

Transportation Alternatives Program Federal Funding Flow

Under the federal FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) Act, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is the major source of federal funding for walking, bicycling, Safe Routes to School, and trails. Each year, more than \$800 million in TAP funds is divided among all state Departments of Transportation (DOT). **Thanks to TAP funding, communities enjoy safer, more convenient places to walk, bike, and be physically active, and kids are able to safely walk and bike to school.**



TAP funds can be used for: Sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and trails, as well as Safe Routes to School projects. Under TAP, Safe Routes to School projects enjoy benefits that regular walking, bicycling, and trail projects do not – funding can be used for not only infrastructure (physical improvements to streets and sidewalks), but also non-infrastructure (such as education and encouragement programs). TAP can also fund Safe Routes to School coordinators, both at the state level and locally.



Examples of TAP-funded projects: Facilities for walking, biking, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, Safe Routes to School education programs, school sidewalk improvements, streetscape improvements, and recreational trails.



Funding is competitively awarded to eligible applicants: Local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts and local education agencies, tribal governments, other local and governmental entities with oversight of transportation or recreational trails, nonprofit organizations.

What Happens to a State's Transportation Alternatives Program Funds?

Recreational Trails Set-Aside

Funding comes off the top of each state's TAP funds to "develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses." These funds cannot be transferred to other uses.

After taking out the Recreational Trails Set-Aside, the remaining TAP funds are divided within a state according to a funding formula that is set out in the FAST Act. The money is divided up this way to give communities of all sizes a chance to compete for TAP money.



50% of the remaining funds are awarded by the state DOT around the state.

50% of the remaining funds are awarded through competitions based on community size, with funds proportionately divided into the following pots based on population.



States can choose to transfer these funds away from walking and bicycling, for example, to highway projects.

State DOT-run competition for communities of any size anywhere in the state.

MPOs run competitions in urban areas over 200k population.

State DOT-run competition for communities with less than 5k pop (rural, small communities).

State DOT-run competition for communities with 5k-200k pop (mid-sized communities).



Projects must be awarded through a competitive process. Most TAP projects require a 20 percent match from the applicant, though in certain states, the match is lower.



State DOTs can run one competition for all their pots of TAP money, as long as they make sure that the right percent of funds go to smaller communities.



State DOTs and MPOs can run one big competition for all TAP projects or can choose to have a separate Safe Routes to School competition.

Ways that state DOTs and MPOs can support Safe Routes to School:

- Set-aside a percentage of the TAP funds specifically for Safe Routes to School. Suggested: 18% (roughly the percentage of federal active transportation funding that went to Safe Routes to School under the old federal transportation bill, before it was combined with other walking, bicycling, and trails programs).
- Hold a separate competition for Safe Routes to School programs from the rest of the TAP funds.
- Prioritize Safe Routes to School projects and programs in application scoring.
- Prioritize funding for Safe Routes to School projects and programs in communities with significant concentrations of people with low-income, communities of color, and communities with high bicycle and pedestrian injury and fatality rates.
- Host pre-application workshops to build capacity of communities to develop successful applications.
- If state funds are available, waive matching requirement for low-income communities.



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