

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Background and funding level

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) provides funding under MAP-21 for alternative transportation programs and projects including on-and-off road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects.

The FAST ACT replaced the MAP-21 TAP with a set-aside of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funding for the Transportation Alternatives (referred to as TA set-aside). These TA set-aside funds include all previous projects and activities that were previously eligible under MAP- 21 TAP so it will continue to be referred to as the TAP.

Each project is eligible to receive no more than 80% of the project costs in federal funds, with the remaining 20% as matching funds by the applicant.

Based on experience from the Transportation Enhancement Program (TE) and the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS), a high and low limit for project funding was set. The minimum amount in the most recent round was set at \$400,000 (\$320,000 fed.) and a maximum amount was set at \$1,000,000 (\$800,000 fed.)

Eligibility criteria

The TAP requires a competitive process to select projects for funding. In 2014, NHDOT created the Transportation Alternatives Program Advisory Committee (TAPAC). This group of stakeholders developed criteria that were used to evaluate TAP projects. Six criteria were developed and are as follows:

- Safety
- Potential for success
- Socioeconomic benefits
- RPC/MPO ranking
- Multi-modal connections
- Project connectivity

Application cycle and process

An application process was developed based on the above criteria and distributed to all potential applicants. The TAP application and grant award process is currently held on a 2 –year cycle. NHDOT selects an independent scoring committee with one member of the TAPAC and they used Decision Lens software to score and rank the projects. The Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) are given the applications for their regions for them to score and rank. Those rankings are used

for the RPC/MPO ranking criterion. Federal rules identify dedicated population regions that have to be factored into the final selection. The four categories are as follows:

- Population >200,000
- Population 5,000 to 200,000
- Population <5,000
- Flex (can be used anywhere in state)

The final project selections made sure all population categories were accounted for. As projects begin, funds from the specific population categories will be used first and if additional obligations are needed will be taken from the Flex category.

Note: The population categories are based on a census model provided by FHWA. They are not based on the actual population of the individual town or city.

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