

2023 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant

This is only a summary; applicants should not rely on it to meet application requirements. Study the full grant opportunity announcement before applying for any federal grant.

Program Description – The purpose of this notice is to solicit applications for two programs: the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program and the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Program, referred to jointly as the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program. While applicants may choose to apply for only one grant program, this combined solicitation will allow applicants to apply for both funding opportunities by submitting one application. The RCP Program aims to advance and support reconnection of communities divided by transportation infrastructure – with a priority on helping disadvantaged communities improve access to daily needs. Funds are to be awarded on a competitive basis to support planning and capital construction activities that aim to restore community connectivity through the removal, retrofit, mitigation or replacement of highways, roadways, or other infrastructure facilities that create barriers to mobility, access or economic development.

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| Opportunity Numbers – DOT-RCP-FY23-01 | Agency – USDOT |
| Available Funding: Up to \$198M in FY 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCP - Community Planning Grant - \$50M RCP - Capital Construction Grant - \$148M NAE Regional Partnerships Challenge (RPC) Grants - \$450M (DOT awarding 3 to 5 RPC Grants.) | Closing – Sep 28, 2023 |
| | NOFO & Related – https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=348959 https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rcnprogram |
| Obligation Deadline: Sep 30, 2026 | BCA Required? Yes for RCP Capital Construction. No for Planning & NAE Grants |
| Minimum Award: Maximum Community Planning Grant award may range from \$100,000 to \$2 million. Capital Construction Grants may range from \$5 million to \$100 million. | Eligible Project Cost Restrictions: Funds may not be used to support or oppose union organizing. NAE funding shall not be used for a project for additional through travel lanes for single-occupant passenger vehicles. |
| Eligible Applicants for Planning Grants (pgs. 9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State governments A unit of local government Tribal government; Metropolitan Planning Organization; Non-profit organization. Others (see "Additional Information on Eligibility") Eligible Applicants for Construction Grants (pgs. 9-10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facility Owner or Eligible applicants to Planning Grants may submit the application for a Capital Construction Grant. | Required Cost Share: RCP - Community Planning Grant – 80% RCP/20% Local RCP - Capital Construction Grant - 50% RCP/50% Local NAE – Community Planning, Capital Construction, and Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants - 80% NAE/20% Local |
| | Data Collection Requirements: (Pg. 17) -- Performance indicators used in reporting should align with project goals in at least two of the merit criteria below: 1) mobility, 2) access, 3) safety, 4) human & environmental impacts, 5) congestion, 6) economic development, 7) quality of life, and 8) community engagement. |

Merit Criteria: Applications must describe, in detail with supporting documentation, how the project addresses **two** of these criteria for Planning Grants, and **three** for Construction Grants.

| Equity and Environmental Justice | Access | Facility Suitability | Community Engagement & Community based Stewardship, Management & Partnerships | Equitable Development | Climate and Environment | Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity |
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This Program will be implemented in line with the DOT Equity Action Plan (page 4) and these additional equity-related objectives: (1) Housing Supply; (2) Rural and Tribal Communities (ROUTES Initiative); and DOT Strategic Plan priorities (1) Safety; (2) Climate and Sustainability; (3) Equity and Justice40; (4) Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation; (5) Transformation.

A lead applicant may submit no more than three applications for Community Planning Grants, two applications for Capital Construction Grants, and one application for NAE Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants.

Eligible Activities and Costs (NOFO pgs. 14-16)

Each of the funding opportunities has slightly different statutory rules for eligible facilities and different eligible activities and costs.

Community Planning Grants for Both RCP and NAE:

Public engagement activities, including community visioning or other place-based strategies for public input.

- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible dividing facility to reconnect communities, including assessments of:
 - Current traffic patterns on the facility and the surrounding street network.
 - Capacity of existing transportation networks to maintain mobility needs.
 - Alternative roadway designs or other uses for the right-of-way including green infrastructure or other nature-based solutions.
 - The project's anticipated impact on mobility of freight and people.
 - The project's anticipated impact on safety.
 - The estimated cost to restore community connectivity and to convert the facility to a different design or use, compared to any expected maintenance or reconstruction costs.
 - The project's anticipated economic impact and development opportunities.
 - The project's anticipated environmental, public health, and community impacts.
- Other planning activities in advance of the project, such as:
 - Conceptual and preliminary engineering, or design and planning studies that support the environmental review for a construction project.
 - Developing local anti-displacement policies and community benefit agreements.
 - Associated needs such as locally-driven land use and zoning reform, transit-oriented development, housing supply, in particular location-efficient affordable housing, managing gentrification and neighborhood change, proposed project impact mitigation, green and open space, local history and culture, access and mobility barriers, jobs and workforce, or other necessary planning activities as put forth by the applicant that do not result in construction.

Community Planning Grants for NAE only:

- Planning and capacity building activities in disadvantaged or underserved communities to:
 - Identify, monitor, or assess local and ambient air quality, emissions of transportation greenhouse gases, hot spot areas of extreme heat or elevated air pollution, gaps in tree canopy coverage, or flood prone transportation infrastructure.
- Planning studies to assess the feasibility of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible burdening or dividing facility, and predevelopment activities for eligible NAE Capital Construction projects.
- Assess transportation equity or pollution impacts.
- Administer or obtain technical assistance related to other eligible planning activities listed above.

Capital Construction Grants for Both RCP and NAE:

- Preliminary and detailed design activities and associated environmental studies; predevelopment / preconstruction; permitting activities including the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for:
 - The removal, retrofit, or mitigation of an eligible dividing facility;
 - The replacement of an eligible dividing facility with a new facility that restores community connectivity;
 - Delivering community benefits and environmental improvements or mitigation of impacts identified through the NEPA process or other planning and project development for the construction project.

Application & Narrative Requirements –

Required components include: **SF-424**, Planning Grants (**SF-424A and SF424B**) or Capital Construction Grants (**SF-424C and SF-424D**), **Key Information Table** and **Project Narrative**. For Planning Grants, the narrative should not exceed 10 pages; for Capital Grants and Regional Partnerships Challenge grant, the narrative should not exceed 20 pages. Standard formatting: i.e., single-spaced, standard 12-point such as Times New Roman, 1-inch margins and page numbers.

Applicants must submit their applications via Valid Eval at the links below:

Community Planning Grants: https://usg.valideval.com/teams/rcn_planning/signup

Capital Construction Grants: https://usg.valideval.com/teams/rcn_captialconstruction/signup

Do not submit applications through Grants.gov.