

# GRANT ALERT

September 20, 2023

## Thriving Communities Program (TCP)

DEADLINE	PROGRAM NAME & LINK
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Capacity Builders</b> <b>Tuesday, November 28, 2023, 4:59 p.m. EST</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Letters of Interest</b> <b>Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 4:59 p.m. EST</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Applicants must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting the final application; the process usually takes 2-4 weeks to complete.)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Thriving Communities Program - Capacity Builders   US Department of Transportation</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="#">Thriving Communities - Letters of Interest   US Department of Transportation</a></p>
DESCRIPTION	
<p>This discretionary grant program was authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to ensure that disadvantaged communities adversely or disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health policy outcomes have the technical tools and organizational capacity to compete for federal aid and deliver quality infrastructure projects that enable their communities and neighborhoods to thrive. The TCP facilitates the planning and development of transportation and community revitalization activities and provides tools to ensure that under-resourced communities can access the funding provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.</p> <p>Within the program, there are two separate response opportunities (individual application processes):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Capacity Builders - Eligible applicants <b>TO PROVIDE</b> technical assistance, planning, or capacity building services to help disadvantaged communities. There are two distinct programs:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. National Program (TCP-N) - Provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support.</li> <li>b. Regional Pilots Program (TCP-R) - Coordinate assistance and support to advance and align infrastructure goals and projects.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Letters of Interest (LOI) – applicants eligible <b>TO RECEIVE</b> TCP support.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Will receive assistance as a voluntary program with no obligation to apply for DOT grants.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>What’s New this Round?</b> This FY 2023 NOFO updated and revised some key aspects of the program. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the period of performance to three years, with the first two years focused on deep-dive individual community support, peer learning, and collaboration and the third year focused on evaluation, reporting, community transitioning, and resource sharing.</li> <li>• The inclusion of a separate Regional Pilot Program.</li> </ul>	

- 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.
- Revisions to the merit rating criteria, including how applicants should respond to each criterion.
- Changes to the requirements for targeted support to supported communities, including a new requirement to subgrant at least 20 percent of the budget to community recipients.
- Option to renew FY 2023 selected Capacity Builder cooperative agreements for a second round of funding for FY 2024

## ELIGIBILITY

### Applicants

#### Capacity Builders

##### TCP-N

- Non-profit organizations
- Philanthropic entities
- other technical assistance providers including academic institutions or private sector organizations with a demonstrated capacity to develop and provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building to a range of communities located across multiple states and regions

##### TCP-R

- State government
- Local government
- Tribal government
- Governmental planning, economic development, or transportation organization working at the regional or metropolitan level
- Regional, Tribal or Statewide planning nonprofit organization

#### Letters of Interest

- State government
- Local government
- Tribal government
- Political subdivision of a state or local government
- United States Territory
- Transit agencies
- Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)
- Regional planning organizations

### Projects

#### Capacity Builders

Based on the three Communities of Practice Cohorts (Main Streets, Compete Neighborhoods & Networked Communities), development of:

- Technical assistance
- Planning
- Capacity building

**TCP-N** - assisting individual communities to successfully advance projects identified through meaningful public involvement that deliver a broad set of transportation, climate, equity, housing, economic, and other community benefits.

**TCP-R** - to advance transformative infrastructure projects in disadvantaged communities or jurisdictions located within a specific state, Tribe, or metropolitan region that face barriers to implementation.

#### Letters of Interest

Identify which **one** of the three Communities of Practice they would like to receive support:

- **Main Streets** – Focused on Tribal and rural communities and the interconnected transportation, housing, community, and economic development issues they face.
- **Complete Neighborhoods** – Focused on comprehensive strategies to enhance community connectivity, improve coordination of land use, housing, economic development, and transportation, and to accelerate innovation specifically for disadvantaged communities or neighborhoods.
- **Networked Communities** – Focused on advancing equity by addressing environmental injustice, mobility, pollution, public health, economic development, and land use planning through meaningful public involvement for

communities, particularly those that are lower income and/or have a higher proportion of people of color, that reside near multimodal hubs.

## FUNDING

### General

- \$25 million to be obligated by September 30, 2025.

### Capacity Builders

- Anticipated to award at least three separate cooperative agreements to TCP-N Capacity Builders and potentially as many as five.
  - Range of award will be between \$4 million to \$5 million for each cooperative agreement.
- Anticipated to award at least four separate cooperative agreements to TCP-R Capacity Builders.
  - Range of award will be between \$1 million to \$2 million for each cooperative agreement.

### Letters of Interest

- Technical assistance to at least 45-60 communities.
- Participation in DOT’s TCP is voluntary and does not obligate the awardee or recipients to apply for DOT grants or credit programs in the future, nor does participation offer preferential treatment to future applications or a guarantee of Federal funding.

### Cost-Sharing

- No cost sharing or matching is required as a condition of eligibility under this competition. US DOT will fund up to 100 percent of eligible project costs.

## APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

### Capacity Builders

DOT will review applicant for both the TCP-N and TCP-R programs based on the below rating factors. Each application will be assigned an overall score of “Highly Recommended,” “Recommended,” or “Not Recommended” based on the ratings for each of the four Rating Factors.

- **Rating Factor 1:** Approach to Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
  - Technical assistance approach
  - Capacity building approach
  - Community of practice management approach
- **Rating Factor 2:** Teaming Arrangement

### Letters of Interest

Applicants are required to respond to a series of short questions to describe their community partnerships, needs and experience with disadvantage, and anticipated outcomes of receiving TCP support. These short responses will be evaluated as part of the Merit Review. Applicants will prepare answers to the following prompts:

- Community partnerships
- Community needs and challenges
- Community vision and goals

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Role of partner organization</li> <li>○ Staffing plan and demonstrated staff expertise</li> <li>● <b>Rating Factor 3: Proven Success</b></li> <li>○ Experience supportive of technical assistance approach</li> <li>○ Experience supportive of capacity building approach</li> <li>○ Experience supportive of community of practice management approach</li> <li>● <b>Rating Factor 4: Program Management and Evaluation</b></li> <li>○ Schedule of milestones and deliverables</li> <li>○ Program evaluation and assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Each eligible LOI will be evaluated based on the following evaluation criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strength of lead-partner relationship</li> <li>○ Experience with meaningful public engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community needs and challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community challenges aligned with TCP support</li> <li>○ Evidence of technical or capacity challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community vision and goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Description of TCP project(s) or plan(s)</li> <li>○ Outcomes of capacity building support</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Complete Letter of Interest Worksheet and LOI Web-based Submission Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">LOI Worksheet</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">LOI Web-based Submission Form</a></li> </ul>
--	--

## PROJECT TIMEFRAME

The estimated period of performance is three years, with obligation of funding by September 30, 2025 for both TCP-N and TCP-R.

For TCP-N, the first two years of the period of performance must be dedicated to providing targeted, deep-dive support to assigned communities in accordance with the scopes of work co-designed with communities and conduct Community of Practice activities during the first two years of the period of performance.

For TCP-R, the first two years of the period of performance must be dedicated to providing support to the communities identified in the application, in accordance with the activities described in the application. The third year of the period of performance will be focused on program evaluation and reporting, transition activities for communities, and collecting and sharing lessons learned and best practices from the first two years of support.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

### Letters of Interest

Those submitting an LOI for TCP assistance must identify a lead applicant and an additional two key community partners. A key partner is one who can help with implementation activities and community engagement and must be a different organization than the lead applicant. For example, this partnership could include another government agency that may have regulatory, planning, or funding tools it can contribute. The partnership could be a church, local planning firm, or artist collaboration that can assist with inclusive community engagement activities. It could also be a local business owner or health center from the identified focus area that will represent business and employer interests during planning processes. It may be a community development corporation, private developer, or neighborhood advocacy group that brings community finance and housing perspectives.

Applicants may assemble a team of more than two community partners if doing so supports the team’s ability to meaningfully engage with the community to identify, plan, and deliver comprehensive and transformative transportation projects. For those applicants working in larger communities or metropolitan areas, DOT will view more favorably LOIs that include more than two partners and those with demonstrated skills, relationships, and experience engaging with or directly representing community interests.

## PENNDOT ROLE

### PennDOT Emphasis

The Thriving Communities Program makes available the opportunity to provide or receive additional technical assistance in planning and capacity building support to advance transportation and community revitalization activities. The Thriving Communities Program provides the opportunity for underserved communities to leverage the knowledge base of the Communities of Practice which will be formed by the program. This opportunity is extremely important as it aids communities who lack the staffing or technical expertise in scoping, funding, and developing infrastructure projects. Providing the tools for local communities to drive innovation will strengthen infrastructure projects that address critical social, economic, environmental and mobility needs across the Commonwealth.

### PennDOT Support

PennDOT recognizes the potential this program has to significantly help communities and individuals and will consider how the Department might assist or collaborate with applicants to advance and strengthen regionally supported competitive proposals.

PennDOT assistance may include offering data and subject matter expertise as available.

PennDOT will also collaborate with other state agencies where there may be an interest in this program.

**The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is November 1, 2023 for Letters of Interest and November 14, 2023 for Capacity Builders.**

Transportation Federal Funding Opportunities  
Resource Account:

[RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov).