



Reconnecting Communities - FAQs

RCP Grant Priorities

What is the purpose of the program?

The purpose of the RCP Program is to reconnect communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating transportation facilities like highways or rail lines that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development. The program provides technical assistance and grant funding for planning and capital construction to address infrastructure barriers, reconnect communities, and improve peoples' lives.

What are examples of reconnecting solutions?

The variety of transformative solutions to knit communities back together can include: high-quality public transportation, infrastructure removal, pedestrian walkways and overpasses, capping and lids, linear parks and trails, roadway redesigns and complete streets conversions, and main street revitalization.

RCP Grant Types

What types of grants are available under the program?

Planning Grants fund the study of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing facility to restore community connectivity; public engagement; and other transportation planning activities.

Capital Construction Grants are to carry out a project to remove, retrofit, mitigate, or to replace an existing eligible facility with a new facility that reconnects communities.

Eligibility to Apply

Who is eligible to apply?

RCP Community Planning Grants:

1. a State;
2. a unit of local government;
3. a Tribal government;
4. a Metropolitan Planning Organization; or
5. a non-profit organization

RCP Capital Construction Grants:

1. owner(s) of the eligible facility proposed in the project for which all necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed; or

2. a partnership between a facility owner (#1 above) and any eligible RCP Community Planning Grant applicant.

Are rural and disadvantaged communities eligible to apply?

Yes, if they meet the eligibility criteria.

What proof should a nonprofit applicant provide to establish they are nonprofit?

Nonprofit applicants should provide information describing how they are legally organized and confirming their nonprofit tax status.

Are partnerships encouraged or scored higher?

Yes, partnerships are encouraged and are included in the merit criteria.

Grant Awards, Funding, and Match

How much funding is available?

In FY 2023, BIL allocates up to \$198 million for the RCP Program. It allocates \$50 million for Community Planning Grants, including funding for technical assistance, and \$148 million for Capital Construction Grants.

Is there a Federal share match requirement?

RCP Community Planning Grants:

- 80% RCP funds and 20% local match

RCP Capital Construction Grants:

- RCP grant funding may not exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. Other Federal funds may be used to bring the total Federal share up to a maximum of 80% of the total cost of the project.

Is there a minimum or maximum grant size?

The maximum Community Planning Grant award funded with RCP funds is \$2 million. The minimum Capital Construction Grant award funded with RCP funds is \$5 million.

Is there a set number of awards to be made?

In FY 2023, BIL allocates up to \$198 million for the RCP Program

Eligible Activities and Projects

What are eligible activities and projects for the grant program?

Community Planning Grants:

- Conducting public engagement activities
- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible dividing facility to reconnect communities
- Other planning activities in support of the project

Capital Construction Grants:

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment/preconstruction; or permitting activities, including completion of NEPA process, for:
 - Removal, retrofit, or mitigation of an eligible dividing facility
 - Replacement of an eligible dividing facility with a new facility that restores community connectivity
 - Delivering community benefits and the mitigation of impacts identified through the NEPA process or other planning and project development for the construction project

What is an eligible facility?

RCP Eligible Facilities – Community Planning and Capital Construction Grants

The proposed project must address an “eligible facility,” which is defined as a highway or other transportation facility that creates a barrier to community connectivity, including barriers to mobility, access, or economic development, due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors. Eligible facilities may include limited access highways, viaducts, any other principal arterial facilities, and other facilities such as transit lines, rail lines, gas pipelines, and airports. See Section H.1. Definitions for “highway” and Section D.2.ii. Key Information Questions for a suggested list of other facilities.

Timelines

How many fiscal years will awarded grant funds be available for use?

RCP Program grant funds are available until expended, however, DOT encourages all projects awarded with FY 2023 RCN Program funds to be obligated by the same date of September 30, 2026

Pre-Requisites

Is NEPA approval required? Is a Benefit Cost Analysis required?

For Capital Construction Grants, RCP preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment / preconstruction; permitting activities including the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

All Capital Construction Grant applicants are required to submit the results of a benefit cost analysis (BCA).

Do capital construction projects have to be included in the TIP/STIP or Long-Range Plans?

Eligible projects for RCP Capital Construction Grants include those for which all necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed. Projects must be consistent with the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan, included in the Metropolitan Long-Range Plan (if applicable), and in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) or equivalent, as applicable, prior to the obligation of the award. Transit projects must be included in the investment prioritization of the relevant Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan by the time of the obligation of the award.

To find the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) with jurisdiction for your community, consult this MPO Database - <https://www.planning.dot.gov/mpo/>

To understand if your area is located within an MPO boundary, FHWA maintains a map of MPO boundaries. <https://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/fhwagis/>

If you are located outside of the jurisdiction of an MPO, please contact your State Department of Transportation.

To learn more, please see: The Transportation Planning Process Briefing Book: Key Issues for Transportation Decisionmakers, Officials, and Staff. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/briefing_book/fhwahep18015.pdf

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