



**THRIVING
COMMUNITIES**
PROGRAM



GUIDING TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

DOT Thriving Communities Program Overview for Prospective Technical
Assistance Recipients – October 13, 2022





Thriving Communities Program Webinar Overview



Audio

- To listen via computer: Select “Computer Audio”
- To listen via phone:
 - Call: 669-254-5252
 - Webinar ID: 160 689 4119
 - Passcode: 427020
- All participants will automatically join on mute with cameras off.
- This webinar is being recorded.

Technical Support

- Email Webconference@dot.gov

Questions for Presenters

- Please type your questions in the Q&A box

Instrucciones para la traducción al español:

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





Getting to Know Our Audience



Poll Question #1: What type of organization do you represent?

- State or local government agency (or entity)
- Indian Tribe
- U.S. Territory
- Regional planning agency, MPO, COG
- Transit agency
- Philanthropic entity
- Community based organization
- Private sector organization
- Non-profit organization
- Other (please specify in the chat)



Getting to Know Our Audience



Poll Question #2: Which Community of Practice best describes your organization and/or community and its needs?

- **Main Streets** – Focused on Tribal and rural communities and the interconnected transportation, housing, community, and economic development issues they face.
- **Complete Neighborhoods** – Focused on urban and suburban communities located within metropolitan areas working to better coordinate transportation with land use, housing, and economic development.
- **Networked Communities** – Focused on those communities located near ports, airports, freight, and rail facilities to address mobility, access, environmental justice, and economic issues, including leveraging their proximity to these facilities for wealth-building and economic development opportunities.



Getting to Know Our Audience



Poll Question #3: Describe your organization's experience with DOT discretionary grant funding

- My organization has never applied for a DOT grant
- My organization has applied but has been unsuccessful in obtaining a DOT grant (i.e., has never received a DOT grant)
- My organization has been awarded one or more DOT grants at some point in the past
- I'm not sure



Today's Speakers



Arlando Teller
DOT Deputy Assistant
Secretary for Tribal
Affairs



Christopher Coes
DOT Assistant Secretary
for Policy

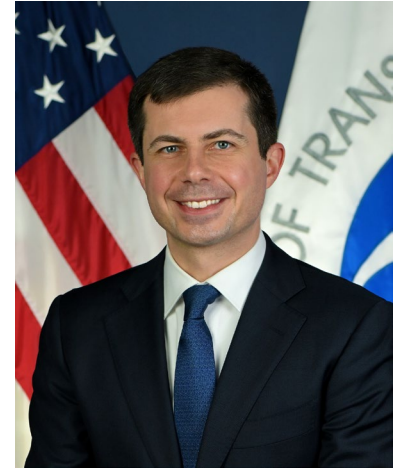


Mariia Zimmerman
DOT Strategic Advisor

Contents of this webinar do not substitute for or supplant official written communications or public solicitation contents.



DOT Thriving Communities Program Letter of Interest



"This program will help equip more local leaders with the resources, knowledge, and assistance they need to access federal funding, and modernize their infrastructure so that it serves the community well for decades to come." - U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg



Today's Agenda



- Thriving Communities Initiative overview
- Eligibility and partnerships
- How to prepare for and submit a Letter of Interest
- Evaluation and selection process
- Q&A



About the Thriving Communities Initiative



- Created by the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (PL-117-103)
DOT = \$25 million | HUD = \$5 million
- Goals of the Initiative:
 - Plan and develop a pipeline of community-driven transportation and community revitalization activities
 - Increase mobility, reduce pollution from transportation sources, and expand affordable transportation options
 - Facilitate efficient land use, preserve or expand jobs, and improve housing conditions
 - Enhance connections to health care, education, and food security, or improve health outcomes
 - Offer support to disadvantaged and under resourced communities



Thriving Communities Program Overview



- TCP will provide access to a diverse set of Capacity Builders available to work directly with communities as they build upon local assets to **co-design and advance infrastructure projects** that address critical social, economic, environmental and mobility needs
- Supports the Administration's [Justice40 Policy](#) and the DOT [Equity Action Plan](#)
- Ensures implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) supports the greatest range of communities, especially those that have greatest need
- Designed to grow community capacity to take transformative projects from concept through to delivery
- Program was designed using public input received in Request for Information (RFI) and other stakeholder outreach conducted summer of 2022.

USDOT Guide on Meaningful Public Involvement

JUST RELEASED!

A **set of promising practices** to help transportation practitioners across *all modes* incorporate meaningful public involvement into each stage of the transportation decision-making process and project lifecycle.

A **guide** to help USDOT funding recipients meet the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, planning regulations, and other existing requirements.

A **product** of [USDOT's Equity Action Plan](#) to help individuals and communities have a greater voice in transportation decisions affecting them.



<https://www.transportation.gov/public-involvement>



What's in the Public Involvement Guide?

Core content helps leaders in all modes of transportation in various roles – including policy, planning, engineering, operations, civil rights, grants and program management, environmental justice, and public involvement – understand meaningful public involvement, why it's important, and how to build organizational capacity for it.

www.transportation.gov/public-involvement



Address Critical Gaps



Meaningful Public
Involvement in
Transportation
Decision-Making



Build Public
Involvement Capacity



Measure the Success of
Public Involvement
Strategies





TCP Key Terms



- **Capacity Building:** Activities designed to **improve the ability of an organization to design and implement** the necessary technical, financial, business, data analysis, and management skills of grantees to access Federal funding, meet Federal requirements, undertake statewide and metropolitan long-range planning and programming activities, and implement other activities that broadly support project development and delivery. This includes developing long-term community capacity to sustain partnerships and engage non-governmental partners; leadership and workforce development; and program evaluation.
- **Planning:** Efforts that support inclusive and **meaningful public participation and community engagement** in developing and implementing a range of activities to identify, assess, and evaluate community needs, including but not limited to environmental reviews, data and mapping visualization, market and mobility studies, health and safety impacts, and climate vulnerability assessments. Planning assistance may involve developing or designing for a program or project that aligns with the goals of the [DOT Strategic Plan](#).
- **Technical Assistance:** Programs, processes, and resources that provide **targeted support, knowledge or expertise** to a community, region, organization, or other beneficiary to help them access and utilize Federal funding to develop, analyze, design, and deliver transportation plans and projects.



Assistance Provided to TCP Communities

- Inaugural year will provide \$21 million in expert technical assistance, planning, and capacity building services **that will be made available to select communities**
 - Separate Notice of Funding Opportunity
- At least 60% of Capacity Builder budget for direct support to communities
 - Intermediary roles: e.g., sub-granting, staffing, data and management systems





Two Opportunities to Participate



To Receive Support: Submit a Letter of Interest (LOI)

- **Deadline to apply:** December 6, 2022
- **Eligible lead applicants:** Local, state, or Tribal governments including pueblos or villages; United States territories; metropolitan planning organizations; transit agencies; other political subdivisions of state or local governments
- **Requirements:** Bring at least two key Community Partners; Identify Geographic Area of Focus (disadvantaged community); Submit LOI via fillable online webform. (No cost to participate)
- **Learn more:**
<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/information-for-technical-assistance-seekers>

To be Funded as a Capacity Builder: Respond to Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- **Deadline to apply:** November 22, 2022
- **Eligible lead applicants:** Non-profit organizations; state or local governments and their agencies (such as transit agencies or metropolitan planning organizations); Indian Tribes; philanthropic entities; other technical assistance providers.
- **Capacity Builder role:** Provide two years of direct, individualized deep-dive support to selected communities; contribute to a national Community of Practice; and provide targeted technical support
- **Learn more:**
<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/information-for-capacity-builders>



What does TCP offer to Communities?



Over a two-year period (calendar years 2023-2025), TCP recipient communities will have access to:

1. **Direct, individualized deep-dive technical assistance, planning and capacity building support** including assistance with grant applications, planning and pre-development activities and pre-engineering studies. As applicable, assistance is also provided through project development, project funding and financing, and project delivery.
2. A **Community of Practice** comprised of local and national partners to advance policies, practices and projects informed by meaningful public involvement and partnership.
3. **Targeted technical support** as part of the national TCP capacity building network.
4. **Federal liaisons** at DOT and across other federally-supported technical assistance programs to leverage and connect to opportunities supporting comprehensive plans and projects.



How to Apply: Develop and Submit a Letter of Interest



1. Form a Thriving Communities Team

- Lead applicant + at least two Community Partners

2. Identify your Community

- Identify your area of focus and verify disadvantaged community status

3. Identify your Community of Practice

- Main Streets, Complete Neighborhoods, or Networked Communities

4. Prepare a Needs and Vision Statement

5. Complete the LOI Worksheet to draft required information

6. Submit your LOI using the webform by **11:59 p.m. EST on December 6, 2022**

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/call-for-letters-of-interest-fy22



Who is Eligible to Respond to DOT Call for Letters of Interest?



- Organizations eligible to submit a Letter of Interest include the following:
 - State or local governments
 - Indian Tribes
 - United States Territories
 - Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - Transit agencies
 - Other political subdivisions of state or local government
- DOT requires lead applicant to identify at least **two key partner organizations** that:
 - Are important implementation partners;
 - Can help to supplement local capacity; and/or
 - Can ensure that those who live in disadvantaged communities have a voice at the table.
- DOT will prioritize those with limited past success; support to disadvantaged communities
- If selected as a finalist, lead applicant and two key partners **MUST** provide Letters of Commitment



Partnership is Required to Participate – Lead Applicants



Lead applicant role and responsibilities:

- The lead applicant must have an implementation role for current or future transportation projects in the identified area that will be supported through the TCP.
- The lead applicant must partner with other organizations to meaningfully engage affected communities and facilitate implementation.
- The lead applicant must identify a staff person to serve as the primary point of contact to coordinate with the assigned TCP Capacity Builder, community partners, and the Bureau throughout the entire two-year period of support.



Partnership is Required to Participate – Community Partners



Who can be a Community Partner?:

- Any entity that is eligible to be a lead applicant.
- Eligible non-governmental partners include community-based organizations, business employers or labor organizations, private sector firms or developers, educational or anchor institutions, workforce development boards, faith-based organizations, community development financial institutions, philanthropic and civic organizations, nonprofits, and community advocacy groups with ties to the focus area.
- Any of the above entities who will specifically provide local or regional technical assistance, planning and capacity building support

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/call-for-letters-of-interest-fy22



Identify a Geographic Focus Area for TCP Support



- Applicants should identify the geographic area that will receive the TCP support based upon locally understood boundaries and transportation patterns and needs.
- Focus on area that needs support (i.e., most disadvantaged or under resourced; severe transportation cost burden or lack of mobility options; safety concerns; disinvestment).
- Cannot be entire state, MPO, or transit service area.
- Can be entire Tribal area or U.S. territory, or area of specific focus.

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/call-for-letters-of-interest-fy22



Verify Disadvantaged Community Status



- Applicants are asked to verify whether their area of focus includes federally identified disadvantaged Census tracts using one or a combination of:
 - DOT's mapping tool for Historically Disadvantaged Communities
 - Areas of Persistent Poverty table
- Applicants may also indicate in their LOI form whether there are other Federally designated community development zones (for example: Empowerment Zones, Promise Zones, or Choice Neighborhoods) within the identified geographic area
- All Tribal lands and United States territories receive priority under Justice40; and are therefore provided disadvantaged community status (no need to verify)
- For more information, see the **Instructions for Identifying Disadvantaged Communities**: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/instructions-for-identifying-disadvantaged-communities>.



Identify Community of Practice

Main Streets

- Rural, Tribal and small towns not covered by an MPO
- Main street revitalization projects; road safety; rural intercity and transit; trails and transportation alternatives; basic infrastructure improvements; climate resiliency and decarbonization

Connected Neighborhoods

- Urban and suburban areas within an MPO
- Increasing transportation options; equitable TOD and walkable urbanism; decarbonization and air quality; transportation networks; transportation supportive land use and zoning

Networked Communities

- Located near intercity transportation facilities
- Public health, environmental justice, and pollution mitigation; improved connectivity; safety; decarbonization and clean energy economies; new or extended passenger rail



Develop the Needs and Vision Statements

The Needs Statement should be no more than 500 words and address:

- **Key challenges or needs**, including those caused by harmful historic or current policies that could be addressed through the TCP.
- **Technical or capacity challenges** the applicant or community has faced when seeking Federal funding or delivering transportation projects, or in trying to coordinate infrastructure projects with broader community and economic development efforts.
- Any **infrastructure projects that may be planned or underway**, and specific or anticipated challenges your team may face in funding or implementing these projects (if applicable).

The Vision Statement should be no more than 500 words and address:

- **Community and/or organizational goals** to be advanced through participation in the TCP.
- Why the **key community partners** were chosen and how the assembled team will be able to successfully work together to meet identified goals.
- Ways in which **traditionally underrepresented voices and community stakeholders will be engaged** in the technical assistance, planning, and capacity building process throughout the two-year period.



Submit the LOI through the Webform by December 6



- LOIs should be submitted via [DOT's online webform](#)
- Collaborate with partners to prepare LOI submission using the [LOI worksheet](#) provided on the TCP website
- Note additional information required for lead applicant
 - Annual budget
 - Number of staff primarily involved in transportation planning, public engagement, and/or grant application and administration
 - Previous experience with federal funding and technical assistance
- Be sure to read the entire [Call for Letters of Interest](#)
- Submit your Letter of Interest (LOI) for the TCP **no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on December 6, 2022**
- If necessary, paper applications can be requested at thrivingcommunities@dot.gov

Thriving Communities Program Letter of Interest Form

Beginning in 2023, the Thriving Communities Program (TCP) will provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities that may lack the staffing or technical expertise to scope, fund, and develop infrastructure projects that advance broader community goals. The TCP will provide two years of deep-dive assistance to selected communities to help them plan and develop a pipeline of comprehensive transportation, housing, and community revitalization activities.

Complete all required fields below to submit your Letter of Interest (LOI) for the TCP no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on December 6, 2022. Please do not submit the form more than once.

Submission of this form does not commit DOT to providing technical assistance, but to reviewing the applicant's information for eligibility and potential participation in the TCP.

OMB number: 2105-0584

Lead applicant organization

Organization name

Organization Type
(Select one)
☐ State government
☐ Local government
☐ Tribal government
☐ United States territory
☐ Metropolitan Planning Organization
☐ Transit agency
☐ Other political subdivision of state or local government

Primary staff contact name

Business email

Business phone number

TCP Community of Practice

To which TCP Community of Practice are you seeking to apply? (see sections C and E.3 of the LOI)
(Select one)
☐ Main Streets: Focused on Tribal and rural communities and the interconnected transportation, housing, community, and economic development issues they face.



How Communities will be Selected – Goals and Eligibility



ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

DOT will disqualify from consideration any LOI that:

1. Does not identify an eligible entity as a lead applicant.
2. Does not identify two key community partners.
3. Does not identify a geographic area of focus.
4. Does not verify that it has checked for disadvantaged community designation.
5. Does not submit all required LOI information.
6. Is not submitted by 11:59 PM EST on December 6, 2022

GOALS:

- DOT anticipates selecting **at least 30 communities** for the first year.
- Individual LOIs will be reviewed against others that submitted for the same Community of Practice.
- Selection also informed by parallel Capacity Builder selection process.
- Priority is to support disadvantaged and under-resourced communities.
- Key information from all eligible LOIs will be made available on DOT TCP website after selection.



How Communities will be Selected - Evaluation Criteria



1. Demonstration of Need and Vision

- Commitment to develop a pipeline of transformative transportation projects in selected communities
- Persistent challenges in accessing Federal funding
- Limited staff, budget, and/or organizational capacity or economic hardship
- Compelling case for how participation in the TCP program will support identified community and organizational goals
- Demonstrated history of disadvantage, poverty, disproportionate environmental and human health burdens due to harmful past or current policies

2. Strength of Partnerships

- How the partnerships will infuse an equity lens into technical assistance, planning, and capacity building
- comprehensive and collaborative approach among partners
- robust partnership team that includes at least one partner with demonstrated skills and experience building relationships to meaningfully engage with or represent community interests
- At least one partner is a minority-owned or other disadvantaged business enterprise, a Minority-Serving Institution, or non-profit organization located within the disadvantaged community that is identified as playing a capacity building role



How Communities will be Selected - Evaluation Criteria Cont.



3. Community Leadership

- Commitment to support community visioning and inclusive engagement strategies.
- Commitment to build and sustain partnership networks with local and/or regional transportation, economic and community development, public health and/or environmental entities, stakeholders, and civic leadership.
- Strong ties among partners to and from within the disadvantaged community that will increase potential for successful long-term implementation.

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/call-for-letters-of-interest-fy22





How Communities will be Selected – Final Selections



- Highly rated projects move forward for senior level review
- Finalists selected for senior level review notified by DOT.
 - Lead applicant and two key community partners identified in the LOI will have 10 business days to submit a **Letter of Commitment** in order to be considered for final selection.
 - **Does not require a financial commitment**, but a commitment of staff and to partnership and inclusive community engagement
 - Disadvantaged community status also verified for finalists by DOT using the tools identified in LOI



www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/call-for-letters-of-interest-fy22



For More Information



- Thriving Communities webpage: www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities
 - *Information for Communities / How to Apply / Resources including FAQs*
- All webinars will be recorded and posted to: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/webinars>
- NEXT WEBINAR: Interested in becoming a **DOT Thriving Communities Capacity Builder**? Thriving Communities Program Overview for Prospective Technical Assistance Providers (10/19/2022) at 1:00 – 2:00 pm ET. [Register here](#).
- Email questions to ThrivingCommunities@dot.gov



Questions?