

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) [Formerly the Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP)]

Updated May 22, 2013

STATUS: ACTIVE

PROGRAM CODES:

- 94B0 – LTAP
- 4380 – LTAP (SAFETEA-LU FY 2006 - 2009)
- 438E - LTAP (SAFETEA-LU Extension – P.L. 111-068)
- M438 - LTAP (MAP-21 - P.L. 112-141)

EXPIRED PROGRAM CODES: 9450, 9460, 94A0, 96D0, 96F0, 96M0, 96N0, 9AC0, 9AD0

FEDERAL SHARE: LTAP centers - 50 percent; Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) centers - 100 percent; 100 percent for FHWA initiated technical projects

PERIOD AVAILABLE: Until expended

FUND: Highway account of the Highway Trust Fund

FUND DISTRIBUTION METHOD: Allocation - See comments

TYPE OF AUTHORITY: Contract

SUBJECT TO OBLIGATION LIMITATION: Yes

STATUTORY REFERENCE: 23 U.S.C. 504(b); MAP-21 §§ 51001(a)(3) and 52004

CFR REFERENCE: None

ELIGIBILITY: To provide access to surface transportation technology to 1) highway and transportation agencies in urbanized and rural areas; 2) contractors that perform work for the agencies; and 3) infrastructure security staff.

To provide education and training, technical assistance, and related support services to -

- assist rural, local transportation agencies and tribal governments, and the consultants and construction personnel working for the agencies and governments, to—
 - develop and expand expertise in road and transportation areas (including pavement, bridge, concrete structures, intermodal connections, safety management systems, intelligent transportation systems, incident response, operations, and traffic safety countermeasures);
 - improve roads and bridges;
 - enhance—
 - programs for the movement of passengers and freight; and
 - intergovernmental transportation planning and project selection; and
 - deal effectively with special transportation-related problems by preparing and providing training packages, manuals, guidelines, and technical resource materials;
- develop technical assistance for tourism and recreational travel;
- identify, package, and deliver transportation technology and traffic safety information to local jurisdictions to assist urban transportation agencies in developing and expanding their ability to deal effectively with transportation-related problems (particularly the promotion of regional cooperation);
- operate, in cooperation with State transportation departments and universities—
 - local technical assistance program centers designated to provide transportation technology transfer services to rural areas and to urbanized areas; and
 - local technical assistance program centers designated to provide transportation technical assistance to tribal governments; and

- allow local transportation agencies and tribal governments, in cooperation with the private sector, to enhance new technology implementation.

BACKGROUND: The FY 1982 Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriation Act (Public Law 97-102) made \$5 million available for rural technical assistance. Congress directed that the funding be used for technical assistance to meet the growing demands placed on rural roads from increased urban sprawl and the increased size and weight of trucks carrying goods from farm to market.

To further develop the rural technical assistance concept, Congress, in FY 1983, directed that the funding be used to develop a RTAP program and implementation schedule setting forth the special needs of rural transportation and to identify how the RTAP program could help meet these needs.

FHWA was designated the lead agency for the program because of its experience with rural roads and its network of division offices working directly with the States.

To accomplish these goals, the FHWA, in cooperation with State highway agencies (SHA's) and universities, established a nationwide system of technology transfer (T²) centers in the 50 States and Puerto Rico. These T² centers provide essential training to counties, small cities, and towns, and distribute a wide range of new technology to local agencies.

The centers operate under agreements with their respective SHAs which, in turn, have Federal-aid agreements with the FHWA. In most cases the centers receive assistance from SHAs and the FHWA field offices in the form of course instructors, technical advice, and technical materials. The program is operated principally through universities continuing education offices or special units designed to provide technical assistance to local officials, with some centers part of the SHA operation.

Section 6004 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (1991 ISTEA, Public Law 102-240) continued and expanded the RTAP under 23 U.S.C. 326 in the following manner:

- Technology transfer and technology assistance may be provided to urban local governments with populations between 50,000 and 1,000,000 in those States with two or more urbanized areas. This prompted a name change for the program to Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).
- Technical assistance packages are to be prepared and provided for pavement management systems, bridge management systems, safety management systems, use of travel and tourism for economic development, and intergovernmental transportation planning and project selection.
- At least two T² centers were to be established to serve the needs of the American Indian tribal governments and provide training on intergovernmental transportation planning and project selection and the use of tourism and recreation travel for economic development purposes.
- Section 5104 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21, Public Law 105-178) as amended by Title IX of Public Law 105-206 continued and expanded the LTAP under Title 23 United States Code, including an additional 5 TTAP Centers, and added the requirement to provide access to surface transportation technology to contractors that do work for local agencies served by LTAP.

The LTAP/TTAP goals are to:

- Provide local transportation agencies and American Indian tribal governments access to modern highway technology.
- Assist rural local transportation agencies and American Indian tribal governments to develop and expand their expertise in roads and transportation areas.
- Assist rural local transportation agencies and American Indian tribal governments to improve roads and bridges, and to enhance programs for the movement of passengers and freight.
- Promote effective networking and cooperation among Federal, State, local, tribal, and T² centers.

Annual funding for T² centers is 50 percent Federal LTAP funds of \$150,000 and 50 percent or more matching funds obtained from (a) State, university, and local funds, (b) contributed resources and

services, (c) training funds, (d) SPR (formerly HPR) funds, and (e) safety funds. The TTAP centers are 100 percent Federally funded (50 percent FHWA, 50 percent BIA through the Federal Lands Highway Office).

The initial funds for FY 1982 were to remain available until expended. From FY 1982 through FY 1996, the FHWA has continued to include funding for LTAP, about \$4 million per year, in its annual General Operating Expenses (GOE) budget. The 1991 ISTEA provided contract authority for LTAP of \$6 million per year. These funds added to the annual GOE provided for an approximately \$10 million per year for the program.

Under TEA-21, LTAP received \$7 million contract authority for FYs 1998-1999, \$8 million for FY 2000, \$9 million for FY 2001 and \$10 million for FYs 2002-2003. These amounts are subject to the obligation limitation. For FYs 1998-1999 the obligation limitation reduced the available funds for LTAP from the contract authority amount of \$7 million to approximately \$6.2 million per year. No GOE funds are available to supplement the program.

Under SAFETEA-LU, LTAP/TTAP received \$11.1 million contract authority for FYs 2005-2009. These amounts are subject to the obligation limitation. No GOE funds are available to supplement the program. The program continued under SAFETEA-LU extensions.

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21, P.L. 112-141) §§51001(a)(3) and 52004, continued the program with few changes. The Federal share for the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) centers is 50% (§§ 52004(2); 23 USC 504 (b)(3)(A)), and the Tribal Technical Assistance Program centers have a 100% Federal share (§§52004(2); 23 USC 504(b)(3)(B)) of MAP-21; 23 U.S.C. 504). Amounts provided for Surface Transportation Workforce Development, Training, and Education or for State Planning and Research (SP&R) may be applied toward the non-Federal share for LTAP centers, up to 100%. (§§ 52004(4); 23 USC 504(e)(1)(G)). Carryover funds follow the post MAP-21 requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Contact the Director of Technical Services, Office of Technology Partnership Programs Team (DTS-TP-10).