US Department of Transportation

"Interested in Applying?" Webinar
Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program
Overview for Prospective Applicants

July 14, 2022

Webinar Information

Audio

- To listen via computer: Select "Computer Audio"
- To listen via phone:
  - Call: 669-254-5252
  - Webinar ID: 161 610 3501
  - Passcode: 613949
- All participants automatically join on mute, with cameras off
- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the RCP website at www.transportation.gov/reconnecting

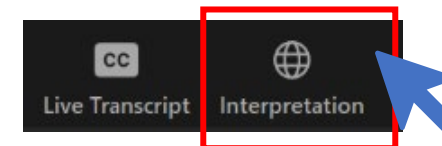## Technical Support

- Email Webconference@dot.gov

Questions for Presenters

- Please type your questions in the Q&A box
- Chat will not be monitored

Instrucciones para la traducción al español:

- Haga clic en el botón "Interpretation," en la parte inferior derecha de la pantalla.
- No "mute original audio"

Informal Poll Questions

What type of organization do you represent?
- State
- Local government
- Federally recognized Tribal government
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nonprofit organization
- Transit Agency
- Transportation Facility Owner
- Federal government
- Consultant
- Other (insert in chat)

Did you attend the first Reconnecting Communities webinar on May 19?
- Yes
- No
- I watched the recording

Agenda

- Welcome
- Opening Remarks
- NOFO Overview and Eligibility Information
- Evaluation and Selection
- How to Apply
- Technical Assistance and Resources
- Q&A

Presenter Introductions

Christopher Coes
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation

Stephanie Pollack
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Amit Bose
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Veronica McBeth
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Charlene Wang
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation

Faith Hall
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

"There is nothing sacred about the status quo. These highways, roads, and railways are not rivers, lakes, or mountains. They are not divinely ordained. They are decisions. And we can make better decisions than what came before."

- Secretary Buttigieg, announcing the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program in Birmingham, Alabama

Reconnecting Communities = Thriving Communities

Jason Cameron/Getty Images

Hands On Atlanta

cavee - stock.adobe.com

Jstock - stock.adobe.com

Federal Highway Administration

City Walk Birmingham, AL. Source: citywalkbham.com

Cap Park over I-579 in Pittsburgh, PA. Source: pgh-sea.com

Long Street Bridge in Columbus, OH
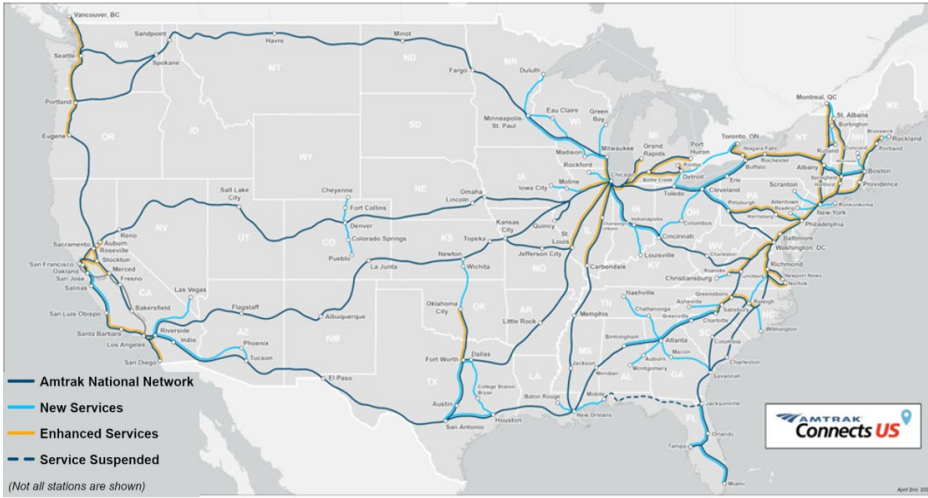Source: mkskstudios.com

Riverfront Parkway in Chattanooga, TN. Source: CNU.org

Federal Rail Administration

Amtrak Connects US: Passenger Rail Vision by 2035

Howard Street Tunnel Groundbreaking in Baltimore, MD

Freight rail upgrades in Oakdale, CA

Redesigned Washington Union Station rendering
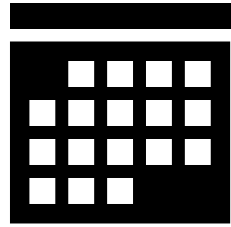

California Workforce Development Center

Birmingham Xpress Bus. Source: MaxTransit

Lynx – Orlando. Source: **Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority**

Lynx – Orlando. Source: **Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority**
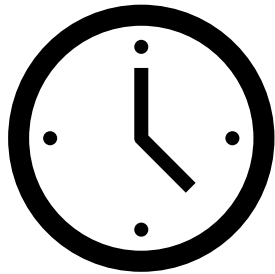
RCP NOFO Is Now Open!

Notice of Funding Opportunity is now **OPEN**
Grants.gov Opportunity Number: DOT-RCP-FY22-01
Assistance Listing: 20.940 – Reconnecting Communities

APPLY by Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 11:59 pm EDT
(no late applications accepted)
Submit on grants.gov

Additional resources
at www.transportation.gov/reconnecting
Subscribe for email updates!

Working Group Members

The Office of the Secretary (OST)

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Leah Epstein
Jordan Katz
Laura Waldon

RCP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Overview and Eligibility

RCP Program Overview

A total of **$1 billion** in grant funding is available through the RCP Program for FY 2022-26 for planning, technical assistance, and construction to reconnect communities harmed by transportation infrastructure.

RCP Program's goal is to advance community-supported projects, with a priority on economically disadvantaged communities, to improve access to daily destinations such as jobs, schools, healthcare, grocery stores, and recreation, and to foster equitable development and restoration.

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Geographic area

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Midwest
- West
- Southwest

Community type

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Tribal
- Frontier

What is the approximate population of your community?

- <10,000
- 10,000-199,999
- 200,000-500,000
- >500,000

Funding Availability and Award Amounts

Fiscal Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
Planning	$50M	$50M	$50M	$50M	$50M	**$250M**
Capital	$145M	$148M	$150M	$152M	$155M	**$750M**
Total	**$195M**	**$198M**	**$200M**	**$202M**	**$205M**	**$1000M**

Award Amounts:

- Planning Grants: No more than **$2M**
- Capital Construction Grants: No less than **$5M**

Eligible Lead Applicants

The lead applicant is the entity that submits the application.

Planning Grants

- States
- Units of local government
- Federally recognized Tribal governments
- MPOs
- Nonprofit organizations

Transit agencies can be eligible to submit the application according to above criteria.

Capital Construction Grants

- Owner of the eligible transportation facility.
- Eligible applicants to Planning Grants may submit the application, as long as the owner of the eligible transportation facility is a joint applicant, with evidence of endorsing the application.

DOT encourages partnerships, See also Merit Criterion #3 - Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

Eligible Transportation Facilities

The proposed project must address an "eligible facility".

Eligible facilities are defined as "***transportation facilities*** *that create barriers to community connectivity*" due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors. This includes barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.

Examples -

Transportation Facilities include:
- Highways, arterials, parkways, collectors, local roads
- Transit lines or rail lines
- Viaducts or bridges
- Ports, gas pipelines, airports

NOT Transportation Facilities:
- Natural geographic features like rivers, lakes or mountains
- Buildings like wastewater treatment facilities or schools
- Water pipeline infrastructure

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Examples of Barriers Created by Transportation Facilities

Eligible facilities are defined as "*transportation facilities **that create barriers to community connectivity**"* due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors. This includes barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.

Examples of transportation facilities *creating* barriers may include:

- The facility's volume of traffic, high speeds, or design creates unsafe conditions or impossible to cross.
- Facility reduces access to everyday destinations.
- Grade separations, i.e., the facility is a structure that is above ground or below ground, creating a physical barrier.
- Facility is missing sidewalks or pedestrian crossings, creating a barrier for some users.
- Due to poor design, i.e., lack of resilience features, facility is frequently unusable after severe weather events.

To be eligible, inadequate infrastructure must be linked to a transportation facility that creates a barrier. These issues, while very important, are examples of weak candidates for the RCP program on their own:

- Sparse road or trail network.
- Facility does not extend far enough.
- Infrequent transit service.

Application narrative should describe how the transportation facility creates a barrier. See Merit Criteria, Section E.

Do you have additional questions about eligible transportation facilities that create barriers?

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Examples of Reconnecting Solutions

Planning grants and Capital Construction grants will address: <u>removing</u>, <u>retrofitting</u>, <u>mitigating</u>, or <u>replacing</u> an existing, eligible facility to reconnect communities

Examples of removing, retrofitting, mitigating or replacing an existing, eligible facility may include:

- High-quality public transportation
- Infrastructure removal
- Pedestrian walkways and overpasses
- Capping and lids
- Linear parks and trails
- Roadway redesigns and complete streets conversions
- Main street revitalization
- More!

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Eligible Activities: Planning Grants

- Public engagement activities, including community visioning or other place-based strategies.
- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing facility to reconnect communities, including assessments of:
    - Current traffic patterns.
    - Capacity of existing transportation networks to maintain mobility needs.
    - Alternative roadway designs or uses for the right-of-way.
    - Impact on mobility of freight and people.
    - Impact on safety.
    - Cost to restore community connectivity and to convert the facility to a different design, compared to expected maintenance or reconstruction costs.
    - Anticipated economic impact and development opportunities.
    - Environmental, public health, and community impacts.

Other Eligible Planning Activities

- Conceptual and preliminary engineering, or design and planning studies that support the environmental review for a construction project.

- Associated needs such as:

  - Locally-driven land use and zoning reform

  - Transit-oriented development

  - Housing supply

  - Managing gentrification and neighborhood change

  - Proposed project impact mitigation

  - Green and open space

  - Local history and culture

  - Access and mobility barriers

  - Jobs and workforce

  - Other necessary planning activities that do not result in construction

Laura Sandt - PBIC

Eligible Activities: Capital Construction Grants

Eligible construction grant activities include:

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment / preconstruction; permitting activities including the completion of the NEPA process;

- The removal, retrofit, or mitigation of an eligible facility;

- The replacement of an eligible facility with a new facility that restores community connectivity; and

- Delivering community benefits and the mitigation of impacts identified through the NEPA process or other planning and project development for the capital construction project.


John Alphonse - stock.adobe.com

Pre-Requisite: Capital Construction Applications Only

- "… all necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed."
- By the time of award obligation, projects must be:
  - Consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan
  - Included in the Metropolitan Long-Range Plan (if applicable)
  - In the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and / or **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP),** Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) or equivalent
  - Transit projects must be included in the investment prioritization of the relevant Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan
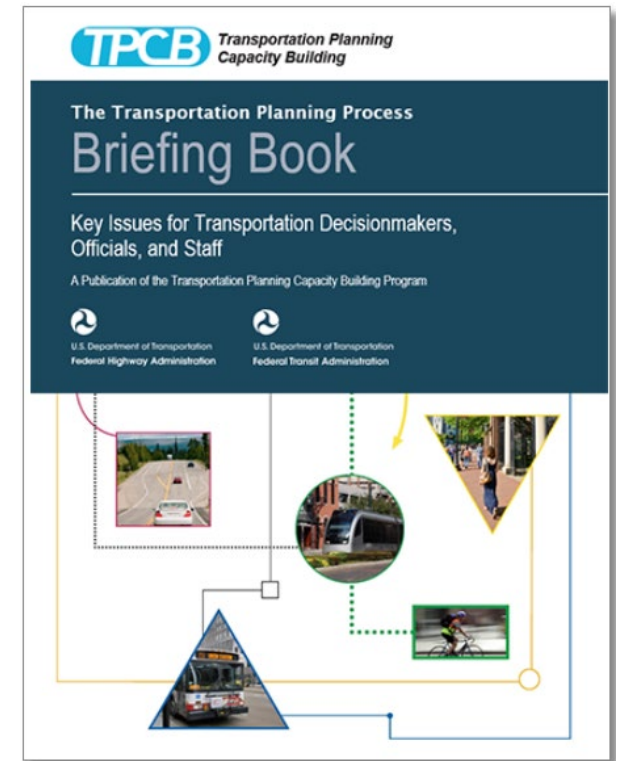
The FHWA / FTA Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book

In a sentence, describe a project in your community that might be eligible for an RCP grant.

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Federal Cost Sharing and Local Match

Award Amounts:

- Planning Grants: No more than **$2M**
- Capital Construction Grants: No less than **$5M**

Cost Sharing: Total Federal Assistance may not exceed 80%.

- **Planning Grants:**
  - Grants may not exceed 80% of the total project cost.
  - Recipients contribute 20% local matching share. There are limited exceptions. FAQ in development.

- **Capital Construction Grants:**
  - Grants may not exceed 50% of total project cost.
  - Applicants may use other Federal assistance up to 80%.
  - Recipients contribute 20% local matching share There is a limited exception. FAQ in development.

Local Match

Matching funds may include non-Federal sources such as:

- State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue.
- Local funds originating from State or local revenue-funded programs.
- Philanthropic funds.
- Private funds.
- In-kind or cash contributions.

DOT Navigator: Understanding Federal Match Requirements

Federal Cost Sharing and Local Match

Max. Federal Awards and Min. Local Match as a Percentage of Total Project Cost

Legend: ■ RCP Award ■ Other Federal Funds ■ Local Match
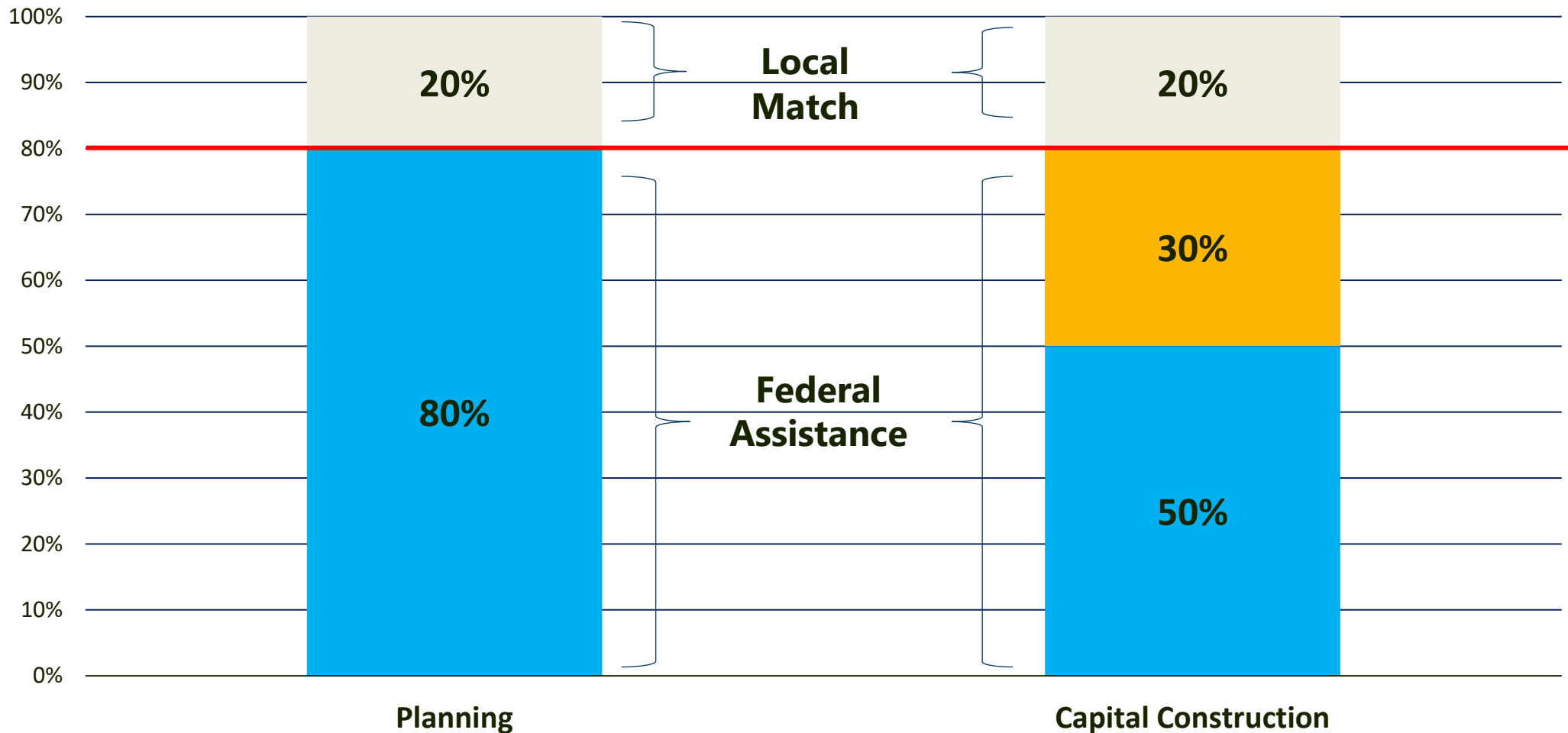
NOTE:
Total Federal Assistance may NOT exceed 80% of total project costs *except in limited circumstances* that differ for Planning and Construction grants.

DOT is developing an FAQ on this.

Planning:
- Local Match: 20%
- RCP Award: 80%

Capital Construction:
- Local Match: 20%
- Other Federal Funds: 30%
- RCP Award: 50%

Local Match

Federal Assistance

- Other than RCP, what sources of match funds, federal and non-federal, or in-kind resources, are top of mind as being easiest to access?

- What sources of funding from other Federal agencies do you want us to explore as potentially qualifying for the 20% local match?

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Selection and Evaluation

DOT will evaluate proposals on:
- Alignment with **merit criteria:**
    - (1) Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement
    - (2) Mobility and Community Connectivity
    - (3) Community-Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships
    - (4) Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity
- **Project readiness** in terms of:
    - Technical assessment of feasibility and capacity to deliver project
    - Financial completeness
    - Environmental risk and permitting (Capital Construction only)
- **Benefit Cost** Analysis (Capital Construction only)

When selecting grants awards, DOT may consider: benefits to economically disadvantaged communities; urban, rural, and Tribal balance; geographic diversity; and, organizational diversity. Secretary makes final selections for awards.

- DOT established a "Reconnecting Extra" designation for Capital Construction grants funded below the requested amount, to encourage applicants to pursue supplemental DOT discretionary funding:
  - Eligible project resubmissions are automatically rated "Highly Recommended" subject to relevant program requirements for:
    - Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
    - Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant programs (MPDG)
  - Loan financing programs (TIFIA, RRIF)

- DOT encourages States to use existing formula funds for projects to reconnect communities.

Jason Cameron/Getty Images

How to Apply

Application Limit and Deadline

A lead applicant may submit no more than **3** applications.
- DOT encourages joint applications from place-based partnerships.

Please be aware that you must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting the final application, and that this process usually takes 2-4 weeks to complete. Applicants are encouraged to start the Grants.gov registration process now.

Applications are due by **11:59 PM EDT on Thursday, October 13, 2022,** on **grants.gov**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make submissions in advance of the deadline.

Unique Entity Identifiers

All applicants **must** obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through SAM.gov to apply for grant opportunities in grants.gov.

On April 4, the federal government stopped using Dun & Bradstreet's proprietary Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) to identify contractors and grantees and began exclusively using the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The process of obtaining a UEI can take up to a month, so applicants are encouraged to apply for the UEI now. If you previously had a DUNS number, your UEI has already been created and is available to view in SAM.gov.

For more information, see https://sam.gov.

Application Submission Structure (Section D)

For Planning and Capital Construction Applications:

- **Standard Forms**
  - SF-424
  - Planning Grants: SF-424A, SF-424B
  - Capital Construction Grants: SF-424C, SF-424D
- **Key Information Table (12 questions)**
- **Narrative (address Merit Criteria)**
- **Budget**

For Capital Construction Applications Only:

- **Supplemental Information (Environmental Risk, Benefit Cost Analysis)**

Suggested Narrative Structure (Section D)

For Planning and Capital Construction Applications:
- **Overview:** Introduction, describe barriers, history and character of the community, and any other background information
- **Location & Map:** Location of the facility and a description of the surrounding community
- **Response to Merit Criteria**

For Capital Construction Applications:
- **Environmental Risk Summary**
- **Benefit Cost Analysis Summary**

Page Limits:
Single Spaced
- Planning: max. **10 pages**
- Capital Construction: max. **20 pages**

Merit Criteria: Planning and Capital Construction (Section E)

#1 Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

#2 Mobility and Community Connectivity

#3 Community-Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

#4 Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity

#1 Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

Planning and Construction applications should address:
- Analysis of harmful policies, burdens, disparities, and how solutions ensure equitable distribution of benefits and mitigation.
- Inclusive community participation plan, including culturally-appropriate and innovative practices for meaningful engagement, for hard-to-access community members.

Construction applications should also address:
- Construction-related displacement and a robust mitigation plan.
- Other negative construction impacts and mitigation measures.

#2 Mobility and Community Connectivity

Planning and Construction applications should address:
- How the existing facility presents significant barriers to access, mobility, and economic development.
- Existing feasibility studies.
- New or improved, affordable transportation options to increase safe mobility and connectivity for all.
- Safe accommodation for all users and integration with the surrounding land use and community context including climate, health, economy.
- Facility replacement or significant reconstruction is anticipated.

Construction applications should also address:
- Goods movement.

#3 Community-Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

Planning and Construction applications should address:
- Community-centered approach.
- Formal partnerships that reflect ties to adjacent community.
- Representative place-based management: community advisory group or advisory board, community land trust, community benefits agreements.

Construction applications should also address:
- Funding and financing from partners and (non-) Federal sources.

#4 Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity

Planning and Construction applications should address:
- Plan for equitable and resilient thriving communities.
- Community restoration, stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies.
- Creative place-making that celebrates local history and culture.
- Local inclusive economic development, including the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs).

Construction applications should also address:
- Good-paying jobs, including local hire preferences.
- High-quality workforce development programs.

Project Readiness

- A project schedule, address required approvals and permits, NEPA class of action and status, public involvement, right-of-way acquisition plans, risk and mitigation strategies.

Benefit Cost Analysis

- Summary of the BCA and the technical basis of the BCA
- Many benefits of RCP Program projects may be difficult to quantify but should be explained as well as possible, whether such benefits are quantified or unquantified.

See Reconnecting Communities – Additional Guidance page

Discussion Question – Respond in the Chat pod

What part of the application seems the most challenging to respond to?

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Do you plan to submit an application for this round?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If yes, what type of application will you submit?

- Planning Grant
- Capital Construction Grant
- Both

Technical Assistance and Resources

Technical Assistance

- Visit www.transportation.gov/reconnecting for resources, FAQs, webinars, and case studies. Subscribe for email updates!

- Grant recipients, with a priority for those serving economically disadvantaged communities, will have access to further technical assistance coordinated through DOT's new Thriving Communities Program, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to implement their projects.

- Starting in 2023, a learning academy will be stood up for prospective applicants to grants.

Technical Assistance – Who Should I Contact?

FHWA Division Offices

- https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/field.cfm

FTA Regional Offices

- https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/regional-offices

FRA Offices

- https://railroads.dot.gov/about-fra/contact-us

Contact the program

ReconnectingCommunities@dot.gov

Aleksandr Matveev - stock.adobe.com

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

Which parts of the application should DOT address in further detail on the RCP website or a future webinar?

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

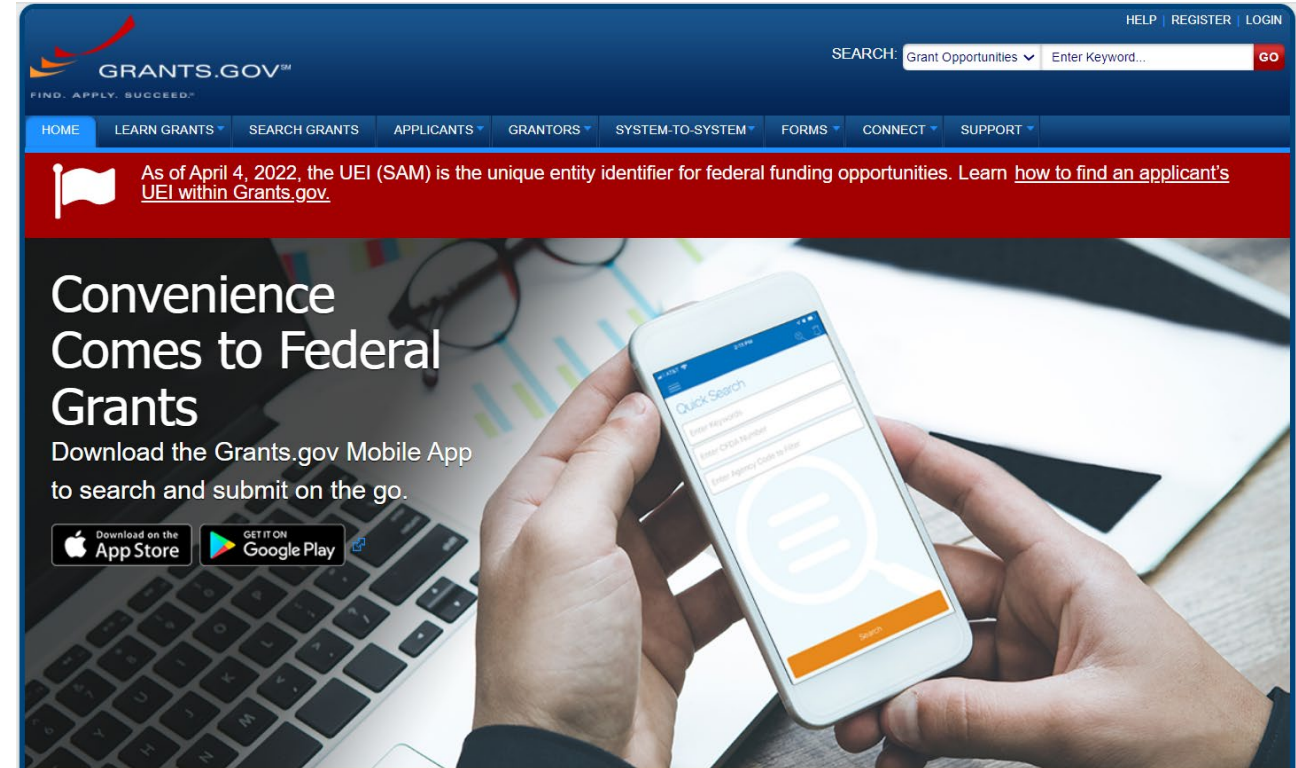# Getting Ready to Apply: Grants.gov

Prospective applicants MUST be registered in SAM.gov.

www.grants.gov provides resources for applicants, including:

- Grants 101 related materials on the overall discretionary funding process.
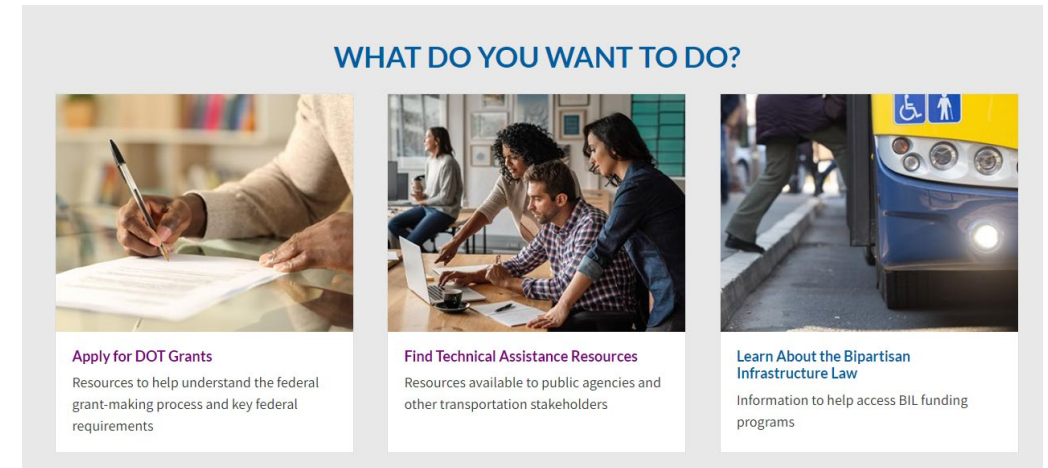- Applicant training for using the Grants.gov application process.

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

DOT Navigator

- Check our new DOT Navigator!

- The website contains basic 101 information and specific tips on applying as a smaller applicant entity across all our DOT grant programs.

https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Apply for DOT Grants
Resources to help understand the federal grant-making process and key federal requirements

Find Technical Assistance Resources
Resources available to public agencies and other transportation stakeholders

Learn About the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
Information to help access BIL funding programs

Q & A

Please type your questions in the **Q&A box**

Technical support: Webconference@dot.gov

Email us at ReconnectingCommunities@dot.gov

~ 200 emails received to date

Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on

https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities/reconnecting-communities-faqs

DOT responses in development: ADA Transition Plans; Tribal Transportation Program (and others) funds for local match; eligibility of Territories; the role of Facility Owners as applicants / recipients

Summary of Key RCP Program Information

Eligible Facilities: Highways or other transportation facilities that create a barrier to community connectivity. This includes barriers to mobility, access, or economic development, due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors.

Application Deadline: October 13, 2022, at 11:59 EDT

Planning Grants

- **Eligible Applicants**: States, units of local governments, Federally recognized Tribal governments, MPOs, nonprofit organizations

- **Eligible Activities:** Planning studies, public engagement activities, and other transportation planning activities as determined by the USDOT.

- **Award Limits**: No more than $2M

- **Match:** Total Federal Assistance not to exceed 80%

Capital Construction Grants

- **Eligible Applicants:** Transportation facility owners, partnerships between facility owners and organizations eligible for planning grants.

- **Eligible Projects:** Remove, retrofit, mitigate, or replace an existing eligible facility with a new facility that reconnects communities.

- **Award Limits:** No less than $5M, no more than 50% of total project cost.

- **Match:** Total Federal Assistance not to exceed 80%

- **Prerequisite:** All necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed.

Thank you for participating.

We will post a recording and slides on the website and notify registrants next week.

RCP Program Website: https://www.transportation.gov/reconnecting

- Includes a link to the Notice of Funding opportunity (NOFO), Frequently Asked Questions, Additional Guidance, Resources, Webinars, and more.

Application Information

- Applications are due Thursday, October 13, 2022, via grants.gov

Contact us: ReconnectingCommunities@dot.gov

Hands On Atlanta

Source: FHWA

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Active DOT Grant Opportunities

Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning (Closes July 25)
- $68 million grant program to fund integrated land use and transportation planning with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit capital investment and improve ridership, multimodal connectivity and accessibility, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations.

Bridge Investment Program (Closes August 9)
- The $12.5 billion program will help ensure that some of the nation's most important bridges remain operational, support local economies, strengthen our supply chains, improve safety, and create good-paying jobs across the country.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Program (Closes September 15)
- $6 billion grant program for localities to develop a comprehensive safety action plan, a plan aimed at preventing transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, commonly referred to as a "Vision Zero" or "Toward Zero Deaths" plan.

Railroad Crossing Elimination Program (Closes October 4)
- $5.5 billion program will fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods

Upcoming DOT Opportunities

All Stations Accessibility Program (Opens July 2022)
- $1.75 billion program to fund capital projects to upgrade the accessibility of legacy rail fixed guideway public transportation systems that meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

National Culvert Removal, Replacement and Restoration (Opens Summer 2022)
- $1 billion grant program to provide funding for projects that would improve or restore passage for anadromous fish.

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program (Opens September 2022)
- $1 billion grant program to provide funding to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart city or community technologies and systems to improve transportation efficiency and safety.

Review the broad range of upcoming USDOT NOFOs available to support reconnecting your community, as well as:
- White House Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments and Other Partners
- USDOT funding and financing opportunities