



FY 2023 Thriving Communities
Program Webinar for Communities
Seeking Support

September 27, 2023



### **Today's Agenda**



- About the Thriving Communities Program
- About Thriving Communities support
- How to apply to receive support through the FY 2023 Thriving Communities Program
- Community selection process
- How to find more information
- Q&A

Webinar slides and recordings will be posted to the <u>Thriving</u> Communities Program webinars webpage!



# Opening Remarks from Christopher Coes, Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy





### **Getting to Know Our Audience**

Poll Question #1

### What type of organization do you represent?

- Local government
- State government
- U.S. territory
- Regional or metropolitan planning organization
- Tribal government
- Non-profit organization
- For-profit organization
- Philanthropy
- Academic institution
- Other



### **Getting to Know Our Audience**

Poll Question #2

### Which time zone are you joining from?

- Eastern time
- Central time
- Mountain time
- Pacific time
- Alaska time
- Hawaii time
- Other time



### **Getting to Know Our Audience**

Poll Question #3

### 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.
- I'm not sure yet.





Poll Question #4

### Please 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**





Monica Guerra
Community
Solutions
Technical
Assistance Lead,
USDOT



Kim Higgins
Policy Analyst,
USDOT Volpe
Center

### **DOT Thriving Communities Program**

"No one understands a community's unique transportation needs better than the people who actually live there—yet many small communities don't have the resources or capacity to secure the funding for infrastructure projects. The Thriving Communities Program is all about empowering communities to better access federal dollars so they can realize their own visions for better infrastructure and transportation."

- U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg



### What is the Thriving Communities Program (TCP)?



- TCP acknowledges that not all communities have the resources to access federal funding opportunities to advance transportation infrastructure, and often these are the communities who need it the most
- The Thriving Communities Program:
  - funds Capacity Builders to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building to individual communities based on their unique needs, goals, and challenges; and
  - directs Capacity Builder support to communities to build the tools, skills, and resources they need to identify and apply for federal funding opportunities and successfully implement transformative projects



### **Thriving Communities Program**



Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL-117-103):

DOT = \$25 million | HUD = \$5 million

Fiscal Year 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL-117-328):

DOT = \$25 million | HUD = \$2 million

Fiscal Year 2024 Administration Budget Request: DOT = \$100 million (not currently funded)

Program funded through the Office of the Secretary and managed by the Build America Bureau



### What is TCP?





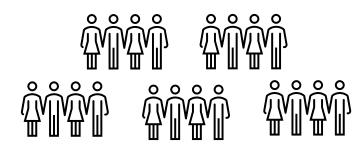


Funding through cooperative agreements

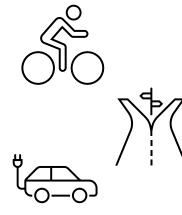
### **Capacity Builders**



Technical assistance, planning, and capacity building services







Transformative transportation projects that increase mobility, reduce pollution, create jobs, and improve health outcomes.

### **TCP Goals**



Provide disadvantaged and underresourced communities the tools
and resources to successfully plan,
fund, develop, and deliver a
pipeline of community-driven
transportation and community
revitalization activities

Increase community access to

DOT funding opportunities and
help ensure successful
implementation of funding

Facilitate community partnership and relationship building

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, and improve health outcomes

### I applied last year – has anything changed?



- If you applied last year, make sure to read the Call for Letters of Interest as some things have changed including:
  - Applicants must describe their community's experience with disadvantage using data and information from CEJST, ETC Explorer, or other local data sources
  - Applicants must identify census tract(s) relevant to their described community
  - Applicants must identify the transportation phase in which they are seeking support
  - There are more (but shorter!) narrative response requirements
  - The web form is slightly modified
- **Demand for the program is strong!** Last year, DOT received 311 eligible Letters of Interest and was only able to select 64 communities for participation in the program.
  - Applicants who apply again are re-evaluated in the context of the new applicant pool.
  - DOT will again publish a list of those who applied.

### What types of communities receive TCP support?



- TCP is intended to support disadvantaged and under-resourced communities who
  need additional tools, skills, and resources to successfully access federal funding and
  plan, develop, and deliver transportation projects that support and align with
  broader community goals
  - 84% of FY22 selected communities were majority disadvantaged
  - Refer to Call for LOI and DOT's Tools for Identifying Disadvantaged Communities to determine status of your community or selected geography to be supported
- The program is ideally suited for communities that have a specific plan or project they are seeking to move forward with TCP support, or clearly defined challenges they'd like to overcome with TCP support
- Partnership is a requirement
  - Eligible Lead Applicant must identify at least 2 community partners
  - Letters of Commitment required by lead applicant and partners if selected as a finalist
- No federal match requirement to participate in TCP

### **TCP Communities of Practice**



### An organizational framework for National Capacity Builders and communities



#### Main Streets

Rural and Tribal community revitalization; building State DOT relationship



### Complete Neighborhoods

Urban and suburban connectivity; equitable transit-oriented development



#### Networked Communities

Intermodal (rail, port, airport) neighborhoods; outside the STIP/TIP

Safety, Access, Environmental, Equity, Community Development, & Economic Impacts

### What does TCP offer to communities?



- Access to a dedicated team of Capacity Builders who provide:
  - Two years of tailored, deep-dive technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support
    - Support is based on a co-designed scope of work developed between the community and their assigned capacity builder
    - **Technical assistance** may include things like assistance with grant applications, project scoping, planning and predevelopment activities, pre-engineering studies, and other activities as determined by selected communities
    - Capacity building support may include things like financial, staffing, or resource support to lead applicants and their identified community partners to grow local capacity and build local technical expertise
      - Support includes mandatory sub-granting to communities and their partners to build lasting capacity
  - Three years of Community of Practice support
    - Selected communities participate in a **Community of Practice alongside 15-20 peer communities**, all of which are supported by the same Capacity Building Team
    - Through the Community of Practice, communities participate in **facilitated peer learning activities** to advance policies, practices, and projects informed by meaningful public involvement and partnership

### **Examples of TCP Support**



### Learn about the communities selected for participation in the first year of the TCP!

- identifying and responding to funding opportunities that align with projects that implement local community mobility, access, climate and community development goals and regional or statewide plans
- activities to support **grant writing**, **project management**, **and compliance** with grant administration requirements
- conducting project scoping, planning, and pre-engineering studies, market, and other technical analysis
- supplementing local staffing and workforce development capacity
- developing systems or structures that improve compliance with federal grant management requirements
- supporting comprehensive community planning activities that better coordinate transportation with other land use, housing, climate, health, and other infrastructure
- implementing innovative public engagement strategies
- sub-granting to local technical assistance and capacity building partners who bring local expertise and capacity
- building organizational capacity to strengthen relationships between key stakeholders that deepen regional
  engagement and collaboration, position partners for future funding opportunities, and/or support inclusive
  planning processes
- evaluating and establishing emerging transportation and planning technologies, data systems, and software

### Who is eligible to receive support through TCP?



### Eligible lead applicants include...

- States
- Local governments
- Tribal governments
- United States territories
- Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)
- Transit agencies
- Other political subdivisions of state or local governments

## And must partner with at least two key community partners, who may be...

- Any entity eligible to be a lead applicant
- Non-governmental partners like community-based organizations, private firms or developers, educational institutions, workforce development boards, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and others

### How do I apply?



### Form your Thriving Communities Team



- Identify your **lead applicant**, which
  - Must be an eligible entity
  - Must have an implementation role for current or future transportation projects in the identified area
  - 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 three-year period of support
- Identify two key community partners, which
  - Can help with implementation activities and community engagement
  - Must be different than the lead applicant
  - Can be any entity that is eligible to be a lead applicant, or eligible non-governmental partners (e.g., community-based organizations, labor organizations, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, advocacy organizations, etc.)
  - For large geographic areas, DOT will view more favorably applicants that identify more than two key partners
- If you are selected as a "finalist," DOT will request **Letters of Commitment** from the lead applicant and each of the two key community partners
  - Letters of Commitment **do not** need to be submitted with the initial application

### U.S. Department of Transportation

### What is my commitment?

There is **no financial commitment** required to receive support through TCP.

### **Lead organizations**

- Coordinate with the assigned Capacity Builder, community partners, and DOT throughout the threeyear period of performance
- Work with the assigned Capacity Builder to co-design a scope of work based on your community's needs
- Play in implementation role in connecting TCP support to the project(s)/plan(s) your community is seeking to advance, including potentially receiving and administering sub-grants
- Participate in program evaluations (~3 hours annually)
- Participate in annual convenings

### **Partner organizations**

- Work with lead organization and other partners to co-design a scope of work based on your community's needs
- Help with implementation activities and community engagement
- Assist in providing local or regional technical assistance, planning and capacity building support, including potentially receiving and administering sub-grants
- Participate in annual convenings

### Provide basic information about the lead applicant in the webform



Lead applicant organization name *	
Lead applicant organization type *	
<ul> <li>State</li> <li>Local government</li> <li>Indian Tribe</li> <li>Metropolitan Planning Organization</li> <li>Regional Planning Agency (Rural Planning Organization, Council of Governments, etc.)</li> <li>Economic Development Authority (EDA)*</li> <li>* Only EDAs that are state or local agencies, or political subdivisions of a state or local government are eligible. The EDA</li> <li>Transit agency</li> </ul>	must be created under the authority of state law.
Other political subdivision of state or local governments (please describe)	Solect the number of staff at the lead organization who work primarily on transportation planning public ongagement, and/or grant application and administration *
Lead applicant state or territory * - Select -	Select the number of staff at the lead organization who work primarily on transportation planning, public engagement, and/or grant application and administration *  O staff
	1-5 staff
Lead applicant city *	○ 6-30 staff ○ 31-50 staff ○ 51+ staff
Lead applicant's primary staff contact	
Name *	
Organization *	Describe the lead applicant'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)
Business Email *	O My organization has been awarded one or more DOT grants at some point in the past
Business Phone *	Has the lead applicant received Federally funded technical assistance in the past or is currently receiving? If yes, indicate granting Federal agency and type of technical assistance *  Yes  No

### Provide basic information about key partners in the webform



Provide organizational names of the lead applicant's two key community partners and indicate their	organization types.	
Community Partner Name *		
Type of Organization *  Government  Non-profit organization  Private sector  Philanthropy  Tribe  Other (please specify)  Is this organization a (select all that apply)		
<ul> <li>Minority-owned, woman-owned, or other disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE)</li> <li>Minority-Serving Institution (for example, a historically black college or university, a Hispanic-serving institution American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, and others)</li> <li>A community-based organization</li> </ul>	on, a Tribal college or university, an Asian	
Additional Notes		er disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) e, a historically black college or university, a Hispanic-serving institution, a Tribal college or university, an Asian
Community Partner Name *	☐ A community-based organization  Additional Notes	stander-serving institution, and others)
Type of Organization *  Government  Non-profit organization  Private sector  Philanthropy  Tribe  Other (please specify)	Sector). If applicable, please indicate if the	nunity partners, please list the names and type of the additional community partners (e.g., Acme Industries, Private organization is a minority-owned, woman-owned, or other DBE; a Minority Serving Institution; or a non-profit y that is identified as playing a capacity building role.
Other (please specify)		

### **Identify your community**



- Determine the geographic area where the program's activities and support will take place, which:
  - Should be those communities and targeted geographies where technical assistance, planning, and capacity building needs are greatest
  - Should be based upon **locally understood boundaries and transportation patterns and needs** e.g., specific city neighborhood(s) or area(s) of the county along a transportation corridor experiencing high rates of air pollution, or that are wanting to promote more development near transit stations, or where traffic safety and long-term community disinvestment challenges exist.
  - Should **not** be an entire state, MPO, or transit service area or other similar large-scale geographies; these may be better fits for the TCP-Regional Pilot program being funded through the separate Notice of Funding Opportunity
- Tribal governments or United States territories have the option to identify their entire political geography or identify a more focused area for participation in TCP
- Identify the census tract(s) that align with the described geography
  - Geographic area does not need to align exactly with census tracts

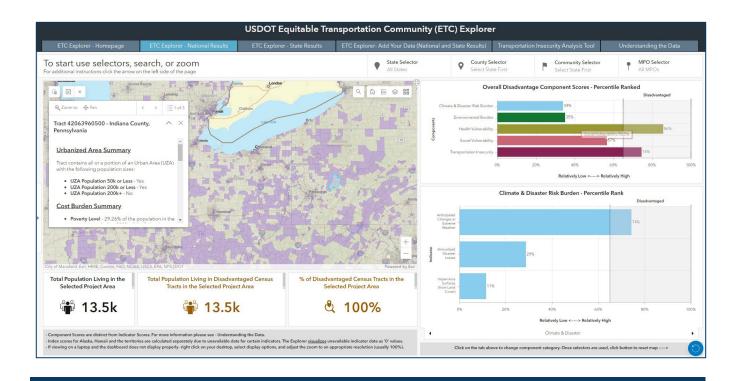


### Describe your community's experience with disadvantage

- DOT will prioritize for selection communities experiencing transportation insecurity
  or disadvantage and those with low capacity to advance transportation project
  planning, development, and delivery activities that are necessary for the
  transformative projects that will help a community thrive
- As part of the application, applicants are asked to describe the way(s) in which the proposed community experiences disadvantage using data and information from any of the following tools/sources:
  - The <u>Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)</u>,
  - Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer Tool, and/or
  - Other local sources
- Applicants should prioritize describing and demonstrating transportation-related disadvantage but may also demonstrate disadvantage in other relevant categories (e.g., health, safety, environment), if applicable and helpful to describe the existing challenges and goals.

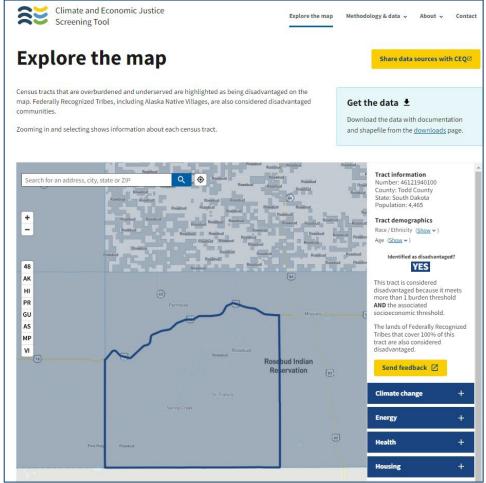


### **Using Tools to Describe Disadvantage**



View the <u>Guide to Using Data Tools for FY 2023 TCP Applicants</u> for more information on how to use CEJST and ETC Explorer for your TCP Letter of Interest!

DOT will host **office hours** to help address applicant questions related to using these tools and other application components.



### Provide information about the community in the webform



Describe the geographic area that will receive the TCP support (see section E.2 of the LOI) *	Select the type(s) of transportation infrastructure for which the lead applicant needs technical assistance (Select all that apply). *
Indicate the census tract(s) in which the geographic area falls *	□ Air (airports, aviation, drones) □ Bicycle □ Electric or autonomous vehicles □ Roads and highway
Briefly describe your community's experience with disadvantage, including supporting data or information from the Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer, Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), or other local data source. *	□ Bridge □ Pedestrian □ Ports □ Railroads □ Public transportation, including transit, bus, van pools and microtransit (e.g., ride sharing)
Please indicate which tool(s) or source(s) were used to support description of disadvantage. *	
<ul> <li>□ Climate &amp; Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)</li> <li>□ Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer Tool</li> <li>□ Other local data source (please describe in the box below)</li> <li>□ I am a Tribe or United States territory</li> <li>□ N/A: The geographic area does not include a disadvantaged community</li> </ul>	
Is the lead applicant or focus of TCP support located in a rural area? (see Appendix A of the LOI of Yes  No	for definitions) *



### Identify your transportation phase for support

- TCP support is ideal for applicants seeking support to advance a specific project or plan within the geographic area
- Applicants must describe the relevant project(s) or plan(s) and define which phase of development the project or plan is in, whether "Project Planning and Scoping," "Project Development and Design," or "Project Delivery."

#### **Project Planning and Scoping**

 Support communities in efforts to identify and scope projects that address a problem or set of challenges in the community and assist with planning activities to move these projects toward development and implementation

#### **Project Development and Design**

 Communities that have completed planning and scoping activities for one or more projects and who need assistance with completing relevant analyses and identifying and securing funding for project delivery

#### **Project Delivery**

 Support communities that have received funding for one or more projects and who need assistance administering funding to successfully deliver projects

### Indicate your phase of support in the webform



Describe the phase of development with which the lead applicant most needs technical assistance \*

Project Planning and Scoping:

Technical assistance in this phase will support communities in efforts to identify projects that address a problem in the community and complete planning activities to move these projects toward development and implementation. Examples of areas of technical assistance in this phase include, but are not limited to environmental planning, transportation planning (e.g., corridor studies, preengineering studies), visioning and goal setting, feasibility studies, and other planning and scoping activities.

Project Development and Design:

Technical assistance in this phase will support communities that have completed planning and scoping activities for one or more projects and who need assistance with completing relevant analyses and identifying and securing funding for project delivery. Specific types of technical assistance that could be provided for communities in this phase include, but are not limited to environmental analysis (e.g., NEPA); equity analysis; mapping and data analysis; Title VI, ADA, and other regulatory compliance; benefit-cost analysis; grant/funding identification and planning; grant writing; and other pre-construction activities.

Project Delivery:

Technical assistance in this phase will support communities that have received funding for one or more projects and who need assistance administering funding to successfully deliver projects. Examples of technical assistance activities that could support communities in this phase include, but are not limited to project and grant management; value engineering; right of way acquisition; coordination with housing and community development, including anti-displacement strategies; data and technology deployment; and other project delivery activities.



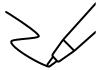
### **Identify your Community of Practice**

 Determine which Community of Practice the community seeks to participate in based upon the community size, location, needs, and priorities. Each applicant must select only one Community of Practice.

To which TCP Community of Practice are you seeking to apply? (see sections C and E.5 of the LOI) \*

- 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.







• Applicants must respond to a series of short answer questions related to Community Partnerships, Community Needs and Challenges, and Community Vision and Goals. Each question should be answered in 250 words or fewer.

#### Community Partnerships:

- Describe relationship between lead applicant and community partners, including past collaboration and vision for collaborating for TCP
- Describe lead applicant and community partners' experience building relationships to meaningfully engage with or represent community interests

#### Community Needs and Challenges:

- Describe the community's key needs and challenges, including those that may be caused by harmful past or current policies, that will be addressed through TCP
- Describe the technical or capacity challenges the applicant or community has faced when seeking federal or other funding or delivering transportation projects, or in trying to coordinate infrastructure projects with broader community and economic development efforts

#### Community Vision and Goals:

- Describe the community's plan(s) or project(s) for which TCP support is being sought to advance. If no formal project or plan exists, describe key community challenges that may be addressed through TCP support and the efforts undertaken to study the problem and potential solutions, and how those solutions support community goals.
- Describe the community and/or organizational core competencies to be gained through participation in the TCP, including the
  anticipated outcomes of longer-term capacity building for broader community goals.



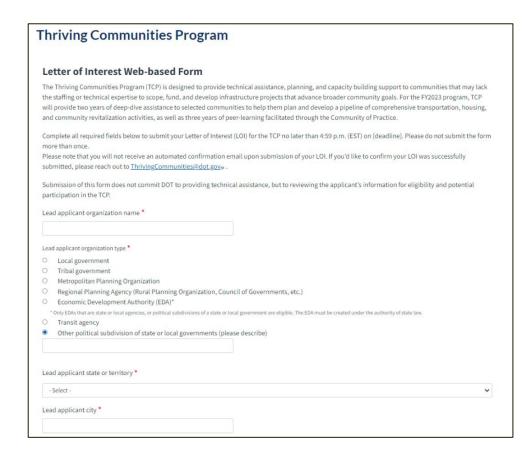
### Enter your short-answer responses into the webform

	ollowing questions in 250 words or fewer:
Community Partne	rships
ave worked collaboratively i	ween the lead applicant and the two key community partners included in the LOI, including a description of how the partners in the past (if applicable); and how they anticipate working together with TCP support to address transportation, equity, housing and or/or other economic issues in the community. *
	nd key community partners' experience building relationships to meaningfully engage with or represent community interests, lemonstrates a commitment to including people with Limited English Proficiency, tribal communities, and/or those with er-represented groups. *
Community Needs	and Challenges

### Submit your webform

https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities-program-LOI-webform

- Submit your Letter of Interest through the DOT webform no later than 4:59 p.m. ET on November 15, 2023.
  - You can use the <u>Letter of Interest worksheet</u> to prepare your responses in advance of submitting the form.
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit!
  - DOT will only accept late applications if technical challenges are documented and submitted to DOT in advance of the deadline.
  - Individual issues such as lack of internet connectivity will not be accepted as reasons for late application.
  - **We're happy to help!** Contact us with your technical issues at ThrivingCommunities@dot.gov or (202) 366-7738.
- Don't worry if you don't receive a confirmation email
  - Applicants will not receive automatic confirmation emails upon submission of their LOIs. If you'd like confirmation that your LOI has been received, contact <u>ThrivingCommunities@dot.gov</u>.



# How are communities selected?



### U.S. Department of Transportation

### How are communities selected?

- Eligible Letters of Interest will undergo **Merit Review**, which will evaluate applicants based on their descriptions of Community Partnerships, Community Needs and Challenges, and Community Vision and Goals
- "Finalists" will be asked to submit **Letters of Commitment** from the lead applicant and two key community partners. Finalists who do not submit Letters of Commitment will not be selected for participation in TCP.
- "Finalists" will be evaluated by a **Senior Review Team**, which will consider each Letter of Interest's merit score and will consider additional factors:
  - Diversity of geographies, community types, and lead applicant types.
  - Communities and/or lead applicants and community partners with the greatest demonstrated need and/or lowest level capacity and resources
  - Communities that share similar challenges, project elements, and/or goals as other applicants for technical assistance that can fit well into a specific Community of Practice
  - Alignment with regions and communities identified for priority consideration through other federal technical assistance initiatives
- Final selections are made by the Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, who may consult the Secretary of Transportation on those selections.



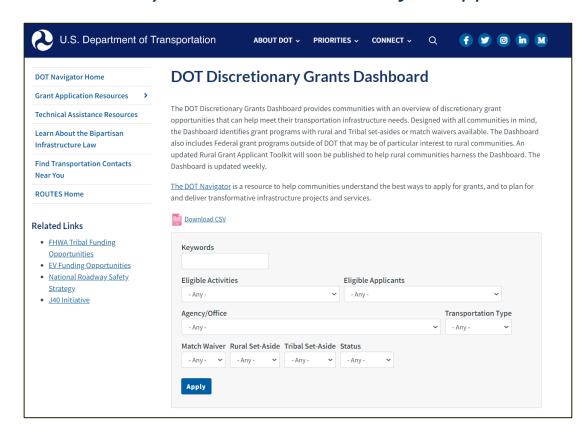


- Visit the <u>Thriving Communities Program website</u>
- Read the <u>Call for Letters of Interest</u>
- Check out the <u>communities that were selected for FY 2022</u>
- Get in touch!
  - Email us at <u>ThrivingCommunities@dot.gov</u>
  - Call us at 202-366-7738



### What if I'm looking for direct grant funding?

DOT offers many opportunities for communities to receive grants for planning and construction — visit the DOT Discretionary Grants Dashboard to find opportunities that meet your needs!





https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard



### **U.S. Department of Transportation**

