Overview
The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to solicit proposals from eligible public school districts to obtain a Transportation Collaboration Grant. A collaboration grant project may be eligible for an award up to $10,000 for efforts that lead to shared resource management, routing consolidations, regional collaborations or other activities to reduce transportation costs. Only one of the collaborating partners shall apply for the collaboration grant. If more than one partner applies for the collaboration grant under the same collaboration project, only the first application received will be considered for the grant funding.

For the Transportation Collaboration Grant FY23, the collaboration project must be a new collaboration for the 2022-2023 school year and must be implemented during the school year 2022-2023. It may not be a continuation of a previous collaboration.

FY2022 grantees are able to apply for a renewal of their grant through the renewal application.

RFA Detailed Information
Application Assistance and Timeline
The successful response to this RFA will propose a collaborative approach to transportation reduction costs that meets the criteria below and is submitted by an eligible public school district. The application window in CCIP opens September 1, 2022, and closes September 30, 2022, at 4:59 p.m. Grantees will be notified in October 2022.

The Department will provide timely information and assistance to eligible applicants who intend to respond to this RFA. Applicants may send questions regarding the application and process to the transportation email inbox at schoolbus@education.ohio.gov.

Funding Details
Up to $10,000 is available to each awardee with $450,000 total available for fiscal year 2023. This is a competitive grant made available by the 134th General Assembly under the passage of Amended Substitute House Bill 110. Grants will be allocated for allowable expenditures based on submitted and approved proposals, plans and corresponding budgets. Funding will be awarded for NEW collaboration projects that begin in FY2023. Expenditures must be incurred by May 31, 2023. If awarded funds are not used by June 30, 2023, the Department reserves the right to request that subgrantees forfeit the balance of awarded funds.

Eligible Applicants
Per Ohio Revised Code Section 3317.072, a city, local or exempted school district may apply for Transportation Collaboration Grant funding. Educational Service Centers may be partners in a collaboration agreement. However, Educational Service Centers are not eligible to receive grant funding allocation(s). Only one of the collaborating partners shall apply for the collaboration grant. If both partners apply for the collaboration grant under the same collaboration project, only the first application received will be considered for grant funding.
Application Review

Members of the review team will have expertise in school transportation and be free of any conflicts of interest for all assigned applications. Each application will be evaluated by at least two review team members. The Department will establish an internal application review process to identify the same collaboration project if submitted by multiple partners.

The review team will conduct an evaluation of applications based on the specific criteria as outlined below.

Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, July 20, 2022</td>
<td>Announcement of grant opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, August 1, 2022</td>
<td>RFA available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 1, 2022</td>
<td>Districts may apply for the grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 30, 2022</td>
<td>Application deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 4, 2022</td>
<td>Grant review process begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 31, 2022</td>
<td>Grant selection notification</td>
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Application Submission

Applicants are required to submit:
- A budget,
- A completed PDF copy of a document answering all questions included in the Application portion of this RFA; and
- The Statement of Grant Assurances located in Appendix A.

All documents must be submitted in the CCIP by September 30, 2022, at 4:59 p.m. EST.

Application Format

Narrative, including the Executive Summary, should appear on 8.5” x 11” standard letter size paper, double-spaced. Use Arial, 11-point font. The application should include a narrative that addresses each of the required questions. Indicate each section title in bold. Appendices must be in the order outlined in the document and immediately follow the application narrative. Number all pages and include the applicant’s name, including district IRN in the header of each page.

Deadline

Submit required items to CCIP and additional documents such as PDF copies of the application narrative, appendices and budget documents by 4:59 p.m. EST September 30, 2022. The electronic version must
include all required components. Applications must be submitted by the time and date specified above. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Application Narrative

The application should include the following sections:

1. Application contact including position, phone number and email address. This will be the individual point of contact during the application process.
2. Grant manager including phone number and email address. This person is responsible for the implementation of the approved grant project.
3. Confirmation that the project is a new collaboration for the 2022-2023 school year. Explain how the new partnership addresses the purpose of the grant.
4. A detailed description of the proposed activity or activities that will lead to a reduction of the districts’ overall transportation operation costs, including an implementation timeline. Allowable activities include those that lead to:
   - Shared resource management;
   - Routing consolidation;
   - Regional collaboration;
   - Other activities that have the potential to reduce transportation operating costs.
5. A list of all school districts involved as collaborative partners in the planned activity or activities. An educational service center may be included as a partner. For each, include the organization name, a contact and the IRN. The application must include the signature of the Superintendent of each collaborating partner indicating their agreement to participate in the proposed activities.
6. The estimated transportation cost reduction that the applicant anticipates through implementation of the proposed collaborative activity or activities in the proposal.
7. Evidence to support the estimated reduction in transportation costs.
8. A budget narrative that explains how the requested funds will be used to meet the objectives in this application using the table provided below.
Budget Narrative and Worksheet

Budget Narrative

Provide an itemized list of expenditures that the project expects to incur throughout the duration of the funding period. Provide information on the activities that will support the grant’s objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Category</th>
<th>Explain how the requested funds will be used to meet the objectives identified in the co-designed plan.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Development (Costs incurred to create/plan the collaboration)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Implementation (Costs incurred to implement the collaboration project)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology and Software Purchases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Budget Worksheet

The budget will be entered in the CCIP. Provide an itemized budget that breaks down salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, capital outlay and other expenditures.
Technical Review

The following selection criteria must be evident in a successful application for the Transportation Collaboration Grant. Any application not meeting all the technical criteria will not be considered. Applications meeting all technical requirements will receive a Quality Review.

A. New collaboration for 2022-2023 school year
B. Description of the proposed activities, including an implementation timeline
C. List of collaborative partners, including appropriate signature for each
D. Estimated cost reduction
E. Evidence of cost reduction calculation
F. Budget Narrative

Quality Review

The following selection criteria should be evident in a successful application for the Transportation Collaboration Grant. Applications will be rated on items A through E below using the listed Rating Characteristics.

A. Program Details (4 possible points)
   Section 4 of the narrative, detailing the collaboration activity or activities for transportation cost reduction, including the proposed timeline. Applicants will be evaluated based on the detailed description of the program.

B. Planned Reduction (4 possible points)
   Section 6 of the narrative, detailing the expected cost reductions and how those reductions were determined.

C. Determination of Planned Reduction (4 possible points)
   Section 7 of the narrative, detailing how planned reductions were determined.

D. Planned Expenditures (4 possible points)
   Section 8 of the narrative, detailing the planned expenditures by cost category and how those costs were calculated.

E. Partnerships (4 points)
   Section 4 of the narrative, detailing the collaboration partners. This item will be rated using the following scoring criteria:
   0 Points: No listed collaboration partner or partnering with a non-educational entity
   2 Points: Public district partnering with an ESC, JVSD or non-public school
   3 Points: Public district partnering with a single other public district
   4 Points: Public district partnering with two or more public districts
Scoring Rubric Criteria

Grant scorers will evaluate each identified section of the application and award points based on the following criteria, with the exception of section 4 for which the criteria is listed above. In sections where qualitative evaluation is necessary for reviewers, the answer will be evaluated on a scale of “0” points to “4” points, with the ability to earn a minimum of 0 points and a maximum of 4 points. In those situations, the below rating characteristics will be used.

The Department will determine a quality cut score based on the scoring results. All qualified applicants meeting that threshold will be awarded a grant.

Rating Characteristics:

Not Addressed/0 Points The response is not provided.

Poorly Developed/1 Point The response is significantly incomplete, missing required appendices or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s capacity to execute it.

Adequately Developed/2 Points The response meets less than half of the established criteria and contains substantial gaps in other areas.

Well Developed/3 Points The response meets the established criteria, but it requires additional information, explanation or detail in one or more areas.

Fully Developed/4 Points The response demonstrates the applicant’s thorough understanding of the grant via specific and accurate information. The response presents a clear, realistic picture of how the district expects to operate and inspires confidence in the applicant’s capacity to execute the plan effectively.

Application Appendix: Grant Assurances

Appendix A is required for all applicants. Appendix A must be completed and signed for applications to be considered for selection.

A. Grant Assurances: The full grant assurances and a copy of Appendix A are in this RFA. If you have questions about any of the assurances, please contact the manager of the grant at schoolbus@education.ohio.gov.
Supporting, Evaluating and Reporting Expectations

Monitoring and Reporting

To evaluate grantee effectiveness and gauge success of the performance criteria listed above, subgrantees will be required to submit interim and final grant activities reports.

The Department reserves the right to request revisions to the application narrative to clarify or ask for additional information as necessary.

Each city, local or exempted village school district awarded a grant under this section is required to submit a final grant report to the Department by the thirtieth day of September following the fiscal year in which the grant was administered.

The final report must include:

1. The activities conducted using grant funds; and
2. Reductions in operating costs resulting from grant activities.

Reports will be submitted to the Department’s manager of this grant at schoolbus@education.ohio.gov.

This grant may be used to purchase materials and services that enable the grantee to address their identified quality criteria. Examples of permitted and not permitted uses include the following:

Permitted uses include:

- Shared resource management;
- Routing consolidation;
- Regional collaboration;
- Other activities that have the potential to reduce transportation operating costs.

Not permitted uses include:

- Facility construction costs;
- Repair or maintenance of school transportation vehicles;
- Payment in lieu of transportation services.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list. If there is doubt about whether an expenditure is appropriate, please contact the manager of the grant at schoolbus@education.ohio.gov.

General Management

Grantees are required to maintain records, including, but not limited to, invoices, purchase order requests, requisition orders and receipts and provide the Department access to those records for the purpose of an audit or for supporting budget documentation. This cooperation includes access without unreasonable restrictions to the public district’s grant-related records and personnel for the purpose of obtaining relevant information.

Records must be maintained for three years following submission of the final grant activities report.
Conflicts of Interest

Grantees must avoid conflicts of interest when entering into contracts for equipment and services. State law regarding conflicts of interest is strict. It is the responsibility of the grantee to be in compliance with the Ohio Ethics Law, ORC Chapter 102, ORC 3314.03 regarding conflicts of interest.

Misuse of Funds and Grant Termination

The Department may terminate the grant award immediately if it is determined that the grantee staff or any individuals connected with the program have used grant funds for personal gain, performed criminal activities or broken any of the agreed upon assurances provided in the use of the CCIP or grant specific assurances. If it is determined that any grant funds have been misused, the Department reserves the right to request the grantee return the full amount of awarded funds.
Transportation Collaboration Grant Selection Criteria and Rubric
Scoring Requirements

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to evaluate the application. Applications with the highest total point value in the quality criteria will be selected.

Application Checklist

The Ohio Department of Education’s Technical Review Team will ensure each applicant submitted all required narratives and appendices before scoring the application. Applications that are missing one or more required narratives and/or appendices will not be scored. Applications missing one or more technical criteria will not be scored.

Rating Characteristics:

**Not Addressed/0 Points** The response is not provided.

**Poorly Developed/1 Point** The response is significantly incomplete, missing required appendices or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s capacity to execute it.

**Adequately Developed/2 Points** The response meets less than half of the established criteria and contains substantial gaps in other areas.

**Well Developed/3 Points** The response meets the established criteria, but it requires additional information, explanation or detail in one or more areas.

**Fully Developed/4 Points** The response demonstrates the applicant’s thorough understanding of the grant via specific and accurate information. The response presents a clear, realistic picture of how the district expects to operate and inspires confidence in the applicant’s capacity to execute the plan effectively.
Quality Criteria Rubric

### District Eligibility (4 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Criteria</th>
<th>Not Addressed</th>
<th>Poorly Developed</th>
<th>Adequately Developed</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
<th>Fully Developed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The response provides context on how the partnership addresses the purpose of this grant.</td>
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<td>• The applicant and partnering districts are eligible to receive this grant.</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points Earned</strong></td>
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<td><strong>/4</strong></td>
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### Program Details (8 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review Criteria</th>
<th>Not Addressed</th>
<th>Poorly Developed</th>
<th>Adequately Developed</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
<th>Fully Developed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Section 4.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides a detailed understanding of how the collaboration will work.</td>
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<td>• The activities will lead to cost savings. For example: shared software, staff, supervisors, buses.</td>
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<td>Section 6.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides an estimated transportation cost reduction through implementation of the collaboration.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Earned</strong></td>
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<td><strong>/8</strong></td>
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### Partnerships (4 points)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Review Criteria</th>
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<td>Section 7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides evidence that once the project is in place it will reduce transportation costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Earned</strong></td>
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# Appendix A  Grant Assurances

## Statement of Grant Specific Assurances

The grantee agrees if awarded a grant that:

- Proof of evidence of financials from collaboration will be provided.
- Proof of evidence of results from the planned collaboration will be provided.
- Any additional documents of evidence as requested by the Department of Education will be provided.
- The LEA will complete any reporting requested by the Department of Education to comply with all reporting requirements.
- Only one of the collaborating partners shall apply for the collaboration grant. If more than one partner applies for the collaboration grant under the same collaboration project, only the first application received will be considered for the grant funding.

## Certification

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is correct.

The applicant designated below hereby applies for the Transportation Collaboration Grant for the purpose of program from the grant list and acknowledges to all Statement of Grant Specific Assurances.

Signature of Superintendent: ____________________________ Date: ______________

Printed Name of Superintendent: ____________________________________________

Signature of Treasurer: ____________________________ Date: ______________

Printed Name of Treasurer: ____________________________________________

District: ____________________________________________ IRN: ______________________