



To: Cities in RPA 8

From: Dan Fox, Senior Planner, ECIA

Date: December 23, 2024

Subject: Proposed Revision to RCTP Scoring Criteria: Removal of Local Match Points

Purpose

Present the proposed changes to the Rural County Transportation Program (RCTP) scoring criteria.

Background

Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties have offered RCTP programs since 2019. Through the RCTP programs, the counties award local county funds to cities to be used for local non-federal-aid transportation projects. The counties then receive federal funds from the RPA to use on their federal-aid transportation projects. The four counties contract with RPA (ECIA) staff to administer the program and help cities write applications. All four counties use the same criteria to evaluate RCTP applications.

Discussion

Following the completion of the Fiscal Year 2025 RCTP cycle, the RPA Technical and Policy Committees discussed the criteria used to evaluate applications. RPA board members expressed concerns that awarding points based on local match percentages may not accurately reflect project merit. In addition, awarding points based on local match may create an unfair situation if something changes with a project that causes local match percentage to go down after funding has been awarded.

The RPA committees instructed staff to conduct a review of the evaluation criteria with input from the cities that are eligible to apply for the program. Based on this review, RPA staff recommends removing the local match percentage from the evaluation criteria.

Current Evaluation Criteria.

Currently, applicants are required to have a minimum 20% local match for their project and applications are awarded points for local match percentages greater than 20%. Removing the local match category will require an update to the total point distribution. The 100 possible points are currently divided into 5 categories worth 20 points each. In addition, points are deducted from applications based on previously approved RCTP funding awards. Cities that have received funding more recently receive a larger deduction.

Table 1 lists the points currently available by category. Table 2 shows how points are deducted based on previous funding awards.

Table 1. Current Evaluation Criteria

Category	Points
Traffic	20
Safety	20
Local Match	20
Community Support	20
Existing Conditions	20
Total	100

Table 2. Current Point Deduction Based on Previously Approved RCTP Award

Year RCTP Funds Awarded	Score Deduction
Awarded one year ago	-75 points
Awarded two years ago	-50 points
Awarded three years ago	-25 points
Awarded four years ago	-10 points
Awarded five or more years ago	No deduction

Proposed Evaluation Criteria

Staff propose removing the local match category and distributing its 20 points evenly to the remaining categories, resulting in four categories with 25 points each as shown in Table 3. Applicants will still be required to have a minimum 20% local match, but no points will be awarded for local match percentages greater than 20%. Staff propose keeping the same point deduction table for cities that have recently received RCTP funding awards. Once the categories and points per category are approved by the RPA Board, RPA staff will create an updated version of the program evaluation criteria.

Table 3. Proposed Evaluation Criteria

Category	Points
Traffic	25
Safety	25
Community Support	25
Existing Conditions	25
Total	100

Next Steps

RPA staff request that cities consider the proposed changes to the RCTP scoring system and provide their feedback. Comments or questions can be submitted by email to dfox@ecia.org or by calling 563.690.5752.

RPA staff will be holding a virtual question and answer session regarding the proposed changes to the scoring criteria at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 7, 2025. Please use the link below to join the Zoom meeting. A calendar invitation with the meeting information will also be sent to all cities.

- <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83840180580?pwd=6yyZXvcoOfJDtntLpuaZYDOxfTAApe.1>
- Meeting ID: 838 4018 0580
- Passcode: 483509

Following the Q&A session, RPA staff will incorporate comments into revised RCTP guidelines that will be presented to the RPA board for their review and approval at the January 23rd RPA meeting.

The target date for opening the FY 2026 RCTP application round is January 30, 2025.

RPA staff plan on holding a Zoom training session for cities on how to apply for an RCTP grant in early February 2025. Additional details on the training session will be provided by email and will be posted on the RCTP program webpage. https://eciatrans.org/grants_rfps/rctp.php