

Transportation Alternatives Program Purpose

The Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school projects; and vulnerable road user safety assessments.

Eligible entities (Project Sponsors)

Eligible entities to receive TA funds (23 U.S.C. 133(h)(4)(A))

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools
- Tribal governments
- A metropolitan planning organization (MPO) that serves an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or fewer
- Nonprofits, however, **MDT requires** that a nonprofit entity partner with another eligible entity, such as a local government. **The Project Sponsor in the application must be the eligible entity that the nonprofit partners with.**

Eligible Activities (Projects)

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.
 - 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.

2023 Montana Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Description

- 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.
5. Section 133(h)(3)(C): activities in furtherance of a vulnerable road user safety assessment (as defined in 23 U.S.C. 148(a))
6. Section 133(h)(6)(C): Improving Accessibility and Efficiency
7. Under 23 U.S.C. 149(b)(7), a project or program is eligible if it “shifts traffic demand to nonpeak hours or other transportation modes, increases vehicle occupancy rates, or otherwise reduces demand for roads through such means as ... shared micromobility (including bikesharing and shared scooter systems).
8. Construction of pedestrian walkways and bicycle and shared micromobility transportation facilities and for carrying out nonconstruction projects related to safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Ineligible Activities

TA Set-Aside funds cannot be used for the following activities:

1. MPO administrative purposes.
2. Promotional activities, except as permitted under the SRTS (2 CFR 200.421(e)(3)).
3. Routine maintenance and operations, except trail maintenance and restoration as permitted under the RTP.
4. General recreation and park facilities, playground equipment, sports fields, campgrounds, picnic areas, pavilions, or other facilities that do not serve an eligible TA Set-Aside, RTP, or SRTS purpose.