



Funding Opportunity Announcement:

The

Justin R. Lehman

Community Capacity-Building

Pre-Planning Assistance Program

Preparing for

the Development of Active Transportation Plans

April 3, 2024

**Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity**

Pennsylvania Downtown Center

Funding is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Justin R. Lehman Community Capacity-Building Pre-Planning Assistance Program Preparing for the Development of Active Transportation Plans

1. Background

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC), continues its mission to increase opportunities for physical activity utilizing the built environment. WalkWorks offers grants to public entities, such as municipalities (for the purpose of this opportunity, defined as: boroughs, towns, townships, cities, and counties) and planning organizations, for the development of active transportation plans (ATPs). It has helped 52 communities fund 49 plans to date. For information about WalkWorks, including listings of previously funded entities, please visit pawalkworks.com.

In April 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released, “Be Active: Community Routes + Destinations,”ⁱ a package of resources designed to advance the findings of the U.S. Community Preventive Services Task Force.ⁱⁱ This Task Force recommends built environment approaches that combine land use and community design interventions to improve transportation systems as a way to increase physical activity. The Task Force defined transportation system interventions as projects and policies designed to increase or improve:

- Street pattern design and connectivity;
- Pedestrian infrastructure;
- Bicycle infrastructure; and
- Public transit infrastructure and access.

The combined interventions connect active means of traveling to everyday destinations so that it is safe and convenient for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, and use wheelchairs in the course of daily life. The focus on creating healthier places and networks overall as opposed to individual projects, trails, or sites represents a shift in past practices and requires support. Through its active transportation planning grants, WalkWorks invests in the development of plans that will, when implemented, improve walking, bicycling, using a wheelchair, and connecting with transit to everyday destinations and increase safe and accessible opportunities for everyone to be physically active.

DOH seeks to focus active transportation grant funding investment in counties and communities with a documented history of underinvestment and low health attainment. These same historically underserved communities often lack the capacity, resources, and means to apply for funding to develop a plan. Therefore, WalkWorks is assisting communities with the pre-planning necessary to prepare to apply for active transportation planning funds.

This announcement marks the second time WalkWorks has offered pre-planning funds. It closely follows the closure of the application window for the eighth cycle of planning funding provided by the program.

2. Purpose of Funding Opportunity

Creating healthier places for all is the basis for the program’s funding. Investing in pedalcycle-, pedestrian-, wheelchair- and public transportation-supportive plans and facilities will create opportunities for people to engage in physical activity as they travel to everyday destinations. Physical activity helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces risk for many chronic diseases; however, the prevalence of obesity and overweight for both adults and children has reached epidemic proportions throughout the nation, as well as in Pennsylvania. In addition, many people suffering from anxiety, depression, and mood swings find walking has a calming effect on mood. Obesity and physical activity are a focus of Chronic Disease Prevention in the 2023-2028 Pennsylvania State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP).ⁱⁱⁱ The SHIP states two out of three adults, and one out of three school-age children, have excess weight.

- 33.3 percent of adults had obesity in 2021.
- 33 percent of adults were overweight in 2021.
- Of adults in Pennsylvania reporting obesity in 2021, 31.5 percent were White, non-Hispanic, 39.2 percent were Black, non-Hispanic and 31.2 percent were Hispanic.^{iv}
- During the 2020-2021 school year, among school-age children in Pennsylvania:
 - 20.3 percent had obesity; and
 - 16.9 percent were overweight.^v
- 12.8 percent of children between 2 and 4 years of age, participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), had obesity in 2018.^{vi}

Not everyone has the same access to opportunity, including access to a safe and healthy community setting. COVID-19 presented a critical opportunity to re-examine how communities grow and develop, for whom they are designed, and how policies and planning practices can promote healthier and more equitable versions of them. The pandemic showed the true importance of active transportation, highlighting the critical role that walking, biking, and using a wheelchair have for both personal and public health. It also highlighted the degree to which public health issues impact various demographic groups differently. Everyone needed more physical activity and more outdoor, distanced time, but not everyone had access to them. Low socio-economic status and racial minority groups were more exposed to the virus by circumstance; they were less likely to be able to reduce exposure by working from home, socially distancing, or isolating when needed.

Those same groups are also – again by virtue of the places they live and work – less likely to have safe, accessible, pleasant, and well-maintained active transportation opportunities at their disposal. Whereas all tiers of society in the US are potentially exposed to limiting and dangerous transportation systems, wealthy and more likely white communities can mitigate that impact by relying on private vehicles and seeking out supplemental exercise opportunities away from dangerous traffic, poorly designed and inhospitable streets, and noxious emissions. Low-income, often Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), community members, in contrast, are less likely to be able to avoid walking or biking where others would consider such activities impossible and more likely to lack convenient access to active recreational opportunities. Equity in active transportation planning, therefore, stands to have significant impacts on people’s daily lives and long-term health outcomes.

The aim of this funding opportunity is to assist low-capacity, high interest municipalities with the pre-planning steps they must undertake to prepare to apply for funding to develop active transportation plans. The long-term goal of the pre-planning program is to facilitate the

development of land use plans and policies at the local and regional levels that allow for the development of activity-friendly routes connecting to everyday destinations. That in turn will enhance public health through reduced injuries and deaths in crashes, increased physical activity and reduced chronic health conditions, as is appropriate given the source of funding – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – and its commitment to increasing physical activity and improving quality of life.

3. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are municipalities, namely boroughs, townships, cities, or counties (hereinafter referred to as municipalities or applicants). Applicants must be located in either PA DOH State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) priority counties or in communities with an overall percentile rating above 60 in the updated Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) PennEnviroScreen Tool. The 10 current SPAN target counties include: Clearfield, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mercer, Northumberland, and Philadelphia. To check your community’s DEP Environmental Justice EnviroScreen percentile rating, please refer to this [link](#) and look for the Final Score Percentile under the Tract Info. These communities most often have well-documented health disparities and/or are located in counties that have documented health disparities.

As a given municipality will include multiple Census Tracts which may have different Final Score Percentiles in the DEP PennEnviroScreen Tool, questions of interpretation of priority status may arise. If the area of focus for the proposed plan or the preponderance of the municipal population is in a priority area, the municipality may be eligible even if the rest of the municipality is not so mapped. Conversely, if only a small portion or an area with few municipal residents are in a priority area, the municipality may not be eligible. Please reach out to pawalkworks@padowntown.org for guidance in such partial coverage cases.

4. Eligible Projects

Funds and structured pre-planning assistance will be available to a limited number of municipal and/or multi-municipal applicants to complete the steps necessary to prepare to apply in the future for funds for the development of active transportation plans. The ultimate goal for a grantee will be to apply for funding to create a plan which will identify and prioritize projects related to modes of active transportation with an emphasis on walking, biking, using a wheelchair, and accessing public transit.

Municipalities should have an interest in applying for funding to develop an active transportation plan but lack the knowledge, professional support, and resources to assemble an application. Barriers may include lack of clarity among elected officials about the goals/results of developing a plan, lack of understanding among the public of the relevance of such a plan for their community, and an inability to establish a reasonable scope and budget for the plan. The funding is not intended for actual plan development nor for project execution, such as signage. See Appendix A for detailed information about the technical assistance to be provided and activities to be completed through the grant period.

The process will help the municipality to determine the appropriate scope and extent of the eventual planning proposal, which might focus on a small number of important corridors in a

community or look at a population center like a village in a larger township or serve largely as a Safe Routes to School or Safe Routes to Parks Action Plan. It is also possible the process will indicate a need to include additional municipal partners in an eventual planning application.

5. Funding

Funding for the awards is made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and will be administered by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

A municipality is eligible to receive \$3,000* if they meet the following minimum requirements between July 1, 2024 and February 28, 2025:

1. Complete a subaward agreement with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC),
2. Have at least one representative attend a half-day virtual Intro to Active Transportation offered by the PennDOT Connects Program on Thursday, September 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.,
3. Work with WalkWorks to develop an active-transportation-related community outreach contact list,
4. Establish email contact with county or regional planning,
5. Work with professional consultants (either using existing connections or facilitated by WalkWorks) to establish a scope and budget for a proposed active transportation planning grant application,
6. Schedule and host a site visit by PDC,
7. Plan a public outreach event for spring or early summer of 2025 (may be a one-off community activity, combined with an existing established local event, or with a mobility tour/audit with PDC or the PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)),
8. Prepare to submit a full ATP planning grant application to WalkWorks in 2025.

The number of awards will be dependent on how many applications are received.

The Pennsylvania Downtown Center will provide selected applicants notice of their award on or about July 1, 2024, to be followed by notice of rejection to all others. The anticipated term of the award is July 1, 2024, through February 28, 2025.

6. Application Submission Procedures

- a. Applicants are required to use the application form that is included with this announcement and submit it via email to pawalkworks@padowntown.org **no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 31, 2024**. Applications received at 5:01 p.m., or after, will not be considered. See Appendix C for application.
- b. The application process timeline is as follows:

MILESTONE	DATE
FOA release	April 3, 2024
FOA intro webinar	April 18, 2024
Deadline for questions on FOA	May 17, 2024
Application submission deadline	May 31, 2024

Application review team meeting	June 2024
Awardees notified	July 1, 2024

c. The decision of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center with regard to selection of grantees is final.

7. Evaluation of Applications

Applications will be reviewed by representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

Applicants must include the following elements on which all proposals will be evaluated:

- a. Statement of need – starting with information on public health outcomes in the region and mobility constraints for people using active modes as well as municipal and public interest in increasing health and safety for people walking, biking, using wheelchairs, and accessing transit.
- b. Letter from the governing body in support of the application and committing to participate in the pre-planning process and activities.
- c. A list of three community contacts who will participate throughout the pre-planning process (see item e below). **The list must include at least one elected official** and may include any of the following: an appointed official, municipal staff (or contracted same), and a community partner (non-profit, Chamber of Commerce, local hospital or healthcare workforce).
- d. Letters of support – at least two letters of support from local or regional non-profits, healthcare providers, business leaders, or educational institutions.
- e. Commitment of human resources – the pre-planning process will involve ongoing time spent by community contacts (item c above) meeting with WalkWorks, doing outreach in the community, meeting on site for a site visit, planning for a public outreach event or activity, and working with a consultant to develop scope and budget. Each community contact should be prepared to invest their time toward completing the process (on the order of 1-2 hours/week).
- f. Commitment of financial resources – the engagement of a professional planning or engineering consultant is expected. It is likely that the bulk of funding awarded for this program will go towards that assistance, though pro-bono assistance from a local firm or retained support from the municipal engineer may also be an option, in which case the community would remain in possession of the full award amount. *Note: an outside consultant will expect the municipality to execute a contract for this small project. The municipality may opt to have the PDC contract with the consultant on their behalf and receive a final disbursement of the remaining balance of the award.
- g. Commitment to involve stakeholders and public-at-large. The application should indicate plans to spur interest, involvement, and input from diverse local stakeholders such as health, planning, transportation, education, business owners, and the public. Stakeholders should reflect racial, ethnic, age, ability, and other dimensions of diversity of the community. (The planned public event may figure into this process.)
- h. Commitment to incorporating consideration of health, equitable access, and opportunity for vulnerable communities as integral to the process of advancing active transportation in the area.

8. Overview Webinar

A 1-hour webinar to review the goals of this funding opportunity, the application process, expectations of grantees, and questions from interested parties is scheduled to be held on **April 18**,

2024, at noon. Zoom will be used to administer the web conference. To register in advance, [click here](#). Participation in the webinar is optional.

9. Contact Information/Questions

Questions about this FOA should be directed to Samantha Pearson, Healthy Communities Program Manager, Pennsylvania Downtown Center: pawalkworks@padowntown.org. Questions may be submitted up to 5 p.m. on May 17, 2024, two weeks prior to the application deadline. Responses to all questions will be emailed to webinar attendees/registrants.

ⁱ [Be Active: Community Routes + Destinations](#)

ⁱⁱ [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Pennsylvania State Health Improvement Plan](#)

^{iv} [BRFSS Prevalence and Trends Data](#)

^v Pennsylvania Department of Health. 2020-2021 Growth Screens/BMI-for-Age Percentiles. *Pennsylvania Department of Health School Health Statistics* (Unpublished)

^{vi} [State of Childhood Obesity](#)

APPENDIX A: CAPACITY-BUILDING PRE-PLANNING PROCESS

To prepare the municipality to respond to the active transportation planning grant application requirements outlined in Appendix B, the community is expected to engage in the following activities with guidance and support from WalkWorks staff:

May:

- Apply for the capacity-building pre-planning program, assembling the materials listed in Section 7 of the FOA.

July:

- Upon notification of award, schedule an onboarding meeting.
- Upon completion of a contact form, execute a subaward agreement with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.
- Review the WalkWorks ATP grant application from the current year to establish the tasks to be completed during the Capacity-Building Pre-Planning Process.

August:

- Start public outreach related to the process by announcing the capacity-building assistance award at a public meeting, issuing a press release (using a template provided by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center), and posting notice in any local fora (newspaper, municipal newsletter, website, and social media if any).
- Work with WalkWorks to develop a list of regional contacts to reach out to about their interest in applying for funding to do an Active Transportation Plan.

August – December:

- Schedule and host a site visit by PDC. This visit may include a mobility audit of one key area in the community, whether the center of town, a neighborhood with road safety concerns, a school pick-up/drop-off, or a public park or trail link to the center of town. Community contacts should plan to attend the mobility audit themselves and may invite other municipal officials (elected, appointed, and employed), public safety, non-profit leaders, social service providers, educators, business leaders, and local active transportation users, such as people who use a wheelchair, those who bicycle for transportation, or youth. The site visit would take a minimum of half a day. The mobility audit element of the visit would be expected to take 1 ½ to 2 hours.

September:

- Attend a half-day virtual Intro to Active Transportation offered by the PennDOT Connects Program on Thursday, September 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Send notification emails to the regional contact list.
- Establish contact with county or regional planning, asking for assistance to identify what existing plans and reports they should review and reference in their application.
- Review possible professional consultants to approach for assistance with establishing a scope and budget for their proposed active transportation planning grant application.

October:

- Invite interested parties throughout the community (and in neighboring municipalities) to attend a one-hour virtual Intro to Active Transportation offered by the PennDOT Connects Program on Thursday, October 17, from noon to 1:00 p.m.

October -- December:

- Investigate who to reach out to for public health data and any existing Community Health Needs Assessments, whether the DOH Community Health Organizer or a local health system or hospital.
- Review local active transportation mapping of the community provided by WalkWorks.
- Start to write the narrative for the ATP grant application.

October -- January:

- Work with the agreed upon consultant to establish a scope and budget for the ATP application.

December -- January:

- Prepare an informational presentation using a WalkWorks template to share with elected officials and the public about the need for and value of active transportation planning in preparation for asking for permission to submit an application for ATP grant funding.

January:

- Request a resolution or an authorization letter from council/board to apply for WalkWorks ATP funding.
- Request letters of support for an ATP funding application from county and regional planning.
- Start planning a community event for spring or early summer to educate the public and maintain momentum after the Pre-Planning Process, moving towards developing an ATP. This could incorporate a public meeting, an open house, a group walk, a group bike ride, or overlap with an existing community event where there could be an outreach table set up with information about active transportation planning. This event will be a post-grant period activity and execution will be left to the discretion of the community. That said, the prospective event would be a valuable element to refer to in the ATP application being completed.

February:

- Request letters of support for an ATP funding application from 2 to 4 community organizations identified in their outreach list.
- Notify regional representatives from PennDOT, DCED, and DCNR of the intent to apply for WalkWorks ATP funding.
- Invite participants from preceding outreach to take part in a future ATP Steering Committee should funding be awarded.

March:

- Complete and submit an application for funding to develop an active transportation plan, based on the results of the preceding 8 months of activities.
- Submit the task checklist and W-9 to trigger disbursement of funds.

APPENDIX B: PRE-PLANNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the Capacity-Building Pre-Planning Assistance period, grantees will be prepared to address the full range of topics called out in Active Transportation Plan Grant Guidelines. Grantees will work with WalkWorks program staff, PennDOT Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) staff, local consultants, and local community members to understand and address the following elements on which all future planning grant applications will be evaluated:

- a. Proposed scope of work that addresses the need for the plan with regard to the community (e.g. population health data referenced in Community Health Needs Assessment(s) for the geographic area, existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, crash data), including how the project is expected to improve outcomes/benefits – i.e. how the plan or policy will enhance the built environment to increase opportunities for physical activity with potential connections of transportation systems such as sidewalks, public transit, bicycle facilities, and trails to everyday destinations (such as, though not limited to, residences, workplaces, and grocery stores). Establishing a reasonable scope of work is key to a successful application and eventual plan. This will be accomplished by working with WalkWorks program staff and a qualified consultant to establish scope and budget.
- b. Estimated project costs that are consistent with the proposed scope and justify the amount of requested funds. This will be accomplished by working with WalkWorks program staff and a qualified consultant to establish scope and budget.
- c. A resolution by or letter from the governing body in support of the application and committing to carry out the project and adopt the resulting plan – if awarded a grant.
- d. Verification that regional planners/key points of contact from relevant state agencies have been notified (email is sufficient) of the intention to apply, including:
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District Bike/Ped Coordinator and District Planner/Connects Coordinator.
 - The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) regional representative.
 - The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) regional advisor.
- e. Evidence that the proposal has the support of the county planning department(s) AND the applicant’s MPO/RPO (i.e. letters of support from both) and, if applicable, is in compliance with an existing comprehensive or other relevant plans of the municipality, county, and/or MPO/RPO. For example: If the comprehensive plan recommends that the municipality develop an active transportation plan, the proposal should provide a link and the specific citation for the recommendation. If applying to develop a policy recommended by an existing transportation plan, that citation should be included.
- f. Evidence that the proposal reflects PennDOT district and statewide active transportation priorities. PennDOT administers roadway projects, coordinates funding, and provides technical assistance both in response to localized issues through LTAP and to more comprehensive planning-scale topics through [PennDOT Connects](#). The proposal should identify how it fits with the six themes in the [Pennsylvania Active Transportation Plan](#).
- g. Commitment of resources – i.e. qualified internal personnel and engagement of a consultant with experience in the field of active transportation – appropriate to the proposed scope. Note: the engagement of a professional planning or engineering consultant is required.
- h. Involvement of stakeholders and public-at-large. The application should indicate plans to spur interest, involvement, and input from diverse local stakeholders such as health, planning, transportation, education, business owners, and the public. Stakeholders should reflect the racial, ethnic, age, ability, and other dimensions of diversity of the community. Applications

themselves can also be strengthened through early engagement with and input from such groups, such as that afforded by the planned public outreach event. These efforts can be documented in letters of support.

- i. Realistic timetable. A realistic timeline consistent with the Active Transportation Planning Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement (i.e. draft by end of May and adoption by the governing body no later than the end of June of the following year) should be provided.
- j. Commitment to incorporating consideration of health, equitable access, and opportunity for vulnerable communities as integral to the process of advancing active transportation in the area.

Appendix C – Application Form

**The Justin R. Lehman Community Capacity-Building Pre-Planning Assistance Program
Preparing for the Development of Active Transportation Plans**

If applying for technical assistance and funds for community capacity-building pre-planning assistance for the development of an active transportation plan, in accordance with the Funding Opportunity Announcement, please complete the following application and submit along with letters of support in pdf format to pawalkworks@padowntown.org by 5:00 p.m. on May 31, 2024.

The boxes within this form will expand to accommodate your responses.

Applicant organization: Enter text		Applicant EIN number: Enter text	
Please check the option that best describes your organization: <input type="checkbox"/> Single Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Municipalities If submitting on behalf of multiple municipalities, please list the partner municipalities here: Enter text			
Primary municipal contact: Enter text		Primary municipal contact email/phone number: Enter text	
Priority status: <input type="checkbox"/> SPAN Priority County <input type="checkbox"/> DEP Environmental Justice Area Please name county or, if not in a SPAN Priority County, please provide a summary of the PennEnviroScreen rating for the proposed site (how many distinct tracts, the Final Score Percentile for each tract, and any notes about either the focus area for active transportation planning and the relative size of the population in the different tracts). Contact pawalkworks@padowntown.org for assistance, if necessary. Enter text			
Please provide the names, roles, and contact information of the three designated community contacts available to serve as liaisons and project team for this grant. The pre-planning process will involve time spent by community contacts meeting with WalkWorks, doing outreach in the community and with regional and state agencies, meeting on site for a mobility audit, planning for and taking part in a public outreach event or activity, and working with a consultant to develop scope and budget. Each community contact should be prepared to invest their time, typically 1-2 hours/week, toward completing the process.			
Name	Role	Role	Email
Enter text	Municipal Leadership Enter text	Enter text	Enter text
Enter text	Enter text	Enter text	Enter text
Enter text	Enter text	Enter text	Enter text

Please attach letters of support from two local organizations, agencies, businesses, or institutions. Please list the organizations providing letters here.

Enter text

Please explain the need for the community capacity-building pre-planning assistance preparing for the development of an Active Transportation Plan below. At a minimum, the response must address the following:

- information on public health outcomes in the region
- information about mobility constraints for people using active modes
- municipal interest in increasing health and safety for people walking, biking, using wheelchairs, and accessing transit, including any past consideration of applying for funding to develop an active transportation plan
- public interest in increasing active transportation opportunities, such as discussion of support for the proposal in the form of news articles, public meeting minutes from official bodies, local walking or biking events, etc.
- what consideration of health, equitable access, and opportunity for vulnerable communities looks like with respect to active transportation in the area
- barriers preventing the municipality from applying directly for ATP planning funding

See Section 7 of the Funding Opportunity Announcement for elements against which applications will be evaluated. (Recommended word count: 500 - 1000 words)

Enter text

Describe plans to spur interest, involvement, and input from diverse local stakeholders such as health, planning, transportation, education, business owners, and the public. Stakeholders should reflect the racial, ethnic, and other dimensions of diversity of the community. (Recommended word count: 250 words)

Enter text

Thank you for your interest in making your community more safe, accessible, and inviting for active transportation!

Rev. March 2024