

# RTPO ALLOCATION POLICY FOR MANAGING DEDICATED FUNDS

SFY 2024 & 2025

DECEMBER 2023



# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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*The Policies for Managing BHRC-Dedicated Funds was prepared by the Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC), 1400 Pike Street, Marietta, Ohio 45750, with funding from the Federal Highway Administration and Ohio Department of Transportation. The content of this report reflects the reviews of the BHRC Committee, which is solely responsible for the information presented herein.*

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Please direct all questions and comments regarding the document to:

**Melissa Zoller**

**Planning Director**

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

1400 Pike Street Marietta, Ohio 45750

P 740.376.1027 or [mzoller@buckeyehills.org](mailto:mzoller@buckeyehills.org)

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the process used by the Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) to prioritize and award allocated Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to projects that further the goals and objectives of the BHRC Long Range Transportation Plan. This document discusses only awards over which BHRC has direct ability and duty to make. Through this policy document, BHRC has established a competitive evaluation process to determine which of the requests will be granted. If future funding rounds are established, this policy will be reviewed and updated prior to additional application cycles.

### Estimated Funding Available

Type	SFY 2024	SFY 2025	Total
STBG	\$766,279.28	\$766,279.58	\$1,532,558.56

### Process Milestones and Schedule

- BHRC will open one round that shall include both state fiscal years.
- BHRC will solicit project applications.
- BHRC staff will evaluate submitted projects based on established criteria and scoring.
- The BHRC Transportation Advisory Committee will review evaluations. Those who submit applications will be recused from the evaluation of their own application.
- A public involvement period will commence following the Transportations Advisory Committee review.
- Make recommendations to the BHRC Executive Board
- The BHRC Executive Board adopts projects based on BHRC Transportation Advisory Committee recommendation and public comments.
- Selected projects added to the BHRC Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). Projects and funding amounts are added to the RTIP and submitted for inclusion in the Statewide TIP (STIP).

## Eligibility Criteria & Application Process

### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be a public agency within the BHRC RTPO counties of Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble, Perry, and portions of Washington that are legally allowed to enter a contract with ODOT. Non-profit organizations, school districts, and other non-public organizations are not eligible applicants, but they may coordinate/partner with an eligible applicant. The sponsoring agency assumes responsibility for project execution and completion. The sponsoring agency must own, hold an easement, or acquire the land on which the project is located. The sponsoring agency must approve a resolution or other legislation committing the agency to the project.

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## **Eligible Projects**

Eligible projects must:

- Be listed in the current or can be added to the BHRC Long-Range Transportation Plan; or
- Be listed in the current BHRC Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP); or
- Be listed in a regionally developed plan, such as Local Road Safety Plan or Active Transportation Plan

The project scope may differ from the listing as long as the project objective is the same and aligns with the goals of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

## **Eligible Activities**

STBG Funds may be used for eligible cost for planning studies/services for active transportation projects or engineering/design phases on Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and Small City projects approved by ODOT Districts #5 (Perry) and #10 (Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble and portions of Washington). Roadway projects must be on a federal-aid eligible route. Bike, pedestrian, safety, transit, and non-highway freight projects are not limited to the federal aid network. Funds not expended in the planning phase of the project may be moved to other portions of the projects as needed without the approval of the committee.

The consultant must be selected through a quality-based selection process. ODOT must ensure that consultant selection complies with applicable USDOT requirements, whether Federal Transit Authority (FTA) or Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Consultants working on projects with a commitment of BHRC dedicated funds for any phase must be pre-qualified by ODOT.

STBG-eligible activities are defined by 23 USC 133 (b) as follows:

At the request of a State, and upon Secretarial approval of credit assistance under Chapter 6, subsidy and administrative costs are necessary to provide an eligible entity Federal credit assistance under Chapter 6 with respect to a project eligible for assistance under this section.

## **Eligible Costs**

This program limits funding to 90 percent of eligible costs and requires a 10% match. Matching funds must be provided in case, as in-kind contributions are not permitted. Toll revenue credits may be used.

## **Maximum Award**

The maximum award amount for preliminary engineering projects will be \$200,000. Funds available after all eligible preliminary engineering requests have been funded will be added to the allocation for all other eligible projects.

The maximum award amount for all eligible projects will be \$200,000. If selected projects are unable to expend all funds on the engineering phase of the project, funds can be moved into the construction portion of the project. Exceptions to this rule will be at the discretion of the BHRC Transportation Committee, with final approval from the Executive Committee.

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## Prior Federal Authorization

The STBG funds utilized in the BHRC dedicated funds are not grants. They operate on a reimbursement basis as work progresses. Costs for any activity that occurs prior to authorization of the project phase by the FWHA are not eligible for reimbursement. The sponsoring agency will be responsible for those costs. In some cases, actions taken by the applicant that are inconsistent with the project development process (E.g., acquiring right-of-way before environmental clearance or through inappropriate means) can jeopardize the use of federal funds on the project.

## Project Conditions

1. Eligible Phases: Preliminary Engineering – Right of Way Services, Right of Way, Utilities, and Construction phases are eligible for funding.
2. Applicants who receive funding through this program should work closely with BHRC and the ODOT district office on a coordinated schedule.
3. Applicants must provide a certified or otherwise official cost estimate for each project request.
4. Projects must be located in the BHRC RTPO region.
5. Projects must be listed in the BHRC Comprehensive Transportation Plan or can be added to the Plan.
6. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.
7. Applications must be submitted to the BHRC office by the due date. Applications may be submitted electronically. Late submissions will not be accepted.

## Application

Applications will be submitted by January 29, 2024.

Applicants will be asked to provide the following information as applicable:

- ✓ Project Title
- ✓ Sponsoring Local Public Agency
- ✓ Project Scope
- ✓ Project Type
- ✓ Applicant Contact Information (Name, Address, Phone Number, E-mail Address)
- ✓ Amount of funding requested
- ✓ Total project cost
- ✓ PID # if known

BHRC staff will review the applications for eligibility. The sponsors will be contacted if there is incomplete information and will be provided an opportunity to provide additional information within the cure period. If a sponsor submits more than one application, the sponsor will provide a priority ranking of the applications.

# EVALUATION

## Evaluation and Selection Process

Because of the expected demand for the BHRC dedicated federal funds, the BHRC RTPO Policy Committee developed criteria and a process to identify the best candidates for funding. The criteria reflect the current adopted BHRC Transportation Plan goals and objectives.

### Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Process

The criteria for evaluating applications for new funding commitments are used to measure how well they help move forward projects approved by ODOT for small cities and TAP-funded. These criteria help assure consistency between criteria and the funding commitments that result from this process. The criteria for evaluation applications follow and consist of qualitative information based on the information in the application as well as quantitative data.

Applications will be scored for each goal on a scale of 1 to 10. The score will be established subjectively based on the overall consideration of the BHRC RTPO criteria assigned. BHRC staff will compile the data for each goal and objective. The BHRC RTPO Policy Committee will then review the scores and rationales and make modifications as necessary to reach an agreement.

### Agency Prioritization of Multiple Applications

An agency that submits multiple funding applications must provide the priority ranking of their projects in writing.

### Scoring Criteria

The applications will be scored against the metrics below:

Criteria	Scoring Criteria	Possible Score
Amount of funds requested	Request less than \$200,000	10
	Request \$200,001 and	7
Match	Have 10% match	10
	Have 9.9% or less match	5
Schedule of completion	Engineering/design to be completed within 12 months of award of these funds	10
	Engineering/design to be completed after 12 months award of these funds	1
Regional Partnership	Benefiting more than one (1) political subdivision	10
	Benefits one political subdivision	5
ODOT TAP Approval	Have received a letter from ODOT of approval of TAP funds	7
	Have submitted a request for funding from ODOT	2

# EVALUATION

## **Prioritizing and Recommending Applications for Funding**

Staff shall consider BHRC RTPO Policy Committee comments on the application scores. Once the overall score is established, the applications are ranked by this score. Applications with higher scores will generally be selected before applications with lower scores.

The BHRC RTPO Policy Committee will not reject portions of an application for funding. If a significant portion of an application appears to be inconsistent with BHRC policy, the project will be down-rated and, therefore, be less likely to be funded.

This program would then be provided for a 45-day agency and public comment period. BHRC staff and the BHRC RTPO Policy Committee would review any comments received and adjust, if necessary, before final action by the BHRC Board.