



2012 Open Call for Projects Request Assistance from the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance Program

About the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance Program

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the regional planning organization for the seven counties of northeastern Illinois, offers planning assistance to municipalities, counties, multijurisdictional groups, or nongovernmental organizations within the region. In today's challenging economic and fiscal times, many communities have difficulty allocating enough resources to plan for their futures as proactively as they would like to. At the same time, proactive planning is necessary for our region's continued economic prosperity. For the second year, **CMAP is helping to fill this gap by making staff resources and grants available for community-based projects through the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program.**

The LTA program is meant to help implement GO TO 2040, the regional comprehensive plan. Recognizing the central role of communities in shaping our region's future, the plan calls for CMAP and other groups to support local planning projects. LTA gives communities the opportunity to request CMAP's assistance on important local planning projects of many types. The program is made possible through a three-year \$4.25 million award to CMAP from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Most assistance will be in the form of staff time. Applicants that would prefer to receive grant funds should consider applying for funding through CMAP's Community Planning program – see <http://rtachicago.com/community-planning/community-planning.html> for more details.

Eligible Applicants

Assistance will be provided to municipalities, counties, multijurisdictional groups, or nongovernmental organizations (though in the case of nongovernmental groups, participation of the appropriate local governments is also required).

Eligible Project Types

The Local Technical Assistance program will support planning activities that advance the implementation of GO TO 2040. **Overall, local planning projects that address issues of transportation, land use, and housing in some way are eligible for assistance;** those that treat these issues comprehensively and also address the natural environment, economic growth, and community development are ideal. **CMAP encourages the submission of ideas from multijurisdictional applicants.**

Examples of areas in which assistance will be provided include, but are not limited to:

- *Preparation or updates to a local comprehensive plan, either in whole or in part.* This could include expanding an existing plan to cover new topics such as energy and water conservation, local food, public health, workforce training, arts and culture, and others.
- *Revisions to ordinances or other land use regulations.* This could include revising outdated ordinances that are inconsistent with the comprehensive plan, updating codes to address water and energy conservation, updating parking regulations in a downtown, or many others.
- *Activities that help to implement previously-adopted plans.* For example, this could include advancing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans or other small-area plans by making

recommended ordinance changes, analyzing financing needs, or similar activities.

- *Studies or specific plans related to important local issues.* This could include planning for stormwater management in areas that experience flooding, projecting future housing supply and demand, addressing parking challenges, identifying open space needs, and others.
- *Projects that involve multijurisdictional coordination,* such as planning for housing cooperatively across several communities, planning for improvements along a transportation corridor, preparing watershed plans that cross municipal boundaries, or pursuing projects that help to implement previous multijurisdictional plans.
- *Assisting with public participation related to challenging local projects,* including meeting facilitation or communication of complex planning issues to the public.

The LTA program is geared toward planning activities at a larger scale than an individual site. Some site-level projects may be undertaken, but these will generally be in the context of larger planning activities. Further information on project types, with descriptions of current LTA activities, can be found at CMAP's LTA web page, <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta>.

Non-Eligible Project Types

Project phases such as land acquisition, engineering, or capital investment, are not intended to be pursued through the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance program.

How to Apply

Applicants should submit the simple "Request for Assistance" form by mail or email by the deadline: 5:00 p.m. on August 1, 2012. Submittal by email is encouraged.

Review Process

It is expected that there will be more requests for assistance than can be accommodated. Staff will review requests for assistance with CMAP's working committees, as well as other technical assistance providers and funders. Below are criteria that will be used to evaluate the requests:

- Alignment of the project with the recommendations of GO TO 2040
- Local need for assistance
- Feasibility and ability to implement
- Collaboration with other groups, including neighboring governments and nongovernmental groups
- Input from relevant Counties and Councils of Government (COGs)
- Geographic balance

Selected projects will be announced in October 2012. All applicants will be notified via letter and email as to whether or not their project was selected. Upon selection, applicants will be assigned a CMAP contact who will work with the designated applicant to scope out the details of the project.

For additional information

Please contact Pete Saunders at psaunders@cmap.illinois.gov or (312) 386-8654. Program information and the Request for Assistance form are available online at this link: <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When are applications due?

Applications are due August 1, 2012.

This seems like a really simple application, am I missing something?

No, you're not missing anything. **Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is needed.** Please be specific, but also brief (less than 2 pages)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what you want to do. CMAP staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project.

Is a funding match required?

No.

Can I submit more than one idea?

You may submit more than one idea. There can be multiple project requests on one application. If this is the case, please include a cover letter or cover page clearly indicating the different ideas included within the application.

Who is eligible to apply?

Staff assistance will be provided to municipalities, counties, interjurisdictional groups, or nongovernmental organizations (though in the case of nongovernmental groups, participation of the appropriate local governments is also required). If you are applying for a project in the City of Chicago, the City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development will be involved in project selection.

What types of projects are eligible?

The Local Technical Assistance program will support planning activities that advance the implementation of GO TO 2040. Overall, local planning projects that address issues of transportation, land use, and housing in some way are eligible for assistance; those that treat these issues comprehensively and also address the natural environment, economic growth, and community development are ideal.

What projects are not eligible?

Project phases such as land acquisition, engineering, or capital investment, are not intended to be pursued through the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance program.

What types of projects has CMAP worked on in the past?

After our first year we've worked on:

- Comprehensive plans
- Housing policy studies
- Corridor plans
- Neighborhood/Subarea plans
- Sustainability plans
- Water conservation studies

Please visit the project website, www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta, for more detail.

Are any types of projects particularly targeted for this year's LTA program?

As noted earlier, many types of projects are eligible for the LTA program. Within these, projects that involve multijurisdictional coordination, or involvement of nongovernmental partners, are priorities. Also, projects that build on past work by CMAP are also more likely to find success. Projects that implement the recommendations of past multijurisdictional projects – like watershed plans, or Homes for a Changing Region projects, or others – are good fits for the program. Also, those that implement

model codes and ordinances produced by CMAP – such as water conservation or parking – will also have some advantage.

Are any types of projects not targeted?

All projects listed as eligible can be submitted. However, please keep in mind that the process is quite competitive, and projects will be evaluated in context. For example, updating a fairly recent comprehensive plan will be a lower priority than updating a much older comprehensive plan or preparing the first-ever comprehensive plan for a community. (During the first round of applications, comprehensive plan updates were targeted primarily to communities whose plans were more than 15 years old.) Therefore, projects involving updates to plans that are relatively new – while they are eligible – will be less likely to be selected than those that update older or lower-quality plans.

How do we demonstrate local support of the application?

For suburban jurisdictions, a letter of support from a Mayor or Village Manager is sufficient. For City of Chicago applicants, a letter of support from the Mayor's Office or from the Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) will do. Kathy Dickhut (Kathleen.Dickhut@cityofchicago.org) should be the first point of contact for nonprofit Chicago-based applicants.

Who is funding this program?

The LTA program is made possible through a \$4.25 million award to CMAP from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is also supported through funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

When will you be announcing the selected projects?

Selected projects will receive final approval at the CMAP Board Meeting on Wednesday, October 10, 2012.

I applied last year and was not selected, can I reapply?

Yes. CMAP will be contacting you to ask if you would like to submit the same application for consideration or make any changes. Please note that this year will be quite competitive, so an application that was not selected last year is not guaranteed to be selected this year either.

How will projects be evaluated?

There are six criteria, listed earlier in this document. Applications will be reviewed for how well they align with these criteria.

What is the difference between the LTA program and the Community Planning program?

Both programs have the same purpose – to implement GO TO 2040 by directing planning resources to local governments. The LTA program primarily provides CMAP staff assistance; the Community Planning program provides either grants or assistance from consulting firms. Also, the Community Planning program requires that project has significant transportation-related elements. Because the Community Planning program involves the commitment of funding, rather than staff resources, it also involves a longer and more detailed application form.

How should I know whether to apply for assistance through the LTA program or the Community Planning program?

If you are fairly certain you want to hire a consultant for your project, rather than using CMAP staff resources, you should apply to the Community Planning program, because the LTA program primarily involves staff assistance from CMAP. The Community Planning program also is more restrictive, in a number of ways. For the Community Planning program, the applicant needs to provide a much more thorough description of their project; the application form is more detailed; the project must include transportation components; and non-governmental organizations are not eligible applicants. For the LTA program, the applicant can provide more general ideas; eligibility is broader; and CMAP will work with the applicant to figure out the most suitable project to meet their needs. Please also note that

because it is less restrictive, the LTA program is also likely to attract more applications – so applicants to the Community Planning program may have a better chance of success.

Can I apply to both the LTA program and Community Planning program for the same project?

Yes, this is fine. If you are interested in this, please fill out a complete Community Planning program application. Within the LTA “Request for Assistance” form, you can simply direct CMAP to refer to the Community Planning program application.

Can I request money to cover staff time at my organization?

Sorry, but no. If any financial commitment from CMAP is involved, it will be to hire an external contractor through a competitive process.

Can I apply for a second project if I was selected in the first round?

Yes. Your application for a second project will be considered along with all of the other projects that are received. Your application is not guaranteed to be successful, but demonstrating how the second project builds on the first project will increase your chance of success.

How competitive is CMAP expecting the application process to be?

Very. During the first year’s call for projects, CMAP received over 220 project ideas from 130 applicants. Approximately 60 of these applicants were selected. This year, a similar number of applications is expected to be received, but only 25-30 projects will be selected. This is because CMAP selected two years’ worth of projects in the first round of projects, and is only selecting one years’ worth during this application cycle, since some of the initial projects are still underway.

Who can I contact if I still have questions?

Pete Saunders at psaunders@cmap.illinois.gov or 312-386-8654

How can I submit my application?

- By email, to psaunders@cmap.illinois.gov
- By mail, to the following address:
Local Technical Assistance Program
CMAP
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606