

# Montana Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Description

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## ***What is the purpose of the Transportation Alternatives Program?***

The Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program authorized under Section 1122 of MAP-21 (23 U.S.C. 213(b), 101(a)(29)) provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Web link to FHWA MAP-21 information <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>

## ***Who may apply?***

Eligible entities to receive TA funds (23USC213(c)(4)(B))

- local governments;
- tribal governments;
- transit agencies;
- natural resource or public land agencies;
- school districts, local education agencies, or schools;
- tribal governments; and
- any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than a metropolitan planning organization or a State agency) that the State determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of subsection (c) of section 213 of title 23.

## ***Who is not eligible to apply?***

Under TA, per federal law, nonprofits, the Montana Department of Transportation, and MPO's are not eligible as direct recipients of the funds. Nonprofits can partner with any eligible entity on an eligible TA project.

## ***Where can projects be located?***

Projects are to be located within the jurisdiction of the Local Entity Sponsor (Sponsor). There is no requirement for TA projects to be located along Federal-aid highways.

## ***What types of proposals will be considered?***

Under 23 U.S.C. 213(b) eligible activities under the TA program consist of:

1. Transportation Alternatives as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(29) (MAP-21 1103):
  - A. Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
  - B. Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.

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- C. Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
  - D. Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
  - E. Community improvement activities, including-
    - i. inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
    - ii. historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
    - iii. vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
    - iv. archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.
  - F. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement activities and mitigation to-
    - i. address storm water management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff, including activities described in sections 133(b)(11), 328(a), and 329 of title 23; or
    - ii. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- 2. The recreational trails program under section 206 of title 23.
  - 3. The safe routes to school program under section 1404 of the SAFETEA-LU.
    - A. Infrastructure-related projects.-planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects on any public road or any bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail in the vicinity of schools that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.
    - B. Non-infrastructure-related activities to encourage walking and bicycling to school, including public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders, traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools, student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment, and funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes to school programs.
    - C. Safe Routes to School coordinator.
  - 4. Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

### ***What types of proposals will not be considered?***

Section 1103 of MAP-21 eliminated the definition of transportation enhancement activities in section 104 of title 23 and inserted in its place a definition of transportation alternatives, which does not include eligibility for certain activities that were previously eligible as transportation enhancements:

- A. Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicycles.  
Exception: Activities targeting children in Kindergarten through 8th grade are eligible under SRTS (an eligible activity under the TA funding).  
Note: Some of these activities may be eligible under HSIP. Non-construction projects for bicycle safety remain broadly eligible for STP funds.
- B. Landscaping and other scenic beautification
- C. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites.
- D. Scenic or historic highway programs (including visitor and welcome centers).

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- i. Note: A few specific activities under this category (construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas) remain eligible under section 101(a)(29)(D) of title 23.
- E. Historic preservation as an independent activity unrelated to historic transportation facilities.  
Note: Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities are permitted as one type of community improvement activity; see section 101(a)(29)(E).
- F. Operation of historic transportation facilities.
- G. Archaeological planning and research undertaken for proactive planning. This category now must be used only as mitigation for highway projects.
- H. Transportation museums.

### *Who will define the nature of each project, the Sponsor or MDT?*

Defining the parameters of any project submitted for evaluation is the responsibility of the Sponsor. Sponsors should have conferred with local MDT officials, and any local MPO before submitting an application, but such dialogue is not required.

### *How can I submit an application?*

Guidance on submitting an application may be found on MDT's internet site at:  
[http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta\\_application.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/ta_application.shtml)