

RPA-1 – Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP)

Instructions and Priority Criteria

RPA-1/Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) is seeking applications for Federal Funding through the regional Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (“TA Set-Aside” or “TAP”*) for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028. Please note, FFYs begin on October 1; for example, FFY 2028 begins October 1, 2027.

**Though the program is now called the Iowa Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TA Set-Aside), the program’s former “popular” name, TAP, continues to be used—stemming from when it was called the Transportation Alternatives Program.*

RPA-1 is expected to have approximately **\$1.386 million** available for distribution in FFY 2025-2028.

Eligible applicants include:

- local governments;
- regional transportation authorities;
- transit agencies;
- natural resource or public land agencies;
- tribal governments;
- any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails

Note: Under TAP, nonprofits are not eligible as direct grant recipients of the funds. Nonprofits and other non-eligible sponsors may partner with any eligible entity on an eligible TAP project.

Eligible activities and projects include:

- 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 but not limited to:
 - inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
 - historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
 - vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control;
 - archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under this title
 - Streetscaping and corridor landscaping.
- F. Any environmental mitigation activity, including pollution prevention and pollution abatement

activities and mitigation to:

- address stormwater management, control, and water pollution prevention or abatement related to highway construction or due to highway runoff
 - reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats
- G. The recreational trails program (RTP) under 23 U.S.C. 206. (Any project eligible under the RTP also is eligible under the TA Set-Aside)
- H. The safe routes to school (SRTS) projects, including:
- Infrastructure-related projects (minimum request is \$25,000): planning, design and construction of infrastructure-related projects 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.
 - 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 K-8 schools; student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment; and funding for training, volunteers, and managers of safe routes to school programs.

The following criteria will apply to the development and letting of construction and/or infrastructure projects:

- 1) Any costs incurred prior to receipt of a notice to proceed from the Iowa DOT are not eligible for reimbursement.
- 2) Plans must be developed by a Professional Engineer registered in the State of Iowa.
- 3) Plans must go through the proper review by the Iowa Department of Transportation as outlined by IDOT.
- 4) All Federal guidelines for project development must be followed, for example: environmental impacts, historical impacts, archeological impacts, etc.
- 5) Inspection and documentation of the project construction will be performed as required by Iowa DOT.
- 6) If Federal funds are to be used for engineering costs, the consultant selection process shall be used as outlined by Iowa DOT.

For the application form and full program guidelines, visit:

https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Transportation-Alternatives

Applications will be accepted beginning January 31, 2024 and are due by **February 29, 2024**. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Detter at 563-419-6126, adetter@uerpc.org, or your respective County Conservation Director, as listed below.

Conservation Directors:	Allamakee	Jim Janett	(563) 568-2996
	Clayton	Jenna Pollock	(563) 245-1516
	Fayette	Rod Marlatt	(563) 422-5146
	Howard	Jeff Korsmo	(563) 547-3634
	Winneshiek	Barb Schroeder	(563) 534-7145

Please return the completed application form to:

RPA-1/UERPC Attn: Aaron Detter
325 Washington Street, Decorah, IA 52101
or via email: adetter@uerpc.org

For the application form and full program guidelines, visit:
https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Transportation-Alternatives

RPA-1 Priority Criteria for TA Set-Aside/TAP Projects

Applications will be evaluated and competitively scored by the RPA-1 Transportation Enhancement Committee, which makes funding recommendations to the RPA-1 Transportation Policy Board.

Information and answers provided on the official application form will be evaluated and scored according to the following criteria. The points available for each criterion are listed in parenthesis; total of 30 points possible.

NOTE: No answers are required below; applicants must only fill out the official application form from the Iowa DOT's program webpage: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Transportation-Alternatives

1. Project description (6 points)

Scoring will consider:

- *Clear understanding and description of the project*
- *Project validity, need, or merit*
- *Readiness of the project*

2. Other funding sources secured or intended to pursue; timeline for funding efforts, if applicable (5 points)

Scoring will consider whether:

- *Funding sources are identified*
- *Funding is secured*
- *Preliminary project planning is complete*
- *Engineering firm has been consulted and/or plans have been initiated*
- *One or more phases is funded and complete*

3. Description of local planning efforts or public input process; extent to which adjacent property owners and others have been informed of the proposed project and an assessment of their acceptance. Has project already gone through a local/county/regional project priority setting process? Is it identified in a long-range plan? (3 points)

Scoring will consider whether the project:

- *Has local, regional, or statewide significance*
- *Has been previously considered as part of a community, school, or byway plan (e.g. Comprehensive Plan, Corridor Management Plan, Transportation Plan, Safe Routes to School Plan, Master Plan, Wellness Plan, Park and Recreation Plan, etc.)*
- *Has sought sufficient public or other stakeholder input*

4. Demonstrated benefit to the community, and/or region, and/or state (5 points)

Scoring will consider how the project is a:

- *Draw for local, regional, or statewide users for recreation*
- *Draw for local, regional, or statewide users for commuting and commerce*

5. Project enhances the existing transportation system or provides an essential element within a larger project (5 points)

Scoring will consider whether the project:

- *Has connectivity or ties to larger project*
- *Is part of trail system or activity already in place*
- *Is part of related development/roadway/paved shoulder project*
- *Provides an essential element of project structure*
- *Provides "live, work and play" components for a comprehensive project*

6. Description of points of interest to visitors (amenities, sites, viewpoints, etc.) associated with the project (3 points)

Scoring will consider whether the project:

- *Positively impacts scenic areas or byways*
- *Provides off road stops/direct access*
- *Provides access to support services, restrooms, rest areas, etc.*

7. Benefit to populations such as children, elderly, low-income, or disabled persons? (3 points)

Scoring will consider whether the project:

- *Has user fees or addresses obstacles for low-income persons*
- *Supports safe access for kids to use unsupervised/little motor vehicle cross traffic*
- *Provides access to rest areas, activities, kiosks for elderly/disabled, etc.*