

FREQUENTLY ASKED TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA) PROGRAM QUESTIONS

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

What is the matching requirement?

The federal government reimburses 80% of eligible construction related expenditures. The local agency must pick up the remaining 20% and all preliminary engineering, design and right-of-way expenses.

What constitutes the local agency's 20% match?

Only hard cash can be used to match TAP funding as the in-kind (soft) match option is no longer beneficial to local agencies.

Can TAP funds be used as a match for other federal-aid funding?

No, there is no legislation that allows TAP funds to be used as a match for other federal funds except where explicitly stated in law.

Are TAP funds allowed to be used for traditional highway projects?

No, TAP funds can only be used for the non-traditional projects listed in the eligible categories and related to surface transportation.

Can I construct a vehicular round-about with TAP funding?

No, roadway modifications exclusive of pedestrian crosswalks are not eligible for TAP funding.

Can TAP funds be used to develop parks and recreational areas?

No, these activities are recreational in nature and not related to surface transportation.

Can TAP funds be used for planning documents?

With the exception of eligible archeological activities, planning documents and/or master plans are not considered an eligible activity.

May a local agency charge a user fee?

Generally, fees should not be charged for access to activities or projects developed with public TAP funds.

If a bicycle/pedestrian facility is funded with TAP funds, can All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) utilize the facility?

No, motorized vehicles are not permitted on such facilities unless they are an approved mobility device or maintenance vehicle.

Do TAP project have to be on or adjacent to a state or federal route?

No

Can a TAP funded project be created solely for recreational purposes?

No, all TAP projects must be primarily for transportation purposes with the understanding that some mixed-use is appropriate.

Can TAP funds be used for maintenance of the project after completion?

No, the local agency is responsible for all future project maintenance and upkeep.

Are there any requirements for meeting the needs of the disabled on TAP projects?

Yes, you must follow all current ADA regulations as referenced in the Public Rights-of-Way Accessible Guidelines <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/streets-sidewalks/public-rights-of-way/proposed-rights-of-way-guidelines>

Is the local agency required to attend any type of training prior to beginning work on an awarded TA project?

Yes, the local agency must attend the Local Government Guidelines and Right-Of-Way training course (see <http://www.tn.gov/tdot/topic/local-programs-training>) and CEI training.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who can apply for TAP funding?

Applicants can only be local governments (cities or counties) or state natural resource or public land agencies. Local governments may work with other public agencies or private organizations, but the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) will only contract with a local government or applicable state agency.

How long do I have to come up with my local match?

Funding for all phases, including the required 20% local cash match for the construction phase, must be available at the time of application.

Do I submit my local cash match to TDOT?

No, this is a reimbursable grant program. Project sponsors must pay all costs up-front and request reimbursement for only the eligible construction expenditures.

Is there a minimum or maximum project dollar amount?

No, currently there are no minimum or maximum award amounts. However, the average TAP project award is approximately \$350,000.00. In order to be cost effective, projects should exceed \$250/300K and rarely will any single phase be awarded in excess of \$1M.

Can a local agency submit more than one application?

Yes, but the local agency must submit a priority list with each application.

Can a local agency submit an application if they have another TAP project currently under development?

Yes.

If a TAP project is canceled or withdrawn can the local agency re-apply at a later date?

Yes, there is no penalty for canceling a previously awarded project.

Will non-awarded applications be automatically rolled-over to the next funding cycle?

No, the local agency must update the application and re-submit in the next funding cycle.

IMPLEMENTATION

Will TDOT design and construct my TAP project?

No, all TAP funded projects are to be locally managed, designed and competitively bid.

Can a local agency use its own forces (employees) to construct the TAP project?

No, all TAP funded projects must be competitively bid and awarded to the lowest responsive bidder.

Can the local agency simply award the construction contract to a local contractor?

No, the TAP project must be competitively bid and awarded to the lowest responsive TDOT pre-qualified bidder.

Is there a timeline for project development?

Yes, the project must obtain construction authorization from TDOT within three (3) years of the award date and it must be completed within five (5) years of the award date.

If construction bids come in below the funding award, can the local agency add items to the project?

Only bid quantities can be increased through the approved change order process. Any funding remaining after project completion will revert back to TDOT for re-distribution.

Can the local agency bid the project with add alternates or deductions?

No, TDOT will not approve any construction cost estimates or bid specifications with add alternates or deductions.

Does there need to be any public involvement?

Yes, every phase of project development, including the application stage, must include appropriate public involvement.

What steps are involved in implementing an awarded TAP project?

All TAP projects, regardless of complexity or funding amount, must follow the state and federal regulations outlined in the Local Government Guidelines Manual http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tdot/attachments/LGG_Manual.pdf

If the local agency already owns the right-of-way for the project, do they still have to go through the right-of-way certification process?

Yes, the local agency must prove to TDOT that they own the right-of-way and complete a Local Public Agency form with the applicable TDOT Regional Right-of-Way Office.

Where does a local agency find a list of minority newspapers?

The local agency will need to contact TDOT's Small Business Development Office at 615-741-3681 for a current listing of these papers.

Will my project be assessed a DBE goal:

DBE goals should be assessed on all federally funded projects. However, all projects over \$500,000 in total construction funding must be assessed a goal to be met or exceeded by the contractor when bid for construction.

How does a local agency calculate their DBE goal?

TDOT's Small Business Development Office has developed a tutorial for the local agency in calculating an appropriate DBE goal. This tutorial can be found at <http://www.tn.gov/tdot/topic/small-business>

Where does a local agency get a listing of TDOT's certified DBE's?

The TNUCP certified list can be found at <https://www.tdot.tn.gov/APPLICATIONS/DBEDirect>. Any DBE's not on this list will not count toward the required goal.

I already have my NEPA (environmental clearance): why do I need to submit permits?

Permits for the NEPA document are different or do not cover all the permits that need to be reviewed or acquired for the project. There is a TDOT Permit Memo that the TAP Office can provide to the local agency for them to review to determine if they need any state or federal permits.

How wide is a multi-modal facility (pedestrian and bicycle traffic)?

12-feet wide at a minimum and pedestrians cannot utilize bike lanes within vehicular traffic lanes.

What is meant by logical termini?

*Sidewalks must connect to existing sidewalks, bikeways must connect to existing bikeways, greenways must connect to existing greenways or each facility must connect to an eligible destination point or an approved trailhead with adequate ADA parking. **FUTURE PEDESTRIAN FACILITY CONNECTORS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TERMINI.** Address any questions concerning connectivity to the Transportation Alternatives Office at TDOT.Enhancements@tn.gov*

Can pedestrians utilize bike lanes?

Pedestrians cannot utilize bike lanes since all pedestrian facilities must provide adequate separation from vehicular traffic, typically accomplished with the installation of a 6-inch non-mountable curb.

When can the local agency begin work on any particular phase of project development?

No work can be performed by the local agency until the appropriate Notice to Proceed has been issued by the TDOT TAP Office.

When do federal-aid prevailing wage rates apply?

The local agency must include both state and federal wage rates in their bid specifications and the contractor must pay the higher of the two per classification.

I have a railroad next to my project but I am not crossing it: do I need railroad coordination?

Yes, all projects that may impact a rail line will need to include proper railroad coordination during project development. This must be done in order to receive utility certification.

After being awarded funding, can the local agency amend the project scope?

Only minor scope changes necessary to complete the original intent of the application will be considered. All scope changes must be reviewed and approved by the TDOT TAP Office.

PROJECT FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENTS

Does the local agency receive the awarded money up-front?

No, this is a reimbursable grant program. Project sponsors must pay all costs up-front and request reimbursement for only the eligible construction expenditures.

What aspects of project development are reimbursable with TAP funding?

Only construction eligible expenditures may be submitted for reimbursement. All preliminary engineering, design and right-of-way expenses are the full responsibility of the local agency.

Can a local agency transfer awarded funding to another local agency?

No, funding awarded is for the completion of only the specific project application. All returned funding will revert to TDOT for redistribution in the next funding cycle.

What happens when a local agency is not awarded the entire amount of TAP funding that was requested?

If TAP funding is less than the amount requested in the application, the local agency has four options: 1) the local agency can seek additional funds from other public or private sources; 2) the project can be reduced to fit within the funding provided; 3) the local agency can stage the project into logical phases and seek additional enhancement funding during a subsequent cycle; or 4) the local agency can return the funding to TDOT.

How does a local agency submit a reimbursement request to TDOT?

Reimbursements must be submitted electronically to TDOT through LPD.Invoices@tn.gov. All invoices must include the appropriate TDOT Invoice form located at <http://www.tn.gov/tdot/topic/reimbursement> as well as the appropriate back-up documentation.

How does the local agency deal with PE, Design and Right-of-Way costs as well as construction overruns?

The local agency is responsible for all costs in excess of the awarded federal construction funding amount, including all ineligible construction items.

For questions not addressed above, please contact the TAP Office directly via e-mail at TDOT.Enhancements@tn.gov