

GRANT ALERT

July 7, 2023

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program

| DEADLINE | PROGRAM NAME & LINK |
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| <p>Thursday, September 28, 2023, 11:59 p.m. EST <i>(Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online proposal submission system used by USDOT.)</i></p> | <p>Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program US Department of Transportation</p> |
| DESCRIPTION | |
| <p>This discretionary grant program purposes are to advance community-centered transportation connection projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, that improve access to daily needs such as jobs, education, healthcare, food, nature, and recreation, and foster equitable development and restoration, and to provide technical assistance to further these goals.</p> <p>The Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program provides technical assistance and grant funding for planning and capital construction to address infrastructure barriers, restore community connectivity, and improve people’s lives.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Program provides technical assistance and grant funding to improve walkability, safety, and affordable transportation access through context-sensitive strategies for improving community connectivity; mitigating or remediating negative impacts on the human or natural environment; and assisting economically disadvantaged or underserved communities with planning and capacity building activities.</p> <p>What’s New this Round? The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program has been combined with the new Neighborhood Access and Equity Program to form the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will be considered for both programs with one grant application. • Updated definition of an economically disadvantaged community – applicants encouraged to use the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). | |
| ELIGIBILITY | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Applicants</p> <p>RCP Community Planning Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government • Local government • Tribal government | <p style="text-align: center;">Projects</p> <p>RCP Community Planning Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement activities, including community visioning or other place-based strategies for public input into project plans. |

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Non-profit organization

RCP Capital Construction Grants

- Owner(s) of the eligible facility proposed in the project for which all necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed
- A partnership between a facility owner and any eligible RCP Community Planning Grant applicant

NAE Community Planning, Capital Construction, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants

- State government or territory of the US
- Local government
- Political subdivision of a state
- Tribal government
- Special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Non-profit organization or institution of higher education that has entered into a partnership with an eligible entity above and is applying for a grant for planning and capacity building activities in disadvantaged or underserved communities

- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible dividing facility to reconnect communities.
- Other planning activities in advance of the project.

RCP Capital Construction Grants

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment / preconstruction; permitting activities including the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

NAE Community Planning Grants

- Public engagement activities, including community visioning or other place-based strategies for public input into project plans.
- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible dividing facility to reconnect communities.
- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible burdening or dividing facility, and predevelopment activities for eligible NAE Capital Construction projects.
- Other planning activities in advance of the project.
- Planning and capacity building activities in disadvantaged or underserved communities.
- Assess transportation equity or pollution impacts.
- Administer or obtain technical assistance related to other eligible planning activities listed above.

NAE Capital Construction Grants

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment / preconstruction; permitting activities including the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

NAE Regional Partnerships Challenge Grant

- Activities included under Community Planning and Capital Construction Grants through partnerships of at least two entities from local governments/tribal governments, Metropolitan

Planning Organizations, State DOTs, and non-profit, private, and community partners to tackle persistent, regional equitable access and mobility challenges.

FUNDING

General

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

- Up to \$198 million for FY 2023
 - Up to \$148 million for Capital Construction Grants
 - Award minimum of \$5 million
 - Up to \$50 million for Community Planning Grants
 - Award maximum of \$2 million

Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program

- Up to \$3.155 billion for FY 2023
 - Up to \$2.57 billion for Capital Construction Grants
 - Up to \$450 million for Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants
 - Up to \$135 million for Community Planning Grants

Cost-Sharing

RCP Community Planning Grants

- Grants may be used for up to 80% of total eligible project costs.

RCP Capital Construction Grants

- Grants may be used for up to 65% of total eligible project costs.
- Other Federal funds may be used to bring the total Federal share up to a maximum of 80% of the total cost of the project.

NAE Community Planning, Capital Construction, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants

- Grants may be used for up to 80% of total eligible project costs.
- Projects in a disadvantaged or underserved community do not require a local match.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Project Criteria

All RCN Applications will be evaluated by:

- Merit Criteria
 - Equity and Environmental Justice
 - Access
 - Facility Suitability
 - Community Engagement and Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships
 - Equitable Development
 - Climate and Environment
 - Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity
- Project Readiness
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
 - Required for RCP Capital Construction Projects
 - Not necessary for Community Planning Grants or NAE program grants, but will be reviewed if submitted

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

RCP Program grant funds are available until expended. NAE funds are available to be obligated until September 30, 2026. However, to ensure that projects are started and completed efficiently, DOT encourages all projects awarded with FY 2023 RCN Program funds to be obligated by the same date of September 30, 2026.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online proposal submission system used by USDOT, at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/rcn_planning/signup for Community Planning Grants and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants with planning activities, and at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/rcn_capitalconstruction/signup for Capital Construction Grants and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants with construction activities.

PENNDOT ROLE

PennDOT Emphasis

PennDOT, primarily through PennDOT Connects, places a high priority on the relationship between improved transportation and better communities. This includes but is not limited to integrated transportation and land use planning and efforts to ensure that mobility and access support the many facets of quality of life. Transportation planning and programming and project development should maximize community interests to the greatest extent possible.

PennDOT Support

Transportation Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Account:

RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov.

PennDOT will consider providing support for regionally supported grant proposals as applicable. PennDOT support may include offering data and subject matter expertise as available.

The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is September 14, 2023.