit
- Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV)
- Rideshare (excluding Vanpool)
- Combination of 2 or more service modes

### Eligible Pilots

- New Pilots
- Enhanced Pilots

### Example Projects and Activities

- Direct operations of an eligible Flexible Fleets service
- Contracted Flexible Fleets services

### Performance Period

Service operations must begin within one year of the grant agreement Notice to Proceed and **must be completed by December 31, 2029**.

### Program Overview

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is soliciting applications for its Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program. The grant program will plan, deploy, and monitor Flexible Fleet pilots aimed at expanding shared mobility travel choices, enhancing transit connections, filling transit gaps, improving air quality, and advancing the goals of the Regional Plan.

- **Funding Source:** Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)
- **Amount of Funding Available:** \$4,500,000
- **Maximum Award (New Pilot):** \$1,000,000
- **Maximum Award (Enhanced Pilot):** \$500,000

### Matching Funds

Matching Funds are required. Applicants must provide 11.47% of the Total Project Cost in Matching Funds.

### Pilot Types

- **New Pilot:** A service that is not currently operating or has not operated in the past.
- **Enhanced Pilot:** Continuation and modification of a service that is currently operating or has operated in the past. Modifications to established/existing operations must improve the service and accommodate new growth through service area expansion, new service model(s), new project partner(s), and/or new technologies. Applications must select and demonstrate how one or more of the modification categories below will improve the service and meet new growth needs, such as demand and ridership.
  - Expansion to Geographic Limits (e.g., increasing the service area to serve additional residents and key destinations such as transit connections, job centers, healthcare, and other essential needs)
  - New operations service model(s) (e.g., introduce a new mode/service type, increasing operation hours, increasing fleet size),
  - New project partner(s) (e.g., agency, nonprofit, or institution that will improve the pilot)
  - New technologies (e.g., fare systems, telematics devices, software, routing algorithms)

### Anticipated Timeline

Activity	Date
Release of the Call for Projects	3/2/2026
Deadline to Protest Call for Projects contents	3/9/2026
Pre-Application Webinar	3/18/2026
Call for Projects Question Deadline (by 5 p.m.)	5/20/2026
Deadline to request application assistance	5/20/2026
Responses to all questions released in BidNet	5/22/2026
<b>Application Deadline (by 5 p.m.)</b>	<b>6/1/2026</b>
<b>Applicant Resolution Deadline</b>	<b>7/1/2026</b>
SANDAG Transportation Committee Meeting (proposed funding recommendations)	9/18/2026
SANDAG Board of Directors Meeting (proposed funding recommendations)	9/25/2026
Grant Agreements Executed/Notices to Proceed Issued	October/November 2026



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[sandag.org/LanguageAssistance](https://sandag.org/LanguageAssistance) | (619) 699-1900

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## 1. Glossary of Key Terms

**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 USC 12101 et seq.).

**Applicant** is an organization that is considering or has submitted an application in response to a Call for Projects (CFP).

**Application Deadline** is the date and time by which applications must be submitted in BidNet to be considered. Applications submitted after the Application Deadline will not be considered. The Application Deadline is located on the first page of this CFP.

**Average Qualitative Score** is the sum of all evaluator scores for an application divided by the number of evaluators. The score is added to the application's Quantitative scores to produce the Total Application Score.

**Build America Buy America (BABA)** is legislation that established a domestic content procurement preference for all federally funded infrastructure projects after May 14, 2022. The domestic content procurement preference requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in covered infrastructure projects are produced in the United States.

**California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)** is the state agency responsible for administering the STBG funding.

**California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)** is a quasi-executive state agency that regulates privately owned public utilities in California, including transportation companies. The CPUC regulates safety, licensing, and rates for private, for-hire transportation carriers, including passenger carriers (limousines, shuttles, buses) and Transportation Network Companies.

**Call for Projects (CFP)** is the document that SANDAG releases to solicit applications to receive grant funding. The CFP includes information on applicant and project eligibility, application submission requirements, the evaluation criteria, and the process SANDAG uses to select applications for funding.

**Carshare** is a mode of Flexible Fleet consisting of a variety of short-term car rental services (less than a day) that are reserved and managed through a smartphone application. Services can offer fixed stations with dedicated parking spaces or free-floating pickup and drop-off within a designated zone. Carshare services typically offer round-trip (the car must be returned to its original location) or one-way options (the car can be dropped off anywhere within a geofence).

**Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)** is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the departments and agencies of the Federal Government. An electronic version is available at <https://www.ecfr.gov/>.

**Commercial Driver's License (CDL)** is a license required to operate large or heavy vehicles like semi-trucks and buses. To obtain a CDL, you must meet age and residency requirements, pass written and skills tests, and meet medical qualifications.

**Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)** are non-profit organizations who might be service providers or advocacy organizations who work with the target populations in a specific community/neighborhood.

**Demand Responsive Service** is any non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling, including services provided by public entities, private nonprofit organizations, and private providers.

**Direct Cost** is an expense that can be readily and accurately assigned to a grant. It typically consists of salaries, consultant or contractor services, and other expenses that would not otherwise exist if the project were not in existence.

**Enhanced Pilot** means the continuation and modification of a service that is currently operating or has previously operated. Modifications to established or existing operations must improve the service and accommodate new growth through service area expansion, new service model(s), new project partner(s), and/or new technologies.

**Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)** is the principle that all employees and applicants have a fair, equitable chance at employment, promotion, and benefits without discrimination based on protected characteristics like race, gender, age, religion, or disability.

**Federal Audit Clearinghouse** is a federal website that SANDAG uses to review an Applicant's federal grant audits to assist with the pre-award risk assessment. The website features a searchable database of single audit submissions from 2016 through the current fiscal year. The website is available at <https://www.fac.gov/>.

**Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)** requires the federal Office of Management and Budget to maintain a single, searchable website that contains information on all Federal spending awards.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** is a USDOT division specializing in highway transportation. FHWA has authority over the STBG funds used for this grant program.

**Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)** is a USDOT division that works to prevent crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles like large trucks and buses. FMCSA creates and enforces safety regulations that commercial motor carriers must follow, and conducts compliance reviews, inspections, and investigations to monitor adherence.

**Federal Register** is the official journal of the federal government of the United States that contains government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices. It is published every weekday except on federal holidays. It is available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

**Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNICR)** is an Indirect Cost Rate applicable to a specified past period that a federal agency has approved for use. All federal agencies and pass-through entities must accept the rate. An agency's FNICR is typically included in its NICRA.

**Flexible Fleets** is an initiative that uses on-demand transportation services to move around the region. Riders can use these services to reach their destinations or to connect to high-speed transit. Flexible Fleets comprises a variety of on-demand shared mobility services, typically requested or reserved via a smartphone app or call center. The goal of this initiative is to provide affordable transportation options for all users while improving air quality and

advancing the goals of the Regional Plan. Flexible Fleet service modes include Micromobility, Neighborhood Electric Vehicle, Carshare, Rideshare, and Microtransit.

**Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program** is a new, one-time grant program being offered by SANDAG to pilot projects that implement Flexible Fleets.

**Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)** consists of a common set of accounting rules, requirements, and practices issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board that Grantees are required to follow. GAAP is located in the Financial Accounting Standards Board Accounting Standards Codification, which is available at <https://www.fasb.org/standards>.

**Grant Award** is financial assistance by a government entity to an eligible recipient to provide support or stimulation to accomplish a public purpose. The maximum Grant Award for the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program is outlined in this CFP. Grant Awards are formalized in grant agreements or other contracts that outline the terms, conditions, and requirements of the Grant Award. SANDAG Grant Awards are provided on a reimbursement basis.

**Grant Term** is the period of time during which expenses for project-related activities can be incurred to be eligible for reimbursement. It begins on the NTP date and extends through the grant agreement's expiration date, which is no later than December 31, 2029. Extensions to this date will not be provided. SANDAG will determine the grant agreement expiration date utilizing the project schedule provided by the Applicant.

**Grantee** is an organization that has been awarded funding through the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program and has entered into a grant agreement with SANDAG.

**Indirect Cost Allocation Plan (ICAP)** is the documentation prepared by an agency to substantiate its request to establish an Indirect Cost Rate.

**Indirect Cost** is an expense incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective or project and cannot be readily assigned to a specific grant, contract, or other activity. Indirect Costs typically include rent, insurance, copying expenses, fringe benefits, and other costs not directly charged to the grant project that the Applicant's general fund typically supports.

**Indirect Cost Rate** is the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of the Indirect Costs to a Direct Cost base.

**Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** are persons for whom English is not their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Individuals with LEP include those who report to the U.S. Census that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all.

**Low-Income Person** refers to an individual whose family income is at or below 200% of the poverty line as defined by the Office of Management and Budget based on the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau for a household of the size being evaluated.

**Low-Income Population** refers to any readily identifiable group of Low-Income Persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed SANDAG-funded program, policy, or activity.

**Match Percentage** is calculated by dividing the total Matching Funds by the sum of the Matching Funds and the Grant Award.

**Matching Funds** are funds other than the Grant Award that go towards the Total Project Cost. It is often represented as a percentage of the Total Project Cost.

**Micromobility** is Flexible Fleet mode consisting of small, low-speed vehicles such as e-scooters, e-bikes, and other electric vehicles to be used by a single person.

**Microtransit** is a mode of Flexible Fleet consisting of multi-passenger shuttles that can carry up to 15 passengers and provide rides within a defined service area.

**Minimum Total Application Score** is the Total Application Score value that an application must be equal to or greater than to be eligible to receive funding from this CFP.

**Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)** is a formal document that establishes an organization's indirect cost rate with a federal agency. To obtain a NICRA, an organization must submit an indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant federal agency for review and negotiation, a process that typically takes several months. All federal agencies and pass-through entities must accept a NICRA.

**Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV)** is a Flexible Fleet mode that uses low-speed electric vehicle shuttles for short trips (up to three miles). NEVs typically operate on fixed or on-demand routes, with the NEV shuttle available to be hailed via a smartphone application.

**New Pilot** is a Flexible Fleet project or service that is new to the region, is not currently operating, or has not operated in the past. Expansion of an Existing Project is not considered a New Service, but could be an Enhanced Pilot.

**Non-Scalable Project** is a project whose 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 the public, or (c) would score substantially differently in the competitive process with a reduced scope of work.

**Notice to Proceed (NTP)** is a written notice issued by SANDAG that allows the Grantee to begin working on the project and marks the beginning of the Grant Term.

**Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions List Search** is a federal website that SANDAG uses to determine whether an Applicant is eligible for federal funding. The website contains a searchable database of all individuals and organizations subject to federal trade sanctions. The website is available at <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>.

**Performance Measure** is the numeric value assigned to the Performance Metric to show the quantity or extent of the item being observed by the metric. For example, the number of participants who attend a project outreach meeting is a Performance Measure that can be used to demonstrate the Performance Metric for increased stakeholder engagement.

**Performance Metric** is the specific, quantifiable unit of measurement that will be used to determine a project's success in meeting the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program's goals and objectives. For example, a Performance Metric could be the number of Flexible Fleet trips completed over a specific period.

**Project Milestone and Completion Deadlines** are outlined in SANDAG Board Policy No. 035 and require Grantees to complete and implement projects quickly so the public can benefit from project deliverables as soon as possible. Failure to meet the deadlines following SANDAG's issuance of the NTP on the project may result in the revocation of all grant funds not already expended.

**Qualitative Criteria** are subjective criteria in which discretion is needed to provide a score. Often, Qualitative Criteria evaluate how well an Applicant responded to an application question or how well the proposed project will achieve a stated goal. These criteria are subjective, and scores are determined at the evaluator's discretion.

**Quantitative Criteria** are objective criteria for which a formula or conditional statement is used to provide a score. Often, Quantitative Criteria evaluate a project-related data point or metric against a range or scale and assign a point value based on its position within that range or scale. Other Quantitative Criteria assign a point value based on responses to a conditional statement, such as a yes/no question or the presence or absence of a condition.

**Regional Plan** refers to the SANDAG Regional Transportation Plan, a federal- and state-mandated planning document prepared by SANDAG that describes existing and projected transportation needs, conditions, and financing affecting all modes of transportation over a planning period of at least 20 years. The most recently adopted version, the 2025 Regional Plan, was approved in December 2025. More information on the Regional Plan is available here: <https://www.sandag.org/regional-plan>.

**Ridehailing** is an on-demand service that links passengers with available drivers, such as Uber, Lyft, and taxis.

**Rideshare** is a Flexible Fleet mode that includes carpool and pooled Ride-Hailing Services such as UberPOOL and Lyft Shared.

**San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)** is the primary public transportation agency serving central, south, and east San Diego County, operating an extensive network of Trolley light-rail lines and over 90 bus routes. MTS also licenses and monitors taxis, jitneys, charter, sightseeing, and non-emergency medical vehicles in multiple San Diego County cities.

**Scalable Project** is a project whose scope of work can be reduced, would score substantially the same under the CFP with the scaled-down scope of work as the originally proposed project, and will further the grant program goals and provide significant value to the public.

**Subapplicant** is an entity that would serve as a third-party contractor or consultant under an Applicant if the Applicant's proposed project is awarded funding.

**Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)** funds are federal gas tax dollars distributed by Caltrans to areas within the state for roads, transit, non-motorized, and other transportation needs. The program was formerly known as the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP). STBG funds are being used to fund the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program.

**System for Award Management** is a federal website that SANDAG uses to determine whether an Applicant is eligible to receive federal funding. The website contains a searchable database of all individuals and organizations that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving government contracts or funding. The database also contains information on SANDAG subawards under FFATA. The website is available at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

**Total Application Score** is the sum of an application's Average Qualitative Score and the application's Quantitative scores. The score determines the order in which projects are recommended to receive funding through this CFP.

**Total Project Cost** is calculated as the sum of the Grant Award and the Matching Funds.

**Transportation Committee (TC)** is one of six policy advisory committees at SANDAG that advises the Board of Directors on policy-level matters related to transportation, including the Regional Plan. The TC reviews and recommends to the Board the eligibility and evaluation criteria for the CFP and which Applicants should be awarded grant funding. The TC also receives quarterly status reports on each awarded grant and has the authority to grant time extensions for individual projects. More details on TC are available [here](#).

**Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** is a number assigned to an agency or organization when it registers in the System for Award Management. SANDAG requests each Applicant's UEI to review federal records and ensure the Applicant is not debarred, suspended, or subject to trade sanctions. SANDAG also uses the UEI number to review federal records regarding an Applicant when completing the pre-award risk assessment. More information on UEIs is available [here](#).

**United States Code (USC)** is the official codification of the general and permanent federal statutes of the United States. It contains 53 titles, which are organized into numbered sections. The USC does not include regulations issued by executive branch agencies, decisions of the Federal courts, treaties, or laws enacted by State or local governments. Regulations issued by executive branch agencies are available in the CFR. Proposed and recently adopted regulations may be found in the Federal Register.

**United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)** is one of the executive departments of the federal government, whose mission is to ensure the United States has the safest, most efficient, and modern transportation system in the world. The USDOT has 11 operating administrations, including the FHWA, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, among others.

## 2. List of Resources

Below is a list of resources referenced in this CFP, along with descriptions of how to use them.

Resource/Links	What to do?
<a href="#">2025 Regional Plan</a> <a href="#">Transportation Network: San Diego Region</a>	Refer to the Microtransit Zones in this document to inform project planning.
<a href="#">BidNet</a>	Access the CFP materials, submit and receive responses to questions, receive any updates to the CFP, and submit a completed application for consideration.
<a href="#">Caltrans Language Access Plan</a>	Review the document outlining .how to ensure meaningful access to transportation programs, services, and information for individuals with LEP. It provides

[CPUC Charter Party Carriers Webpage](#)

guidance on translation, interpretation, and public outreach to remove language as a barrier.

Review this webpage to learn more about permit requirements that may be applicable to a proposed Flexible Fleet service.

[Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#)

Review the Applicant's prior single audit submissions to the federal government to determine potential pre-award risk assessment topics that SANDAG may identify.

[Flexible Fleets Implementation Strategic Plan](#)

Review the document that provides a roadmap for planning and implementing Flexible Fleet programs in communities across the region. The Plan includes a description of Flexible Fleets services, a review of case studies, a summary of outreach to SANDAG's various CBOs, a "regional scan" of the County that identifies the suitability for Flexible Fleets services in various opportunity areas, and the Implementation Strategic Plan that identifies a path forward for deploying Flexible Fleets projects in the opportunity areas with the highest suitability.

Flexible Fleets Performance Metrics

Review the Performance Metrics that will be used to measure a project's success in meeting the Flexible Fleets goals. This resource is available on BidNet, along with the CFP materials.

[Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Mapping Tool](#)

Utilize the map to determine how points will be determined for several evaluation criteria. The map will also be used to submit information in the application. The map contains layers for the following:

- Transit Stops and a half-mile buffer area
- Military facilities
- Tribal lands
- Jurisdiction boundaries

[Flexible Fleets Webpage](#)

Learn about Flexible Fleets, SANDAG's on-call contracts for service providers, and other Flexible Fleet services in operation.

Sample Resolution

Use the Sample Resolution template to prepare the Applicant's required resolution or agency letter. The template includes the required components that must be included to comply with CFP requirements. This resource is available on BidNet, along with the CFP materials.

[SANDAG Board Policy No. 035](#)

Review the Board Policy governing SANDAG's competitive grant programs, which outlines the milestone and completion deadlines.

SANDAG Grant Programs ADA and Title VI Guide

Review the Guide that includes templates, tools, and instructions to assist Grantees in meeting their ADA and Title VI requirements. This resource is available on BidNet, along with the CFP materials.

[SANDAG Grant Programs Webpage](#)

Explore SANDAG's grant programs, review grant project progress reports, and access documents applicable across all grant programs, such as the Grant Program Protest Procedures and BidNet registration and navigation information.

[System for Award Management](#)

Review the Applicant and all Subapplicant profiles on this federal website to determine whether the Applicant or any Subapplicant is debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving government contracts or funding. The website also contains the Applicant's UEI number and additional information that SANDAG will review in the pre-award risk assessment.

[USDOT LEP Guidance](#)

Review information provided by the USDOT for compliance with federal LEP requirements.

## 3. Background

### 3.1. About SANDAG

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation, and research agency, comprising the 18 cities and the County of San Diego. SANDAG serves as the public forum for regional policy decisions about growth, transportation, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety, and binational collaboration.

SANDAG's vision is to pursue a brighter future for everyone living, working, or recreating in the San Diego region. To this end, SANDAG plans and implements projects that seek to use land more wisely, build a more efficient and accessible transportation system, protect the environment, improve public health, promote a strong regional economy, better manage our access to energy, incorporate accessibility into the planning process, address pressing needs on tribal lands, and support a vibrant international border.

SANDAG receives local, state, and federal funds to implement regional policies, programs, and projects that advance its vision. SANDAG passes through a portion of its funding through several [competitive grant programs](#). These grant programs provide local, state, and federal funding to local jurisdictions, nonprofits, and other partners to achieve regional goals. Grants awarded range from infrastructure projects and habitat management and monitoring efforts to specialized transportation services for senior and disabled populations. While each grant program maintains a particular focus, all work together to enhance our region's quality of life.

### 3.2. Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program

#### 3.2.1. Overview

Flexible Fleets, a key strategy in the Regional Plan, has emerged as a promising sustainable travel option. In efforts to implement the Regional Plan, SANDAG developed a [Flexible Fleets Implementation Strategic Plan](#) that identifies priority Flexible Fleet service areas and provides a detailed roadmap for deploying services to make the region more accessible.

In 2023, the SANDAG Board of Directors approved an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024 budget that authorized 5 million dollars in federal STBG funding to implement a Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program. This one-time funding is offered to support the implementation of Flexible Fleet strategies across the region.

### **3.2.2. Goal(s) and Objectives**

The Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program aims to plan, deploy, and monitor Flexible Fleet projects to expand shared mobility travel choices, enhance transit connections, fill transit gaps, and advance the goals of the Regional Plan. The Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program seeks to fund projects that can serve as models across the region and that the Applicant can continue to fund after the grant expires. Projects funded by this program must support the objectives outlined below, which are derived from the STBG funding requirements and the Flexible Fleets Implementation Strategy:

- Serve as model examples for Flexible Fleets in a variety of locations throughout the region
- Provide more mobility options and greater accessibility.
- Demonstrate financial sustainability through other funding sources besides the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program for a period of at least one year after the grant expires.

## **4. Eligibility**

### **4.1. Eligible Applicants, Subapplicants, Consultants, and Contractors**

#### **4.1.1. Eligible Applicants**

- Federal, state, and local government agencies
- Tribal governments
- Transit districts
- Military institutions

To be eligible to receive grant funding through this CFP, Applicants must not be debarred, suspended, or subject to trade restrictions with the United States government. SANDAG will verify through the System for Award Management and the Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions List Search that each Applicant is an eligible recipient.

#### **4.1.2. Competitive Procurement Requirements for Subapplicants, Consultants, and Contractors**

Any third-party contract for a non-public agency Subapplicant, consultant, or contractor for which an Applicant intends to seek reimbursement must be awarded competitively. Applicants are advised not to name any non-public agency Subapplicant, consultant, or contractor in the application unless the third-party contractor has been selected in compliance with competitive procurement requirements. SANDAG does not accept requests for sole source contracts based on a third-party contractor's role in preparing an application or an existing relationship that an applicant may have established without complying with competitive procurement requirements. See the grant agreement for additional details regarding third-party contracting requirements.

### 4.1.3. Single Audit Requirement

An Applicant that expends more than 1 million dollars in federal awards in a given fiscal year is required to have a single audit performed for that fiscal year in accordance with 2 CFR 200 unless the Applicant elects to have a program-specific audit. Applicants who meet this threshold must submit their most recent single audit with their application to SANDAG.

## 4.2. Eligible Projects

### 4.2.1. Eligible Modes and Services

Applicants may request funding for any of the following Flexible Fleets services. All services must be provided within San Diego County.

- Carshare
- Micromobility
- Microtransit
- Neighborhood Electric Vehicle
- Rideshare
- Combination of 2 or more service modes

Please note that vanpool services are not eligible under this program. SANDAG has a robust vanpool program that offers subsidies to eligible participants. More information is available at: <https://www.sandag.org/projects-and-programs/regional-initiatives/sustainable-transportation-services/vanpool>. Additionally, modes and services using automated vehicle technology are not currently eligible for funding under this grant program.

**All services must be completed, and all grant funding must be expended by December 31, 2029.**

All projects must have pre-launch and continuous community surveying and engagement. Applicants will outline their engagement strategy within the application narrative.

### 4.2.2. Pilot Types

Applications may request funding for New Pilots or Enhanced Pilots. Enhanced Pilots must demonstrate that USDOT funding has not previously been used for the pilot.

For Enhanced Pilots, Applicants must select and demonstrate in the application how one or more of the modification categories below will improve the service and meet new growth needs, such as demand and ridership.

- Expansion to Geographic Limits (e.g., increasing the service area to serve additional residents and key destinations such as transit connections, job centers, healthcare, and other essential needs).
- New operations service model(s) (e.g., introduce a new mode/service type, increasing operation hours, increasing fleet size),
- New project partner(s) (e.g., agency, nonprofit, or institution that will improve the pilot)
- New technologies (e.g., fare systems, telematics devices, software, routing algorithms)

## 4.3. Other Project Eligibility Requirements

### 4.3.1. Safety Requirements

All Applicants must ensure that drivers are required to clear a criminal history check and a driver records check before transporting members of the public. This includes staff, contracted, and volunteer drivers. Drivers must possess a valid driver's license appropriate for the vehicle driven. Drivers shall also be physically capable of safely driving the service vehicles. Vehicles that provide a Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program-funded service must be deemed safe by the Applicant before being operated.

### 4.3.2. For-Hire Vehicle Permits

Applicants who will provide services in the cities of Chula Vista, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, and Santee may be required to obtain a for-hire vehicle permit from MTS. More information is available on the MTS website at <https://www.sdmts.com/business-center/for-hire-vehicle-administration> or by contacting For-Hire Vehicle Administration at (619) 235-2643 or via email at [Leonardo.Fewell@sdmts.com](mailto:Leonardo.Fewell@sdmts.com). Applicants who will provide services in other cities must determine whether other permits, including those issued by the CPUC, are required to operate the proposed service(s).

### 4.3.3. Insurance Requirements

Non-public agency Applicants will be required to provide proof of insurance. The required insurance certificates and endorsements must comply with all requirements included in the grant agreement. SANDAG will not execute the grant agreement until the Grantee complies with the insurance requirements.

## 5. Funding

### 5.1. Available Funding

\$4.5 million is available through this CFP.

SANDAG reserves the right to partially fund projects and to fund less than the amount available in a given grant cycle. See the section entitled "Partial Awards".

### 5.2. Maximum Grant Awards

The maximum Grant Award for New Pilots is \$1,000,000. The maximum Grant Award for Enhanced Pilots is \$500,000.

### 5.3. Match Requirement

Matching Funds are required for all Applicants. Applicants must provide at least 11.47% of the Total Project Cost in Matching Funds to be eligible. Matching Funds must be expended during the grant term. Examples of possible Matching Funds include, but are not limited to:

- Federal\*, state, or local funding
- Staff time, including planning and project oversight

- Private donations
- Revenues from service contracts
- Net income generated from advertising and concessions
- Donations, volunteered services, or other in-kind contributions

**Applications that do not have sufficient Matching Funds are ineligible.** Applicants must provide adequate documentation of Matching Funds and the match source(s) in the application.

## 5.4. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

### 5.4.1. Federal Contract Cost Principles and Procedures

The Grantee and its third-party contractors are responsible for compliance with the federal contract cost principles and procedures outlined in 48 CFR Part 31, which will be utilized to determine the allowability of individual project cost items.

### 5.4.2. Eligible Expenses

Eligible project expenses are listed below. Applicants are encouraged to contact SANDAG by the CFP Question Deadline if they have questions about a proposed project expense's eligibility under this program.

- Direct operations of an eligible Flexible Fleets service
- Contracted Flexible Fleets services

If an Applicant charges a fare for their service, trips connecting to and from transit stops and stations must remain free to the rider for the duration of the SANDAG-funded program.

Eligible expenses must be directly related to executing the project scope of work, including Direct and Indirect Costs. SANDAG will only reimburse costs incurred for the project after the NTP has been issued and up to the amount awarded in the grant agreement. In the event of project cost overruns, SANDAG will not pay more than the original amount specified in the grant agreement.

#### 5.4.2.1. Travel Expenses

Transportation and subsistence costs will be reimbursed at the actual costs incurred by the Grantee and its third-party contractors, as supported by receipts, and shall not exceed the maximum amounts authorized for state employees, which are available at <https://www.calhr.ca.gov/employees/Pages/travel-reimbursements.aspx>. All costs, including travel, shall be invoiced to SANDAG without markup for profit.

### 5.4.3. Ineligible Activities and Expenses

Ineligible projects and activities are those that do not align with the program goals and objectives or are listed as unallowable in 2 CFR 200.

## 5.5. Indirect Costs

Grant funds may be used toward Indirect Costs if they are related to the project scope of work. Applicants requesting reimbursement for Indirect Costs must disclose this in their application.

Applicants must use one of the following options to receive reimbursement for Indirect Costs:

- If the Applicant has a FNICR recognized by the federal government, that rate must be used, and the NICRA must be submitted to SANDAG.
- Elect the de minimis rate under 2 CFR 200 if the Applicant has never received a FNICR. The current de minimis rate is 15%. Applicants with an ICAP approved by their elected body (e.g., City Council or Board of Supervisors), management, another individual within the agency, or any other non-federally approved agency must choose to elect the de minimis rate when charging Indirect Costs.

## 6. Other Program Requirements

### 6.1. Federal Provisions

The Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program is funded with federal STBG monies. The Grantee must abide by the FHWA Provisions included in the grant agreement.

#### 6.1.1. Drug and Alcohol Testing

Grantees must comply with the FMCSA rule for all employees who hold CDLs (49 CFR 382). This part applies if the CDL holder operates a “commercial motor vehicle,” which means a motor vehicle having a gross combination weight rating or gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds or which is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver (49 CFR 382.103[a][1], 49 CFR 382.107).

#### 6.1.2. Buy America

Grantees must comply with BABA, which governs steel, iron, manufactured products, and construction materials permanently incorporated into federal aid projects. BABA includes substantive changes to the existing Buy America provisions. Compliance with the new requirements is required unless the Grantee can qualify for a waiver or exemption. Absent a waiver or exemption, the Grantee shall not approve the use of any iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials in grant-funded projects unless such materials have been produced in the United States, including vehicles. Additional details are available in the grant agreement.

### 6.2. Non-Discrimination

SANDAG includes non-discrimination provisions in its grant agreements with all Grantees. Among other provisions in the SANDAG grant agreement, Grantees must include non-discrimination and compliance provisions in all contracts with third-party entities.

SANDAG requires all SANDAG Grantees to comply with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act,

and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, as amended, and all other applicable discrimination laws.

### 6.3. Title VI

All Grantees are required to comply and ensure compliance by all Subapplicants and third-party contractors with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. Applicants awarded Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program funds are required to develop a Title VI Program accepted by SANDAG and approved by their governing bodies, as applicable, before grant execution. All Grantees must also update their Title VI Program every three years.

All Grantees must establish and implement procedures to ensure the timely resolution of Title VI complaints and sufficiently document steps taken to investigate and address Title VI complaints.

The following components are required to be included in a Grantee's Title VI Program:

- Title VI Notice to the Public - Grantees are required to notify the public of their protection against discrimination under Title VI. The Title VI Notice to the Public must include: (1) a statement that the Grantee operates its programs without regard to race, color, or national origin; (2) a description of the procedures that members of the public should follow to request information on the Grantee's Title VI obligations; and (3) a description of the procedures that members of the public should follow to file a Title VI discrimination complaint against the Grantee.
- Title VI Notice to the Public Availability - Per federal requirements, Grantees must post or make available their Title VI Notice to the Public, at a minimum, in the following areas: the Grantee's website, any public area of the Grantee's office, including the reception desk and meeting rooms, and transit vehicles and/or stations or stops. In its Title VI Program, the Grantee must identify the locations where the agency has posted its Title VI Notice to the Public.
- Complaint Form and Procedures - Grantees are required to have complaint procedures and a form through which the public may file a Title VI discrimination complaint. In its Title VI Programs, the Grantee must identify how its agency makes the complaint form and procedures available to the public, including for non-English or LEP speakers.
- Record and Report Transit-Related Title VI Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits - Grantees must include a record of any complaints or lawsuits alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin.
- Public Participation Plan - Grantees are required to have a public participation plan that describes their strategies to market their program, encourage public participation, and perform community outreach. Grantee's strategies should be tailored to the unique population that they serve. .
- Meaningful Access for LEP Persons – English proficiency can be related to national origin. Grantees are required to develop a Language Assistance Plan. The SANDAG Grant Programs ADA and Title VI Guide provides a step-by-step tutorial on how to access and report on census data to assist Grantees in successfully completing an analysis to support development of a Language Assistance Plan.
- Approval - Grantees are required to submit documentation demonstrating formal approval of their Title VI Program.

## 6.4. Limited English Proficient Populations

Grantees are responsible for ensuring meaningful access to their transportation program by LEP persons pursuant to Title VI. More information is available in the USDOT LEP Guidance and in the Caltrans Language Access Plan.

## 6.5. ADA Compliance

Grantees are required to comply with requirements under the ADA. Grantees must inform SANDAG of any complaints alleging discrimination based on disability by the Grantee or a third-party contractor. SANDAG [Board Policy No. 009](#) outlines procedures for tracking and resolving complaints alleging discrimination. The SANDAG Compliance Officer is responsible for tracking ADA complaints and working with Grantees to resolve ADA-related complaints promptly.

SANDAG prohibits Grantees from using vehicles that are deemed unsafe to operate. This prohibition extends to accessible equipment, such as ramps and lifts, meaning it must be operable and safe before a vehicle can transport individuals with disabilities under a grant-funded project.

Prior to receiving the NTP, SANDAG will review Grantee policies and procedures to verify ADA compliance regarding service animals, respirators or portable oxygen supplies, and accessible information. SANDAG may request response time or other data or information on Grantee policies or procedures to confirm that an equivalent level of service is being provided. Further, SANDAG will confirm that all Grantees have ADA complaint procedures. SANDAG will also confirm that Grantees have a complaint form readily accessible to service beneficiaries so that those beneficiaries can submit a complaint on the grounds of ADA and/or Title VI. During desk reviews and/or site visits, SANDAG will verify that Grantees have maintained a log of ADA or Title VI-related complaints, investigations, and lawsuits.

## 6.6. Equal Employment Opportunity

The EEO provision requires that SANDAG and all Grantees provide equal employment to all people, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other class of persons protected by applicable state or federal law. SANDAG requires that its Grantees certify their compliance with the EEO federal requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 USC 2000e and 49 USC 5332) and any implementing requirements the federal agencies or SANDAG may issue.

## 6.7. SANDAG Board Policy No. 035

[SANDAG Board Policy No. 035](#), "Competitive Grant Program Procedures," applies to all grant programs administered through SANDAG. Applicants should be aware of the following requirements.

### 6.7.1. Applicant Resolution or Agency Letter

Within 30 days following the grant application deadline, Applicants must submit a resolution from their authorized governing body that:

- Commits to providing the minimum Matching Funds percentage outlined in the CFP;
- and

- Authorizes the Applicant's staff to accept the grant funding and execute a grant agreement if an award is made by SANDAG.

If an Applicant does not have a governing body, it must submit a letter on Applicant letterhead signed by the agency head affirming the points above.

**If an Applicant fails to provide a resolution or agency letter that meets the above requirements, that application will be considered nonresponsive and will no longer be considered in the competitive process.**

Applicants are encouraged to use the language in the sample resolution and sample agency letter templates included with the CFP materials. The resolution or agency letter can be submitted to SANDAG in either of the following ways:

- If the Applicant wishes to submit its Board Policy No. 035 resolution or agency letter with its application by the Application Submission deadline, it may include its resolution in BidNet.
- If the Applicant does not submit its Board Policy No. 035 resolution or agency letter by the Application Deadline, the resolution or agency letter must be emailed to [grantsdistribution@sandag.org](mailto:grantsdistribution@sandag.org) by the date listed in the Timeline.

### 6.7.2. Grant Agreement Execution

After the Board approves the funding recommendations, SANDAG will present a grant agreement to the awarded Applicant. An authorized representative of the awarded Applicant must sign the grant agreement within 45 days from the date SANDAG presents the grant agreement to the awarded Applicant. Failure to meet this requirement may result in the revocation of the Grant Award. Applicants are encouraged to review the sample grant agreement included with this CFP to ensure compliance with this provision.

### 6.7.3. Project Start Deadline

When signing a grant agreement, Grantees must agree to the project deliverables and schedule in the agreement. In addition, a Grantee's project schedule in its application and grant agreement must adhere to the deadline listed below. Failure to meet the Project Start Deadline following SANDAG's issuance of the NTP on the project may result in the revocation of all grant funds not already expended.

- **Operations Projects.**
  - Any operations project requiring a services contract must commence within eighteen months following SANDAG's issuance of the NTP on the project.
  - If no services contract is necessary, the project must commence within one year of SANDAG's issuance of the NTP on the project.

## 6.8. Performance Measures

SANDAG has identified several Performance Metrics that will be used to measure a project's success in meeting the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program goals and objectives. The Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Performance Metrics are provided as an attachment to this CFP and are available in BidNet.

All Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Grantees are encouraged to meet the Performance Measures, which will be included in the grant agreement. The Grantee must report on its progress toward meeting the Performance Measures in its quarterly progress report.

## 6.9. Project Implementation and Oversight Requirements

### 6.9.1. Project Communication

#### 6.9.1.1. Project Manager Continuity

The Grantee must provide SANDAG with the project manager's contact information and keep it up to date. SANDAG should be notified promptly in case of a change to the Grantee's project manager.

#### 6.9.1.2. Media and Community Outreach

Grantees must notify SANDAG of events or promotions related to the grant-funded project, including service launches, groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, community workshops, media coverage, and community outreach. For these activities, the Grantee must notify SANDAG and, as applicable, provide before-and-after photos. SANDAG staff may attend any meetings as appropriate.

Grantees are encouraged to use social media to inform the public of project accomplishments and performance. When using social media to post information about grant-funded projects, Grantees should follow the SANDAG grant communications guidelines, available from the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Manager.

#### 6.9.1.3. Outreach Materials

Outreach materials include, but are not limited to, fliers, posters, web updates, and newsletters used to inform the public about the grant-funded project. Outreach materials geared toward the target population that communicate vital information such as eligibility requirements, project enrollment information, or ways to provide feedback are vital documents and must be provided in English and any other languages identified in the Grantee's Title VI Program. All project outreach materials should include SANDAG's logo and may include the Grantee's logo.

### 6.9.2. Quarterly Progress Reports

Grantees must complete and submit quarterly progress reports that illustrate the Grantee's efforts to make timely progress on their project, including meeting the Performance Measures. SANDAG will provide a standard progress report template that the Grantee must use. Quarterly reports will be due on the last day of the month following the quarter's close. SANDAG will summarize the information in the Grantee's progress report, which will be provided to the TC at its next meeting. The reporting schedule is included in the table below.

Quarter	Performance Period	Report Due Date	TC Meeting Date
1	7/1 – 9/30	10/31	December
2	10/1 – 12/31	1/31	March
3	1/1 – 3/31	4/30	June
4	4/1 – 6/30	7/31	September

SANDAG will monitor the Grantee's progress and performance against the scope of work and schedule in the grant agreement. If SANDAG believes the Grantee is not making timely progress or is not adhering to the terms of the grant agreement, this information will be reported to the TC. SANDAG will notify the Grantee if it believes the Grantee's performance warrants notification of TC. Poor performance may be grounds for termination of the grant agreement and revocation of the grant, as determined by TC.

### **6.9.3. Financial Management**

All Grantees must establish and maintain an accounting system and records that properly accumulate and segregate incurred costs and Matching Funds by line item for the grant. This accounting system may be a separate set of accounts or separate accounts within an established accounting system, and must conform to GAAP, enable the determination of incurred costs at interim points of completion, and support reimbursement payment vouchers or invoices. Furthermore, the Grantee's financial management system must ensure effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

Grantees must establish and maintain procedures for determining the allowability of costs in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the terms of the grant agreement. Grantees must then adhere to these procedures over the Grant Term.

Grantees must maintain all checks, payrolls, invoices, contracts, vouchers, orders, or other accounting documents related to the project so that they may be clearly identified, readily accessible, and available to SANDAG upon request.

### **6.9.4. Invoices**

Grant funding is by reimbursement only. Funds will not be disbursed until SANDAG and the Grantee have fully executed a grant agreement, and the NTP has been issued.

To be reimbursed for project expenses, Grantees must submit an invoice packet consisting of an invoice coversheet, expense summary, and receipts or other documentation demonstrating proof of incurred expenses. Grantees must use the invoice packet provided by SANDAG. Invoices submitted without a corresponding progress report will not be processed. Any third-party consultant or contractor expenses must be accompanied by proof of competitive procurement or a signed sole source justification from SANDAG to be eligible for reimbursement.

To qualify for reimbursement, the following requirements must be met:

- Staff costs must be submitted with payroll documentation. Personally identifiable information (such as social security numbers, home addresses, etc.) must not be provided to SANDAG.
- Third-party vendor (consultant or contractor) invoices must be submitted with:
  - Proof of payment, such as a copy of a check provided to the vendor or a printout for the Grantee's financial system showing the funds were dispersed.
  - The vendor's invoice and backup documentation (schedule of values, receipts for expenses)
- Clearly identify all grant-related expenses that include non-related costs. Grantees can highlight, circle, or use a separate document/spreadsheet to differentiate the grant-related costs from other costs unrelated to the grant.

- All receipts and invoices must be detailed, dated, directly related to the project scope of work, and incurred after the NTP date and before the grant expiration date.

SANDAG will make payments for undisputed, eligible invoices within 30 days upon receipt of the Grantee's complete invoice packet, deliverables, and confirmation by the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Manager that the Grantee is in compliance with the requirements in the grant agreement. SANDAG shall retain 10 percent of the amounts invoiced until the completion of the project.

#### **6.9.5. Matching Funds**

The Grantee must provide a cumulative match over the grant period such that the total Matching Funds amount provided at the end of the grant period is equal to or greater than the Match Percentage required under the grant agreement. Grantees may forfeit the Grant Award and be responsible for the repayment of grant funds to SANDAG if the cumulative Match Percentage falls below the required percentage or if Grantees fail to provide sufficient documentation of Matching Funds.

#### **6.9.6. Final Progress Report, Invoice, and Project Closeout**

Within 90 calendar days of Grantee determining the project is complete, or no later than December 31, 2029, a final progress report and invoice will be submitted to SANDAG. SANDAG will provide the final progress report template that the Grantee must use. The final progress report should detail all completed project activities, challenges, and successes, and explain how the project is expected to continue supporting the goals of the Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program. The report will also include the Performance Measures listed in the grant agreement and document the Grantee's ability to achieve them. The Grantee should provide any remaining deliverables listed in the scope of work that were not previously provided with the final progress report. The final progress report should accompany the final invoice and include all remaining project expenses.

Upon receipt of a final progress report, invoice, and deliverables, SANDAG will verify that the full scope of work in the grant agreement was completed and that the Performance Measures were met. Once SANDAG verifies that the project is complete and can be closed out, the Grantee will be asked to submit an invoice for the retention amounts withheld. The project will be closed after SANDAG pays the Grantee's retention invoice.

### **6.10. Public Record and Record Retention Policy**

All applications submitted in response to this CFP become the property of SANDAG and are considered a public record. As such, applications and other project-related documentation may be subject to public review per [SANDAG Board Policy No. 015: Records Management](#). Grantees must retain project-related documents for at least three years after receipt of final payment from SANDAG. These documents must be made available to SANDAG upon request.

## 7. Application and Submittal Process

### 7.1. Application Materials

Application materials are available online at <https://www.bidnetdirect.com/sandag/sandag-grants>.

Applicants must submit their completed application, including all required signatures, by the Application Deadline. An incomplete application may be considered nonresponsive. For an application to be considered complete, it must include all the materials described in the application and be submitted before the Application Deadline.

SANDAG reserves the right to cancel or revise this CFP at any time, for any or no reason, in part or in its entirety. If SANDAG revises or cancels the CFP before the Application Deadline, Applicants who have downloaded the CFP materials in BidNet will be notified by email.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review this CFP and Application materials as early as possible. The deadline to protest the CFP or Application materials is listed in the Timeline. Protests submitted after this deadline will be rejected.

### 7.2. Applicant Webinar, Questions, and Application Assistance

#### 7.2.1. Pre-Application Webinar

SANDAG will host a pre-application webinar for all prospective Applicants to provide an overview of this CFP and the application process, and to address any questions. See the Timeline for the date and time of the webinar. SANDAG staff will also provide information and address questions on the eligibility, approval, contracting, and specific requirements of this grant program. This workshop will be held virtually. SANDAG will post the virtual meeting link and other details on BidNet.

#### 7.2.2. CFP Questions

Prospective Applicants must submit questions through BidNet, which is available at <https://www.bidnetdirect.com/sandag/sandag-grants>. Questions submitted after the Question Deadline or outside of BidNet will not be answered. See the Timeline for the deadline to submit questions.

#### 7.2.3. Application Assistance

Prospective Applicants may request a meeting with the SANDAG Grants staff to obtain assistance with an application, including a discussion of a potential project or guidance on using BidNet. Requests should be submitted to [grantsdistribution@sandag.org](mailto:grantsdistribution@sandag.org). See the Timeline for the deadline to request a meeting. Requests submitted after the Deadline will not be accommodated.

### 7.3. Submittal Process

Applicants shall submit application documents via BidNet, available at <https://www.bidnetdirect.com/sandag/sandag-grants>. Applications submitted by mail, facsimile, or email in lieu of electronic copies uploaded to BidNet will not be considered. Any

application that is missing pages or cannot be opened for any reason may be considered nonresponsive.

Applicants are responsible for fully uploading their entire application before the Application Deadline. It is the Applicant's sole responsibility to contact BidNet to resolve any technical issues related to electronic submittal, including, but not limited to, registering as a vendor, updating password, updating profiles, uploading/downloading documents, and submitting an electronic offer, before the submission deadline. BidNet's Vendor Support team is available Monday-Friday from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time at (800) 835-4603 or [e-procurementsupport@bidnet.com](mailto:procurementsupport@bidnet.com).

## 8. Application Evaluation Process and Awards

This CFP does not commit SANDAG to award a contract, defray any costs incurred in preparing an application pursuant to this CFP, or procure or contract for work. SANDAG may reject applications without providing the reason(s) underlying the rejection. Failure by SANDAG to award funding to an Applicant will not result in a cause of action against SANDAG.

### 8.1. Responsiveness and Eligibility Review

#### 8.1.1. Responsiveness Review

SANDAG Grants staff will review submitted applications to ensure they are responsive to the requirements outlined in this CFP. Below is a list of Application materials that, if not submitted before the Application Deadline, will render the Application nonresponsive. These items are not permitted after the Application Deadline, as doing so would compromise the integrity of the competitive selection process.

- Application
- Scope, Schedule, and Budget

SANDAG Grants staff will notify an Applicant in writing if their application is deemed nonresponsive. Applicants may protest a nonresponsive determination pursuant to the protest procedures (see the section entitled "Protest Procedures"). A nonresponsive application will not continue in the competitive selection process unless a protest is filed and substantiated.

#### 8.1.2. Eligibility Review

Following the application submittal period and concurrently with the responsiveness review, SANDAG staff will conduct an eligibility review of all Applicants and projects against the eligibility requirements set forth in this CFP. During the eligibility screening process, SANDAG reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification from an Applicant, but is not required to do so. Staff may also seek input from a policy advisory committee to determine eligibility. Applications deemed eligible will proceed to the competitive selection process.

Any Applicant deemed ineligible or whose project has been deemed ineligible during the eligibility review will be notified in writing when the determination is made. Applicants may protest the eligibility determination pursuant to the protest procedures (see the section

entitled “Protest Procedures”). Unless a protest is filed and substantiated, an ineligible application will not continue in the competitive selection process.

### **8.1.3. Notice to Cure Application Deficiencies**

During the responsiveness and eligibility review phase, SANDAG staff also verify that eligible and responsive applications are consistent with the Call for Project instructions and that the submitted data and information are accurate. SANDAG may provide an Applicant with identified deficiencies an opportunity to correct or cure their applications if those corrections do not impact the competitive selection process. SANDAG staff, in their sole discretion, will determine whether an application can be cured without impacting the competitive selection process.

If staff identifies application deficiencies that an Applicant may cure without affecting the competitive process, SANDAG staff will send the Applicant a written notice to cure the Application deficiencies. This notice identifies the Application deficiencies, outlines the required corrections, and sets a deadline for the Applicant to correct them.

### **8.1.4. Pre-Award Risk Assessment**

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(c), SANDAG staff will perform a pre-award risk assessment of all eligible and responsive Applications. The risk assessment examines an Applicant’s fiscal and operational capabilities to assess the Applicant’s risk of fraud and noncompliance with a federal Grant Award to determine the appropriate monitoring.

A pre-award risk assessment may include a review of the Applicant’s financial statements, audit findings, and past performance in managing previous Grant Awards. To help SANDAG staff perform a pre-award risk assessment, Applicants are required to complete an Applicant Risk Assessment Questionnaire, which is included in the Application. Risk factors may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Prior financial and administrative performance
- Reliability of the Applicant’s accounting system
- Applicant’s resource capacity, including the competency of program, fiscal, and administrative staff
- Inherent program risk
- Results of prior audits, including a Single Audit, if applicable, and any repeat audit findings
- Substantial changes in the Applicant’s personnel or systems

SANDAG staff gathers information for the Applicant’s risk assessment by reviewing submitted application materials, reviewing public information on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse and the System for Award Management as applicable, and contacting the Applicant for any additional information needed. Based on this information, SANDAG staff then categorize the Applicant as high, medium, or low risk. The results of the pre-award risk assessment may inform the level of monitoring SANDAG conducts of the awarded Applicant and could be considered by the Board with the funding recommendations.

## **8.2. Scoring and Awarding of Funds**

Responsive and eligible Applications will be scored using the Qualitative and Quantitative Criteria approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors and included in this CFP.

### **8.2.1. Qualitative Scoring**

An evaluation panel will provide the Qualitative criteria scores for eligible applications. The evaluation panel will typically consist of at least three but no more than five public members who are familiar with the San Diego region and the grant program goals and objectives.

To avoid conflicts of interest, all evaluation panel members will be screened to ensure they do not have any affiliation with any of the Applicants or proposed projects. Individuals who work for a private company that could potentially receive a future contract from a Flexible Fleets Pilot Grant Program Applicant, due to the project being selected for funding, will not be permitted to serve as evaluators.

### **8.2.2. Quantitative Scoring**

SANDAG Grants and Data Science staff will provide the Quantitative Criteria scores for each project. Points associated with Quantitative Criteria undergo a quality assurance/quality control review to ensure that the data used in the Quantitative scoring process is accurate and points are awarded appropriately.

### **8.2.3. Calculation of Total Application Scores**

An application's Average Qualitative Score will be calculated by summing all evaluator scores for that application and dividing by the number of evaluators. The application's Average Qualitative Score will then be added to the Quantitative scores, producing the Total Application Score.

### **8.2.4. Tiebreakers**

If two or more projects receive the same Total Application Score, the following methodology, in descending order, will be used as the tiebreaker:

- Highest score on Criteria #5 Feasibility & Performance
- Highest score on Criteria #2 Connectivity
- Highest score on Criteria #1 Financial Sustainability

### **8.2.5. Minimum Total Application Score**

To ensure grant funds support quality projects, a project must receive a Total Application Score of at least 60 points to be eligible for funding.

### **8.2.6. Funding Recommendations**

Following the scoring process outlined above, applications will be placed in descending Total Application Score order (from the highest to lowest). Projects will be recommended to receive funding based on this order and the maximum Grant Award outlined in this CFP. As previously stated, partial awards may be recommended (see the section entitled "Partial Awards").

SANDAG will recommend a list of projects to the Board of Directors that are financially constrained by the available funding.

## **8.2.7. Partial Awards**

Given the competitive nature of the grant program and the amount of funds available through this CFP, Applicants may receive partial awards. Additionally, SANDAG may choose to roll over any remaining funds not awarded through this CFP to a future CFP. SANDAG handles partial awards differently depending on a project's scalability. SANDAG, at its sole discretion, will determine whether a project is Scalable or Non-Scalable.

### **8.2.7.1. Scalable Projects**

Applicants whose projects are recommended for partial award and are Scalable will be required to work with SANDAG staff before grant agreement execution to alter the scope of work, budget, and schedule submitted as part of the application to reflect a reduced scope of work.

### **8.2.7.2. Non-Scalable Projects**

Applicants whose projects are recommended for partial funding and cannot be scaled will be asked whether they would like to accept the partial funding award, subject to the condition that the entire project, as proposed in the scope of work included in the application, must be completed. Applicants will be required to contribute additional Matching Funds than listed in their application to complete the project scope of work.

If an Applicant cannot provide the necessary Matching Funds and declines the partial funding award, the award will be offered in accordance with the process described in the section entitled "Application Evaluation Process." If no Applicant accepts the funding, the funding may be rolled over to future funding cycles.

## **8.2.8. Notice of Intent to Award**

Once the funding recommendations have been finalized, staff will email all Applicants a Notice of Intent to Award. The Notice will include detailed scores for each Application and the funding recommendations to be presented to the policy advisory committee(s) and the Board of Directors. Applicants may protest the funding recommendations pursuant to the protest procedures (see the section entitled "Protest Procedures"). See the Timeline for the anticipated date of issuance of the Notice of Intent to Award.

## **8.2.9. Protest Procedures**

SANDAG grant program protest procedures are available on the SANDAG website at <https://www.sandag.org/funding/grant-programs>.

## **8.2.10. Approval of the Funding Recommendations**

The funding recommendations will be presented to the relevant policy advisory committee for recommendation to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will then be asked to approve the proposed funding recommendations.

## 8.2.11. Application Debriefs

Following the Board of Directors' award of grant funds, SANDAG can provide Applicants with a debrief on the strengths and weaknesses of their application. SANDAG can also provide copies of a grant application to any requester under the California Public Records Act.

## 9. Grant Agreement Execution

If awarded funds, an Applicant will enter into a grant agreement with SANDAG for the approved project scope of services and become a Grantee.

A sample grant agreement is included with the CFP. Applicants are encouraged to review the sample grant agreement within their organization before applying so they are fully aware of the requirements they must comply with during the Grant Term. Aside from any potential errors or omissions, the terms of the grant agreement will be substantially the same as those in the sample grant agreement and are non-negotiable.

### 9.1. Insurance Certificates

Following the Board of Directors' grant awards, each non-public agency Grantee will receive an email from myCOI, the SANDAG insurance tracking system. The Grantee shall follow the instructions contained in the email and complete the online registration. Upon completion of registration, myCOI will request proof of insurance directly from the Grantee's insurance agents. SANDAG will not provide the grant agreement to the Grantee to sign until the Grantee is registered with myCOI, compliant certificates of insurance and endorsements have been received, and SANDAG has deemed the Grantee compliant with the insurance requirements.

### 9.2. Title VI Program

Grantees are required to develop a Title VI Program and submit it to SANDAG for review. Once SANDAG has accepted a Grantee's Title VI Program, the grant agreement signature stage can begin.

### 9.3. Grant Agreement Signature

SANDAG will prepare the grant agreement utilizing the sample provided with the CFP. Once the draft has been approved by SANDAG staff for signature, it will be sent electronically to the person listed in the grant application. Failure by the Grantee to sign and return the grant agreement within 45 days of receiving it from SANDAG may result in the revocation of the Grant Award. See the section entitled "SANDAG Board Policy No. 035."

### 9.4. Notice to Proceed and Grant Term

Grantees cannot begin work on their grant-funded project until they receive a written NTP from SANDAG. The NTP specifies the date on which the Grantee may begin work on the project and marks the beginning of the Grant Term. Any work performed before the NTP is not eligible for reimbursement.

**All services must be completed, and all grant funding must be expended by December 31, 2029.**

## 9.5. Federal Subaward Report

Consistent with FFATA, SANDAG will report information on each grant subaward over \$30,000 to the System for Award Management by the end of the month in which the grant agreements have been executed.

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