

METRO RTO SMALL GRANTS GUIDE

Last update: December 26, 2023

This guidance is specific to the Regional Travel Options (RTO) Small Grants. For guidance related to all other types of RTO grants, please see the RTO Grant Application Handbook on the RTO website:

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-partners/grants-and-resources/regional-travel-options-program>

The RTO Small Grants Track is comprised of small awards to fund specific, one-time purchases of **materials and services only** to support events, education, and outreach activities. All awards are reimbursement based.

The Small Grants Track includes two categories of funding with slightly different priorities:

[Apply for an RTO
Small Grant](#)

*RTO Small Grants are
accepted on a rolling basis*

RTO Mini-Grants: open to all applicants eligible for RTO funding (up to \$5,000 per application). Approximately \$57,500 is available each fiscal year (July-June); and the application will close when all funds have been awarded – reopening each July.

- The RTO Program’s funding priority for RTO Mini-Grants is for materials & services that support **transportation-focused events**, education & outreach activities. For non-transportation-specific events, we prioritize local, community-based, and culturally specific events that incorporate travel options outreach and engagement to their attendees.

SRTS Micro-Grants: open to individual schools or nonprofit school PTOs (up to \$500 per application). 25 SRTS Micro-Grants are available each fiscal year/school year (July-June); and the application will close when all 25 have been awarded – reopening each July.

- All proposed activities will be reviewed by Metro staff for eligibility, but we encourage activities that prioritize:
 - Supporting kids to walk and bike regularly to school through a walking school bus or bike bus - an organized group of students who walk or bike to school together with adult supervision.
 - Traffic safety activities that ensure kids walking and rolling to school are safe - which could include activities like crossing guards or park & walk programs to encourage parents to park in a designated location and walk to school.
 - Activities that aim to reduce carbon emissions which could include no-idling campaigns or events that improve student access to walking or rolling.

Application process: Applications for Small Grants are accepted through an [online form](#) and are awarded on a rolling basis. Applicants may submit more than one application within the Small Grants Track; however, applicants are advised to a limit of one application per fiscal year per category. Small Grants applications are scored in the order received until all funds for the fiscal year are awarded, after which the application will close. Applications can only include funding for activities that will occur within the fiscal year the funds are awarded (for example, if funding is awarded in fiscal year 2024, activity must be completed by June 30, 2024). Funding cannot go toward activity that occurred prior to the application date. Finally, the proposed activity should occur no less than 15 business days after the submission date to allow adequate time for Metro staff to review the application.

Final Report & Invoice: To receive reimbursement for your Small Grant, you must submit a final report and invoice. Some tips for submitting your final report and invoice:

- All activities should be reported on in the final report, with all receipts attached as a single PDF. Only one report & invoice should be submitted for the entire Small Grant.
 - If your Small Grant extends between Metro’s fiscal years (July-June), you may be asked to submit an interim report and invoice to reflect expenses occurred within the previous fiscal year.
- All invoices should be labeled with a number, which can be the number created within your accounting system or some other unique identifier that Metro can use to track your payment.
- All recipients must submit a W9 to Metro, either with their original application or attached to their final report. If you have already received funding from Metro, we should already have your W9 on file.
- Direct deposit forms (provided to applicants when their Small Grant is approved) can also be uploaded to the final report – otherwise, checks will be sent to the address on your W9.
- All incentive tracking sheets (provided to applicants when their Small Grant is approved) must be uploaded to the final report, and payment may be delayed if all incentives have not been distributed.



Small Grants Eligibility: Common eligible uses of Small Grants funds include materials and services to support one-time events or initiatives and may include:

- **Vendor-provided services such as bike tune-ups at events**
 - The documentation of payment for services, such as bike tune-ups at an outreach event, must include the standard fee/rate offered for the service by the vendor, and the hours/staff position who provided the services for the event/activity on the corresponding invoice submitted for reimbursement. If you have any questions about necessary documentation for services, please reach out to RTO staff to clarify before the event.
- **Outreach materials or temporary signage to support an event**
 - If you need support on translation of materials, funded partners can use Metro’s RTO & SRTS Translation Portal to submit translation requests in up to 5 languages: <https://linguistlink.net/rto-srts.html>
- **Eligible snacks or refreshments**
 - Examples of **eligible** food items include:
 - Snacks at a community engagement event like fruit, granola bars, etc.
 - Treats for participation in an event, such as a school walk & roll event with popsicles or cupcakes
 - Examples of **ineligible** food items include:
 - Alcohol for any purpose
 - Purchases of sandwiches, pizza, or other types of meal items for any purpose
 - Purchases of food for staff meetings, such as coffee, pastries, etc.
- **Scholarships, such as conference attendance or other educational opportunities:** Funding to support conference attendance aimed at networking and learning about travel

options (or other similar educational opportunities) are eligible, but not the priority of Small Grants funds. The RTO program may award a maximum of \$5,000 of the total Small Grant funds available each fiscal year toward conference costs (such as admission, lodging or airfare). If you are a current RTO Core/Emerging/General grant recipient, conference costs may be eligible within your existing grant; check in with your grant manager to verify.

- **Engagement items, incentives, and stipends:** See below for definitions and differences between these closely related types of purchases. This guidance is to provide consistency in how items in this category of spending are provided and recognizes that funding these activities needs to be scaled appropriately. Purchase of items in this category must be associated with increasing awareness of travel options programs, improving safety while using travel options, and/or changing behavior to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips. The cost should be reasonable and prioritize new participants or expanded use of travel options by existing participants.
 - **Engagement items** are safety or program awareness/marketing items that are handed out at engagement events or as a thank you for participation (stickers, lights, etc.). These items do not need to be tracked using the RTO Incentives Tracking Sheet for invoice documentation purposes, but receipts will need to be provided to Metro along with how they were used for engagement. Gift cards do not fall under engagement items.
 - Cost range: under \$5 per item.
 - For small engagement items for SRTS applications, such as pencils, shoelaces or stickers – please utilize statewide SRTS resources, which are available multiple times a year: <http://streettrust.oregonscreen.com>
 - **Incentives** may be funded only if they are used for the direct purpose of encouraging people to participate in a program intended to increase their use of travel options and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips. Incentive items should be related to improving a travel options trip (i.e. bike locks, transit fare) or improving safety (i.e. reflective items, helmets, etc.) Requests for non-travel options incentives (i.e. a gift card for coffee/local restaurant) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Incentives cannot go toward the purchase of items for single-occupancy vehicle trips (i.e. gas gift cards, parking payments if not associated with carpooling). *Incentives and recipients must be tracked using the Metro-provided RTO Incentives Tracking Sheet for invoice documentation purposes. Incentives cannot be provided to paid staff supporting an event.*
 - Cost range: \$5-25 for items such as helmets, reflective items, bike locks, gift cards, etc.
 - Random drawings of items above \$25 should be coordinated with Metro RTO staff before purchasing.
 - If a program intends to purchase children’s kick-scooters as an incentive, there is a cap of \$500 for the purchase of scooters for a single program/year and they must be used as an incentive for participation in a travel options program.
 - Per IRS Rules, if gift cards are used as incentives: If the total value of gift cards received by any individual from your organization (grantee) exceeds \$600, the grantee must issue a Form 1099-MISC for that individual, and that individual will be responsible for any taxes. The organization (grantee) is

responsible for sharing this information with each gift card recipient. This language is included in the Metro-provided template.

- Gift cards as incentives should not go to paid staff whose time supporting the program is covered by another source. Small thank you incentives (gift cards of \$5 or less) can be used if time on the program is outside the scope of duties for their job – for example, a teacher doing hand tallies in their classroom for Safe Routes to School.
- If gift cards are used as an incentive and an individual is receiving more than \$600, the program should implement a more formal stipend agreement. Gift cards should be used for short-term program incentive purposes to kickstart activity but not an ongoing payment method.
- **Stipends** may be used in regional travel options projects in several ways. This includes compensating individuals for their time assisting in the administration of events or ongoing activities. In addition, stipends can be used to compensate individuals for their participation in surveys, focus groups, community walks, or other substantial community engagement activities. Gift cards may be used as a stand-in for stipends, if necessary, for short-term program purposes. Payment amounts should be commensurate with the activity occurring and it is recommended that you review your proposed payment structure with Metro staff before implementing. *All stipends must be documented via a stipend agreement (for cash stipends) or tracked using the RTO Incentive Tracking Sheet (for gift card stipends) for invoice documentation purposes.*
 - Per IRS Rules: If the total value of cash or gift cards received by any individual from your organization (grantee) exceeds \$600, the grantee must issue a Form 1099-MISC for that individual, and that individual will be responsible for any taxes. The organization (grantee) is responsible for sharing this information with each stipend or gift card recipient. This language is included in the Metro-provided template.

Activities and items that are not eligible in the Small Grant category include:

- Projects or programs held outside the Metro boundary.
- Ongoing purchases longer than one calendar year.
- Labor or personnel time (Small Grants are for materials and services only).
- Installation of permanent infrastructure (only specific kinds of supportive infrastructure are funded through Metro's RTO program, and those must be funded through the Infrastructure grant category). This includes:
 - Indoor or outdoor bike parking
 - Painting of sharrows or other wayfinding signage in the public right of way
- Food purchases beyond snacks for community engagement purposes
 - Examples of ineligible food items include:
 - Alcohol for any purpose
 - Purchases of sandwiches, pizza, or other types of full meal items for any purpose
 - Purchases of food for staff meetings, such as coffee, pastries, etc.
- The purchase of bicycles or adult electric scooters for use in a shared system – 'bike-share' or 'scooter-share', OR for individual use. Bicycle parts are also ineligible.

- Bicycles and scooters for an educational fleet are eligible purchases (the only eligible bike purchase). An “educational fleet” is a set of bikes or scooters for limited use during educational or outreach events. Grantee must maintain possession of the fleet when not being used directly for educational purposes.
 - If you are interested in purchasing a bike or scooter fleet for educational purposes, contact Noel Mickelberry (School & Community Travel Options Coordinator) to discuss your options at noel.mickelberry@oregonmetro.gov.
- Any transit or shuttle operational costs or the costs associated with establishing a new service. This includes but is not limited to fare-payment systems, real-time transit tracking, on-board displays, and any other cost related to directly providing service. Costs associated with promoting or encouraging people to use these services are eligible for RTO grant funding.
- Activities or events held on property whose owner discriminates against individuals or groups because of race, color creed, national origin, sex, age, or disability, in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, as amended; 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d; Section 303 of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; 42 U.S.C. Section 6102; Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; 42 U.S.C. Section 12132.