

California Regional Blueprint Planning Program Grant Application Frequently Asked Questions August 2005

Q: Will Blueprint grant applications be viewed more favorably, if we partner with other agencies?

A: Blueprint planning is based on collaboration. Evidence of collaboration and support of local agencies will be considered favorably. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in coordination with the Councils of Government (COG), submits the application. Local jurisdictions and other private and public sector stakeholders should also be included to the extent possible. Applicants should build early support for the Blueprint planning process.

Q: Is it required that 25% – 30% of our budget must be spent on public participation?

A: Public participation is a significant component of Blueprint planning. However, there is no set requirement. Your budget should show all of your activities.

Q: What if agencies have already done some public participation work? Do we get credit for what's been done?

A: Yes. You should show what you have already accomplished in the process as well as proposed future steps.

Q: Is there a cap on the amount that an applicant can request?

A: No. There is no cap.

Q: Are there additional criteria to what is in the application?

A: No. The grant application outlines all of the criteria that are appropriate to the Blueprint planning process.

Q: Is the funding criteria similar to the criteria for PL funds?

A: Yes. Data gathering and visioning that ultimately support transportation planning decisions are eligible costs.

Q: Should this endeavor support the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) development and assist decision makers?

A: Yes. The Blueprint Plans, the data collected, and the partnerships built should all lead to the RTP/MTP and transportation planning decisions. It is expected that they will also support General Plan updates.

Q: What are the incentives and benefits of this program for Housing and Community Development?

A: There are no specific incentives, however, the data and information collected for the Blueprint will complement the update of the Housing Element within General Plans and assist with their approval.

Q: Will this program have statewide significance?

A: Yes. The Blueprint Plans should help the State address interregional and statewide land use, transportation, and housing issues and work toward achievement of the 3E's: equity, environment and economy. The statewide performance measures are expected to provide data for state policy making.

Q: Should MPOs structure the process and pass through funding to subregions?

A: Yes, when the purpose of passing through funding to sub-regions is to support the overall regional blueprint planning process, it would be appropriate. This will, however, depend on the region.

Q: Will these grant funds be limited to a certain number of applicants?

A: All 18 MPOs are eligible to apply and it would be ideal to provide some level of funding to all applicants with an adequate application.

Q: Should we coordinate with neighboring regional agencies?

A: Yes, this may be in the form of regular communications and consultation on common issues or could be a more extensive multiple MPO effort. Neighboring regional agencies should share the load, work on common issues, and set concrete goals/expectations.

Q: Should there be joint use of models by more than one MPO?

A: There could be joint use of models by more than one MPO. This will depend on the region and if it is appropriate to have a multiple MPO effort.

Q: Will the Blueprint Planning grants require separate agreements with Caltrans?

A: No. We will use the Master Fund Transfer Agreements (MFTAs). Funding received through the Blueprint Planning Grant will require amending the Overall Work Programs and Overall Work Program Agreements.

Q: What if we are unable to obtain a MPO Board resolution in time for the September 30 deadline? Will a resolution from our COG Board suffice?

A: We must have the MPO Board resolution supporting the Blueprint planning process and the grant application. However, if timelines do not permit this to be completed by September 30, showing that it is on the next Board agenda on your application will suffice and it can be provided it as soon as it is completed. We should have a resolution from your COG Board as well.

Q: Must the 20 percent match be cash, or can it be in-kind from the applicant, not a third party? Can it be a mix of both cash and in-kind?

A: The 20 percent match can be any combination of cash and in-kind from the applicant adding up to at least 20 percent. But it must be non-federal funds that are being used to fund the match, including the in-kind portion. In other words, if the applicant is providing staff time as an in-kind match, be sure that the staff salary is not paid with federal funds.