



**VAN AWARD PROGRAM APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**PROGRAM PURPOSE**

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) offers a wide range of transportation services that enrich lives, connect communities, and expand opportunities throughout Central Iowa. DART’s services include fixed routes, paratransit, Flex Connect, On Demand, and the Caravan vanpool program, all designed to provide access to essential destinations such as jobs, healthcare, and education. As Iowa’s largest and only regional transit agency, DART serves 12 member communities, including Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Pleasant Hill, Urbandale, West Des Moines, and Windsor Heights.

Committed to enhancing mobility across Greater Des Moines, DART works to complement the region's growth by providing efficient, reliable transportation while ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources. Each year, the DART Commission allocates up to three retired vans to non-profit or government organizations to help meet transportation needs in areas or populations underserved by existing DART services.

Eligible non-profit organizations or government agencies are encouraged to apply following the guidelines outlined below.

**PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

To ensure the program serves public, not private, transportation needs, only governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations qualifying under 26 USC 501(c)(3) will be eligible to participate. Questions about the program or how to apply can be directed to: Ellie McElvain, DART Caravan Administrative Assistant, [caravan@ridedart.com](mailto:caravan@ridedart.com) or 515-288-RIDE (7433).

**WHAT’S NEW THIS CYCLE**

- Non-profit organizations must now provide proof of their designation as a public charity under [IRC Section 509\(a\)](#)
- Due to changes in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the federal share of a van’s cost must be repaid to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As of August 1, 2023, and with approval from the DART Commission, Grantees may now be required to cover the federal interest portion of the van. While DART will donate its stake in the van, Grantees will be responsible for paying the federal interest associated with the vehicle. The formula to determine the amount due will be determined as follows:
  - Fair Market Value – \$5000 – DART’s interest) = Remaining Federal Interest Due

**APPLICATION SCHEDULE**

<b>November 4, 2024</b>	<b>Deadline for submitting applications</b>
<b>November 5-15, 2024</b>	<b>DART staff review of applications</b>
<b>December 2024</b>	<b>DART Commission review and recommendation of applicants and Notice of Award</b>
<b>February 2025</b>	<b>Federal Interest Due and Presentation of awarded vehicles</b>



### **OTHER RULES AND REQUIREMENTS**

- The application must clearly designate the primary applicant, who will be listed as the buyer on the vehicle title if selected as a recipient.
- Only one van will be awarded per agency/organization every two years.
- All applicants must operate within DART's service area and demonstrate that the van will primarily serve residents within that area.
- Trips to or from religious worship, devotion, or instruction may not be counted toward meeting the selection criteria; however, this does not limit the use of the van once awarded.
- Grantees may only provide transportation services to clients, members, guests, or similar users and cannot offer transportation to the general public.
- Applicants must certify that they have the financial and managerial capacity to maintain the vehicle in good working order and insure the vehicle if selected.
- Grantees are required to track ridership, hours, and miles of service and submit quarterly reports to DART for one year following the grant.
- The vehicle cannot be used to assist in any election campaign or to promote or oppose any ballot measure.
- Grantees must sign an agreement with DART committing to the terms of the policy, proper vehicle maintenance, and compliance with DART's monitoring program. The agreement will specify that the vehicle is granted "as is" without any express or implied warranties, and the grantee is responsible for all licensing, permits, and insurance. A hold harmless agreement acceptable to DART must also be signed.

### **VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS**

Two retired vehicles will be granted as described below. These vans had been earmarked for retirement and scheduled for auction this fiscal year.

- 2016 Chevrolet Express 3500 LT Extended Van 3D, V8, FF, 6.0L RWD. 11 passenger. Silver Color. Approx. 100,000 - 115,000 miles. Federal Interest as of 9/27/2024 is approximately \$6,600\*.
- 2017 Chevrolet Express 3500 LS Extended Van 3D, V8, 4.8 Liter RWD. 15 passenger. Silver Color. Approx. 155,000 - 175,000 miles. Federal Interest as of 9/27/2024 is approximately \$6,800\*.

\*The amount provided for Federal Interest due are estimates that can fluctuate with the Fair Market Value of the van. Final Federal Interest due will be calculated as of the date of the Award Notice.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The competitive selection process will be conducted by a committee that reviews applications based on the criteria below. Additionally, geographic equity, diversity of populations served, and previous grant awards will be considered as balancing factors in the selection process.



**1. Demonstrated Community Benefit – 50%**

To ensure the awarded vehicle delivers tangible benefits to public transportation, applicants must provide a detailed description of their organization’s mission and service scope. This includes the population served, the specific area within DART's member communities that will benefit, and the type of transportation the van will facilitate. Additionally, applicants must outline how the van will be used, the unmet transportation needs it will address, and the current transportation methods used by the organization.

**2. Estimated Van Usage – 20%**

Applicants must provide a clear account of how the van will be used, including whether it will be in full-time, part-time, or seasonal operation. Detail the type and purpose of the trips, estimating the total number annually, while including relevant information about seasonality and the nature of the services. Note that trips to or from religious worship cannot count towards the selection criteria, but this restriction does not apply to the van's use post-award. Additionally, highlight existing partnerships with transportation providers and, if none exist, address the challenges in forming those partnerships.

**3. Clarity and Quality of Application – 15%**

Applications will be evaluated based on overall clarity, completeness, and quality. This includes organization, presentation, legibility, and thoroughness of information. Strong applications will clearly define the organization's transportation needs, provide detailed descriptions of how the vehicle will be used, and include relevant data to support the proposed plan. Applicants are encouraged to ensure their responses are clear and provide a complete picture of their needs and intended outcomes. Applications will also be assessed on whether all required documentation is submitted, including a copy of the 501(c)(3) certification from the IRS, confirming status as a Public Charity under IRC Section 509(a).

**4. Ability of Organization to Maintain Service – 10%**

Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to effectively manage and sustain the proposed transportation program long-term. This includes detailing how they plan to maintain and ensure the vehicle, fund ongoing operational costs, and ensure continuity of transportation services. A strong application will include information on covering expenses such as maintenance, insurance, and potential repairs, along with partnerships with mechanics or service providers. Applicants should also provide a plan for managing service continuity if the vehicle becomes inoperable or requires replacement.

**5. Ability of Organization to Pay federal interest – 5%**

As part of the van award program, grantees may be required to cover the federal interest associated with the vehicle. This interest is calculated using a formula provided by DART and must be paid in full before the vehicle is transferred to the recipient. Applicants must demonstrate their ability to pay this amount within the specified timeframe and explain how they plan to secure or allocate funds for this payment, ensuring financial preparedness to accept the van and meet the federal interest obligation.



**DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
2024 APPLICATION FOR RETIRED VANS**

**APPLICATION SUBMITTAL**

**Applications must be received no later than 5:00p.m. on Monday, November 4, 2024.**

Applications should be submitted via email to [caravan@ridedart.com](mailto:caravan@ridedart.com) with the subject line “2024 Van Award Program.”

Applications can also be submitted via mail to:

Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority  
Attn: Caravan Department  
620 Cherry Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

**SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION**

<p><b>Name of Your Organization:</b> <i>(Name of your group, organization, or business)</i></p>	
<p><b>Mailing Address:</b> <i>(Where we can send mail to your organization?)</i></p>	
<p><b>Contact Person:</b> <i>(Who can we talk to about this application?)</i></p>	
<p><b>Phone Number:</b> <i>(What is the best number to reach the contact person?)</i></p>	
<p><b>Email Address:</b> <i>(What is the best email to reach the contact person?)</i></p>	
<p><b>Website:</b> <i>(if you have one)</i></p>	

**SECTION 2: ORGANIZATION TYPE**

**(Check all that apply)**

	<b>Church or Religious Organization</b>
	<b>Community Service Organization</b>
	<b>Government Entity/Public Agency</b>
	<b>Senior Center or Nursing Home</b>
	<b>School or Daycare</b>
	<p><b>Other:</b> <i>(Please describe)</i></p>



**SECTION 3: NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**

<b>Demonstrated Community Benefit</b>	
<i>This category assesses how the van will benefit the community your organization serves. Clearly explain who you help and how the van will positively impact those individuals, ensuring better transportation access and a tangible improvement in their quality of life.</i>	
<p><b>What does your organization do?</b> <i>(Explain what your group does, who you help, and how long you have been in service. Example: "Since 2020, We have helped 100 seniors each year get to medical appointments.")</i></p> <p><i>This is also a great place to include information about your organizations mission, vision, goals, etc. as you find appropriate. Please include a written narrative, links to websites in this section will <u>not</u> be considered.</i></p>	
<p><b>Where do the people you help live?</b> <i>(Which cities or areas do they come from? For example: "Most of the people we help live in Des Moines.")</i></p> <p><i>DART member communities include Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Pleasant Hill, Urbandale, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights and unincorporated Polk County.</i></p>	
<p><b>How will the van increase your organization's capacity?</b> <i>(Explain how the van will allow you to serve more people or expand services.)</i></p>	
<p><b>How does your organization ensure that all individuals you serve have equitable access to transportation services?</b> <i>(Explain how your organization ensures equitable access across the diverse populations you serve. If your organization does not currently provide transportation services, how will the addition of the van create equitable access to transportation for the individuals you serve?)</i></p>	



**SECTION 3: NARRATIVE QUESTIONS, Cont.**

<b>Estimated Van Usage</b>	
<i>This category assesses how frequently and effectively the van will be used to meet transportation needs. Provide specific details about the trips you'll make and how often the van will be on the road to demonstrate its potential impact on your services. Use organizational data as much as possible to support each of your answers.</i>	
<p><b>What is your organization's experience in collaborating with other transportation providers?</b> <i>(Describe any previous or current partnerships with transportation providers like DART, Uber, or other organization/non-profits. Include if you have received a van from DART or another group before. When and how was that van used.</i></p> <p><i>If your organization does not currently have any partnerships, please describe what barriers have prevented these types of relationships.)</i></p>	
<p><b>How do you handle transportation now?</b> <i>(Describe current transportation methods you use, or promote, to support the services you provide, such as buses, paratransit, carpooling, staff using personal vehicles, etc.)</i></p>	
<p><b>What transportation problem are you trying to solve?</b> <i>(Explain why you need the van. Example: "25% of the people in our group don't have cars. 30% of the people in our group are children under the age of 10.")</i></p>	
<p><b>What will the donated van be used for?</b> <i>(Describe the types of trips you'll make; include demographics served and destinations involved. Also include whether the van be in full-time, part-time, or seasonal use? Please specify and explain the expected usage pattern Example: "We will use the van all year to take seniors living in Des Moines to medical appointments in West Des Moines.")</i></p>	
<p><b>How many trips per week will you use the van for?</b> <i>(Estimate the number of trips including whether this usage be full-time, part-time, or seasonal. Example: "We will make 10 trips per week in July-September, helping 5 people each time; total 50 trips per week.")</i></p>	



**SECTION 3: NARRATIVE QUESTIONS, Cont.**

<b>Ability to Maintain Service</b>	
<i>This category measures your ability to maintain and sustain the van and its services. Outline your maintenance plans and resources, showing how you will keep the van in good condition and continue providing transportation for the individuals you serve even if repairs or replacements are needed in the future.</i>	
<p><b>How will you pay for maintaining and insuring the van?</b></p> <p><i>(Explain how you will care for the van. Include information regarding how you will provide and pay for insurance and maintenance of the van. Information regarding detailed maintenance plans, relationships/partnerships you may have with mechanics for repairs and service.</i></p>	
<p><b>Do you have a plan for replacing the van if it becomes inoperable?</b></p> <p><i>(Describe how you will ensure continuity of service for those you will be assisting.)</i></p>	

**SECTION 4: ABILITY TO PAY FEDERAL INTEREST**

**As part of this program, recipients of vans are required to pay the federal interest associated with the vehicle. The amount will be calculated based on a formula provided by DART and must be paid before the van is transferred to the recipient.**

<p><b>Has your organization reviewed the federal interest requirement, and does it have the financial capacity to pay this amount if awarded a van?</b></p> <p><i>(Yes/No)</i></p>	
<p><b>If your organization answered "Yes" to the above question, please briefly describe how you plan to secure or allocate funds to cover the federal interest amount due within 60 days of the notice of award.</b></p> <p><i>(Provide a short description, such as using general funds, grant funds, fundraising, etc.)</i></p>	



**SECTION 5: ATTACHMENTS / SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**(Check all that apply for supporting documentation)**

	<b>501(C)3 CERTIFICATION PROVIDED BY IRS (REQUIRED)</b> <i>This document <b>must</b> also confirm you are a Public Charity under <a href="#">IRC Section 509(a)</a></i>
	<b>Letters of Recommendation (Optional but encouraged)</b> <i>Please provide no more than two (2) letters of recommendation from a community leader, partner organization, or someone your organization serves, describing how receiving a van would benefit your organization and the community you serve. Letters from government officials cannot be accepted.</i>
	<b>Other:</b> <i>(Please describe)</i>

**SECTION 6: CERTIFICATION**

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information in this application is true, and our organization has the ability to manage, maintain, insure and pay the Federal Interest required for the van. I have read and understood the DART Van Award Program guidelines.

<b>Signature of Board Chair/CEO:</b>	
<b>Printed Name / Title</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	