

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN)

INTRODUCTION

The RCN program was established to remove surface transportation structures (e.g. highways or viaducts) to increase connectivity in disadvantaged or underserved communities, and planning/capacity-building activities in these communities.

The program aligns with federal administration policies and priorities on Safety, Economic Strength, Equity, Climate and Sustainability and Transformation, and Organization Excellence.

GRANT APPLICATION BOOTCAMP GOALS

- Provide clear, actionable, and user-centered information on funding opportunities available to all local governments as part of the IIJA
- Raise cities' ambition for how they can leverage funds to deliver a big impact for their residents, specifically in relation to racial wealth equity, climate, and other important policy areas
- Provide focused support to resource-constrained communities to help them submit competitive applications and win more federal funds
- Elevate the collective efforts of local governments and philanthropic and civic sectors in their efforts to leverage federal infrastructure dollars for high-impact, outcomes-driven efforts

BOOTCAMP MODULES

Module 1, Orientation and Grant Overview: Cities will be oriented to the funding program.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 2, Federal Administration Priorities: Cities will also be able to incorporate climate, equity, and training and workforce development into their grant applications and demonstrate that they are willing to raise their ambitions in these priority areas.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 3, Incorporating Data: Cities will access and utilize a data platform providing local statistics on issues ranging from health and housing to local economy and environmental issues, as well as other focused variables relevant to their grant application. This module also includes training on conducting equity analysis and developing a strong, data-driven narrative to complement grant applications.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 4, Engaging the Community: Cities will be able to draft Community Engagement and Advocacy Strategies and understand the audience for advocacy and project strategies.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 5, Demystifying Capital Stacks and Budgeting: Cities will understand the basics of capital stacks and funding structures for projects, and possible matching grant requirements and allowable uses before applying this understanding towards developing a draft project budget with matching sources and potential new sources of funding.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 6, Tell Your Story: Cities will understand best practices for crafting narratives and will be able to produce a compelling grant narrative consistent with the funding opportunity requirements. Additionally, Cities will understand how to package/submit a complete grant application and develop a plan to advance the request with key officials.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

Module 7, Post Submission Long-Term Capacity Building: Once the applications have been submitted, cities develop plans to successfully administer the grant including how best to (re)organize local institutional processes.

Link to Peer Learning Session: <https://nlc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kf-ypqDkuHNPH05dKWgmjqXLaPnBIT2OA>

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN EACH SESSION?

Mayor: Participates in selective modules to spearhead goals and advocacy, review the impact story of draft applications, and implement long-term capacity-building measures (Modules 1, 2, 8)

Grant Lead: Participates in all modules and is the primary point of contact for each participating city team (All Modules)

Community Engagement Lead: Participates in selective modules to help design community engagement strategies (Module 4)

Finance Lead: Participates in budget and capital stacks module (Module 5)

BOOTCAMP MEETING STRUCTURE

Peer Learning Sessions (Webinars): Interactive sessions featuring Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on the policy and grant approach, followed by smaller sessions for peer discussions

Coaching Sessions: Smaller sessions that continue to build on specific application questions identified in the peer learning session

Office Hours (Consultant Meetings): Support in the form of designated time slots with our SMEs and your team to address specific questions about your grant application

SUPPORT DURING THIS BOOTCAMP

Navigator Team: Our Navigator is available to help answer the following kinds of questions:

- Bootcamp timelines
- Bootcamp schedules
- Participation expectations

Our Navigator for this grant, Jan Mangana, can be reached at mangana@nlc.org.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible entities include a state, a unit of local government (i.e. cities, towns, counties, special districts, etc.), a Tribal government, a Metropolitan Planning Organization, a non-profit organization, and non-profits or higher education institutions when partnered with an eligible entity listed above.

TIMELINE

The RCN Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is anticipated to be released in June with an expected deadline in October 2023.

LINK TO FEDERAL WEBSITE

<https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/biden-harris-administration-announces-first-ever-awards-program-reconnect-communities>

PREPARING FOR THE BOOTCAMP

- Create an account at login.gov if you do not already have one.
- Register at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) or update registration to obtain a DUNS number.
 - Note: It can take almost a month after an applicant submits the SAM (System for Award Management) registration before the registration is active in the system. Please keep this in mind and create your account as early as possible.
 - Note: Existing SAM.gov registrants should check annually to confirm that their registration is active. Please ensure that your city's name, address, and EIN are up to date.
 - Getting started with your UEI:
 1. Sign in to SAM.gov.
 2. Go to Workspace (top right corner).
 3. Locate the Entity Management widget to find your UEI.
 4. Once you have the UEI, validate your entity's legal business name and physical address under Profile.