

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

2024 Active Living Technical Assistance Program Guidelines

Application period opens: September 5, 2024

Applications due: October 8, 2024



2024 Active Living Technical Assistance Program Guidelines

Hennepin County's Active Living program aims to create healthy, livable, and people-centered communities where people can walk, bike, and take transit to everyday destinations. It supports county priorities including disparity reduction, complete streets, climate resilience, and health equity. Since 2014, the program has successfully invested over \$400,000 in 39 projects to support healthy and active communities.

Through the Active Living Technical Assistance program, Hennepin County's Housing and Economic Development (HED) department is offering financial and technical resources to municipalities and other local agencies within the Hennepin County's Public Health jurisdiction for activities that improve the walkability and bikeability of business and community nodes.

Eligible activities must support walkable and bikeable business and community destinations, focusing on the **routes** to the destinations or the **destinations** themselves. In addition, projects should prioritize the needs of residents most likely to experience health disparities, including low-income residents, communities of color and indigenous people, seniors, young people, and people with disabilities.

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for the Grant, the applicant must be located within Hennepin County's Public Health jurisdiction, which includes all cities/jurisdictions except Bloomington, Edina, Minneapolis, and Richfield. Any city, park district, watershed district, or other public agency is eligible to apply if the project is located in Hennepin County outside those four cities.

Eligible Activities

The Active Living Technical Assistance program funds should be used to advance local governments' efforts to create more walkable and bikeable communities. Activities can include policy creation, plan development, assessments, demonstration projects, and implementation strategies. Capital projects are not eligible for funding.

Policy and plan development are key first steps to creating a built environment that promotes and supports physical activity and healthy communities. Any proposal should focus on plans or policies that will advance the creation of compact, walkable places while highlighting the needs of populations experiencing inequities. Examples include:

- Bike and pedestrian plans
- Wayfinding plans
- Travel demand management plans
- Complete streets policies
- Active Living policies

Funding can be used to support an entire planning effort, or to support specific components of a planning process (eg. community engagement efforts to inform development of a bike or pedestrian plan).

Demonstration projects show how potential changes or improvements will influence pedestrian and bike behavior without a large financial or time commitment. They can test multiple concepts, provide experiential education to potential users, engage community and stakeholders in conversations, and help leverage later infrastructure investments. A proposed project should either be derived from current community plans / policies, or have a role in informing development of a policy or plan. Examples of this type of project include:

- Walk, bike, and roll assessments to document current conditions within an area
- Pop-up placemaking events to activate public spaces and/or engage the community about potential improvements
- Temporary bike lanes/trails and pedestrian improvements to test concepts prior to implementation

Demonstration projects should include community and/or stakeholder engagement to get feedback for evaluating the project and identifying next steps.

Programming and equipment investments aim to create a culture of walking and biking in a community and can be funded if they support local planning efforts or demonstration projects. Improvements can include investment in hard goods (benches or bike facilities) or programming that aims to educate and encourage people to walk, bike or roll. Efforts must advance an articulated broader strategy to increase walking and biking in the community and should also specifically target populations experiencing health disparities (seniors, youth, persons with disabilities, low-income residents, and communities of color). Examples include:

- Equipment investments that are a component of a specific, articulated planning or policy effort to support biking and walking among communities experiencing health disparities (e.g. benches, bike facilities, signage/wayfinding).
- Programs aimed to educate, encourage and engage the community to increase walking or biking to a route or a destination in a community (e.g., learn-to-bike courses, bike-benefits programs in business districts, or activities that help experience and collect input on a project).

Projects must demonstrate how they fit into a more comprehensive strategy to support walkable, bikeable communities and are not a stand-alone effort. For example, a proposal to develop a wayfinding strategy may include signage as part of that proposal; a proposal to develop a multimodal parking plan may include bike racks as part of that proposal. Projects should also consider how their results / findings will influence or be integrated into other projects or future work.

Eligible expenses

Technical assistance resources can be used for the following items:

- Planning, design, engineering, or engagement consultants
- Engagement supplies or outreach materials
- Communications, marketing, or program materials
- Equipment that is a component of a larger planning effort (e.g. a plan to develop a wayfinding strategy could include purchase of wayfinding signage)
- Materials to support demonstration projects and temporary/pilot projects (e.g. bollards, temporary barriers) to support a pedestrian or bike improvement that will inform the planning and implementation of longer term development or transportation project

Ineligible expenses

The following items are ineligible or reimbursement through this program:

- City or agency staff time
- Paying a consultant for regular planning services or an already contracted project
- Stand-alone equipment purchases (e.g. bike racks, signage, etc)
- Exercise, playground, or fitness equipment
- Lighting
- Trees, plantings, landscaping
- Building or paving paths, construction of facilities, construction of fields or courts
- Installation costs for equipment

Funding

Maximum County funding per project is \$20,000. A total of approximately \$60,000 is available for 2024. Funded elements of projects must be completed by October 15, 2025.

Examples of Past Projects

Hennepin County has partnered to create bikeable, walkable places that support healthier communities for the past 10 years. Examples of past partnerships include:

- Technical assistance to the cities of Osseo and St. Louis Park to develop policy language that supports health for inclusion in the cities' 2018 **comprehensive plan** updates
- **Complete Streets** policies or resolutions in nine cities
- Funding for the **ARTery experiment** in the City of Hopkins
- Funding for **demonstration projects** that tested placemaking and active transportation improvements in the cities of Brooklyn Center, New Hope, Osseo, and St. Louis Park
- Funding to purchase **temporary equipment** to support the development of a **traffic calming policy** in Brooklyn Center
- **Signage** that implemented Historic Walker Lake district's **wayfinding plan** in St. Louis Park

- **Walking and cycling assessments** in Crystal, Dayton, Golden Valley, and Robbinsdale
- **Targeted engagement** including communities of color, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities to inform projects and plans in Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, and Minnetonka
- **Bicycle Parking ordinance** adopted by the City of New Hope

Application Process

The Request for Proposal is expected to be released on **September 5**, with applications due on **October 8**, via the Hennepin County Supplier Portal. Funding recommendations are anticipated by the end of November, with funding expected to be awarded in December. Awards are not final until approved by the Minnesota Department of Health and Hennepin County Board or its delegated authority.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to review projects with Denise Engen prior to application submittal. County staff will be available to provide technical assistance to applicants prior to submitting their applications, but not later September 24, 2024. Email: Denise Engen, denise.engen@hennepin.us

Application Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Proposal provides a clear project description and project map.
- Proposal has clear description of how it will improve the walking and biking environment on a route or within a business or community node; and explains why this project is expected to lead to that result.
- Proposal describes how it ties into a larger scale effort to advance walking and biking in the area, and how this project will further advance that work.
- Proposal demonstrates clear plan for engaging stakeholders, especially low-income, communities of color, seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- The need, and degree of need, for why county resources are needed for this project.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of Hennepin County Housing and Economic Development and Public Health staff to thoroughly evaluate applications.

Contracting and Reporting

Hennepin County will work with funded entities to identify best method for completing the work, which could include a contract with the city or a direct contract with any consultants.

Hennepin County requires all awarded projects to include a final report summarizing the process, outcomes, and impacts of the completed work and a memorandum, upon request, detailing feedback on how to improve the Active Living technical assistance program and application process.

Hennepin County is obligated to follow the Minnesota Data Practices Act, which means that applications will likely be public data after the evaluation and selection process. A statement identifying data as copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the data contained in the response if such data does not qualify as trade secret data.

Hennepin County is not obligated to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application. Hennepin County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, to accept or reject any late applications, to request additional information as deemed necessary to review any application, to negotiate with all qualified proposers, to use any or all proposer ideas and/or approaches presented, or to cancel this application process, if it is in the best interest of Hennepin County to do so.

Receiving funds through this program does not guarantee that future capital funding will be made available.