

Transit Station Activation Projects – An RTA 2024 Pilot Project

To support implementation of [*Transit Is The Answer*](#) and the RTA's Safety and Security Summit, the 2024 Call for Projects will pilot a new category, Transit Station Activations. Under this category funding will be made available to cover the costs related to rail station and bus stop activation projects and activities aimed at bringing a temporary, increased presence of people to transit stations and stops as a solution to real or perceived public safety concerns. It is envisioned these projects and activities will be simple, short-term actions or events occurring for a few hours over the course of 1-2 days that will bring residents, transit riders and visitors to the area to experience the activation project.

Eligible Projects

Permanent capital improvements are not eligible through this pilot as activations are focused on temporary, short-term activities that are open to the public. Projects may be located at any Service Board (CTA, Metra, Pace) station or stop. For projects located near CTA stations, activities must be outside of the paid area. For projects located near Metra stations, activities must be off the platforms. Projects proposed near any transit stations must not impeded the operations of transit or rider access to the transit service. Activation projects may take place on Service Board property or adjacent property (with permission from the property owner). While non-partisan voter drives are welcome as part of an activation, other partisan political events will not be eligible. The applicant will be responsible for any post event maintenance, if required. The RTA imagines the following as examples of project activations that could receive funding:

- Performers – Events where a local musician(s) or school choir performs near the transit station.
- Vendors – A pop-up event where local vendors set up an area to offer their food, drinks, crafts or other goods.
- Artistic exhibition – Local artists are invited to showcase their work and perhaps offer art for sale.
- Beautification – A community planting day where residents are invited to come to the transit-served area and plant a bed of flowers. This could be expanded to include a periodic, seasonal gardening day where residents weed and water the flower bed.
- Community Outreach – Staff or members of a community-based organization(s) (CBO) set up a table or booth near a transit station, offering assistance or information about services offered for or needed by area residents.
- Safe Walk Programs -- Programs to facilitate safe walks to or from a transit station or stop such as CBO's deploying safe passage workers who can support traveling to and from transit stations to other community events, such as a farmers market or street festival, similar to the Safe Passage Program for Chicago Public School students.

Project Budget

The available budget for each project is in the \$5,000-\$20,000 range. The budget is relatively small to encourage short-term activations that can be implemented quickly. Eligible expenses that may be included as part of the budget include any expenses necessary to implement the

project, including permit fees, the cost of obtaining a certificate of insurance for the event, food and beverage expenses, paid staffing of the activation, and other expenses deemed necessary to implement the project. An estimated project budget should be included in the application, but the RTA will determine the final awarded budget amount.

Eligible Applicants

A variety of municipal, non-profit and community organizations are encouraged to apply. Projects can be focused on Metra, CTA or Pace bus or rail stations, bus stops, or under the L infrastructure adjacent to a station through the RTA's region of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Will, Kane, and McHenry Counties. Priority will be given to high need municipalities or neighborhoods. Potential applicant types include:

- Municipalities
- Ward offices
- Chambers of commerce
- Transit agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Downtown associations
- Economic development corporations
- Not for profits
- Business improvement districts / special service areas

Project Administration Details

Selected projects will need to adhere to a variety of administrative processes and requirements which may vary depending on the impacted Service Board (Metra, CTA, Pace). As this project category is a pilot this year, it is possible administrative processes and requirements may change after project selection. However, please be aware of the following at the time of application:

- Activation projects should not be located within fare paid areas. (i.e. Beyond fare gates or on CTA or Metra rail platforms). A map showing the general location of the project is required as part of the project application.
- Awarded applicants will be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding, or other similar agreement, with the impacted Service Board(s).
- Awarded applicants may be required to carry a certificate of insurance (COI) for the activation event. It is recommended that one COI covers all involved vendors. This can be an eligible expense of the funding award and should be included as part of the project budget.
- Activations taking place on CTA property will be required to carry a Certificate of Insurance, Additional Insured Endorsement, and Waiver of Subrogation. Details on the required coverage can be found [here](#).
- For activations on CTA property or Metra property, a right of entry license (ROE) is required. The ROE will be granted by CTA or Metra and should reference all vendors to be employed. The associated fee can be included as part of the project budget.
 - The following information is required for CTA ROE:

- Cannot go beyond one year in length
 - Specific details about intended use of CTA property
 - Specific details about the exact CTA location that is to be utilized
 - Right of Entry fee will vary based on use and length of time, but the fee will not exceed more than \$1,000 a month.
- Projects utilizing CTA park and ride facilities are preferred during off-peak times on the weekends or evenings. A parking revenue loss fee will vary depending on time and duration of event and location. Each application will be individually evaluated by the CTA for the fee amount.
- For projects located in Metra parking lots, the project sponsor will need to coordinate with Metra and / or the parking lot operator to determine if a fee will be required, but this may vary by lot operator. This fee can be included as part of the project budget.
- For projects located on Pace property, awarded applicants will be required to execute a Temporary License Agreement that outlines the location, date and times, access and use of the Pace property, clean up requirements, insurance requirements and indemnification for Pace. Depending on the project, other requirements may also be needed.
- Awarded applicants will enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the RTA for funding reimbursement.
- Awarded applicants are required to work with RTA staff to gain feedback from participants of the activation project to measure the success of the activation.
- The sale or presence of alcohol will not be permitted as part of any activation project.

Selection Criteria

RTA staff will select projects based on feedback from staff at all three Service Boards. Priority will be given to projects located in high-need communities. Projects will also be selected based on project readiness, the capacity of the applicant to execute the project, ability to implement with the Service Board partner, and potential positive impacts of the activation on personal safety and security.