

Transportation Alternatives

Program Overview

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) is a set-aside of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG). Independent enhancement programs such as Safe Routes to School, Scenic Byways, and the Recreational Trails Program are now included as part of the Transportation Alternatives.



Projects and programs eligible for TA funding are defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; Safe Routes to School projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right of way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

The TA federal funding for local agencies is distributed to the ATP's/MPO's in the following manner:

- 50 percent of the funds are sub-allocated based on population consistent with the most recent census
- 50 percent of the funds are distributed based on the needs calculated by the MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation Division

The MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation Division is responsible for the administration and oversight of the local federal TA program.

Program Eligibility and Criteria

Eligibility

Eligible local agencies that can use TA funds for projects include:

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies
- School districts, local education agencies or schools
- Tribal governments

Townships and cities with a population of less than 5,000, state DOTs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and non-profit organizations must request the sponsorship of an eligible project sponsor to apply for funding and implement projects. An entity that receives TA funding is typically required to provide a local match to any federal funds that they receive, which is typically 20 percent. However, depending on what the funding is for, that local match may vary.

Criteria

Projects are selected through a competitive solicitation process in each of the seven Area Transportation Partnerships/Metropolitan Planning Organizations throughout greater MN and the Metropolitan Council, through the Transportation Advisory Board, in the seven-county metropolitan area. Each ATP/MPO and the Metropolitan Council utilize their own method for ranking and selecting projects.

TA funds may be used for the following:

- Trails and trailheads
- Historic structure rehabilitation
- Safe Routes to School infrastructure
- Scenic byways
- Access enhancements to public transportation
- ADA Transition Plans
- Bus shelters
- Pedestrian/bicycle bridges/tunnels
- Crosswalks, curb cuts and ramps
- Landscaping/streetscaping
- Shared use paths/sidewalks
- Bicycle parking, racks and storage

Funding

The table below shows the TA amounts programmed statewide to local agencies.

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Programmed TA Funds | \$ 13.4 M | \$ 13.6 M | \$ 13.4 M | \$ 13.4 M | \$ 13.4 M |

For More Information

The information provided in this document reflects the FASTACT guidance. Contact Elisa Bottos, State Aid Project Delivery Engineer at elisa.bottos@state.mn.us or 651-366-3821 if you have questions.

Revised: 02/2021