**Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program**

California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

Zero emission vehicle (ZEV) charging infrastructure readiness plans are a critical step in developing a robust and reliable charging system in our rural counties. To date, less than eight percent of California’s chargers exist in RCRC’s 40-member rural counties, an area that totals two-thirds of the State’s geography and fifteen percent of its population.

Without adequate charging infrastructure, rural areas lose economic opportunity as visitors with ZEVs will increasingly avoid those destinations, they create increased risk for stranded travelers or residents, rural residents will not convert to ZEVs at a pace needed to reach state and national goals, and local cities and counties will forego the opportunity replace declining gas tax funding with potential renewable fuel revenues.

There are several federal and state funding grant opportunities that significantly lessen the impact of upfront capital expenditures for charging systems, however most rural counties do not have the capacity nor financial resources to develop a strategy or workplan to take advantage of these opportunities.

Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is engaging in support for several counties to apply for the CalTrans Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant within the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program. If awarded, a primary use of grant proceeds will go toward the development of ZEV charging infrastructure readiness plans for the applying counties, within two identified regions encompassing Modoc, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties, and Sierra and Nevada Counties. If all are awarded the readiness plans will be regional in nature.

Because eligibility is restricted to planning and transportation agencies, and/or city/county jurisdictions, the county(ies) will apply for the grant independently. If at least one county in a region does not apply or is not awarded, the project will default to individual county readiness plans rather than regional.

RCRC will provide significant guidance on the county grant applications, and will work with CalTrans to maximize chances of being awarded. If awarded, RCRC will produce a draft RFP to select a county/regional transportation consultant that has experience creating quality ZEV readiness plans. A working team will need to be established for each county/region to provide guidance and direction to the consultant, and RCRC will provide contract and project management services, ensure the product meets all the grant requirements and meets the needs of the respective region. Upon award, RCRC will also create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each of the participants to provide organizational structure to the program.

While readiness plans will be the deliverable, counties and regions will be required to create an inclusive community process that engages cities, town, community areas, underserved residents, tribes and others to achieve a plan with broad-based input and support. The plan will also have to address the “intersection” of housing, land use, and transportation, so that a strategy is synergistic in nature.

**Additional grant program details:**

Application deadline: 1/18/2024

Grant type: Reimbursable (monthly/Quarterly)

Grant Range: $100,000 to $700,000 ($350,000 est.)

Match Requirement: 11.47% of Total Project Cost (Cash or In-Kind)

Award Announcements: Summer of 2024

Other Requirements: 50% of grant should benefit underserved communities

 County compliance of HCD Housing Element and Annual Progress Reports for 21/22

 Quarterly Reporting

Guideline Document: [Fiscal Year 2024-25 Grant Application Guide Sustainable Communities, Climate Adaptation and Strategic Partnerships](https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/division-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants/finalfy202425stpgapplicationguide1a11y.pdf)

Grant Program Website: [Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants | Caltrans](https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants)

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