



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: John Swanson, Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Upcoming Solicitations for Applications for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program
DATE: March 29, 2019

SUMMARY

Under the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program, the TPB is responsible for selecting projects using sub-allocated funding for Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The TA Set-Aside, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, was previously known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and that name is still commonly used.

The next solicitation periods for TA Set-Aside applications have been scheduled as follows:

- District of Columbia
March 26 - May 17, 2019
See ddot.dc.gov/page/transportation-alternatives-program.
- Maryland
April 15 - May 15, 2019
See www.roads.maryland.gov/index.aspx?PagelId=144
- Virginia
 - Pre-applications: May 15 – July 1, 2019
(NOTE: Pre-applications are mandatory for the first time)
 - Applications: Due October 1
(NOTE: Virginia is now on a two year funding cycle)See www.virginiadot.org/business/prenhancegrants.asp.

Past recipients of technical assistance through the TPB's Transportation Land Use Connections (TLC) Program are encouraged to consider seeking funding through the TA Set-Aside Program. The TPB also encourages TA Set-Aside applications that support policies highlighted in Visualize 2045, our region's recently adopted long-range transportation plan.

BACKGROUND

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) Program was established by federal law to fund a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, safe routes to school (SRTS) projects, community improvements, and environmental mitigation. MAP

21, the surface transportation legislation enacted in 2012, established the program as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act of 2015 renamed the program as the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program, but the key features of the program largely remain the same.

Information on the program is available from FHWA at:
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/.

The program provides sub-allocated funding for large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB (those classified as “Transportation Management Areas” or TMAs) to fund local projects. In addition to these sub-allocated funds, a portion of the TA Set-Aside funding is reserved for statewide project selection, which is conducted by the state departments of transportation.

For the National Capital Region, the program offers an opportunity to support and enhance regional planning activities. At the direction of the TPB, our region’s TA Set-Aside is framed as a complementary component of the TPB’s Transportation Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, which provides technical assistance for small planning studies to TPB member jurisdictions. Past recipients of technical assistance through TLC are encouraged to consider seeking funding assistance through the TA Set-Aside Program.

The TA Set-Aside offers the region the ability to fund projects that support regional priorities and goals. Applicants from the National Capital Region are asked to show how their projects will serve regional criteria when they seek TA Set-Aside funds.

The selection criteria, which are rooted in TPB Policies and programs, include:

- Focus on expanding transportation options;
- Support for Regional Activity Centers;
- Access to high-capacity transit;
- Access in Equity Emphasis Areas;
- Support for the National Capital Trail; and
- Increased access for people with disabilities.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Since the establishment of the program in 2012, the TPB has combined its solicitations with the state departments of transportation in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. In each state, the state DOT conducts the solicitation through its website, although each application includes a supplementary form requesting information about how projects responded to the TPB’s regional priorities.

The following entities in the TPB’s planning area are eligible to apply: local governments (county, city, or town); regional transportation authorities; transit agencies; natural resource or public land agencies; school districts and agencies; and any local and governmental entity with oversight of transportation or recreational trails. Nonprofits are eligible to partner with any eligible entity on an application, if state or local requirements permit.

Applications must adhere to all federal requirements for the program, including providing a minimum 20 percent match.

The selection process is conducted separately for each state. Upon receipt of the applications, state staff screens the submissions for eligibility and conducts preliminary assessments of the proposed projects. Once applications are determined eligible, they are forwarded to the TPB for consideration and selection.

Working with the states, TPB staff conducts research on the proposed projects, which may include site visits and interviews with applicants. TPB staff convenes a separate selection panel for each state's applications. The panel members include COG/TPB staff as well as representatives from the state DOTs whose applications are not under consideration. Representatives from the DOTs in the states whose projects are under consideration are invited to participate in the selection process as technical resources.

Panel members individually review and score applications based on each reviewer's professional assessment (50 points) and regional selection criteria (50 points). The regional criteria are rooted in TPB policies and programs, with the understanding that some projects will not meet all criteria.

For each state, the panel's recommendations are forwarded to the TPB for approval. After that, the TPB's decision is forwarded to the DOT to include in the state's capital improvement program.

In addition to the funding allocated by the TPB, each DOT has responsibility for a statewide allocation of TA Set-Aside funding. The statewide funds represent half of the state's total allocation under the program. Project selection using these funds usually occurs after the TPB makes its selections, although a portion of Virginia's statewide funds are reserved for project selection by the district member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. In recent year, this CTB member's selection process has been conducted in coordination with the TPB's project selection.

DETAILS FOR THIS YEAR

Here are some details related to the processes in the TPB's three state-level jurisdictions:

District of Columbia

- The next round of funding will be for FY 2020.
- The application was made available on the DDOT website on March 26, 2019.
- Applications are due by May 17, 2019.
- The FY 2020 sub-allocation to the TPB is expected to be \$1,150,000.
- The TPB is expected to approve D.C. projects for funding on July 24, 2019.
- For more information, contact Kelsey Bridges at DDOT, kelsey.bridges@dc.gov

Maryland

- The next round of funding will be for FY 2020.
- The application will be made available on the MDOT website on April 15, 2019.
- Applications are due by May 15, 2019.
- New application requirements for design and construction funding have been approved for this round (FY 2020): Construction funding will need to have 30 percent design plans, per

MDOT SHA checklist and guidance, in order to be considered for construction funding. To be considered for design funding, sponsors must include a completed concept, per MDOT SHA guidelines, as part of the application.

- The funding amount for the FY 2020 sub-allocation to the TPB are not yet known. For reference, however, the TPB in FY 2019 was sub-allocated \$1,217,150 for Maryland.
- The TPB is expected to approve Maryland projects for funding on July 24, 2019.
- For more information, contact Christy Bernal at SHA, CBernal@sha.state.md.us.

Virginia

- The next round of funding will be for FY 2021 and FY 2022. Virginia is now conducting project selection for the TA Set-Aside Program every two years. The FY 2020 projects were selected last year (in April 2018) in conjunction with the FY 2019 selections.
- The pre-application form for the next round of funding will be made available on the VDOT website on May 15, 2019.
- The deadline for the pre-application, which is mandatory, is July 1, 2019.
- Final applications are due by October 1, 2019.
- The funding amount for the next sub-allocations to the TPB are not yet known. For reference, however, the TPB for FY 2019 and FY 2020 was sub-allocated a total of \$5,440,710 – which amounts to \$2,720,335 for each year.
- The TPB is expected to approve the next round of projects (FY 2021-22) in April of 2020.
- For more information, contact Pamela Liston at VDOT, pamela.liston@vdot.virginia.gov.

TPB CONTACT

For more information about the TPB's role in this program, please contact John Swanson at jswanson@mwkog.org or 202-962-3295.