

REGION V TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

602 1st Avenue South
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-576-7183 ext. 212

April 3, 2024

Enclosed is Region V's Iowa Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program application package. This package includes requirements for funding, the application, and defines what types of projects are fundable. You may also contact slentsch@midascog.net for a copy of the application.

The application shall be used to submit a Region V TA Set-Aside Project proposal. The application shall also be used to submit a revision to projects in the current Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Please review the requirements carefully.

For Federal FY 2027 approximately \$840,000 in regional TAP Program funding is available, and in Federal FY 2028, an additional \$290,000 in regional TAP Program funding is available.

The application deadline is **May 10, 2024 at 12:00 PM**. Before submitting an application, please make sure all information is included. Incomplete applications will be rejected.

Projects identified by the region to be included in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are not guaranteed funding.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Lentsch with MIDAS Council of Governments at slentsch@midascog.net or 515-576-7183 ext. 212.

Sincerely,

Adam Clemons
Chairperson

Enclosure

REGION V's IOWA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

** Items in italics are qualifications/restrictions/requirements that Region V requires in addition to Iowa DOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program requirements.*

Projects funded by the TA Set-Aside program will be carried out under the same rules and procedures as a highway project on a federal-aid highway. This subjects all projects to, among other things, Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage requirements and other federal-aid requirements applicable to projects on federal-aid highways (e.g., Build America, Buy America, planning, environmental review, letting, etc.).

Eligible Activities

Eligible projects must meet one or more of these categories:

1. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq).
2. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
3. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.
4. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
5. Community improvement activities, which include but are not limited to:
 - a. Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising.
 - b. Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.
 - c. Vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control.
 - d. Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under this title.
 - e. Streetscaping and corridor landscaping.
6. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to:
 - a. Address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in Title 23 sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329; or
 - b. Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

Ineligible Activities

- Promotional activities.
- Routine maintenance and operations.
- General recreation and park facilities, playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions, or other facilities that do not serve an eligible TA Set-Aside purpose.

Eligible Applicants and Project Sponsors

Each application must identify an eligible project sponsor. The project sponsor is the entity that will assume all responsibility for implementing the project, guarantees the necessary funds are delivered to the project, and is accountable for the use of program funds. Projects involving more than one entity must identify a single project sponsor that will be required to enter into a project agreement with Iowa DOT and will ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. The project sponsor must also register in the System for Award Management (SAM) and provide a Uniform Entity Identifier (UEI) to Iowa DOT.

The following entities are eligible to apply for Iowa's TA Set-Aside funding:

- Local governments.
- Regional transportation authorities.
- Transit agencies.
- Natural resource or public lands agencies.
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools.
- Tribal governments.
- Nonprofit entities.
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a State agency that the State determines to be eligible).
- A non-eligible project sponsor may partner with an eligible co-sponsor in applying for funds.

Projects Involving Primary Highway System Right-of-Way

Projects that will encroach on Primary Highway System right-of-way will require review of plans, submission of all applicable permit applications, and are subject to final approval by the applicable Iowa DOT District Office staff prior to being allowed to proceed to letting. To ensure advanced collaboration between the project sponsor and the Iowa DOT District Office, applications require a letter from the Iowa DOT District Engineer offering consent for the application to be submitted. All requests for such a letter should be submitted at least three weeks prior to the application deadline to the applicable District Transportation Planner.

Eligible Costs

Funds awarded through the TA Set-Aside program are provided to project sponsors on a reimbursement basis and are not provided as a lump sum or cash payment in advance of costs being incurred. After a project has been awarded funds, a project sponsor will work with Iowa

DOT to request Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) authorization of specific costs. This is also called obligation of funds. Although funds may be awarded or committed, no costs can be incurred until after those specific costs have received FHWA authorization. Costs incurred prior to FHWA authorization are not eligible for reimbursement. Following FHWA authorization, the project sponsor will receive notice from Iowa DOT and then may begin approved project activities and incur costs. Any costs incurred prior to receipt of a notice to proceed from Iowa DOT are not eligible for reimbursement.

After FHWA authorization/obligation, many project specific costs are eligible. Preliminary and final engineering work including project development, acquisition of right-of-way, environmental work, cost estimates, construction plans, and architectural work are eligible after approval is granted by the Iowa DOT. Utility relocations as permitted under Iowa Code, construction engineering, and construction costs would also be eligible. Any administrative, maintenance, or general planning studies would not be eligible. Upon award, each project will be assigned a dedicated contact person within the Iowa DOT who will work with the project sponsor through each step of the project development process.

Local Match

TA Set-Aside program funds may pay for up to 80 percent of eligible project costs or up to the approved grant maximum, whichever is less. A non-federal local match is required to pay for a minimum of 20 percent of the remaining project costs; however, the project sponsor is ultimately responsible for all costs beyond any TA Set-Aside funds awarded to the project and for 100 percent of all costs determined to be ineligible for TA Set-Aside reimbursement. Federal funds cannot be used as matching funds, unless expressly permitted by law. Matching funds may include grants from other state agencies or programs if their laws and rules allow.

**** Project must have a minimum estimated total cost of \$100,000.***

There are significant federal project processing requirements that come with federal funds. These requirements translate into expenditures of time and money on the parts of both the sponsoring entity and Iowa Department of Transportation. Project sponsors can “Bundle” projects together to meet this minimum. Entities may want to consider using joint powers agreements for implementing bundled projects, although it is not required as long as there is one lead entity to sponsor the project.

**** Cost Estimates must be signed by a licensed professional.***

An itemized breakdown of project costs for construction projects must be reviewed and signed by a licensed professional. Equipment applications must have signed price quotes attached.

**** Projects must be consistent with the regional Long-Range Transportation Plan.***

All projects included in the Region V Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and funded by Iowa’s TA Set-Aside Program funds must be consistent with Region V’s Long Range Transportation Plan.

**** If acquisition is necessary for your project, support from the property owners is needed.***

In your application narrative under Project Readiness, you need to include a statement that you spoke to the project owner(s) about the project, and they are not opposed to the project. You may

also include a letter from the property owner stating they are aware of the proposed project and are not opposed to it. This is NOT an agreement to purchase property, that needs to come later in the process after Environmental Clearance is received from NEPA.

**** Attendance at Transportation Alternatives Subcommittee Project Review Meeting Required.***

Applicants for a TA Set-Aside project must attend the Region V Transportation Alternatives Subcommittee Project Review meeting to present their project. An exact date/time for the meeting hasn't been set yet but it will occur the week of May 13, 2024.

Regional Priorities

- Land procurement should be a priority for all proposed trails. Projects that have already acquired the land needed for development have higher priority. (Units of government should secure the land when it becomes available through a local or statewide foundation which will then be ready when regional acquisition and development money is available.)
- Projects included in the State Trails Plan and/or the Region V Bicycle, Trails and Pedestrian Plan have higher priority.
- Projects should have connectivity to other recreational areas (i.e. another trail, a park, etc.)
- Trails that extend existing trails and are connecting to trails listed in the State Trails Plan and/or Region V Trails Plan have higher priority.
- Loop trails within a city or park area should have lower priority.
- Projects that are ready to “go”, to be constructed have higher priority.
- High-Need Areas – projects impacting rural areas will have a higher priority.

Ranking Criteria for Transportation Alternative Projects

The following are factors that will be considered when ranking of enhancement projects for the transportation improvement program:

- Accessibility to the public
- Appropriateness of project concept, design or phasing
- Compatibility with adjacent land use
- Connectivity to existing facilities
- Cost in relation to public benefit
- Environmental and social impacts
- Inclusion in a state, regional, or local plan. Trails projects must be in the Region V Bicycle, Trails and Pedestrian Network Plan
- Level of local support
- Predicted usage
- Relationship to transportation facilities
- High-Need Area (rural)

Federal Requirements, Standards, or Guidelines

Since Iowa's TA Set-Aside program is funded with federal-aid highway program funds, awarded projects are subject to certain federal laws, regulations, and procedures including but not limited to:

1. Public Involvement. Involvement of the public, including the adjacent property owners, in the development of the project.

2. The Uniform Act. Compliance with the Uniform Relocation Property Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (the Uniform Act) for the acquisition of easements or the purchase of land in fee simple. This includes fair treatment practices and may include the completion of an appraisal on parcels to be acquired. This requirement applies whether or not federal funds will be used for the acquisition costs.
3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires verification the project is not harmful to the environment including, but not limited to:
 - Noise (before and after construction).
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources (disturbance to resources of archaeological or historical significance).
 - Water Quality.
 - Wetlands
 - Floodplains
 - Farmland Protection
 - Hazardous Waste Sites
4. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which allows for reasonable access to the project for persons with disabilities.
5. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and Minority Business Enterprises (MBE). Verification must be received that efforts have been made to solicit bids from disadvantaged and minority business enterprises.
6. Davis-Bacon Wage Requirements. Projects must comply with Davis-Bacon wage requirements, which state that contractors will conform to federal minimum wage requirements.
7. Competitive bidding requirements. Construction projects are required to be let through the Iowa DOT or according to procedures for a public letting as per Iowa Code 26.3 through 26.13.
8. Build America, Buy America Act (BABA). Part of the IIJA, this legislation requires that iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in a federal-aid project are produced in the United States.
9. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). This legislation forms the basis for a wide array of other laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, and age. It prohibits discrimination in all programs or activities of any LPA that is a recipient of any federal-aid financial assistance; even those programs or activities that do not directly benefit from such assistance.
10. Accounting Procedures. The project sponsor shall establish and maintain for the project either a separate set of accounts or accounts within the framework of an established accounting system, in a manner consistent with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.302, 200.303, and 200.305. All costs charged to the project, including any approved services contributed by the project sponsor or others, shall be supported by properly executed payrolls, time records, invoices, contracts, or vouchers describing in detail the nature and propriety of the charges. The project sponsor shall ensure that all checks, payrolls, invoices, contracts, vouchers, orders, or other accounting documents pertaining in whole or in part to the

project are clearly identified with a grant agreement number, readily accessible, and to the extent feasible, kept separate from documents not pertaining to the project.

11. Permits or Other Approvals. It is the project owner/sponsor's responsibility to obtain all local, state, or federal permits or other approvals that may be required as a result of the activities proposed as part of the project.

Official Endorsement

All applications must be accompanied by an official endorsement from the project sponsor. For cities, counties, or other political subdivisions, this endorsement must be in the form of a fully executed resolution by the elected body or board, as applicable. It must provide written assurance the project sponsor will adequately maintain the completed project for its intended public use following project completion (for most construction projects, this will be a minimum of 20 years) and acknowledge the intent of the project sponsor to provide all funds required to complete the project beyond any TA Set-Aside award.

Resources

FEDERAL-AID PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCIES

The Project Development Guide provides a condensed overview of the federal-aid project development process with links to more detailed information by topic. All applicants should read and understand the content of this document and are encouraged to ask any questions ahead of submitting their application.

https://iowadot.gov/local_systems/publications/im/federal-aid-guide.pdf

INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUMS TO LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCIES

Instructional Memorandums (IMs) are organized by topic and provide detailed background and instruction for project sponsors. Once awarded, the project sponsor will work directly with their Iowa DOT contact to move through the processes described in the IMs and complete their federal-aid project. The applicability of an individual IM may be briefly described in the IM title and more explicitly in the contents section at the beginning of each IM.

https://www.iowadot.gov/local_systems/publications/im/imtoc.pdf

IOWA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM GUIDANCE

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside or TAP) Program is a new iteration of the former Transportation Enhancements (later Transportation Alternatives) program that has been in existence since 1991.

https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/pdf/IIJA-TAP-Guidance.pdf

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications are to be submitted electronically to: slentsch@midascog.net

Applications are due by 12:00 PM on May 10, 2024 (No exceptions)

PLEASE NOTE:

- ◆ Submit electronically a scanned copy of the application with original signatures.
- ◆ All parts of the application must be completed and all attachments included or the application will not be considered for funding.
- ◆ Applicants will receive only the amount granted by the Region V Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) or 80% of the project (whichever is less), unless a revised application is received and approved by the TAC.
- ◆ It is not the intention of the MIDAS staff to complete these applications for the various applicants. However, if there are any questions about the application please contact:

Stacy Lentsch
515-576-7183 ext. 212
slentsch@midascog.net

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTING A GRANT APPLICATION FOR IOWA’S
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDING AND
COMMITMENT OF MATCHING FUNDS**

WHEREAS, the Iowa Transportation Alternative Program provides federal funding for various Transportation Alternative eligible projects as listed on the Region V TAP application; and

WHERE AS, the City Council/Board of Supervisors of the City/County of _____, Iowa hereby endorses the proposed _____ project located at _____, _____, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, the City/County wishes to apply for funding from the Iowa Transportation Alternative Program for funding for the above project; and

NOW, THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF _____ / _____ BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT:

1. The City/County hereby commits matching funds as required by the Iowa Transportation Alternative Program.
2. The City/County hereby commits to adequately maintain the completed project for its intended public use for a minimum of 20 years following project completion.
3. The City/County hereby authorizes _____ to sign the project application on behalf of the City/County and carry the project to completion if it is approved for federal funding.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS ___ DAY OF _____, 20__.

AYES: _____

NAYS: _____

OTHER: _____

____ (Mayor/Chairperson)

Attest:

____ (City Clerk/Auditor)