U.S. Department of Transportation

FY 2023 Thriving Communities Program Overview for Prospective Capacity Builders

September 20, 2023

THRIVING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Today's Agenda

- Introduction to the Webinar

- About the Thriving Communities Program

- Thriving Communities National Capacity Builders Program (TCP-N)

- Thriving Communities Regional Capacity Builders Pilot Program (TCP-R)

- How to Apply

- Q&A

Webinar slides and recordings will be posted to the [Thriving Communities Program webinars webpage](#)!

This webinar is intended for organizations interested in **providing** technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities.

If you're interested in **receiving** support through TCP, join our webinar on September 27 at 3:00-4:00 p.m. ET.

Register here:
https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/webinars

Getting to know our audience

Poll Question 1

What type of organization do you represent

- State government agency (or entity)
- Local government agency (or entity)
- Indian Tribe
- U.S. Territory
- Regional planning agency
- Transit agency
- Academic institution
- For-profit organization
- Non-profit organization
- Other

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Getting to know our audience

Poll Question 2

Are you interested in applying to be a Capacity Builder for DOT's Thriving Communities Program? (select only one)

- Yes, as a lead applicant to TCP-N
- Yes, as a lead applicant to TCP-R
- Yes, as partner organization
- I don't plan to apply
- Not sure yet

Getting to know our audience

Poll Question 3

Which time zone are you joining from?

- Eastern time

- Central time

- Mountain time

- Pacific time

- Alaska time

- Hawaii time

- Hawaii-Aleutian time

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Community Solutions Technical Assistance Lead, USDOT

DOT Thriving Communities NOFO

"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

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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
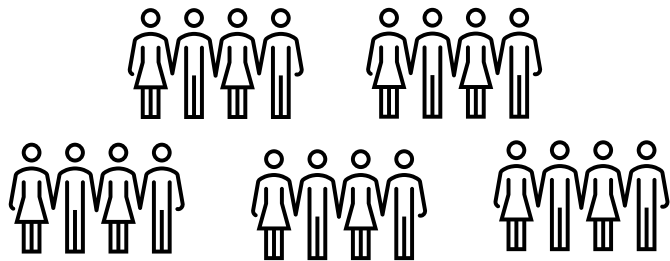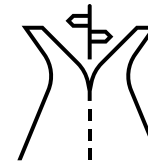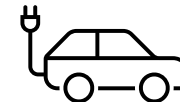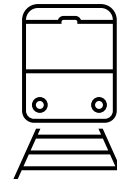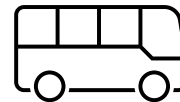
Funding through cooperative agreements

Capacity Builders

Technical assistance, planning, and capacity building services

Communities

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

TCP Goals

Ensure that disadvantaged and under-resourced communities have 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**

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, and improve health outcomes

Two Options for Capacity Builders to Participate

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For FY 2023, DOT is offering two separate* Capacity Builder opportunities:

Thriving Communities National Program (TCP-N)

- Receive $4-5 million from DOT through a cooperative agreement

- Provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to 15-20 communities located across the U.S.
  - Communities are selected and assigned to Capacity Builders by DOT

- Manage a Community of Practice comprised of 15-20 assigned communities

Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Program (TCP-R) (NEW for FY23!)

- Receive $1-2 million from DOT through a cooperative agreement

- Provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities located within your jurisdiction or service area
  - Communities are selected by the applicant

- Facilitate peer learning among recipient communities and other communities within your jurisdiction or service area

DOT is soliciting applications for both the TCP-N and TCP-R Programs under a single NOFO

What's New for FY 2023 TCP?

- Key changes from the FY 2022 TCP include:
  - Two opportunities for Capacity Builders: TCP-N and TCP-R
  - Three-year period of performance (two-year POP in 2022)
    - Provides transition time in third year for reporting and evaluation
  - Reductions to the maximum award amounts from up to $6 million to up to $5 million per National Capacity Builder and increases the number of communities served by each Capacity Builder from 10-15 to 15-20.
  - Changes to the requirements for Targeted Support to supported communities, including a new requirement to subgrant at least 20% of budgets to community recipients
  - Revised merit criteria and priority considerations

- **If you applied last year, don't use the same application!**
  - Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) carefully before developing your application

Who is eligible to apply for TCP-N?

- Eligible applicants include:
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Philanthropic entities
  - Other technical assistance providers

- DOT **strongly encourages** applicants to apply as part of a team of eligible organizations
  - DOT will prioritize teams that include one or more of the following organization types: disadvantaged business, small business, Historically Black College or University, other Minority Serving Institution, HUBZone, a woman-owned or service-disabled veteran-owned small business as defined by SBA.
  - One applicant on the team will need to be identified as the Lead Recipient

What kind of support will TCP-N Capacity Builders provide?

- **Two years** of individualized, tailored support to selected communities based on their unique challenges, needs, and goals. This may include activities such as:
  - identifying and responding to funding opportunities
  - grant writing
  - conducting project scoping or planning
  - supplementing local staffing
  - developing systems to improve compliance
  - supporting comprehensive planning
  - implementing innovative public engagement

  *As part of this support, Capacity Builders are **required** to subgrant at least 20% of their budgets to assigned communities and their partners to facilitate long-term capacity building.*

- **Three years** of facilitated peer learning opportunities across their assigned Community of Practice

TCP-N: Supporting a TCP Community of Practice

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

Who are ideal candidates to be a TCP-N Capacity Builder?

- Organizations with **demonstrated capacity** to provide technical assistance and address community needs

- Organizations with **experience working with disadvantaged communities** and the types of communities aligned with the relevant Community of Practice (e.g., urban, rural, Tribal)

- Organizations committed to **advancing community-driven priorities**, developing community relationships, and building innovative partnerships

- Organizations that can **begin work quickly** while meaningfully engaging and working **in partnership with communities**

- Organizations with the capacity to assist communities **located in different geographies** across the U.S.

- Organizations that can cover costs prior to federal **monthly reimbursements**

What types of communities will TCP-N Capacity Builders support?

DOT will select recipient communities and pair them with selected Capacity Builders
- Communities are those that are disadvantaged and/or low-capacity and require support to advance plans or projects that may be in the planning/scoping, design/development, or delivery phase – selected through separate Letter of Interest

Recipients of each Capacity Builder's technical assistance must also form partnerships:

- Eligible lead applicants: Local, state, or Tribal governments including pueblos or villages, United States territories, metropolitan planning organizations/rural transportation planning organizations, transit agencies, other political subdivisions of state or local governments

- **PLUS** at least **two other** organizations that:
  - Are committed community implementation partners,
  - Can help to supplement local capacity, or
  - Can support bringing disadvantaged communities and underrepresented voiced to the table

Examples of Capacity Builder Support (FY2022)

- Community Assessments (via survey & on-site)

- Tailored Community Work Plans

- Grant Writing Support

- Capacity Building Workshops (in person and/or virtual)

- Outreach Strategy Development

- Strategic Advising on Projects and Processes

- Partnership Building and Community Engagement

- Sub-granting to lead applicant and/or community partners ($500,000-$1,800,000 across cohorts in FY22)

- Facilitating Peer Learning across Communities of Practice cohort

Thriving Communities Regional Capacity Builders Pilot Program (TCP-R)

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Who is eligible to apply for TCP-R?

- Eligible lead applicants include:
  - State governments and their agencies
  - Indian Tribes
  - Local governments and their agencies
  - Governmental planning or transportation organizations working at the regional or metropolitan level
  - Regional planning non-profit organizations

*DOT **strongly encourages** applicants to apply as part of a team of eligible organizations*

Who are ideal candidates to be a TCP-R Capacity Builder?

- Governments or organizations with demonstrated relationships with the disadvantaged or under-resourced communities selected for support

- Governments or organizations with an established regional planning presence

- Governments or organizations with demonstrated capacity to take on additional support for communities

- Organizations that can begin work quickly while meaningfully engaging and working in partnership with communities

Local governments are eligible to apply to be TCP-R Capacity Builders; however, only local governments with a regional presence and capacity to take on support to additional communities at a regional or statewide scale should apply.

Local governments interested in receiving technical assistance should explore the Letter of Interest option for communities seeking support.

What kind of support will TCP-R Capacity Builders provide?

- **Two years** of individualized support to **communities they select** that may involve activities such as:
  - identifying funding opportunities that align with transportation goals
  - supporting predevelopment planning and scoping of projects
  - designing and implementing meaningful public involvement activities
  - establishing pooled resources and/or innovative funding tools that increase community investments in transportation, housing, environment, and health
  - activities to support grant writing, project management, and compliance with grant administration requirements

  *As part of this support, Capacity Builders are **required** to subgrant at least 20% of their budgets to assigned communities and their partners to facilitate long-term capacity building.*

  DOT will prioritize applicants who describe robust meaningful public engagement activities.

- **Three years** of facilitated peer learning opportunities for selected TCP communities and other communities within their jurisdiction

What types of communities will TCP-R Capacity Builders support?

- TCP-R applicants select communities within their jurisdiction/service area that will receive support (if selected)
  - Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment from proposed communities
  - No minimum/maximum number of communities required

- Communities should be disadvantaged and/or low-capacity and require support to advance transportation plans or projects
  - Support to these communities should also advance alignment of transportation projects with regional transportation goals, as well as goals related to housing, health, environment, economic development, and other related issues
  - Applicants must describe how and why they selected their proposed communities (including their use of tools like CEJST and/or ETC Explorer)

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Applying to be a TCP Capacity Builder

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Application Submission Content

Program Design and Substance

- Executive Summary
- Narrative Responses to Individual Merit Criteria
- Letters of Commitment (TCP-R only)
- Staffing Plan
- Budget Proposal

Forms and Supporting Documentation

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
- Organizational Documentation (if applicable, depending on your organization type)
- Organization Descriptions
- Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Documentation (if applicable)

See Section D of the NOFO for more detailed information on content and form for each element. Appendix A provides an application checklist.

Narrative Elements (Merit Criteria)

Rating Factor	Sub-Factors (Narrative Components)
Approach to Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	Technical Assistance Approach
	Capacity Building Approach
	Community of Practice Management Approach
Teaming Arrangement	Role of Partner Organizations
	Demonstrated Staff Expertise
Proven Success	Experience Supportive of Technical Assistance Approach
	Experience Supportive of Capacity Building Approach
	Experience Supportive of COP Management Approach
Program Management and Evaluation	Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables
	Program Evaluation and Assessment

See Section E of the NOFO, starting on page 30 for more information on specific merit criteria and distinctions between the TCP-N and TCP-R programs.

Rating Factor 1: Approach to TA and Capacity Building

- **Approach to technical assistance** *(priority sub-factor)*
  - **TCP-N:** describe approach to supporting 15-20 communities in three phases – Project Planning and Scoping, Project Development and Design, and Project Delivery
  - **TCP-R**: identify/describe proposed communities and how they were selected and describe approach to supporting these communities based in individual needs

- **Approach to capacity building**
  - describe approach to building lasting capacity in selected communities, including how this approach may adapt and how applicants will use the third year of the POP to transition communities for long-term success

- **Approach to Community of Practice Management**
  - **TCP-N**: describe approach to facilitating peer learning across 15-20 communities within assigned Community of Practice
  - **TCP-R:** describe approach to facilitating peer learning across selected communities and other communities within the region

Rating Factor 2: Teaming Arrangement

- **Role of Partner Organizations**
  - Describe role of each organization on proposed Capacity Builder team, including their individual skills, knowledge, and expertise
  - Describe how each organization's expertise will be applied to the technical assistance and capacity building approach

- **Demonstrated Staff Expertise**
  - Describe individual staff members' relevant experience and areas of expertise and how they will contribute to the technical assistance and capacity building approach and overall TCP goals

- **Experience Supportive of Technical Assistance Approach** *(priority sub-factor)*
  - demonstrate prior experience and successes related to the tasks and activities described in the technical assistance approach, clearly identifying which organization(s) have undertaken the activities described.

- **Experience Supportive of Capacity Building Approach**
  - demonstrate prior experience and successes related to the tasks and activities described in the capacity building approach, clearly identifying which organization(s) have undertaken the activities described.

- **Experience Supportive of Community of Practice Management Approach**
  - Applicants must demonstrate prior experience and successes related to the tasks and activities described in the Community of Practice Management (TCP-N) or peer learning approach (TCP-R), clearly identifying which organization(s) have undertaken the activities described.

Rating Factor 4: Program Management and Evaluation

- **Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables**
  - include a proposed set of tasks and schedule detailing the expected start and end date of tasks and major deliverables described in the proposed approach
  - clearly delineate and describe tasks and deliverables expected in the first two years of targeted community support, including peer learning support, and the third year of peer learning, evaluation, reporting, and transition activities

- **Program Evaluation and Assessment**
  - include specific performance metrics under each of the specific work tasks describing how applicants will track, analyze, and report on the results and outcomes of the technical assistance, planning, and capacity building they are providing to individual communities and to the Communities of Practice / network of peer communities they are supporting
  - performance metrics may be qualitative and/or quantitative and should be described in terms of well-defined goals that align with the goals of TCP.

Additional Considerations and Priorities

These considerations are not factored into merit scores, but are provided to the Senior Review Team for consideration

- Priority Considerations
  - Experience with priority geographies
  - Diversity of Capacity Builder teams (for TCP-N only)
  - Leveraging of additional funding sources

- Additional Considerations
  - Soundness of proposed budget

Budget Requirements and Considerations

- TCP **does not** require applicants to provide a non-Federal match; however, applicants that demonstrate an ability to leverage other funding and resources to provide support to amplify program impact and support Thriving Communities Program goals and objectives in the long-term will be prioritized

- DOT will view more favorably applicants that allocate larger amounts of their budget for **"targeted support"**
  - The **20% or more of the budget** allocated for sub-granting to communities counts as "targeted support"

- For TCP-R, DOT will view more favorably applicants with **robust public involvement approaches**, considering their budget allocations for these activities

- No more than **25% of the proposed budget** may be allotted to program administration and grant management activities (e.g., workplan development, invoicing, team meetings, evaluation report)

- All applicants are expected to plan for **at least one visit to each assigned community per year** for the first two years of the period of performance.

- Applicants **cannot** budget to earn a profit from the Federal funding

Application Technicalities

- NOFO is available on [TCP website](#) and on Grants.gov (search Opportunity Number DOT-TCP-FY23-01)
- Applications **MUST** be submitted via grants.gov
  - Exceptions are made only for grants.gov systems issues documented in advance of the submission deadline
- Before you submit, you **must** be registered in Grants.gov – **don't wait until the last minute!**
  - Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number by registering with the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.SAM.gov;
  - Create a Grants.gov username and password; and
  - The E-Business Point of Contact (POC) at your organization must respond to the registration email from Grants.gov and login at Grants.gov to authorize you as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Please note that there can be more than one AOR for an organization.

- Applications are due on **November 28, 2023** (no later than 4:59 PM ET)

Teaming Opportunities

- DOT will post a list of potential Capacity Builder applicants to facilitate teaming between interested organizations

- **If you're interested in being included on the list, email ThrivingCommunities@dot.gov and include:**
  - Name of key contact
  - Email address of key contact
  - Name of organization
  - Location of organization (city, state, zip code)
  - Community of Practice you're interested in applying to support
  - Interest in TCP-R or TCP-N

Additional Resources

DOT Thriving Communities Website

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities

Apply to be a Capacity Builder on Grants.gov

- Opportunity Number: DOT-TCP-FY23-01
- Assistance Listing: 20.942

DOT TCP General Inquiries

thrivingcommunities@dot.gov

(202) 366-7738

Webinar Recordings

www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/webinars

Other Resources and FAQs

https://www.transportation.gov/grants/thriving-communities/resources

Questions?

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