

# FTA Tribal Transit Program (TTP)



Tribal Transit Program  
Virtual Consultation  
November 2, 2023  
Marianne Stock



Office of Program Management  
Federal Transit Administration



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Transit  
Administration

# Agenda

## Objectives

- Provide recent updates on the Tribal Transit Program (TTP)
- Discuss next steps and available resources
- Consultation Efforts and Questions

## Agenda

1. TTP Overview
2. TTP Funding Levels
3. Competitive Program Update
4. Targeted and Tribal Transit Technical Assistance
5. Initial Listening Session
6. Tribal Consultation
7. Resources and Questions



# Tribal Transit Program Overview



# Tribal Transit Program Overview

## Who is eligible?

TTP provides direct funding to federally recognized American Indian and Alaskan Native Tribes for public transportation services on and around Indian reservations or Tribal lands in rural areas.

## What activities are eligible?

Eligible activities under the program include planning, operating and capital projects.

## How is the Program structured?

TTP has two components:

- 1) Formula funding is apportioned to Tribes who report transit data to the National Transit Database (NTD). Census data is also used under the formula program.
- 2) Competitive funding is made available in a Notice of Funding Opportunity each year.



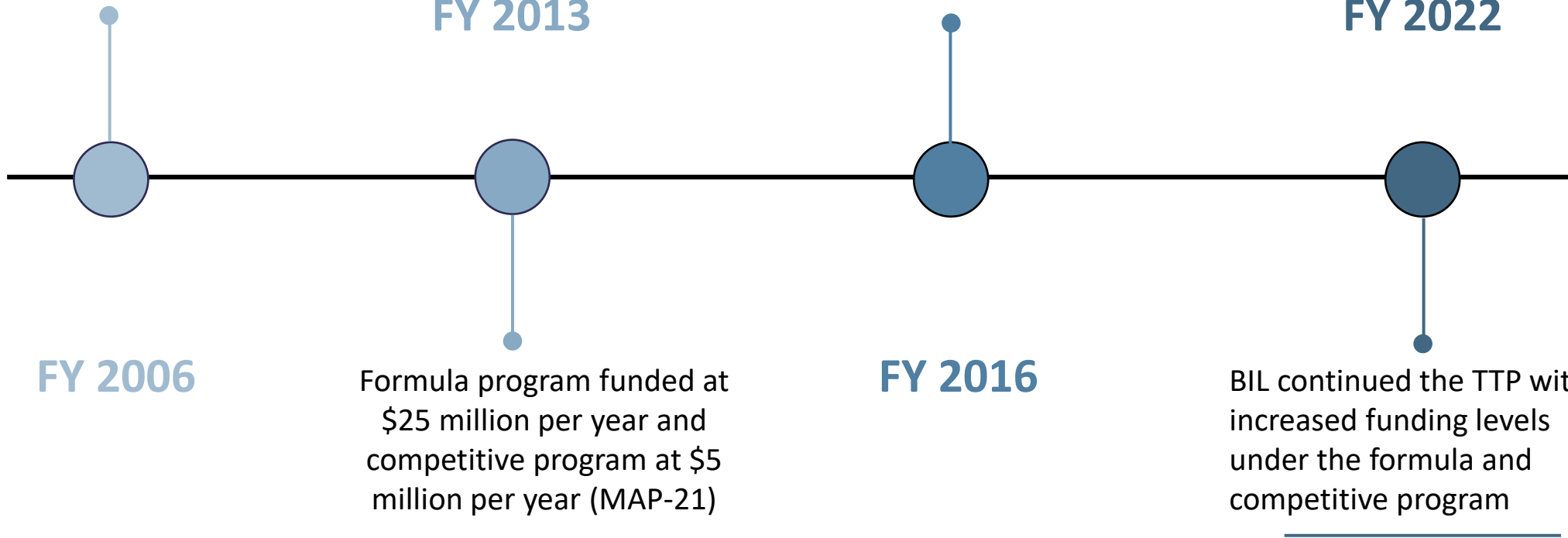
# FTA TTP History

Competitive program created and funded at \$8 million to \$15 million per year (SAFETEA-LU)

FY 2013

Formula program funded at \$30 million per year and competitive program at \$5 million per year (FAST Act)

FY 2022



*The TTP is a set-aside of the Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program (49 US Code Section 5311)*

# Tribal Transit Program Funding Levels

# Current Tribal Transit Program

- [The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (FY 2022-2026)
  - Increased funding for the Tribal Transit Program by nearly 31 percent
  - Instead of a flat amount each year, the Tribal Transit Program now grows with the Rural Transit Program
- **Supports 136 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes with transit service**

In Millions						
Funding Program	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
TTP Formula	\$30.0	<b>\$35.01</b>	<b>\$35.74</b>	<b>\$36.68</b>	<b>\$37.43</b>	<b>\$38.39</b>
TTP Competitive	\$5.0	<b>\$8.75</b>	<b>\$8.93</b>	<b>\$9.17</b>	<b>\$9.36</b>	<b>\$9.60</b>

# Competitive Program Update





# FY 2023 TTP Competitive Program

## Program Overview

- **Over \$8.9 million** available
- **Funding Availability:** 3 years (Year of Allocation + 2 FY)
- **Eligible Federal Share:** 100 percent in each of the 3 years
- Funding can serve as an entry point to the TTP program or useful way to fund a large-scale project

## Eligible Projects

### Planning

- \$25,000 cap

### Capital

- New Services
- Replacement (bus, equip, facility)
- Expansion (bus, equip, facility)

### Operating Assistance

- All eligible recipients

## Eligible Applicants

Federally recognized American Indian or Alaska Native Tribes as [identified](#) by the US Department of Interior, in rural areas with a population of less than 50,000



# FY 2023 TTP Competitive Program Cont.



Application period closed on **June 26, 2023**

- Received 41 applications from 41 Tribes in 15 states requesting \$19M



On September 25, FTA announced **\$9.9 million** in funding to 22 Tribes for 22 projects in 12 states



# Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program

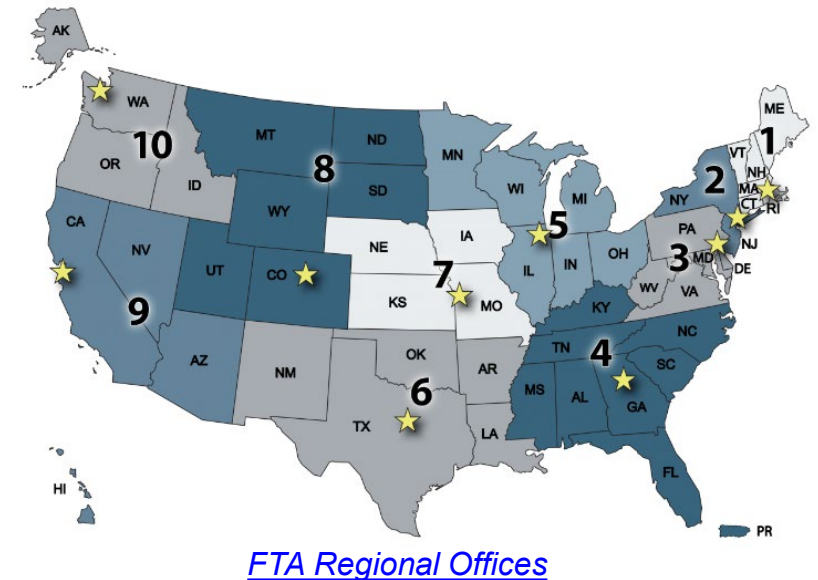
- Funds are allocated to States to support transit service in rural areas
- Tribes are eligible recipients
- Planning, operating, and capital projects are eligible
- States distribute funds within their state, as described in a State Management Plan
- Once funds are allocated by the state, tribes may opt to receive the funding directly from FTA



# Targeted and Tribal Transit Technical Assistance

# Targeted FTA Technical Assistance for Tribes

- FTA's [Tribal Governments Landing Page](#) contains information for Tribes interested in becoming FTA recipients.
- [Regional Tribal Liaisons](#) in each FTA regional office provide targeted technical assistance to Tribal grantees
- FTA conducted a Buses and Bus Facilities/Low or No Emissions competitive program webinar targeted specifically to rural and Tribal applicants on February 28<sup>th</sup>
- FTA conducted a Tribal Transit competitive program webinar on April 20<sup>th</sup> and had 95 participants



# Technical Assistance Assessments

As part of the TTP, FTA offers **targeted technical assistance** through the Tribal Transit Technical Assistance Assessments Initiative.



In FY23, **36 Assessments** took place.



FTA collaborates with Tribal Transit recipients to **review grant administration** processes and **identify areas in need of improvement** and then assists to offer solutions to address these needs.



FTA has conducted **62 assessments since 2015**. That number continues to grow.



# National Rural Transit Assistance Program (NRTAP)

- [FTA 5311-funded technical assistance center](#), which provides targeted technical assistance to rural transit providers, including Tribes.
- Collaborates with FTA and Tribes to provide resources to ensure Tribal Transit programs are successfully implemented.
- Offers training and technical assistance on grant writing for competitive funding opportunities eligible to Tribes.
- Develops training modules for Tribal Transit agencies.



# Initial Listening Session





# Listening Session – Purpose

The purpose of the listening session (held during the Tribal Symposium on May 24 and 25, 2023 in Oklahoma City, O.K.) was to gather feedback from Tribes to help us structure a formal consultation related to the administration of the Tribal Transit Competitive Program.



FTA gathered feedback and ideas from Tribes on changing, expanding, or adding additional questions they would like included in the consultation.



Based on listening session feedback, FTA published a Federal Register Notice to open the Consultation and request Comments through an official Docket on August 15.



# Tribal Consultation



# Tribal Consultation



FTA initiated the official Tribal consultation through a Federal Register Notice published on August 15.



This consultation will address ways to improve the Tribal Transit Program and enhance the technical assistance provided to our Tribal grantees.



Consultation efforts include:

- Listening session
- In-person (9/25 at NTICC) and virtual consultations
- Federal Register Notice and Public Docket for submission of comments

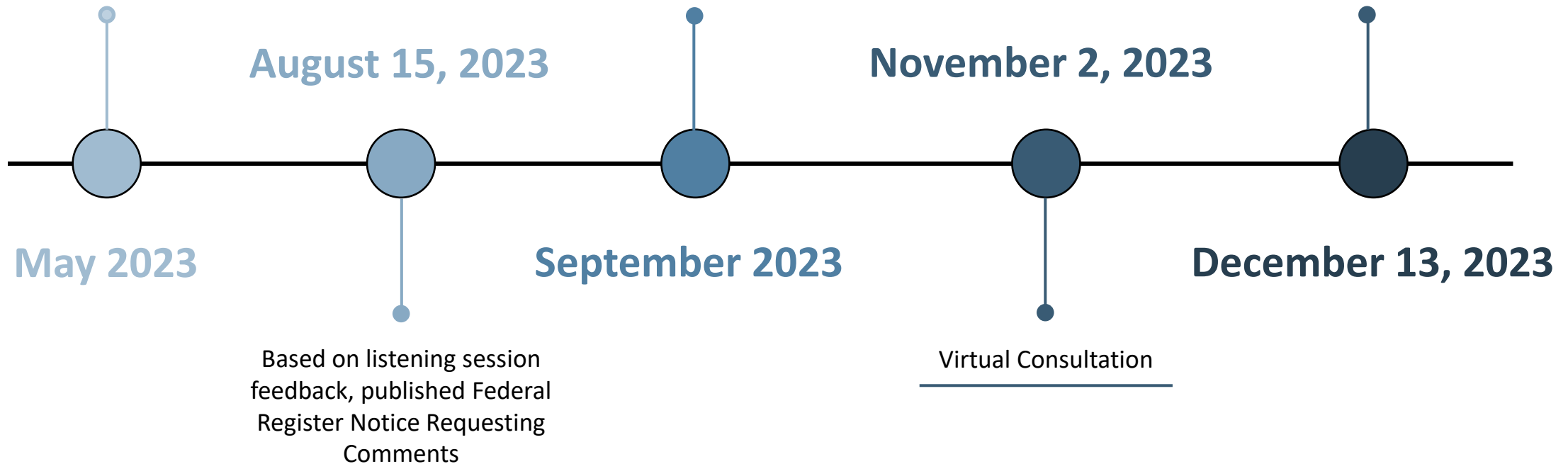


# Timeline for Consultation

In-Person listening session  
at DOT/FTA Tribal Transit  
Symposium

In-Person Consultation at NTICC

FRN Docket closes



**TBD** – Publication of FR Notice with responses and program changes



# Consultation– Topics

The topics for consultation include, but are not limited to the following:

1

Changes to the \$25,000 cap for planning funds under the TTP competitive program.

2

Changes to match requirements under the TTP competitive program.

3

Changes to the threshold for operating assistance eligibility under the competitive program.

4

Improvements to FTA's Tribal technical assistance efforts.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

**Comments to these questions should be submitted via the Docket for official response:**

1. Should TTP competitive program funds continue to support capital, operating and planning projects? These types of projects are currently eligible under the program. Limitations on certain activities will leave more funding available for the other types of activities. For example, limiting or removing operating projects as an eligible project type will leave more funding available for capital and planning projects.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

2. Should operating assistance under the competitive program be limited based on the amount of TTP formula allocation received? In the past, FTA has limited operating assistance to applicants who receive less than \$20,000 under the TTP formula program. This threshold preserves TTP competitive funds for larger capital projects. Increasing or removing this threshold would potentially reduce the amount of funding available for capital projects.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

3. Should TTP competitive program funds continue to support start-up, expansion, and replacement capital projects? These projects are currently eligible under the program. Should FTA prioritize start-up projects in order to advance Tribal transit providers into the formula program? Once a Tribal transit provider begins operating service and providing service data to the National Transit Database, the provider will begin to receive Tribal Transit formula funds.





# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

4. Should FTA establish a minimum and/or maximum grant amount under the TTP competitive program? Currently, there is no minimum or maximum set for allocations under this program. However, planning grants are capped at \$25,000. Establishing a maximum grant amount would preserve funds for additional projects but may prevent larger projects from being funded at the full request.
5. Should FTA continue to cap planning grants at \$25,000 under the competitive program? Should FTA retain the cap for planning grants but set it at a different amount? This cap preserves TTP competitive funds for larger capital projects.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

6. Should FTA require a local match of 10 percent of total project costs for both capital and operating assistance projects under the TTP competitive program? If so, should FTA continue to include an option for Tribes to submit a local match waiver request? Currently, there is no match required for both the competitive and formula programs. However, in the past, a match of 10 percent was required on competitive program projects, unless the Tribe applied for a hardship waiver. Requiring a local match would allow for more projects to be funded, but may discourage some Tribes from applying for funding.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

7. Should FTA retain the condition that indirect costs not exceed 10 percent of each Tribal Transit competitive grant allocation? Providing a cap on the percentage of a grant that can be applied to indirect costs reserves more funding for capital projects, but may underestimate the true amount of indirect costs attributable to a project.



# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Competitive Program

8. Should FTA continue to provide Tribes 90 days to submit applications under the TTP competitive program Notice of Funding Opportunity? In the past, FTA has had either a 60-day or a 90-day deadline for application submission under the TTP competitive program.
9. Should FTA examine or alter any other aspect of the Tribal Transit competitive program?





# Consultation Questions– Tribal Transit Technical Assistance Improvements

1. How can FTA improve its technical assistance efforts for Tribal recipients?
  - A. Through the Tribal Transit Technical Assistance Assessments Initiative, FTA Collaborates with Tribal Transit recipients to review processes and identify areas in need of improvement and then assists by offering solutions to address these needs.
  - B. FTA also offers technical assistance to Tribes through its National Rural Transit Assistance Program.



# Consultation Resources

- [Tribal Transit Program](#)
- [2023 Consultation Information](#)
- [Consultation Federal Register](#)

## To submit comments:

1. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>.
2. Identify your submission with docket number FTA-2023-0015.
3. Follow the online instructions

# Other Links and Resources

- [Formula Grants for Rural Areas - 5311 | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)
- [NRTAP](#)
- [Tribal Governments Landing Page](#)

# Questions?

**Contact:**

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