

LINKING TAHOE

2021 Regional Grant Program Guidelines



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INTRODUCTION

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, in its capacity as the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) is responsible for allocating and tracking various federal and state funding programs. The Linking Tahoe: Regional Grant Program (RGP) strives to allocate funds to transportation projects that support regional transportation goals through a competitive process. The program seeks to leverage funding sources, when possible, to increase success and effectiveness of project implementation.

The RGP supports the implementation of the 2020 Linking Tahoe: Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals, policies, new Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) threshold standard and more specifically advances the implementation of regional and local priorities. All proposed projects must be listed in the RTP. The focus of the program is to create additional transportation options and an enhanced transportation system to provide safe, multi-modal improvements that also provide social and environmental benefits.

This call for projects uses an enhanced performance-based evaluation system that has incorporated feedback received from the previous grant funding cycle. The application includes a performance assessment evaluating how the project best meets the overall Regional Plan goals and policies and those identified as priorities in the Regional Transportation Plan. The RGP goals and criteria are consistent with the following funding sources that are included in this call for projects.

Funding sources:

- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (California and Nevada)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
- Nevada Transportation Alternatives Program
- Highway Infrastructure Program (California and Nevada)

TRPA encourages partners to submit all planned transportation projects that meet the grant program selection criteria even if the request need exceeds the funding availability. This allows for the establishment of a comprehensive regional list, creates a more streamlined grant process, and removes the need for additional call for projects if supplementary funding sources become available.

GRANT PROGRAM GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Performance Assessment in the application is used to illustrate the proposed project's contribution to regional goals, and implementation priorities. This is intended to elevate projects that can reduce the reliance on the automobile, improve safety, and close gaps in the active transportation and transit network, and support implementation of the regional and local priorities. The following details the RTP Goals & Policies and regional and local priorities.

Reginal Transportation Plan Goals & Policies

The Regional Transportation Plan is the building block for transformative change at Lake Tahoe. It grows and enhances the plan's core focus of areas of transit, trails, technology, and communities and their emphasis on creating walkable and bikeable town centers, increasing electric vehicles infrastructure and

use, and developing greater walking, biking, and transit options that also connect people to popular recreation destinations in the region. The regional goals and policies establish the organizing framework for transportation planning at Lake Tahoe. They represent stakeholder feedback and public input, as well as input from previous plans. There are six goals within the plan: Environment, Connectivity, Safety, Operations and Congestion Management, Economic Vitality and Quality of Life, and System Preservation, each having a policy and a focus area. For additional information regarding the regional goals and policies, please refer to [Appendix A: Regional Goals and Policies](#). The Regional Grant Program strives to further the RTP goals and policies through funding project implementation.

Transportation Priorities

The RGP recognizes regional and local transportation priority projects identified in the Regional Transportation Plan. Over the past five years, the state of California and Nevada convened a Bi-State Consultation on transportation to work with public and private partners on ways to accelerate transportation improvements in Lake Tahoe. The consultation continues to recognize and identify top priority projects, services, and fair share funding commitments from federal, state, local, and private sectors. The Bi-State consultation along with local agencies, public stakeholders participate on committees to advance transportation funding for regional and local priority transportation projects. The RGP strives to accelerate and fund these top priority projects. More information on the Bi-State Consultation on Transportation can be found in the [2020 RTP](#).

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The following lists the milestones for the development and adoption of the 2021 RGP:

RGP Milestones	Scheduled Date
Call for Projects	June 14,2021
Project Application Deadline	July 19, 2021
Tahoe Transportation Implementation Committee (TTIC) - Endorsement (TRPA Staff project recommendations for RGP)	August 2021
Release RGP Project Selection Recommendations	August 2021
TRPA Environmental Improvement Transportation & Public Outreach Committee – Informational (Report on TTIC and Staff recommendations for RGP projects)	September 2021
Tahoe Transportation Commission Board - Recommendation of approval to TMPO Governing Board (RGP programming of projects in FTIP)	October 08, 2021
TMPO Governing Board – Approval (RGP programming of projects in FTIP)	October 27, 2021

FUNDING

The Regional Grant Program has an estimated budget of \$11,182,000 that is competitively available to project sponsors. There are four funding sources available for this cycle that combined make up the \$11,182M. The proposed projects must be included in the 2020 RTP constrained project list to be eligible for funding. All phases of work including Environmental, Preliminary Engineering, Right of Way, and Construction are eligible for the funds. Applicants can jointly submit an application for multiple funding sources. Project sponsors must provide the applicable non-federal match for all funding sources applying for in the application.

In addition to complying with federal laws, regulations, policies, and procedures, applicants are also required to comply with the appropriate state requirements.

- California applicants must be able to comply with all state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures in the [Caltrans Local Assistance Program Guidelines \(LAPG\)](#) and [Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual \(LAPM\)](#) and have a Master Agreement with Caltrans. An agency that does not have an MA must be able to meet requirements and enter into an MA with Caltrans prior to requesting authorization of funds. The MA process can take 6 to 12 months to complete.
- Nevada applicants must be able to comply with all state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures in the [NDOT Local Public Agency Manual](#).

FUNDING SOURCES

The RGP includes four federal funding sources within this call including Surface Transportation Block Grant (California and Nevada), Congestive Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (California), Nevada Transportation Alternatives Program and Highway Infrastructure Program (California and Nevada). The specific eligibility requirements and objectives for each of these funding sources are detailed below. The project criteria for all sources are the same as listed in the Project Evaluation Criteria and Scoring section. To maximize the effectiveness of program funds and to encourage project submittals, TMPO has elected to have no minimum project size for all funding sources.

The following table shows the federal funding sources and estimated fund amounts by federal fiscal year. Each of the fund sources have different eligibility requirements and objectives that are specified below.

Funding Source	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) CA	\$0	\$2,052,971	\$2,052,717
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) NV	\$727,269	\$1,311,746	\$1,311,746
Congestive Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)	\$0	\$1,470,832	\$1,470,357
Nevada Transportation Alternative Program (NV TAP)	\$0	\$61,601	\$61,601
Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) CA	\$410,506	\$0	\$0
Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) NV	\$250,976	\$0	\$0
Totals:	\$1,388,751	\$4,897,150	\$4,896,421

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

Overview

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) is a federal-aid transportation program, administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which provides flexible funding to states and localities for transportation improvement projects. STBG funds are reimbursable federal aid funds, subject to the requirements of [23 U.S. Code 133](#). TMPO is required to allocate and program the STBG funds that are apportioned to the Tahoe Region.

STBG is the primary federal funding program allocated to the Region to implement transportation projects. It promotes flexibility in state and local transportation decisions and provides federal funding to best address state and local transportation needs. The funding is apportioned directly to TMPO by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the Federal FAST Act. The funding is allocated by State (CA and NV) and must be awarded to projects in the corresponding state. The funds are allocated and programmed based on a competitive process in accordance with these guidelines.

Programming capacity for STBG is estimated at a total of \$7,456,449 for federal fiscal years 2022 thru 2024. Out of the total funding capacity, California state has \$4,105,688 available between two years: \$2,052,971 for 2023 and \$2,052,717 for 2024. Nevada state total availability is \$3,350,761 divided between three years: \$727,269 for 2022 and \$1,311,746 for each year 2023 and 2024.

Local match is required on all STBG funds; the minimum percentage requirement is mandated by the state. The required non-federal match for California is at 11.47 percent and 5 percent for Nevada. However, applicants that can demonstrate a greater match than the minimum requirement will score higher. The funds will be programmed accordingly to award year and must be obligated prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local government, a regional transportation authority, transit agency, a natural resource or public land agency, a tribal government, and nonprofit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs. Projects must meet the STBG eligibility requirements related to project location, eligibility, and planning outlined in the [23 U.S. Code 133](#).

Funding is available for a variety of projects including but not limited to:

- Highways, bridges, tunnels
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs
- Transit capital
- Ferry boats and terminal facilities

For additional information regarding STBG eligibility please refer to the [FHWA guidance](#).

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

Overview

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program was created under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and was reauthorized under all Federal Transportation Acts since, including the most recent Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (2015). The 2015 FAST Act provides millions of CMAQ funds annually to the states. The funds are distributed to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies in federally designated air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas within the state in accordance with the formula set forth in Section 182.7 of the Streets and Highways Code. The Program provides a flexible funding source to state and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. CMAQ funds must be invested in the El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Region, including the City of South Lake Tahoe (CSLT) to meet these requirements. The funding may be used for a transportation project or program that focuses on improving air quality and reducing emissions. The funds are allocated and programmed based on the competitive process in accordance with these guidelines.

Programming capacity for CMAQ funding is estimated at a total of \$2,941,189 through 2024. Federal fiscal year 2023 amount is \$1,470,832 and 2024 is estimated at \$1,470,357. A non-federal match of 11.47 percent is required on all funds. Applicants that can demonstrate a greater match than the minimum requirement will score higher. The funds will be programmed accordingly to award year and must be obligated prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local government entities and transit operators within the El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Region, including the CSLT. The project must meet the [CMAQ eligibility requirements](#) included related to project location, eligibility, and planning. Project sponsors must be able to provide a [cost-effectiveness emissions reduction analysis](#) for the project if awarded funding.

Funds are available for a variety of projects including but not limited to:

- Diesel engine retrofits
- Electric vehicles
- Congestion reduction and traffic flow improvements
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs
- Ridesharing programs
- Public education and outreach activities

For additional information regarding CMAQ eligibility please refer to the [FHWA guidance](#).

Nevada Transportation Alternatives Program

Overview

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was established in 2012 and authorized under section 1122 of the federal “MAP 21” surface transportation authorization legislation. This program consolidated multiple programs from the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); including Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities and Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The MAP-21 legislation provided for a reserved portion of federal surface transportation funds to be apportioned to a State under section 104(b) of title 23 to carry out the Transportation Alternatives Program. The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives.

The 2015 Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act replaced the Transportation Alternatives Program with a set-aside of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program funding for transportation alternatives (TA). The set-aside provides funds for projects or activities described in section 101 (a) (29) or 213. These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP, encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity.

Nevada TAP provides federal funds for community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by integrating modes and improving the cultural, historic, and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. The MPO apportionment is made available to the state through the Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Nevada State Department of Transportation. Funding must be awarded to projects located entirely within the Nevada portion of the Tahoe Region. The funds are allocated and programmed based on the competitive process in accordance with these guidelines.

Total funds available under Nevada TAP is \$123,202 split evenly between federal fiscal years 2023 and 2024. A minimum of 5 percent local non-federal match is required on Nevada TAP funds; however, applicants that can demonstrate above the minimum will score higher. The funds will be programmed accordingly to award year and must be obligated prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local, state, and regional government entities located within the Nevada portion of the Tahoe Region. Funds are available for a variety of projects including but not limited to:

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Improvements to existing bikeways and walkways
- Safe routes to school projects
- Connectivity of bike paths
- Education programs to increase active transportation
- Installation of traffic control devices to improve safety of pedestrian and bicyclists

For additional information regarding TAP eligibility please refer to the [FHWA TA guidance](#) .

Highway Infrastructure Program

Overview

Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) was created in Section 122 in Division A of the 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which authorized \$650 million with the intent to specifically fund restoration, repair and construction of the federal-aid system eligible roads, bridges, and tunnels. On March 23, 2018, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, which included the Department of Transportation Appropriations Act, funding the HIP with the similar intent. Annually since 2018, the [FHWA Notice](#) for the Department of Transportation Appropriation Act has set aside and apportioned funds for HIP activities eligible under section [23 U.S. Code 133](#).

HIP funding is distributed by FHWA and further divided by states, which are required to coordinate with the relevant Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as required by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act for allocation of funds. The Tahoe Region receives HIP funding from [California](#) and [Nevada](#). The funding is allocated by states and must be awarded to projects in the corresponding state.

A combined total of \$661,482 is available for HIP between the state of California and Nevada. California's allocation is \$410,506 and the Nevada allocation is \$250,976 both for federal fiscal year 2022. Each state requires a non-federal match for the funding. A minimum of 11.47 percent for local non-federal match is required on California funds, and Nevada requires a 5 percent local non-federal match. Applicants that can demonstrate above the minimum amount will score higher. The funds will be programmed accordingly to award year and must be obligated prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include local government, a regional transportation authority, transit agency, a natural resource or public land agency, a tribal government, and nonprofit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs. Projects must meet the HIP eligibility requirements related to project location, eligibility, and planning outlined in the [23 U.S. Code 133](#). Funds are available for a variety of projects including but not limited to:

- Highways, bridges, tunnels
- Charging infrastructure along corridor-ready or corridor-pending alternative fuel corridors
- Transit capital
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Ferry boats and terminal facilities
- Highway and transit infrastructure improvements and programs

For additional information on Highway Infrastructure Program eligibility please refer to the [FHWA Notice](#).

INITIAL SCREENING CRITERIA

TMPO staff will conduct an initial screening to determine if an application will proceed forward to the evaluation process. Project applications will be screened for the following:

- Consistency with the adopted 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Project must be listed in the constrained project list of the RTP.
- Consistent with appropriate fund eligibility requirements.
- Required amount of local non-federal match for funding source.
- Identified public outreach on project.
- If applying for California funds, knowledge of required Master Agreement (MA) with Caltrans.
- Project fully funded with application request or has identified and provided documentation of other funding to achieve 100% funded status.
- Application requesting construction funds must have environmental, engineering, and right-of-way completed by the time funds are requested.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The Regional Grant Program application is available at TRPA.gov. There is one application for all funding sources included in the call. An application may include any combination of the available funds.

- Download application here: www.trpa.gov/transportation/funding/regional-grant-program/
- The application must include a completed project or program performance assessment.
Download performance assessments here: <https://www.trpa.gov/transportation/funding/regional-grant-program/>
- Project applications must include signature of Public Works Director or another authorized representative of the applicant's agency.
- An application must include documentation of all other funds committed to the project.
- Submit completed application electronically to Judy Weber at jweber@trpa.gov.
- Application deadline to submit electronically is Monday, July 19, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA & SCORING

Submitted applications will be scored and ranked on the following evaluation criteria using the identified relative weighting (maximum of 100 points). The criteria are specified in the project application.

CRITERIA	POINTS
Work plan and Timeline. Application clearly illustrated the scope of the project or program, the delivery work plan, funding plan, and a detailed timeline with key milestones demonstrating the capacity to deliver in timely manner.	20 Points
Demonstrated Need and Benefits. Project or program delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impacts. Connects to local area plans. Is a good investment of resources.	15 Points
Public Participation and Planning. Identifies the local community public participation process developed for the proposed project or program. Show how the participation process identified the project as a priority and responded to input from public participation process. Includes Letter of Support.	10 points
Performance Assessment. Assessment evaluates how a project or program best meets the overall Regional Plan goals and policies and those identified as priorities in the Regional Transportation Plan. Download the Project or Program Performance Assessment here and complete the questions within each category and all supplemental questions.	30 Points
Potential for Success. Applicant’s ability to carry out project or program based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Management; LT management plan, maintenance, and monitoring • Demonstrating Agency Success; examples of implementing similar projects within 5 years • Commitment to complete. Project or program is fully funded with request. 	10 Points
Matching funds. Applicant has identified and confirmed secured non-federal matching funds. Provided documentation of secured funds.	5 Points
Regional or Local Priority. Please provide justification for project or program priority.	10 Points
	100 POINTS

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

A committee of evaluators comprised of TRPA staff, with the oversight of TRPA leadership, will review, evaluate, and score all eligible applications. The committee will meet to review and discuss the cumulative application scores and select projects for recommendation. Applications will be recommended for funding by ranked score.

OVERSIGHT & IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

TRPA requires that all applicants awarded funds comply with the following oversight and implementation requirements. If the recipient is unable to complete this process, they must notify TMPO immediately. TMPO will maintain a project contingency list. If an awarded project is not able to meet funding programming and authorization guidelines and milestones, funding may be moved to a project on the contingency list.

Oversight

1. The project sponsor is responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance for any capital project awards.
2. The recipient will provide an annual project update, including expenditures and project updates, through the Lake Tahoe Transportation Tracker Tool: <https://transportation.laketahoeinfo.org/>.

Implementation

1. Project sponsor is responsible for entering the project award in the Tracker. The Tracker information will be used to program the project in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).
2. California funded projects must work with Caltrans District Local Assistance (DLA) on the Request for Authorization (E76) process for obligation of the funds. Follow the processes in the [Local Assistance Procedures Manual](#).
3. Nevada funded projects must work with NDOT on the Local Public Agency (LPA) process. Follow processes in the [Local Public Agency Manual](#).
4. An agency may request a transfer of funds through the **Funding Distribution Transfers** procedure. TMPO shall retain the right to redirect program funding to other agencies and projects if funds will not be used in a timely manner. A transfer may include moving funds between the work phases on a project or may request the transfer of funding to a different project. Moving funds between phases of work on the project should not affect the project cost. All funding transfers must be submitted to TMPO for consideration and approval. When preparing a funding distribution transfer request, the agency must consider and include the following:
 1. The reason for the proposed funding transfer.
 2. The impact the transfer will have on the original and proposed project.
 3. An excel worksheet that outlines the proposed funding transfer from/to the project.
 4. The transfer must be made in the same federal fiscal year in which the funds have been programmed.
 5. The overall benefits of the funding transfer.
 6. If the funding transfer is approved, the updated changes must be entered in the Transportation Tracker to the project.
 7. TRPA shall retain the right to redirect program funding to other agencies and projects if funding transfer does not align with the transportation regional goals and policies.

TIMELY USE OF FUNDS

RGP funds are allocated by project phase of work and federal fiscal year. The request for authorization of funds must be requested in the year the funds are programmed. Once funds are processed for authorization and obligated, the agency has three years from the obligation date to fully expend the funds. When programmed funds are not authorized within the year programmed or the time allowed by a transfer of funds, TMPO shall retain the right to redirect the programmed funds to other agencies and/or projects so not to lose funding to the Tahoe Region. In unforeseeable circumstances, an agency can request in writing an extension of funds.

RESOURCES

[Linking Tahoe: 2020 Regional Transportation Plan](#)

[Regional Grant Program](#)