2021 TA Set-Aside Program Kickoff
Statewide Webinar
June 23, 2021

Questions and Answers

Project Sponsors

Can a consultant be hired by the municipality to complete the application on their behalf?
Yes. Please contact your PennDOT District's TA Set-Aside Coordinator for additional information.

Does the applicant have to be the sponsor or have to have approval from a sponsor?
A consultant may fill out an application and submit on behalf of a project sponsor. A consultant should have the approval of the sponsor and work closely with them to complete the application. The contact information within the application should be for the sponsor, not the consultant.

Are consultants able to fill out the application and have the sponsor actually submit it?
The individual that creates the application in the system must also submit the application; the contact information within the application should be for the sponsor.

Are consultants able to apply for multiple clients?
Yes. They would need to apply on behalf of the sponsor as they are not the applicant.

Can more than one individual from the same sponsor register and create an account?
Yes, but only the individual from the sponsor organization who creates the application can work on it and view it.

Application System

Should District planning and programming staff create an account to review the applications?
Yes, any District users that will be reviewing and commenting on applications should contact Matt Long (matlong@pa.gov), PennDOT, Program Center for access.

Can you provide a word document of the application so applicants can write it out before entering information into the form?
A pdf of the application is available on the TA Set-Aside website.

Will applicants be able to print out their submitted application with all text for each answer shown? Yes, the application system has a function to create a pdf of the application. The pdf can then be printed or saved.

Is there a limit of number of characters that can be entered in the description boxes?
No.

Is the online mapping tool required as part of the application?
Yes, the mapping within the application system is required as it brings in the environmental information as well as linking other information such as Planning Partner, PennDOT District, School District, etc. If a sponsor is having difficulty with mapping, they can reach out for assistance via RA-pdTASA@pa.gov or 717-775-3276. The sponsor's District or Planning Partner may also be able to assist with this.

For the mapping tool, if you clear the point from the legend, will it automatically remove the item as a proposed feature?
The Clear Proposal Features button will remove all proposed features from the map. Individual features can be removed by clicking on the feature and selecting Remove from Proposal in the popup.

For the mapping tool, do you have to click "Add to Proposal" for line features created, or are they automatically added?
Yes, you need to click "Add to Proposal" for all lines and features that you are adding to the map.

Application Process

If in one of the Large MPO areas that are not partnering with the statewide application round, are we eligible to apply?
Yes. You can still apply for consideration for statewide funding.

Can an applicant submit more than one pre-application by Aug. 16th for feedback on which would be best to submit through the full application?
Yes, a sponsor can submit multiple pre-applications and even multiple final applications.

Am I understanding the scoring system correctly? It appeared that a high score in environmental impacts was undesirable and in the Project Criteria a high score is desirable.
A high score in the environmental section does not mean that a project is undesirable but that there is a potential to have an effect on environmental resources as they are located in close proximity to your project. These items could be discussed during the pre-application meeting and if your project is selected, they would be evaluated more closely during the environmental clearance process. A high score in the Selection Criteria is desirable as this score aids in project selection.

If the final application is due Oct 15th, when does the "pre-application" need to be sent to the District?
Pre-applications must be submitted by August 16, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

If you are in a large MPO like SPC, do you still submit the pre-applications and applications to the District or to SPC?
SPC specifically, has a separate application for their large MPO funding allocation but run their application process on a concurrent timeline with the statewide application round. Sponsors within the SPC region who want to be considered for both large MPO funding and statewide funding would need to apply under both of the separate applications. The statewide pre-application would then be submitted to the applicable District. The large MPO program guidance and applications specific to the SPC region will be available starting 6/28/21 at the following location: https://www.spcregion.org/funding-programs/. Please monitor PennDOT's TA Set-Aside webpage for other large MPO guidance or reach out to your large MPO directly.

Is there a fee to apply?
No.

Is there any possibility that for project selection, the State could choose before the large MPO, if there is more than one application?
For the current funding round the large MPOs will provide their selections first, followed by the statewide selection committee. A revision to this process could be evaluated at a later date.

Funding Related

Can you review the maximum grant amount you can apply for?
There is a soft cap of $1 million. On a case-by-case basis, projects with exceptional value may be selected and funded up to a total cost of $3 million if the expense is justified.

Is the total funding available $18 million for statewide and additional $5 million for small MPOs or $18 million total?
Total statewide funding available is approximately $18 million.

Can you explain the logistics of this grant being a reimbursement only? At what point will the grant amount be set? Are there partial releases of funds?
During the application process the sponsor provides a construction estimate for the project and requests the amount of funding that they feel will be needed based upon that estimate. If the sponsor is not requesting TA Set-Aside funds cover the entire construction total, additional information should be provided within the application indicating the amount being requested and how the remainder of the project will be funded. Upon project award, the sponsors of selected projects will be notified of the amount of funding they have been awarded. During the course of construction, periodic invoices will be submitted to PennDOT for reimbursement. PennDOT will provide payment to the sponsor and then the sponsor will in turn pay the contractor.

If awarded funding, can you use this funding as the local match for a DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant?
This should be verified with DCED but would be allowable from a TA Set-Aside standpoint.

Can other federal funding (such as Smart Growth Transportation funding) be helping to fund the same project? It would not be match funding but filling in a gap in funding.
Yes, this is allowable with the TA Set-Aside funding, but it is recommended that you check on specifications from the other funding source to see if it is allowable from their end to combine.

Similar to the last question, can other state funding sources be used to help fund the same project, not as a match but to fill in the gaps in funding? i.e. DCNR, DCED and DEP grant programs
Yes, this is allowable with the TA Set-Aside funding, but it is recommended that you check on specifications from the other funding source to see if it is allowable from their end to combine.

Is there a match requirement?
No match is required. The sponsor is responsible for all pre-construction costs. These would include design costs, preparation of environmental, right-of-way, and utility submission documents, any required environmental studies, any needed temporary or permanent right-of-way acquisition, any needed railroad coordination, any needed permits and the preparation of final plans and specifications.

Can federal funds be used for the design of a TA-Set Aside project?

If you have federal funds for design and those funds require a match you will need to check with the source of those design funds to see if TA Set-Aside funds will be an acceptable match.

Project Delivery

Do you have to use the PennDOT engineer selection process for a project?

No, not for selection of a design consultant as design costs are the responsibility of the sponsor. However, it is highly recommended using an engineer with PennDOT/ ECMS experience in order to reduce the time required to design and deliver the project and not put the awarded federal construction funds in jeopardy. For construction inspection, the sponsor must follow a qualifications-based selection process. Please refer to PennDOT Publication 93.

Can the consultant hired by the sponsor for design of the project also provide construction inspection?

That is allowable if the project construction costs are $1.5 million or less and the consultant was selected using a qualification based selection process and is qualified to perform both design and inspection. Please refer to PennDOT's Publication 740 for more information.