

Application for performance measures technical assistance for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)

Transportation for America (T4America) is excited to announce the launch of its new technical assistance program on performance measurement that is designed to help **metropolitan planning organizations** (MPOs) successfully respond to federal, state and local requirements. This new program helps MPOs and their communities:

- Understand federal laws and new state and local performance measurement requirements;
- Incorporate and respond to community concern comprehensively and inclusively, and;
- Use performance measures to select projects that reflect regional vision and goals.

The application deadline for this opportunity is **Friday, March 10, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. EDT**. Applications may be filled out online via a form on the T4America website at <http://t4america.org/mpo-technical-assistance> or emailed as a PDF to assistance@t4america.org by the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

PURPOSE OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One of the most promising strategies to help communities address their development and mobility goals is the adoption of performance measures in transportation planning and project selection, particularly in a fiscally constrained environment. MAP-21, the federal surface transportation law passed in 2012, required communities to address 12 highway performance measures. These include, but are not limited to, congestion, safety, state of repair, air emissions, and others. USDOT finalized the requirements for all of the new measures on January 18, 2017 and will require all 400-plus MPOs and 50 state departments of transportation (DOTs) to develop transportation performance measure frameworks.

Leading up to and following the passage of MAP-21, T4America has provided MPOs nationwide with the tools and understanding they need to develop robust performance programs and incorporate these into their transportation planning and project selection processes. For example, T4America convened a two-year collaborative of four metropolitan regions that explored ways in which MPOs could address health, equity and accessibility through transportation performance measures. Additionally, in 2016 T4America conducted a yearlong Transportation Leadership Academy on performance measures with seven MPOs in partnership with the U.S. Federal Highway Administration.

Building on this work, T4America designed a suite of tools for MPOs in various stages of performance measure development that help them meet federal requirements in ways that respond to the unique needs of their regions. This technical assistance helps interested MPOs adopt cutting edge performance measurement approaches. This ranges from developing measures for areas such as public health, access and social equity, to translating planning-level performance targets into specific criteria for prioritizing projects.

CUSTOMIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR REGION

Whether you are just beginning to consider performance measures in response to the federal rules or need support addressing specific technical or stakeholder engagement challenges,

qualified applicants may apply for one of three tiers of performance measures technical assistance:

- Background on performance measures (101),
- In-depth peer-to-peer learning (201), or
- Translating planning-level performance measures into project selection criteria (301)

The following table describes T4America’s technical assistance offerings in greater depth and highlights the value different stakeholders will receive. The assistance described in each tier can also be customized based on your region’s specific needs.

MENU OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OFFERINGS

101: Background on performance measures

This provides an introduction to both the federal performance measures framework and how communities can tailor performance measures to their community’s needs. This workshop provides a platform for introducing performance measures to various stakeholders. T4America will work with you to identify the right audience(s) based on your goals, including local advocates, elected officials, the public, or MPO staff.

Typical services provided:

- An interactive one-day workshop for your chosen audience(s), delivered by two national experts;
- A summary memo outlining the outcomes of the workshop and any next steps identified, and;
- Optional follow-up call with T4America staff to discuss next steps.

Value to your region:

- *For your agency:* Participating MPO staff gain assistance building a coalition to help foster the broad public and political support necessary to implement change over the long term.
- *For local advocates:* By expanding understanding of common terminology and concepts, local advocates will effectively communicate about performance measures and encourage broad, inclusive public conversations on the topic.
- *For elected officials:* This workshop builds the local technical and political capacity to implement change over the long term by debunking common myths and focusing on shared values. Participants may also receive assistance to build a policy framework on top of technical understanding.
- *For the public:* Through an engaging and enlightening public forum, the session builds the public’s understanding of common terminology and concepts, focuses on shared values, and builds or validates common visions. By empowering the public to engage on the topic, the workshop supports broad, inclusive public conversations in your region.

201: In-depth peer-to-peer learning

Participants in the 201-level assistance receive curated research support, an evaluation of existing tools and resources, and will connect with regions that are leading in the creation and implementation of transportation performance measures. Participants discover how other communities have established objectives-driven planning, programming and design processes coupled with monitoring and reporting methods that improve the accountability and effectiveness of their transportation programs and system.

By being plugged into a dynamic national network of MPOs, elected leaders, and practitioners throughout the country, participants benefit from the unique insights of their peers. Participants will become expert in current best practices, success stories, and lessons learned from peer regions on topics tailored to each region's areas of interest.

Typical services provided:

- A curated scan of existing tools, resources and case studies from peer agencies nationwide;
- An interactive 1.5-day workshop focused on discussing and applying lessons from other MPOs that have similar performance measurement goals or are facing similar implementation challenges, and;
- An optional series of conference calls or interactive webinars to connect with peer MPOs.

Value to your region:

- *For your agency:* Participating MPO staff learn the specific strategies and tactics other MPOs are using nationwide to advance performance measurement adoption in their community. Additionally, MPO staff have the ability to evaluate tactics against local needs and desires to determine applicability to their region.
- *For local advocates:* This assistance builds on the efforts of local advocates to learn from other metropolitan regions about the challenges and opportunities that exist for local adoption of forward-looking measures.
- *For elected officials:* This assistance can be used to help elected officials better understand the role that they can take in discussing trends from their peer regions and can position them as leaders within their MPO and community. Officials who participate in this assistance will learn practical techniques that have already been field-tested and can be applicable in their community.
- *For the public:* This assistance can build public understanding of how competitive their region is compared to its peers and what kind of work is needed to compete in the future.

301: Translating planning-level performance measures into project selection criteria

This assistance is designed for more advanced MPOs who are interested in taking the next step and translating their planning-level performance measures into criteria they can use during project prioritization and selection.

Participants will receive tailored support to assess their current performance measurement frameworks and policy priorities, identify project-level performance measures that align with those priorities, work through strategies to integrate those measures into their project selection process, and tailor methodologies, data sources, and best practices to their own regions' needs.

Typical services provided:

- A series of site visits (up to three) with your agency to assess current performance measurement approaches, discuss national best practices, and develop and refine a performance-based project selection framework;
- The development of a messaging framework to cover your discussion of performance measures for success, or training key stakeholders to communicate effectively on the topics adopted by the region;
- A final summary report at the conclusion of the TA, and;
- Up to three, follow-up conference calls with key staff at your agency between site visits to provide consultation, as needed.

Value to your region:

- *For your agency:* This TA will result in a ready-to-implement framework of performance measures that can be used to evaluate and prioritize projects. Participating staff will gain hands-on experience and expertise testing new techniques and ideas, as well as help with messaging and assistance building a coalition to help foster the broad public and political support necessary to implement change.
- *For local advocates:* This technical assistance offers advocates whom your agency chooses to engage the ability to not just understand how policy is translated into projects, but also helps them inform the trade offs of certain tactics at every stage of the project development project.
- *For elected officials:* Similar to the local advocates, elected officials will come away with an understanding of how projects are selected. They will have the opportunity to become leaders and external advocates for the work being done by the MPOs, while also increasing the level of transparency between transportation funding decisions and the public.
- *For the public:* 301-level assistance puts decision-making frameworks in place that help the public better understand how projects are decided on and which tradeoffs are necessary and desirable. This assistance increases transparency between the MPO and the public, allowing for projects with greater support.

ELIGIBILITY FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are eligible to apply for this technical assistance.

COST

T4America is holding an open call for applicants. In this round of solicitations, T4America is also able to offer financial assistance to a select number of applicants. This offers applicants a one-time opportunity to receive this technical assistance at a significantly reduced cost. The discounted cost to the applying MPO for this round ranges from \$5,000 to \$25,000, depending on the level of assistance requested.

MPOs can always apply at any time for this assistance outside of this special offering. A discount is available for T4America members at the market rate but does not apply against this special, discounted rate.

Type of Technical Assistance Available	Actual Cost	Cost After Discount
101: Background on performance measures	\$25,000	\$5,000
201: In-depth peer-to-peer learning	\$50,000	\$10,000
301: Translating planning-level performance measures into project selection criteria	\$125,000	\$25,000

In addition, it may be possible to reduce the cost even more through in-kind contributions that are needed to carry out the technical assistance. Examples of in-kind contributions include space for workshop(s), catering, or other hard costs. T4America will review and consider these offers on a case-by-case basis.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Selection timeline:

- Call for applicants opens: Wednesday, February 8
- Informational webinar: Wednesday March 1 at 2:00 p.m. EDT (Registration available on application page: <http://t4america.org/mpo-technical-assistance/>)
- Applications due: Friday, March 10 by 5:00 p.m. EDT
- Awards made: April 3

Criteria:

T4America will select MPOs to receive assistance through a competitive application process. T4America staff will review each application for completeness. Only completed applications that filled out in an interactive form on our website at <http://t4america.org/mpo-technical-assistance> or submitted via email to assistance@t4america.org will be considered. A proposal review committee will review each proposal per the criteria listed below, during and may reach out and discuss applications in greater detail.

The primary selection criteria are:

- **Interest in performance measurement:** T4America will work with MPOs that demonstrate a desire to leverage the requirements they are facing under MAP 21 to better address the goals of the regions they serve and improve the accountability and effectiveness of their transportation programs. Applicants can demonstrate this desire by describing steps they have already taken to adopt performance-based decision-making practices. Priority will be given to MPOs interested in integrating measures in project selection as well as planning.
- **Readiness to implement:** T4America will prioritize applicants that are well positioned to act on the concepts covered during the training and demonstrate a readiness to integrate those concepts into their decision-making practices. This will depend partially on the timing of applicants' long-range planning cycles.
- **Interest in public health, access, and equity:** MPOs can apply for this assistance to address up to seven different topics of regional importance; however, for the 2017 round of assistance, priority will be given to MPOs that demonstrate a strong interest in integrating public health, access, and equity measures and criteria into their investment decisions.
- **Capacity to support planning and delivering the assistance:** Participants of this assistance may be asked to provide support in identifying venues for workshops assistance, inviting participants, and other logistics. Successful applicants will demonstrate a commitment to being a partner with T4America in planning the assistance and providing the staff support necessary for successful technical assistance.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The deadline for T4America Technical Assistance applications is **Wednesday, March 10, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. EDT**. Applications must be uploaded to the Transportation for America web page application portal at <http://t4america.org/mpo-technical-assistance> or emailed to assistance@t4america.org by this time. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed.

PRE-APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AND COMMUNICATION

T4America will hold a webinar to discuss the technical assistance program and to answer any questions on **March 1 at 2:00 p.m. EDT**. More information about that webinar and a link to register is available on the application page: <http://t4america.org/mpo-technical-assistance/>

All pre-application questions or inquiries must be made in writing to assistance@t4america.org. The T4America project team will contact you promptly. Please do not contact other T4America staff.

APPLICATION FORM

Name of applicant agency

Region represented

Agency CEO or other individual authorized to enter into agreements

Contact person name, email, phone

Organization address, phone and website

Please list any other partner organizations participating in the technical assistance

Level of assistance requested (101, 201, 301)

- 1) **Prior or current work:** Please list all prior work on performance measures that has been completed for your region. Please include any performance measures that are included in a policy statement in your region's current LRTP.

- 2) **Rank interest in the following topics (on a scale of 1 to 7 from most interested to least interested):**

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Access to opportunity | <input type="text"/> |
| b. Economic development | <input type="text"/> |
| c. Environmental sustainability | <input type="text"/> |
| d. Equity | <input type="text"/> |
| e. Resilience | <input type="text"/> |
| f. Placemaking | <input type="text"/> |
| g. Public health | <input type="text"/> |

- 3) **Lead organization's definition of equity:** As defined and used by the organization leading this application, what is equity? What specific, past actions by the lead applicant organization embody this definition?

- 4) **Statement of need:** In plain English terms that would be generally understood by the public, please describe the performance measures technical assistance that is needed in your region. Also, please describe the barriers or challenges that are currently facing your region's adoption of performance measures and/or your region's incorporation of performance measures into your TIP project selection process.

- 5) **Requested focus of technical assistance:** Describe the specific assistance that you would like T4America to provide (topic(s) of focus, desired participants, etc.) and how the assistance would address the need identified in the Statement of Need above?

6) **Long-range planning process and timing of assistance:** Please describe the timeline of your current long-range planning process and how this TA will fit in. Please also discuss any other internal processes or milestones and any external factors that should be considered in selecting the timing for this assistance to be as impactful as possible.

7) **Partnership and engagement:** Describe the staff commitment the applicant group will provide to reinforce and enhance the technical assistance.

8) **Commitment to health and equity:** Successful completion of this Technical Assistance will result in a commitment from the participating region to incorporate the learning concepts into their activities. What represents a commitment to you? What would incorporating a commitment into your TIP look like?

9) **In kind contribution:** Please check this box if you are interested in discussing and being considered for an in-kind contribution to offset some of the cost of this assistance.

Please indicate which kind(s) of in-kind contributions you could provide:

Workshops venue

Catering support

Printing materials

Other