

Application Instructions for Region 10 RPA Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP) Funds

The Regional Planning Affiliation for Region 10 (RPA 10), including the counties of Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington, is currently accepting applications for regional TAP funding for projects occurring in federal fiscal years 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028. Approximately \$2,100,000 in TAP funds are available for transportation projects of regional significance. However, all funding and regional approval of project applications is contingent upon the obligation of federal funds.

All RPAs are required to use Iowa Department of Transportation's statewide TAP application. A copy of the form is available on the ECICOG website at www.ecicog.org

- Prior to the submittal of an application **all applicants must participate in a pre-application workshop to be held on January 10, 2024 at 1:30 pm**. The workshop will be held online via Zoom. Contact Mary Rump at mary.rump@ecicog.org or at (319) 289-0063 to request an invite.
- In addition, a short pre-application must be submitted to ECICOG by January 19, 2024. The pre-application will determine if the project meets program requirements and if so, ECICOG will authorize applicants to complete a full application.
- A full application must be submitted by February 16, 2024. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. All information submitted as part of this application, as well as any additional information requested by RPA 10, will be used to evaluate the application.
- An electronic copy of the completed application must be submitted. Information must be clear, concise, and accurate. The designated application form must be used. Additional pages should be attached to address the supplementary information requested by the region.
- The Certification section of this form must be completed by the political jurisdiction responsible for the maintenance and operation of the proposed project.
- Applicants may be asked to make a short presentation to the Regional Trails Advisory Committee in March 2024 as part of the application review process. The exact date and time of the meeting is yet to be determined.
- Submit the completed application and all attachments via email by February 16, 2024 @ 4:30 pm to:
Mary Rump, Transportation Director
mary.rump@ecicog.org

If there are questions, call (319) 289-0063.

PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

All projects are subject to all applicable federal requirements and FHWA approval. To be eligible for TAP funds, the following qualifications must be met:

- Federal funding requires that TAP projects fit into one or more specific funding categories. The following link provides a complete listing of the funding categories: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/pdf/IIJA-TAP-Guidance.pdf.
- Note, however, that the RPA prioritizes capital projects specified in the *Additional RPA Requirements* section.
- Project sponsors must be a local government, regional transportation authority, transit agency, natural resource or public land agency, school district, local education agency, school, tribal government, non-profit entity, MPO, state, or local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for or oversight of transportation or recreational trails .
- Project sponsors must assure they will operate and maintain the property and facility for the useful life (minimum of twenty years) of the improvement and not change the use of any right-of-way acquired without prior approval from the Iowa Department of Transportation.
- Project sponsors must assure ability to let or have the project under construction within two years of when programmed.
- All project bids will be let by the Iowa Department of Transportation.
- Projects must demonstrate a direct relationship to existing or planned surface transportation facilities.
- TAP funding may not be used for engineering or architectural related services during design or project construction.

ADDITIONAL RPA REQUIREMENTS

RPA 10 TAP projects should be limited to capital improvements in the following specific areas, and must fit into one of the following categories:

- a. Multi-use, non-motorized trails and essential support facilities and on-road improvements to enhance bicycle/pedestrian use

- b. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations associated with a federal aid roadway project
- c. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas along designated scenic byways
- d. Historic preservation of transportation structures with preference given to their functional use
- e. Aesthetic and environmental enhancements to public roadways
- f. Pedestrian improvements related to routes to school or safety issues

Projects that do not meet these guidelines but are eligible under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are allowed to be submitted, but there will need to be a significant extenuating circumstance in order for them to be considered for funding. This determination will be at the discretion of the RPA.

The region has established the following additional funding requirements:

- Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) and eligible scenic byway projects*:
 - Projects must have a minimum total project cost of \$75,000
 - Projects must have a minimum 20% local match
 - Projects must have a minimum federal aid participation level of 50%.
- All other trail projects:
 - Projects must have a minimum total project cost of \$75,000
 - Projects must have a minimum 20% local match
 - Projects must have a minimum federal aid participation level of 50%, however, the minimum federal participation level of 50% may be waived for projects with a total cost great than \$250,000.

**Note: Iowa DOT may have matching funds available for SRTS or eligible scenic byway projects to ensure 80% federal participation.*

Projects that would be competitive at the state level may be programmed with RPA 10 TAP funds but should compete for statewide or other funding sources (e.g., REAP, State Recreational Trails Program, etc.) whenever appropriate. Should sufficient other funding be awarded, regional TAP funds will be returned to the program to be reallocated.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

If a pre-application is approved, applicants will complete the full application. The TAP application form was developed by Iowa DOT and is used statewide by all RPAs. **In addition to**

this statewide form, projects sponsors are asked to complete the following supplementary information, on a separate piece of paper, at the request of the RPA:

- Project sponsors are asked to identify how their project relates to the criteria noted below and provide a brief (one to two sentences) description of the relationship.
- Project sponsors are also asked to identify the project timeline, and any additional planned phases of the project.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by the Regional Trails Advisory Committee at their January meeting to prepare a tentative recommendation for the Transportation Policy Committee. Tentatively approved projects will be included in the RPA's Transportation Improvement Program that is submitted to Iowa DOT by July 15. Final approval is complete when projects are included in the State's Transportation Improvement Program that's submitted to the Federal Highway Administration each Fall. In addition to the criteria noted below, applications may be given additional consideration to ensure geographic equity.

Application Review Criteria

Projects will be ranked and recommended for funding based on the following criteria:

- *Jurisdiction's Ability To Complete Project*
 - *Ability to meet federal requirements*
 - *Ability to meet programming timelines*
- *Project Readiness*
 - *Status of matching funds*
 - *Public acceptance of project*
 - *Right of way constraints*
- *Relationship to Transportation System*
 - *Ability to enhance safety*
 - *Connectivity to existing facilities*
 - *Enhancement to existing transportation system*
 - *Inclusion in state, regional, and local plans*
- *Associated Benefits*
 - *Environmental and social impacts*
 - *Regional economic development impact*
 - *Regional tourism impact*
 - *Sustainability elements of project*
- *Other*
 - *Cost in relation to public benefit*

- *Involvement of multiple jurisdictions and other local partners (i.e. chambers of commerce, tourism & visitors bureau)*
- *Predicted usage relative to population*
- *Additional consideration may be given to applications submitted from areas within the RPA that haven't recently received regional TAP funding.*