



## **Request for Applications: Participation in State Technology Summits**

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**N-CATT State Technology Summits  
Request for Applications  
RFA Number: 38715RFA 001**

**What This Is**

The Community Transportation Association of America, through its National Center for Applied Transit Technology (N-CATT), is seeking applications from interested state departments of transportation to host one of up to three N-CATT State Technology Summits, to be held in the spring or early summer of 2020.

**There will be an opportunity to ask questions about the application on a call on Thursday, February 13 at 2:00pm EST.**

**Applications must follow the instructions and format set forth in this announcement, and are due no later than 5:00pm Eastern Time on March 6, 2020.**

**About N-CATT**

The National Center for Applied Transit Technology's (N-CATT) goal is to improve and make more efficient small-urban, rural and tribal transit service by assisting local systems in understanding, selecting, and otherwise planning to incorporate new technology into service. N-CATT helps transportation providers, managers, and decision-makers, such as board members or public officials, to identify promising technologies, practices, and opportunities that accomplish agencies' goals or resolve particular challenges.

The recent burst of technology-based innovations in transportation has largely focused on dense urban areas. N-CATT seeks to spread the benefits of these developments to smaller transportation providers who lack the resources and capacities of large-urban systems to research, analyze, and test new products that could enhance their services. This includes educating system managers and helping them to encourage influential stakeholders to support needed technological advancements.

To achieve this vision, N-CATT provides technical assistance and networking opportunities to transit agencies who need support in navigating the evolving technological landscape and understanding how to best improve their systems through practical applications of new technologies.

**The N-CATT State Technology Summits**

In 2020, N-CATT will partner with up to three state departments of transportation to host applied technology summits for small-urban, rural, and tribal transit operators in those states. These State Technology Summits ("State Summits") will provide an organized forum for attendees to discuss achievable goals for their systems and learn about promising practices, collaboration strategies and potential solutions. Participants will develop specific, measurable plans to accomplish their technology goals. N-CATT envisions partnerships among transit providers in the same state and with the state department of transportation (DOT).

Each State Summit will be two days in length. Building on the technology deployment goal(s) of the state, as set forth in its application to CTAA, the summit will bring together the state, its participating small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies, and N-CATT technology experts as they explore the challenges in determining short- and long-term technology strategies, identifying and selecting technologies that meet the state's goals and local transit agencies' needs and priorities, planning for the roll-out, use, and life cycle of these technologies, procurement and deployment of technology, planning for sustainability and technological change, and issues

that may be specific to the state's goal for the summit and the technological strategies being adopted. As a result of the summit, the state and its participating transit agencies will arrive at a one-year technology action plan, for which they will receive a limited amount of follow-up technical assistance from N-CATT.

Specific technologies that the State Summits will focus on may include:

- a. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and One-Call/One-Click/One-Tap building block technologies and capacities that support MaaS strategies;
- b. Ridehailing, microtransit and other on-demand services that complement traditional fixed-route transit service;
- c. Automated vehicle planning and pilots;
- d. Real-time transit information;
- e. Open source software that enables interoperability of systems (such as GTFS and GTFS-Flex);
- f. Fare integration;
- g. Open data;
- h. Electric buses and related charging infrastructure or facilities; and
- i. Other potential technologies

### **Approach to be Taken**

The State Summit process aims to support and strengthen the state DOT and its transit agencies through the following:

- N-CATT and the state DOT will establish a date and location for the two-day State Summit. The summit must conclude no later than July 30, 2020, and no summits will occur between May 18 and June 6, 2020.
- N-CATT will determine and invite technology generalist(s) and specialist(s) to guide and contribute expertise at the State Summit that is pertinent to addressing the goal(s) identified in the state's application (see application narrative below).
- Well in advance of the scheduled State Summit date, the state DOT and N-CATT will meet by conference call to review and discuss the details and intended outcome(s) of a successful State Summit, considering the expected participants, whether additional participants should be invited, the technology goal(s) identified in the state's application, state DOT and local/regional authority and capacity, and existing or expected challenges.
- State Summit Day 1: Participating agencies will explore the goal and challenges in the context of available technologies to address the goal. Technologists will provide information about the technology, what is involved with planning, and variables (including, but not limited to, costs) affecting decision making and adoption/implementation. Then the Summit will use information gathered from earlier in the day to map out possibilities for addressing challenges and reaching the goal.
- State Summit Day 2: The group will develop year-long plan to carry out what they identify as a path forward to achieve the goal identified in the State Summit application. This may include, but is not limited to, a plan for education about particular technology(ies) and the variables involved in making specific decisions about it (them); in-depth planning to test, pilot, adopt or implement a particular technology(ies); or in-depth planning for a regional or statewide coordinated approach overall to technology decision making.

- N-CATT staff and the technology generalists and specialists used at the State Summit will be available for two half-hour calls, up to one hour of follow up assistance, via conference call or equivalent media within the two months following the State Summit.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

Departments of transportation in the 50 states, the District of Columbia or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are the only eligible applicants for this opportunity. Two or more contiguous states may submit an application as a multi-state consortium for holding a State Summit, but the summit must address a common goal, priorities and strategies that are shared among the applicant states. In any event, N-CATT will review the applications as detailed below and select the three State Summits it will convene, in partnership with the selected states' DOTs. A state's proposed State Summit may be statewide in scope, or may focus on a particular geographic region within the state. Preference will be given to those states in which State Summit participants would focus on a similar goal or type of technology.

### **Participant Eligibility**

The target audience for all N-CATT activities are public transportation providers in small-urban areas (i.e., urbanized areas with populations less than 200,000), rural areas and tribal nations. Therefore, each State Summit shall be designed for the benefit of small-urban, rural and tribal transit providers in the selected state. In some instances, a selected state DOT may find it appropriate to include participation from larger urbanized areas' transit systems in its State Summit, but only to the extent that such participation furthers the state's goals and does not detract from how the state and N-CATT may focus on the state's small-urban, rural and tribal transit agencies. All participants in a State Summit must have some programmatic relationship (e.g., grantor/grantee, contractual, or regulatory) with the selected state DOT.

### **Responsibilities of the State DOT**

Once chosen, selected State DOTs are to solicit participation from relevant stakeholders. The state DOT will propose a location and venue for the State Summit. The state is to work collaboratively with N-CATT in setting priorities and state-specific details of the summit's agenda. The state DOT may request that N-CATT provide up to \$10,000 to the state DOT to help cover its cost in addressing attendees' travel and lodging expenses (however, N-CATT will not provide any payments or reimbursements directly to summit participants).

### **Responsibilities of N-CATT**

N-CATT will engage and provide all subject matter experts, technology generalists and other professional staff necessary for the State Summit, including their travel expenses and their salaries or fees. Unless negotiated differently with the selected state, N-CATT will be responsible for the costs associated with the summit's meeting space, any group meals that are part of the State Summit program, and the production of any meeting materials necessary for the summit. N-CATT is not responsible for the travel costs of summit attendees, other than the \$10,000 that the state DOT may request to help it cover attendees' travel and lodging expenses. Other than this optional payment of up to \$10,000, there shall be no compensation or remuneration between CTAA and a state DOT in connection with any N-CATT State Summit.

### **Application Requirements**

Any state DOT interested in hosting a State Summit should submit an application to Andrew Carpenter of CTAA's N-CATT project staff. Applications must be submitted by email to Mr. Carpenter at [carpenter@ctaa.org](mailto:carpenter@ctaa.org). Applications must be received no later than 5:00pm (Eastern Time) on March 6, 2020.

A complete application consists of:

- (1) Application Cover Sheet;
- (2) Application Narrative (see word limits for each question); and
- (3) Letters of Support.

**Cover sheet** - Please provide the following information:

1. Name of applicant state DOT;
2. Location of applicant – Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code;
3. Name of lead contact;
4. Title and agency of lead contact;
5. Lead contact’s email; and
6. Lead contact’s phone number.
7. Statement of agreement that State Summit would occur before July 30, 2020, and not between May 18 and June 6, 2020.

**Application Narrative** – For the Application Narrative, the word limits below are maximums and in no way reflect a requirement for a specific number of words. Please provide the following information:

1. **Clearly articulated goal** (Up to 50 words): State the goal in the form of an aim or overarching challenge to be solved.
2. **Vision for the State Summit** (Up to 100 words): Describe how the state DOT and/or other state-level or regional agencies in your state will use a State Summit to collaborate to address a statewide or regional problem, or a situation common to rural, tribal, or small-urban transit providers in applying new technologies; and State a specific outcome for what you would consider the result of a successful State Summit.
3. **Background** (Up to 150 words): How or why the goal was identified; Recent efforts to address the goal or overcome long-term challenges to address the goal; and any challenges confronted in identifying a solution, set of solutions, or appropriate tools or assistance to accomplish the goal.
4. **Commitment and feasibility** (Up to 150 words): Describe the ways in which rural, tribal, or small-urban transit providers and any state-level or regional agencies are currently demonstrating a commitment to accomplishing the goal, whether through funding, expertise, participation in discussions or outreach, projects or collaboration; and
5. **Capacity** (Up to 100 words): To demonstrate capacity for any necessary follow up, planning, or implementation of the articulated specific outcome for what you would consider the result of a successful State Summit.
6. **State tech landscape** (Up to 200 words): Please describe the following regarding the “landscape” of technology across the state’s small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies that will participate in the State Summit:
  - a. Are some small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies already trying new technologies?
  - b. What are the challenges that are preventing others from technology adoption?
  - c. Are the state DOT and/or other state-level or regional agencies suited to facilitating, coordinating, encouraging and/or funding planning, piloting, adoption and/or implementation of technological advancements?

- d. What is the DOT's plan, if any, for advancing technology for small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies?
- e. What interest have local or regional agencies expressed in advancing technology in their systems?
- f. Are other stakeholders, such as political leaders and advocates, influential and active in spurring technological advancement, either specifically at rural, small urban, and/or tribal transit systems, or, more generally, across the state or through state programs?

**Letters of support:** Please provide signed letters of support from at least four local or regional rural, small urban, and/or tribal transit agencies relevant to the vision for a State Summit. Each letter should be written individually by the local agency to indicate the reason for their commitment to participating in a State Summit.

### **Application Screening and Review Process**

1. **Screening.** All applications received will be initially screened to determine that the minimum requirements, as noted in the initial screening criteria, are met. Only those applications that meet the minimum requirements of the initial screening criteria will be reviewed.
2. **Review Committee.** N-CATT staff will comprise a committee to rate applications according to the criteria noted below.
3. **Review Process.** The review committee will evaluate the proposals based on the evaluation criteria specified below. N-CATT may schedule follow-up phone calls with up to 8 agencies to further discuss their visions for the Tech Strike Team's assistance, as well as potential dates and activities. Screening and review will include a determination that applicants and their expected participants are available for a State Summit that will take place no later than July 30, 2020, and not between May 18 and June 6, 2020. Unavailability will disqualify a state from being selected for a State Summit opportunity.
4. **Selection.** N-CATT will choose those projects receiving the highest recommendations by its review committee (see Review and Rating Criteria section below). FTA will make the final selection of successful applicants for the State Summit opportunity.

### **Application Evaluation – Initial Screening Criteria**

- Application must be submitted by an eligible applicant.
- Complete application must be received by email by the deadline.
- Application must comply with all word limits prescribed for each section.
- Application must be submitted as a single pdf document.
- Application must include all the required elements, as noted above.
- Statement of availability for State Summit to occur before July 30, 2020, and not between May 18 and June 6, 2020.

### **Application Review and Rating Criteria**

Applications will be rated by the review committee on the basis of highly recommended (HR), recommended (R), and not recommended (NR) in the following areas:

1. **Clearly articulated goal:** A succinct goal is stated in the form of an aim or overarching challenge to be solved.
2. **Vision for the State Summit:** The vision for the State Summit is described in terms of the following:

- a. A description of how the state DOT and/or other state-level or regional agencies in your state will use a State Summit to collaborate to address a statewide or regional problem, or a situation common to rural, tribal, or small-urban transit providers in applying new technologies; and
  - b. A specific outcome is articulated to state would be considered the result of a successful State Summit.
3. **Background:** Background information about the goal is described in terms of the following:
  - a. Statement of how or why the goal was identified;
  - b. Description of recent efforts to address the goal or overcome long-term challenges to address the goal; and
  - c. A description of any challenges confronted in identifying a solution, set of solutions, or appropriate tools or assistance to accomplish the goal.
4. **Commitment and feasibility:** Commitment and feasibility are described in terms of the following:
  - a. An explanation of the ways in which rural, tribal, or small-urban transit providers and any state-level or regional agencies are currently demonstrating a commitment to accomplishing the goal, whether through funding, expertise, participation in discussions or outreach, projects or collaboration.
5. **Capacity):** Capacity is described in terms of demonstrated capacity for any necessary follow up, planning, or implementation of articulated specific outcome for what you would consider the result of a successful State Summit.
6. **State tech landscape:** The State tech landscape is described in terms of the following:
  - a. Whether some small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies already trying new technologies;
  - b. Identification of the challenges that are preventing others from technology adoption;
  - c. Whether the state DOT and/or other state-level or regional agencies are suited to facilitating, coordinating, encouraging and/or funding planning, piloting, adoption and/or implementation of technological advancements;
  - d. A brief statement of any state DOT plan, if one exists, for advancing technology for small-urban, rural, and tribal transit agencies;
  - e. A brief statement of what, if any, interest local or regional agencies have expressed in advancing technology in their systems; and
  - f. Whether other stakeholders, such as political leaders and advocates, are influential and active in spurring technological advancement, either specifically at rural, small urban, and/or tribal transit systems, or, more generally, across the state or through state programs.
7. **Support:** At least four letters of support that demonstrate a statewide or regional effort or commitment to reach the goal identified in the application; and willingness to learn further, plan for, or adopt technology to address that goal.
8. **Suitability assessment:** The applications will be assessed to determine that one or more of the following technologies would, when implemented, significantly assist the lead and partners to reach the goal identified or to overcome substantial challenges described to reach that goal. Suitability will not be assessed on the basis of timing. Technologies that take a long time to plan for, to obtain funding for, and to implement will be eligible. The technologies are:
  - a. Mobility as a Service and One-Call/One-Click/One-Tap building block technologies and capacities that comprise these;
  - b. Ridehailing, microtransit and other on-demand services that complement transit service;
  - c. Automated vehicle planning and pilots;
  - d. Real-time transit information;

- e. Open Source software that enables interoperability of systems (such as GTFS and GTFS-Flex);
- f. Open data; and
- g. Electric buses and related charging infrastructure or facilities.

N-CATT is willing to consider other technologies not mentioned above, with proper justification.

### **Application Ratings**

The review committee will make its recommendations based on the following guidelines:

- Applications rated as highly recommended (HR) will be those that receive “HR” in all categories.
- Applications rated as recommended (R) will be those that receive no more than 2 “NR” ratings, but not “HR” in all categories
- Applications rated as not recommended (NR) will be those that receive “NR” in 2 or more categories.

### **Timeline**

- February 6: State Summit opportunity is announced.
- February 13: Live Q&A call for questions. All written questions should be submitted to [carpenter@ctaa.org](mailto:carpenter@ctaa.org) by this time, as well. Responses to all written questions and those asked on the call will be compiled into one document and sent to all DOTs who express interest in applying
- February 18: Questions and answers to them will be compiled and sent to interested State DOTs.
- March 6: Deadline for submission of applications
- March 9-13: N-CATT will hold follow-up calls with DOTs
- March 18: Selected State Summits announced
- April through July: N-CATT hosts up to three state summits

After carefully reviewing this solicitation, if you have questions please send them by email to [carpenter@ctaa.org](mailto:carpenter@ctaa.org) no later than 5:00p.m., EST, on February 13, or join the live call on February 14 at 2:00pm, EST. Responses and questions will be compiled into a document and shared with all who have expressed interest in submitting an application.

### **Selection Process**

N-CATT will review the submitted applications and schedule follow-up phone calls with up to five state DOTs to further discuss their visions for a State Summit, as well as potential dates and venues. Shortly following these phone calls, N-CATT will make its final selections of up to three states and design the meeting in consultation with its state DOT partner. State Summits will neither be held on or after July 30, 2020, nor from May 18 to June 6, 2020.

### **Submittal Instructions**

Please submit your application in one document in PDF format to [carpenter@ctaa.org](mailto:carpenter@ctaa.org) no later than 5:00p.m. EST, on March 6, 2020. No calls, please.