

Transportation Alternatives Program Federal Funding Flow

Under the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 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 \$1.4 billion in TAP funds is divided among all state Departments of Transportation (DOT) to award projects to local communities. **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, small metropolitan planning organizations, 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 up to give communities of all sizes a chance to compete for TAP money.



41%

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



59%

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



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

States can choose to transfer these funds away from walking and bicycling, for example, to highway projects. To transfer funds a state must first show that it held a competition, provided robust technical assistance, and there were not enough suitable projects.

MPOs run competition in urbanized areas with populations over 200k.

State DOT-run competition for communities with populations between 50k - 199,999.

State DOT-run competition for communities with populations between 5k - 49,999.

State DOT-run competition for communities with populations under 5k.

States may use up to five percent of available TAP funds (after suballocation described above) to provide technical assistance to improve access to TAP funds and improve efficiency of project delivery. This can be achieved through staffing or contracted out to other state agencies, private sector entities, or nonprofit organizations.



State must consider project location and impact in high-need areas as defined by the State, such as low-income, transit dependent, rural, or other areas and prioritize projects that will benefit high-need areas. 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. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created new flexibilities for the local match requirement, including that the match can be averaged across the program rather than at the project level, and HSIP funds can be used as the match for TAP projects.



State DOTs can run one competition for all their TAP money, as long as they make sure that the right percent of funds are awarded based on community size.



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

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

- Use TAP funds to hire a full-time statewide Safe Routes to School coordinator, either within DOT, another state agency, or contracted with an outside organization.
- Set-aside a percentage or dollar amount of the TAP funds specifically for Safe Routes to School competition.
- Prioritize Safe Routes to School projects and programs in TAP application scoring.
- Award both Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure programs with TAP funds.
- 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.
- Use HSIP as match for Safe Routes to School projects.