

MDOT Grants and Local Partnerships

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity Programs

Grants due September 28

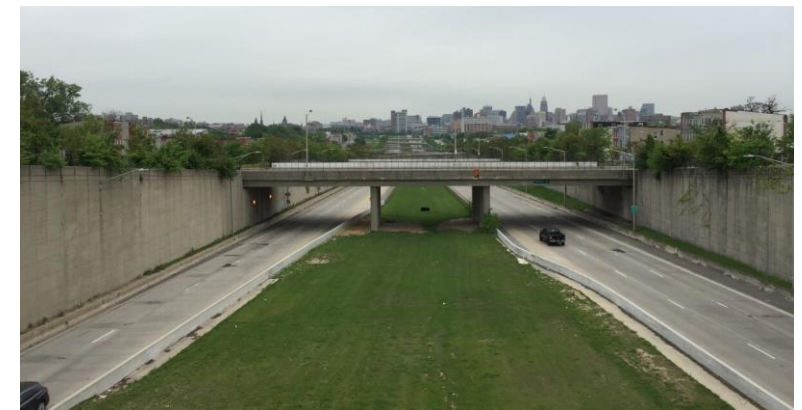
August 22, 2023



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Background

- The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program was championed by Maryland's congressional delegation and passed in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- The Neighborhood Access and Equity Program was created in the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Together, the programs seek to provide funds to overcome or mitigate transportation dividing or burdening facilities that historically have harmed community connectivity and build technical capacity at the community and local level.
- USDOT combined the programs into one discretionary grants NOFO, applicant may apply to both programs with one submission.



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity

- Grant applications **due September 28**.
- **\$3.35 Billion** in available funding.
- Key Definitions:
 - **Transportation Dividing Facility**:
 - A surface transportation facility that creates an obstacle to community connectivity by high speeds, grade separation or other design factors.
 - **Transportation Burdening Facility**:
 - A surface transportation facility that is a source of air pollution, noise, stormwater, heat or other burden to a disadvantaged or underserved community.



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Grant Categories

- Community Planning (**\$188 Million available**)
 - Awards may be used for planning activities that support future construction projects and to support innovative community planning/technical capacity building to address localized transportation challenges.
- Capital Construction (**~\$2.72 Billion available**)
 - Awards are used to:
 - implement a project to remove, retrofit, mitigate or replace an existing eligible transportation dividing facility and provide enhanced community connectivity;
 - mitigate a burdening transportation facility that is a source of localized pollution (air, water, noise, heat) or implements a strategy to reduce environmental harm; and
 - improve mobility and access to transportation for communities.
- Regional Partnership Challenge (**\$450 Million available – Neighborhood Access Only**)
 - Awards to two or more partners to address persistent regional challenges related to equitable access and mobility. Planning and construction activities are eligible.

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Eligible Activities

Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

- Projects must address a transportation dividing facility.
- **Planning:**
 - Public engagement activities.
 - Feasibility studies to determine how to address a dividing facility and restore community connectivity.
 - Environmental assessment activities to include NEPA and historical reviews.
 - Preliminary engineering and design.
 - Land use and anti-displacement studies.

- **Construction:**

- NEPA, preliminary and final design, permitting and general predevelopment activities.
- Removal, retrofit, replacement or mitigation of a dividing facility that provides community connectivity or an environmental benefit, as identified in NEPA/planning process.



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Eligible Activities

Neighborhood Access and Equity

- Not limited to dividing facilities. At least 40% of all funds to be invested in historically disadvantaged areas.
- **Planning:**
 - Capacity building activities to include pollution and extreme heat monitoring and assessments of transportation equity and source pollution.
 - Feasibility studies.
- **Construction:**
 - NEPA, preliminary and final design, permitting and general predevelopment activities and construction for:
 - The reuse of a burdening or dividing facility to improve walkability, safety or transportation access.
 - Projects that mitigate impacts of a burdening facility (noise, GHG reduction, environmental).
 - Natural infrastructure or permeable pavements to reduce stormwater run-off or environmental impact at facilities.
 - Traditional or natural infrastructure to mitigate urban heat island effects or hot spots at surface transportation facilities.
 - Safety improvements for vulnerable road users.
 - Complete streets, multi-use trails, regional greenways or other active transportation networks.
 - Providing affordable access to essential destinations to include transit hubs or public spaces.

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Eligible Applicants

Reconnecting Communities Pilot

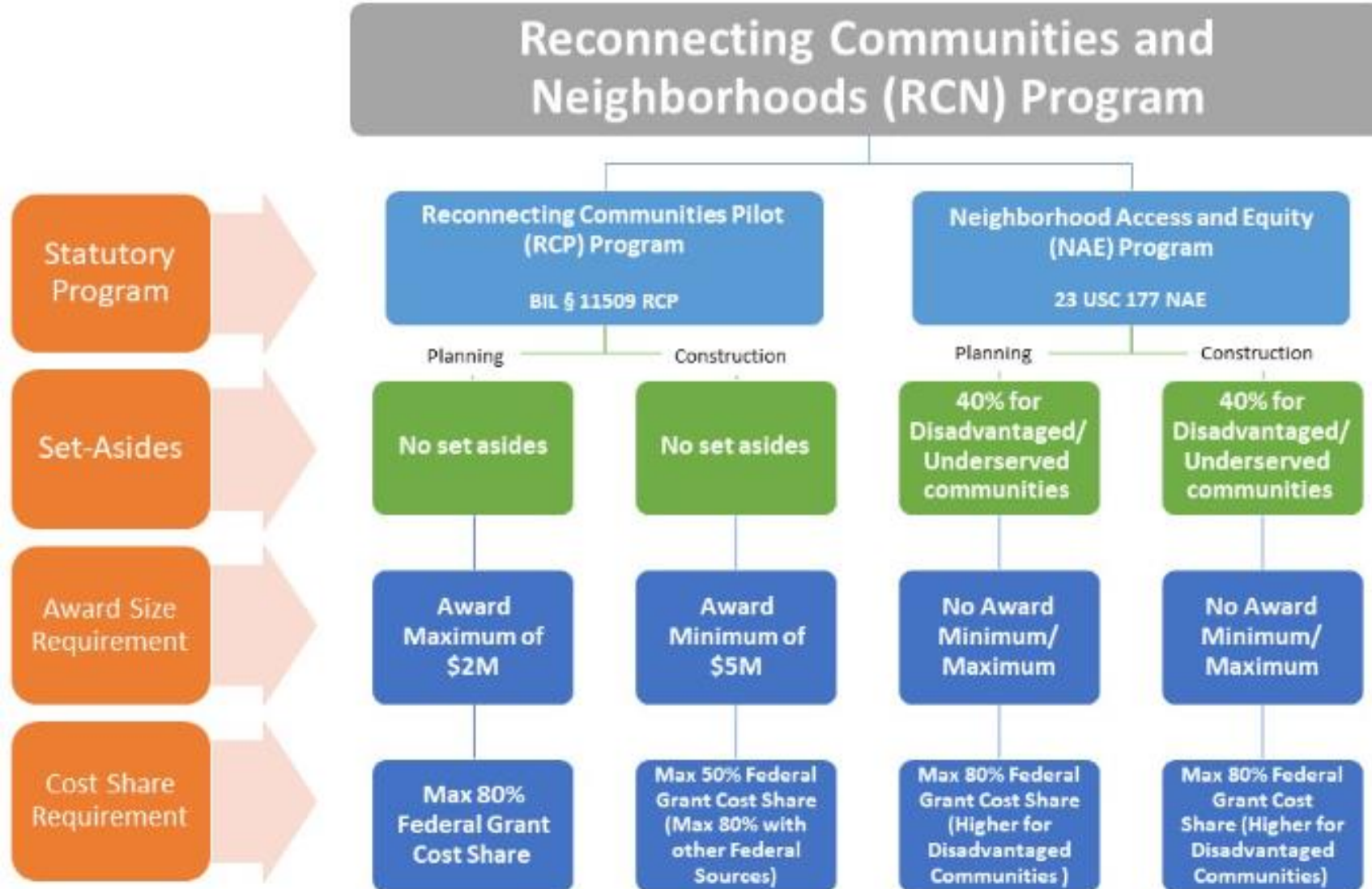
- **Planning:** State, unit of local government, Tribal government, MPO or non-profit organization.
- **Construction:**
 - Owner of an eligible transportation dividing facility (with all required feasibility studies completed).
 - Entities listed in planning in partnership with facility owner.

Neighborhood Access and Equity

- **All activities:** State or territory, unit of local government, a political subdivision of a state, Tribal government, special purpose district with a transportation function, MPO, non-profit or higher education institution in partnership with one of the above.
- USDOT encourages NAE grant applicants to be led by a potential facility owner or have documented support/partnership from facility owner.

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM

Fast Facts



RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES INSTITUTE (RCI)

- DOT will provide **technical assistance** for grantees and potential grantees launching **later in 2023**.
- Eligible entities: States, local and tribal governments, MPOs and non-profit organizations.
- The RCI will provide capacity building through group and peer-based virtual leaning, and one-on-one assistance to participants in the following areas:
 - Project scoping and development, including meaningful public involvement and transportation planning.
 - Travel demand modeling.
 - Equitable development and community-wealth building strategies.
 - Project funding and financing.
 - Design and preliminary engineering within the planning and pre-construction phases.
 - Data collection and performance metrics to capture the impacts of reconnecting projects.



RCN UPCOMING WEBINARS

Title: Interested in Applying? Reconnecting Communities Grant Program Overview for Prospective Applicants - Encore

Wednesday, August 9, 2023
1:30 – 3:30 p.m. ET

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Rural/Nonprofit focus

Tuesday, August 15, 2023
1:30 – 3:30 p.m. ET

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods – Capital Construction

Thursday, August 24, 2023
1:30 – 3:30 p.m. ET

To view recorded webinars, visit the USDOT webinar [webpage](#).

MDOT Federal Discretionary Grants

For More Information:

www.mdot.Maryland.gov/ijagrants

- Information on federal discretionary grant opportunities
- Monthly newsletter
- More content tailored for local partners in development

Sean Winkler

Manager, Federal Infrastructure Strategy

Swinkler1@mdot.Maryland.gov

Office: 410-865-1158

Direct: 443-401-7788

Scan Here for More Information.

