



Regional Transportation Planning In-Kind Grant Program

Grant Application Background and Instructions

Welcome to the Fiscal Year 2004 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Transportation Planning Grant Program. This program could provide your community with staff time worth up to \$21,000 from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) to perform transportation planning. If you see a need for such a service in your community, please read the background information and application instructions, and then complete the attached application. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Hubley at 1-800-232-0707 or ahubley@ardc.org.

ARDC would like to thank you for your interest and looks forward to your application!

Background

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

The Arrowhead Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) is a sub-committee of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) that advises ARDC staff regarding transportation planning processes. The committee has members representing each county in the Arrowhead Region, Mn/DOT, transit systems, airports, regional rail authorities, reservations, chambers of commerce, and others (some positions are currently vacant). The committee meets quarterly in January, April, June, and October. Funding for the group comes from a regional transportation grant that ARDC receives from Mn/DOT each fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

In 1997, the RTAC conducted a strategic planning process to help them better define their mission and purpose. The resulting mission statement of the RTAC is:

ARDC's Transportation Advisory Committee provides a forum for comprehensive and cooperative planning and leadership in the improvement of transportation in Northeastern Minnesota.

Proposed FY 2004 RTAC Work Program

RTAC Admin/Regional Plan:	30% (\$18,750)
Mn/DOT Planning Start-up:	10% (\$6,250)
In-kind Local Planning Grant:	35% (\$21,875)
In-kind LP Grant Admin:	10% (\$6,250)
Statewide Planning:	15% (\$9,375)
Total:	100% (\$62,500)

In-Kind Planning Grant Background

In October 2002, ARDC and the RTAC developed several strategies to better assist the communities of Northeast Minnesota. The most significant strategy is one that dramatically changes the way ARDC spends its \$62,500 annual regional transportation grant budget. This budget is the combination of a \$50,000 Mn/DOT grant and a required 15 percent local match from the ARDC levy, which ARDC chooses to overmatch.

ARDC will take about \$21,000 of that money and offer it in the form of in-kind transportation planning grants. The grant program will offer ARDC services to local entities or state agencies. Each year, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee will solicit the planning project ideas and award the grants to the entities.

The RTAC will award the in-kind planning grant(s) every July, which is when the regional transportation grant is renewed. The committee would monitor the planning processes during the fiscal year, and begin the program again the next June.

This grant offers *planning services only*, not money. If you are awarded a grant, it means you will receive staff time from ARDC in order for transportation planners to work with you to complete your planning process. Matching dollars from the applicants to enhance the size and scope of the planning processes are encouraged.

What is a planning process?

Planning processes have many roles within communities, including assessing needs, determining basic goals, and changing policies. In the case of this grant, we will be awarding staff time to complete transportation planning. In addition to the above items, transportation planning is the procedure that communities can use to implement a significant investment in infrastructure.

While each planning process is different based on goals and budget, a likely transportation process that ARDC will use for this grant is as follows:

Eligible Entities

All state and local agencies and governments are eligible to apply. Entity eligibility will mirror the Area Transportation Partnership Enhancement guidelines.

Eligible Projects

The RTAC in-kind grant program will be available for transportation planning. "Transportation" will be defined similar to the federal eligibility guidelines.

Examples include:

- ➔ Parking capacity studies
- ➔ Highway or railroad corridor safety studies
- ➔ Access management planning
- ➔ Bike trail or bike route planning
- ➔ Pedestrian safety studies
- ➔ Enhancement project preparation
- ➔ Local road plans

1. **Process development**
ARDC works with the grantee to determine what the goals of the planning process are, what steps will be used, and what the process schedule will be.
2. **Needs assessment**
ARDC will inventory the community to determine the need for the proposed infrastructure or policy change. Public input is part of this step.
3. **Recommendation development**
ARDC will work with the community to develop ideas regarding what transportation investment or policy change is needed. ARDC will ensure the recommendation is feasible.
4. **Funding identification**
ARDC will work with the community to identify what sources of funding could be used to implement the recommendations.
5. **Plan publication**
ARDC will publish the plan document for the community. Plan documents typically include process review, recommendations, graphics, and maps. Public review of the draft document is part of this step.
6. **Implementation**
ARDC will assist the community with plan implementation or give them the necessary tools to work towards that goal themselves.

Grant Schedule and Process

- *April: Solicitation and Start-up*
The RTAC will approve the grant process at their April meeting and will authorize ARDC staff to solicit applications. Staff will mail invitations to local and state agencies and governments. Interested applicants will be asked to contact ARDC to begin scoping out possible projects. ARDC will help the entities develop their ideas and to determine the project budgets. Applicants will then complete a standard grant request for the RTAC to review.
- *June: Application Review*
Applications will be due in mid-June. The RTAC will review the applications at their fiscal year-end meeting in late June. The committee will determine grant recipients at that time via a vote. ARDC staff will inform the entities, and will begin working with the groups to complete their plans.
- *October: Project Monitoring*
ARDC staff will inform the RTAC of project progress and receive feedback on planning direction.

- *January: Project Monitoring*
ARDC staff will inform the RTAC of project progress and receive feedback on planning direction.
- *April: Project Monitoring and Process Review*
ARDC staff will inform the RTAC of project progress and receive feedback on planning direction. The RTAC will review the entire grant process and recommend any changes for the next fiscal year cycle. Following review, the solicitation process will begin for the new fiscal year.

Project Review Guidelines

The RTAC will review project proposals and budgets each year. The committee will determine how the available \$21,000 is spent. It could be split into as many as four projects or as few as a single project. Awarding the grants will be based on the following criteria:

- Regional impact-how does the planning process affect the region (priority would be given to planning processes that enhance regional plans)?
- Local impact-how does the planning process affect the community?
- Multi-modalism-does the planning process include more than a single mode of transportation?
- Safety-does the planning process involve improving the safety of transportation in a community?
- Economic impact-does the planning process improve the economy of the community and the region?
- Matching dollars-does the applicant bring more money to the project than just the RTAC grant?
- Budget-how does the budget fit with other projects into the \$21,000 total in-kind award?

Application Instructions

Please fill out the attached application as thoroughly as you can. Upon completion, send it to the address below by **May 9, 2003**. ARDC staff will contact you to finalize details regarding your planning project idea.

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