

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

2026 Application Cycle

Questions and Answers

Project Eligibility

Q: For the RTP grant, are trail overlays on existing trails eligible? We have an existing trail where tree roots are pushing up through the surface.

A: Yes, it is eligible. It would fall under the project category of maintenance of existing trails.

Q: Is lighting at a park eligible?

A: Lighting would be eligible if it's intended for either recreational trail users or the safety of users of non-motorized transportation alternatives.

Q: Can support facilities such as bathrooms and/or multi-purpose rooms for educational purposes be funded along with the construction of a new recreational trail in the RTP?

A: If you're constructing a new trail, but the proposed bathroom and multi-purpose rooms are solely for educational purposes, those bathrooms and multi-purpose rooms would not be eligible. However, bathrooms at a trail head for recreation use are eligible.

Q: Can you incorporate infrastructure and non-infrastructure elements into the same project? E.g., trail construction and adding educational signage along those trails.

A: Installing signage would be considered wayfinding which would qualify it as an infrastructure project, so its incorporation into trail construction would still be an infrastructure project as a whole. However, if an infrastructure project also includes an educational program, it would need to be separated into two applications.

Q: Would benches to be placed along the sidewalk be an allowable cost?

A: No, benches along sidewalks are not eligible for both the TAP and RTP.

Q: Are safe routes to school plans eligible under TAP?

A: Yes, safe routes to school is part of the TAP for Arkansas.

Q: Can you provide some additional examples of studies or planning documents that are eligible under the non-infrastructure category?

A: Some examples include (but aren't limited to): vulnerable road user studies, pedestrian or bicycle master plans, corridor studies with non-motorized users focus, trail management plans, or education programs that could teach how to maintain a trail.

Q: Can projects adding onto already established infrastructure qualify? For example, app enabled bike locking devices mounted to existing bike racks for public use.

A: Yes. That specific example could be related to the safety-related or micromobility-related categories. Another example could be improving an existing trailhead through projects such as wayfinding or adding a parking lot.

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Q: What other projects are schools eligible for?

A: Schools are eligible for either program presented (TAP or RTP). As long as the project is transportation-related, the project would be likely eligible for TAP, or if the project has a recreational focus, it'd likely be eligible for RTP.

Sponsor Eligibility

Q: Are schools eligible?

A: Yes, schools do qualify as education agencies for TAP and private organizations for RTP. Organizations can scale from individual schools to school districts to institutions of higher education.

Q: Are for-profit entities eligible?

A: For-profit entities are not eligible due to the intent of the program to be geared towards public use. Non-profit 501(c)3s are eligible at this time.

Funding Phases

Q: Are all phases (design, right-of-way acquisition, utilities, construction) eligible for RTP funding?

A: Yes, all phases are eligible for RTP funding. Local Programs recommends applying for both preliminary engineering and construction if construction estimates aren't based on more developed plan documents. A supplemental agreement can always be executed later on to change which phases are funded if needed.

Q: Are planning efforts, i.e. feasibility studies eligible for RTP?

A: Yes, planning efforts are eligible. All phases are eligible for both programs.

Q: If we are in the early phases of a project, would the infrastructure planning phase and initial Construction phase be different projects and then would need to be prioritized?

A: For ARDOT purposes, "planning" typically refers to studies that help define the overall scope of future or current projects rather than design alternatives within a known scope. If "planning" is referring to an overall planning study or feasibility study in line with ARDOT parlance, it needs to come as a separate application as a non-infrastructure project necessitating prioritization. However, if the word "planning" is used in a more colloquial sense and refers to the preliminary or conceptual stages of engineering for a project (yielding a set of design plans), ARDOT classifies this as "pre-construction." In that case, both pre-construction and construction activities may be included within the same project application, eliminating the need to prioritize the phases separately.

Q: Can you explain which section of the grant is reimbursable?

A: All phases (ex. Preliminary engineering, environmental documentation, construction, etc.) of the grant are reimbursable except for work performed before the agreement is executed and federal funding obligated.

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Project Administration

Q: What is the lifetime of these grants once awarded?

A: The projects are on the Sponsors' timeline. ARDOT will work with Sponsors to make sure federal requirements are followed. There is, however, a federal guideline that restricts the timeline to 4 years due to funds lapsing.

Q: If a planning and development district administers the grant for a city or county, are they eligible for the 1% administration fee? The administration fee would not be for planning and developing the project but the actual project steps to follow if awarded.

A: The administration fee is solely for ARDOT to administer the project and to ensure federal requirements are met by the Sponsor. If a Sponsor is awarded \$500,000, in general, the 1% would not be given to the Sponsor to administer the cost. It would be on top of the 20% local match.

Q: Could a planning and development district put the planning and development fees as a separate line item in their budget? We would still need to have the 1% administration fee for ARDOT as well right?

A: If the additional line-item administration fee is for a non-infrastructure project, it could be added as a separate line item. If it is used for infrastructure projects, all federal funding needs to go through a federal competitive procurement process. So, depending on the type of the project, an additional line item for administration might not be eligible. For more details, please email LocalPrograms@ardot.gov. Yes, the 1% administration fee for ARDOT would still be necessary no matter what type of project.

Q: Is the administration fee different for each application or is it the same?

A: It depends on the awards. It is 1% of the awarded amount. For example, if the cumulative federal award inclusive of all funded project phases is \$1,000,000, the administration fee would be \$10,000.

Q: Does the 1% administration fee apply to all phases of the project?

A: Yes, the administration fee is applied to the federal award.

Q: Does the \$50,000 minimum federal award request apply to non-infrastructure projects?

A: There is no minimum request for non-infrastructure projects.

Q: Does the minimum infrastructure request exclude the 20% match?

A: The minimum infrastructure request, \$50,000, applies to the federal funding award of the project. So, the minimum total project cost of an infrastructure project would be \$62,500 (\$50,000 from the federal award and \$12,500 from the 20% local share).

Q: Can you give more examples of approved in-kind matches for RTP-eligible projects?

A: Labor, donated land, and donated material are the traditional examples from previous projects.

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Q: Can we have multiple contributors for the 20% local match?

A: Yes. For example, a project could have 10% in-kind labor along with 10% donated material.

Program Administration

Q: How do I go about getting previous applications from our organization/transferring ownership?

A: Send a request email to LocalPrograms@ardot.gov with the context around transferring ownership and details about why the transfer is needed (ex. Change of employees responsible for grants, etc.).

Q: We applied last year but our project did not get selected. Is there a way to find out the results or improvements we could make to be more successful in the future?

A: Yes, send an email to schedule a debrief at LocalPrograms@ardot.gov.

Q: With the federal award cap removed, is there a goal for how many projects will be awarded?

A: We don't have a hard cap for the number of projects being awarded. The impetus for removing the cap was: (1) with inflation, project costs have been a lot higher than they were when the \$500,000 federal funding share cap was implemented originally, and (2) to reduce project volatility and funding volatility so that we can have everything funded at once so we can deliver the projects as efficiently as possible so that Arkansans can enjoy the projects. We don't have a specific goal for how many projects are selected.

Q: How can we see the list of ARDOT-approved consultants?

A: The list is on the Consultant Contracts Division website (www.ardot.gov/divisions/consultant-contracts). Scroll to the bottom until you see the Awards List button. Once you click that button, it will take you to our list. Alternatively, you can request the list by emailing LocalPrograms@ardot.gov.

Q: Is this funding opportunity open each year?

A: Yes, as long as the Federal funding is available ARDOT will plan to open up an application cycle each year.

Q: Which contact is best to possibly schedule a 1 on 1 meeting?

A: Please email LocalPrograms@ardot.gov to schedule a 1 on 1 meeting.