



Community Partner Grant Program

Overview: Commute.org is a government agency in San Mateo County with a mission to reduce vehicle miles traveled and solo driving trips to work by residents and commuters who travel to/from the county for work. We do this through a variety of free programs, including shuttles to/from Caltrain, BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), and the SF Bay Ferry; rewards for biking, carpooling, and vanpooling; and transit incentives. In 2023, the agency conducted outreach to priority audiences that have been less represented in our programs and have developed a pilot program to improve engagement with those audiences.

In addition to fostering increased involvement and awareness of Commute.org's programs, the Community Partner Grant Program is designed to generate mutually beneficial outcomes. While the grant size is modest, its impact is envisioned to be meaningful for the diverse communities served by our Community Partners. Two-way interaction ensures that the benefits of transportation programs are effectively communicated as well as tailored to the specific needs of priority communities. Commute.org envisions a symbiotic relationship, where financial support catalyzes enhanced access to transportation services and benefits and fosters a deeper connection between our organization and the diverse audiences we aim to serve.

The objective of this pilot grant program is to increase participation and input from communities currently underrepresented in Commute.org's programs. Through this grant program, we hope to see sustained engagement with Community Partners that represent and serve these communities, thereby increasing awareness and use of our programs and services. The goal is to make new audiences aware of the transportation benefits and services available to people who live and work in San Mateo County.

To achieve this goal, Commute.org is creating an outreach grant program for up to 5 Community Partner (non-profit) recipients. The types of engagement will be determined through the application process, with organizations being compensated for their time and effort collaborating with us.

Grants will be awarded \$5,000 per organization for work to be completed within one year, starting July 1, 2024.

Grant recipients will be asked to:

- Provide accurate information about Commute.org's programs and services to their community
- Help enroll their constituents in Commute.org programs
- Collaborate with Commute.org on the development and refinement of programs and services that best meet the needs of the community

Grantees will be provided:

- \$5,000 grant
- Outreach materials/marketing toolkit in relevant languages, including digital and print flyers, social media posts and graphics,



- Presentations or tabling by Commute.org staff twice per year
- Information on other relevant transportation benefit programs in the region
- Exclusive raffles for Community Partner Grantees' constituents
- Commute.org swag/prizes for your audiences
- Personalized STAR network for your organization/constituency

Grant Program Eligibility

All 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, or their fiscally sponsored projects, with an established track record of public outreach, communications, providing social services, or case management in San Mateo County are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Grant Recipient Work Plans

Commute.org recognizes that nonprofit organizations in San Mateo County have varied and unique methods for conducting outreach and engagement with the communities that they serve. For that reason, we encourage applicants to become familiar with the existing Commute.org programs and services and propose a work plan (part of the application) to best achieve the following goals during the funding period:

1. Provide accurate and timely information about Commute.org programs and services
2. Provide feedback to Commute.org on programs, resources, and messaging
3. Assist individuals in registering for and/or participating in Commute.org's FREE programs, such as STAR rewards, Guaranteed Ride Home, Try Transit, and first/last mile shuttle services
4. Conduct outreach for newly developed programs and services from Commute.org as they are launched

Priority audiences:

These audiences were determined by data analysis of Commute.org's current program participants as well as Equity Priority Community Maps from SamTrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Ideally, your organization works with one or more of the following groups:

- Latinos
- Non-English speakers
- People who earn less than \$75k/year
- Women
- People living in the following geographies – informed by MTC and SamTrans Equity Communities maps/data
 - North Fair Oaks
 - East Palo Alto
 - South San Francisco
 - Daly City
 - Coastside
- People working in the following industries – as determined by data analysis
 - Small employers (under 50 employees)
 - Warehouse/Light Industrial



- Hospitality (Restaurant, Hotel)
- Healthcare
- Agriculture
- Grocery, Retail

Grant Application Process and Requirements

All materials will be on this webpage <http://commute.org/resources/partners/community-partner-grant-program> . Deadline for applications is: **March 29, 2024 at 5 pm PT.**

Please send questions to Emma Shlaes eshlaes@commute.org with the subject line “Community Partner Grant Program questions”

The timeline for this process is outlined below. This timeline is subject to change.

- March 4, 2024: Call for Applications posted on Commute.org website
- March 8, 2024: Call for Projects Workshop: Virtual via Zoom (will be recorded)
- March 13, 2024: Questions due for Q&A. Please send questions to Emma Shlaes eshlaes@commute.org with the subject line “Community Partner Grant Program questions”
- March 20, 2024: Q&A posted on Commute.org website
- March 29, 2024: Proposals due by 5 pm PT
- April 18, 2024: Board meeting to approve grantees; Grantees selected and notified
- May and June: contracting
- July 1, 2024: Grant period begins

Complete applications must include:

- Complete [this online form, including:](#)
 - Narrative (200 words minimum to 400 words maximum)
- Email the following to Emma Shlaes eshlaes@commute.org with the subject line “Community Partner Grant Program”
 - [Work plan](#) using table format provided in application
 - Your 501(c)(3) letter OR fiscal sponsor documentation

Grant Program Deliverables

Commute.org expects that organizations will integrate Commute.org’s key messages into existing outreach, as applicable. Grantees will also be expected to produce the following deliverables:

- 1. Attend three mandatory meetings during the one-year grant period.** Meetings will be scheduled with your work schedules in mind, and translation can be provided with prior notice:
 - a. 90-minute virtual group training** on Commute.org key messages and programs. Attendance is mandatory for all grantee organization staff involved in implementing the outreach grant. Commute.org will train Community Partner staff to educate their own



community members on Commute.org's programs, STAR platform, and rewards. Commute.org will also provide free branded materials to assist with outreach.

- b. **1-hour virtual group meeting mid-year** with all grantees to receive program and messaging updates, provide feedback to Commute.org, and identify opportunities for collaboration across organizations.
 - c. **1-hour virtual 1:1 check in with Commute.org** mid-year to go over progress specific to your organization, including data metrics: how many activities have been completed, how many people have been recruited, etc.
2. **Participate in an online commute tracking network, called STAR.** Organization staff must sign up and will be expected to and trained in signing up community members. Commute.org's STAR platform is a way to connect people to commute options, offer rewards and incentives, and track drive-alone rates and carbon emissions reductions. Depending on the Community Partner, we will either provide a personalized sign-up link or create a Community Partner-specific STAR network.
3. **Direct Community Engagement:** provide targeted messaging to key audiences. Commute.org will provide speakers and content, flyers, a marketing toolkit, and a promotions calendar. Organizational activities could include:
 - a. Email marketing
 - b. Social media
 - c. Traditional media
 - d. In-person or virtual events
 - e. Flyers
 - f. Other activities based on organization's capacity, existing communications and events, and ideas
4. **Host Commute.org:** Your organization will additionally provide opportunities for Commute.org to table or present to Community Partners' community members up to 2 times a year. Topics may include carpool etiquette, STAR how-to, Clipper Card enrollment support, transportation options in their area, bike education, and more. Commute.org would also bring giveaway items for the attendees.
5. **Submit a final report** on the work plan provided in the proposal, including estimated number of people were reached by each outreach method, estimated demographics of people reached based on target populations, community feedback on Commute.org messaging, lessons learned, and proposed next steps. The report format will be like the work plan. The final report is due within two weeks after the grant period closes to be eligible for future funding opportunities.
6. **Participate in a survey:** organization staff will take a brief survey to give feedback on the program, what worked and did not, and potential improvements for the program.



Grant Selection Criteria

- Eligibility:
 - 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, or ability to provide a letter of fiscal sponsorship from a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that will receive the grant on your behalf
 - Works in San Mateo County
- Suitability: focuses on one or more priority audiences across Commute.org’s member jurisdictions
- Project plan
 - Quality of proposed plan to meet grant program goals and deliverables, including:
 - Number of people in San Mateo County reached
 - Diversity of audiences
 - Diversity of strategies
 - Demonstrated ability to:
 - Outreach capacity to key audiences in San Mateo County
 - Meet grant deliverables in similar grant programs
 - Project Conception
 - Outcomes

Workplan

Please attach your proposed work plan using the table format provided. Please fill out the template with one line for each major outreach action (or type of action) you propose. See example below and [click here](#) to download the work plan template. Add more rows if needed. Please submit the work plan table as an Excel or Google Sheets document.

Examples of metrics include:

- If you conduct case work with 2,000 clients and share Commute.org materials with 500 of them, please list “500 clients” in your metrics.
- For digital outreach, please set a goal for the number of unique visitors you will send to the Commute.org website. Commute.org will provide each grantee with custom URLs to our webpages to track website visits from each organization’s online marketing.

Sample Workplan

Outreach Action	# of People Your Org Proposes to Reach	How # People Reached Will be Measured
Attend required meetings and submit reports	n/a	n/a
Organize 2 webinars on Commute.org programs, include in newsletter and social media	50 San Mateo County residents/workers at each, 200 visits to Commute.org website via unique link	Registration information, participant count, # of visits to Commute.org website

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Organize in person Spanish language workshop	50 San Mateo County residents/workers at each, 100 visits to Commute.org website via unique link	Registration information, participant count, # of visits to Commute.org website
In-person assistance for enrollment in Commute.org programs	100 San Mateo County residents enrolled	Number of San Mateo County residents enrolled
Include information in organization's newsletter	1,000 people receive newsletter, 100 visits to Commute.org website via unique link	# of people who received and opened newsletter, # of visits to Commute.org website