

GRANT ALERT

July 25, 2022

Reconnecting Communities

DEADLINE	PROGRAM NAME & LINK
<p>Thursday, October 13, 2022, 11:59 p.m. EST</p> <p><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>Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program US Department of Transportation</p>
DESCRIPTION	
<p>This discretionary grant program was authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for the purpose of reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including barriers to mobility, access, or economic development. The RCP provides grant funding to address infrastructure barriers, restore community connectivity, and improve peoples’ lives.</p> <p>The variety of transformative solutions to knit communities back together can include public transportation, infrastructure removal, pedestrian walkways and overpasses, capping and lids, linear parks and trails, roadway redesigns and complete streets conversions, and main street revitalization.</p> <p>The RCP program supports two types of grants: Planning Grants and Capital Construction Grants.</p> <p>What’s New this Round? N/A. This is the first funding round for the Reconnecting Communities Grant Program.</p>	
ELIGIBILITY	
<p style="text-align: center;">Applicants</p> <p>Planning Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government • Units of local government • Federally recognized tribal governments • Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) • Non-profit organizations <p>Capital Construction Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The owner(s) of eligible facilities proposed in the project. Owners of an eligible facility, for the purpose of submitting a grant application, may submit a joint application with a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State; 	<p style="text-align: center;">Projects</p> <p>Eligible Facilities</p> <p>The proposed project must address an “eligible facility,” which is defined as a highway or other transportation facility that creates a barrier to community connectivity, including barriers to mobility, access, or economic development, due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors. Eligible facilities include: limited access highways, viaducts, any other principal arterial facilities, and other facilities such as transit lines, rail lines, gas pipelines, and airports.</p>

- Unit of local government;
- Federally recognized tribal government;
- MPO; and/or
- Non-profit organization

USDOT encourages joint applications from place-based partnerships headed by a lead applicant. A lead applicant may submit no more than three applications. If a lead applicant submits more applications, only the last three received will be reviewed. The designated lead applicant will serve as the recipient to administer and implement the project. If the applicant seeks to transfer the award to another entity, that intention should be made clear in the application and a letter of support from the otherwise eligible, designated entity should be included in the application.

Applicants without experience in USDOT funding requirements may opt to jointly apply with a partner that has an established financial relationship with USDOT and has knowledge of federal grant administration requirements.

Planning Grants

- Studies to assess feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing facility to restore community connectivity.
- Conducting public engagement including community visioning or other place-based strategies for public input into project plans.
- Other transportation planning activities or associated needs in advance of the project.
- Technical assistance for sponsor support and capacity-building.

Capital Construction Grants

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies.
- Predevelopment / preconstruction.
- Permitting activities, including completion of NEPA process.
- Removal, retrofit, or mitigation of an eligible facility.
- Replacement of eligible facility with a new facility.
- Delivering community benefits and mitigation of impacts.
- Eligible Capital Construction projects include those for which all necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed.

Other Eligibility Requirements

All projects must be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan, be included in the Metropolitan Long-Range Plan (if applicable), and in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and/or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, Tribal Transportation Improvement Program or equivalent, as applicable, prior to obligation of award.

Transit projects must be included in the investment prioritization of the relevant Transit Asset Management Plan (TAMP) by the time of the obligation of the award.

FUNDING

General

\$195 million is expected to be awarded for FFY 2022.

Cost-Sharing

- The federal share of a Planning Grant may not exceed 80% of the total cost of the project. The

	<p>local share of a Planning Grant is no less than 20% of eligible activity costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The federal share of a Capital Construction Grant may not exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. The local share of a Capital Construction Grant is no less than 50% of eligible activity costs. <p>Federal assistance other than the RCP Program award may be used to partially satisfy the match requirement as long as total federal assistance (all federal sources) does not exceed 80% of the total cost of the project.</p> <p>Local matching funds may include non-federal sources such as state, local, philanthropic, and/or private funds. In-kind or cash match is allowed as long as those contributions meet federal legal requirements.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Planning Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50 million available (including up to \$30 million cumulatively for FFY 2022–2026 to provide technical assistance and capacity-building support). Minimum award of \$100,000, up to a maximum of \$2 million. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Capital Construction Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$145 million available. Minimum award of \$5 million (no maximum). <p><i>USDOT understands that the amount allocated for Capital Construction Grants in FFY 2022 may not cover the recipient’s full request. If a Capital Construction Grant recipient does not receive the full funds requested, the funded RCP project will receive a “Reconnecting Extra” designation which encourages and facilitates RCP Program recipients’ pursuit of supplemental DOT discretionary program funding. If a project designated ‘Reconnecting Extra’ applies for funding under the FFY 2023 – FFY 2026 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) or Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant (MPDG) programs and is determined eligible, DOT will deem the RCP project application “Highly Recommended” subject to evaluation with the relevant program’s merit criteria. The USDOT will still consider the RCP project’s alignment with the relevant program’s requirements and any project risks before making any award to that RCP project. Projects with this designation that apply for USDOT financing programs, such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program, will be considered for assistance to the extent permissible under law.</i></p>
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APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

<p style="text-align: center;">Selection Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merit Criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement Mobility and Community Connectivity 	<p style="text-align: center;">USDOT Equity Action Plan</p> <p>The RCP program will be implemented in accordance with the USDOT Equity Action Plan, Executive Order 13985, Executive Order 12898, and Executive Order 14008, and other equity-related objectives</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships ○ Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity ● Project Readiness ● Benefit Cost Analysis (for Capital Construction Grants only) 	<p>(e.g., housing supply, rural and tribal communities) while also promoting USDOT Strategic Plan priorities (safety, economic strength and global competitiveness, climate and sustainability, transformation).</p>
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PROJECT TIMEFRAME

RCP Program grant funds are available until expended. However, to ensure that projects are started and completed in an efficient manner, USDOT encourages all projects awarded with FFY 2022 RCP Program grant funds to be obligated by September 30, 2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

<p style="text-align: center; color: #008000;">Data Collection</p> <p>Performance indicators used in reporting should align with project goals for at least two of the merit criteria. USDOT funds may be used for data collection and performance reporting and should be accounted for in the applicant’s budget. USDOT will work with grant recipients to determine the most appropriate indicators and metrics to assess project benefits before the grant agreement is established. Areas of measurement will relate to: 1) mobility; 2) access; 3) safety; 4) environmental impacts; 5) congestion; 6) economic development; 7) quality of life; and 8) community engagement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #008000;">Reporting</p> <p>Recipients must submit various reports during the project period, as well as annual reports that address both project administration and the overall benefits delivered to the project area. Five years after the project is complete, Capital Construction Grant recipients should submit a report fully documenting outcomes achieved in association with the RCP Program project. Additional reporting conditions and requirements may apply.</p>
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PENNDOT ROLE

<p style="text-align: center; color: #008000;">PennDOT Emphasis</p> <p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #008000;">PennDOT Support</p> <p>Transportation Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Account: RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov.</p> <p>PennDOT will consider providing support for regionally supported grant proposals as applicable. PennDOT support may include offering data and subject matter expertise as available.</p> <p>The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is September 29, 2022.</p>
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