

# Frequently Asked Questions

(MAG Call for Projects, August, 2019)

## 1. How much federal funding is available?

Federal funding is available based on federal funding source and modal type. The initial review of applications will be through MAG modal committees. The funding sources available are:

- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding
- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STGB) program funding
- MAG sub allocated Transportation Alternatives Program (MAG TAP) funding

The following summarizes available funding by MAG modal committee, funding source and project type:

- Active Transportation Committee
  - CMAQ funding Bicycle and Pedestrian projects: Estimate of \$11.3 and \$9.9 million per year for FY 23 and FY 24 respectively.
  - MAG TA funding Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects: Estimate of \$5.9 and 5.2 million per year for FY 23 and FY 24 respectively.
- Intelligent Transportation Committee
  - CMAQ funding for Systems Management and Operations is estimated at \$1.0 million per for FY 20, FY 21 and FY 23 respectively.
- Street Committee
  - CMAQ funding
    - PM-10 Certified Street Sweepers: Estimate of \$1.5 million for FY 20.
    - PM-2.5 Paving Unpaved Roads: Estimate of \$1.0 and \$0.9 million for FY 23 and FY 24.
  - STBG program funding
    - Arterial and Bridge Projects: Estimate of \$1.7 and \$1.5 million per year respectively for FY 23 and FY 24.

## 2. Are there geographical limitations on where projects may be programmed?

Yes, federal regulations and MAG policies place limitations on where projects may be programmed. The applications provided include maps showing areas where projects may be programmed. Limitations on programming by funding source area as follows:

- MAG sub allocated Transportation Alternative (TA-MAG ) funds may only be programmed in the MAG planning area. The MAG planning area includes all of Maricopa County and parts to Pinal County.
- Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funds that are available in the current round of applications may only be programmed in parts of the MAG planning area in Pinal County.
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds may only be programmed in nonattainment areas and vary by project type. Please see maps included in CMAQ funded project applications to view areas where projects may be programmed.

**3. Will project applications be reviewed based on the year funding is requested in the application?**

No, the year requested for programming will not affect the review of applications. If after the selection of projects, the amount of funding requested for a year exceeds the available funding for that year, MAG in collaboration with project sponsors, will revise the years in which projects are programmed.

**4. Can the modal committees (e.g. ITS, Bicycle-Pedestrian and Street Committee) revise project funding requests and/or project scopes to fit available funding?**

No. The MAG Federal Fund Guidelines prohibit the revising of project funding requests and/or project scopes to fit available funding by MAG modal committees below the level of Transportation Review Committee. Project sponsors may, however, revise project costs or scopes based technical comments provided at the review of projects by modal committees.

**5. Can consultants present project requests for committee review?**

If the project sponsor employs consultants as its engineering staff, the City of Youngtown for example, its consultant may present project requests. Otherwise, presentations are to be presented by the sponsor's staff with consultants available to answer questions only if needed.

**6. Can features ineligible for federal reimbursement be included in project requests?**

Ineligible features may be included in a project request provided that the request includes additional local funding beyond the minimum match in the request. If ineligible features are included they will be subject to all the requirements of the federal process – i.e. design, environmental, right-of-way, etc. – and there costs will not be accounted as meeting the federal, local matching requirements.

**7. Can CMAQ funding be used to pay for drainage improvements?**

CMAQ may be used to pay for drainage improvements provided the drainage improvements are integral to the completion of an eligible CMAQ activity – i.e. paving an unpaved road, bicycle and pedestrian facilities construction, ITS improvement, etc. This said, the drainage improvements should constitute only a small part of the project costs. Federally funded costs in excess of what is needed to complete the project have a negative impact on air quality scoring, reducing the chances of receiving federal funding.

**8. Does a road have to be federally functionally classified to be eligible for Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funding?**

Prior to federal authorization of STBGP funding, a roadway served by the project must be federally functionally classified as a collector in urban areas or above and in rural areas as a major collector or above. Roadways need not be federally functionally classified at the time they are programmed.

Projects sponsors will need to request the roadway be federally functionally classified during the design and clearance process managed by ADOT. To classify a roadway, please contact MAG.

**9. Can project requests include federally funded design phases?**

A project request for Pinal Area STBGP funding may include a request for a federally funded design phase. Federally funded design requests per MAG policy will not be accepted for other categories of projects during initial programming.

**10. Can locally funded design work be used to meet local matching requirements for federally funded projects?**

Prior to federal authorization (i.e. federal sign off), costs accrued to the local agency sponsor are not eligible for federal reimbursement and may not be used to meet matching requirements. To obtain authorization, a sponsor must meet all applicable federal requirements and all work conducted after authorization must also meet federal requirements.

Project authorization occurs in the year that a federally funded work phase (e.g. design, right-of-way, and construction) of a project is programmed. If locally funded work phases are programmed prior to the first federally funded work phase of a project, the work phase is not authorized and its costs cannot count towards meeting federal matching requirements.

There is no process in place to authorize a locally sponsored, federally funded project prior to the year a federally funded work phase of a project is programmed. Hence, it is not possible at this time for a local agency project sponsor to use the costs accrued from locally funded design phases to meet federal matching requirements in later work phases of the project (e.g. construction).

MAG has initiated inquiries with ADOT to see if it would be feasible to establish a process to authorize a project in the year when the first work phase of the project appears in the TIP, regardless of funding source. If such a process were established, the locally funded work phase would need to meet all federal requirements for authorization and cover any additional review fees needed to obtain the authorization.

**11. Are small format street sweepers (e.g. those used to sweep sidewalks and bike paths) eligible for federal funding in this round of applications?**

No. CMAQ funding is not available for small format sweepers that are primarily used for cleaning sidewalks and bike paths since they provide very little air quality benefit and would not be cost-effective. Sweeping streets with PM-10 certified street sweepers reduces dust re-entrained by motor vehicles traveling on paved roadways and therefore improves air quality. The purchase of PM-10 certified street sweepers is a measure in MAG air quality plans approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The purpose of the federal CMAQ program is to fund transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of the federal air quality standards. MAG programs CMAQ funding to address nonattainment area issues. This is important to enable the MAG region to meet the air quality conformity requirements under the Clean Air Act and provide the necessary transportation infrastructure that this region needs.

**12. How old does a street sweeper need to be, before it is replaced?**

The street sweeper must be eight-years old by the date the sweeper replacement application request is submitted to MAG or have 96,000 miles of service or 12,000 hours of service.