



Activity #8: Archaeological Activities

The federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) program funds 10 different types of transportation-related activities. The archaeological activity allows communities to explore the history in America with archaeological excavations and surveys in conjunction with highway construction projects. The activity also helps build local economies by attracting tourists interested in history. Since the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program began in 1992, less than 1 percent of available TE/TA funds have been programmed for archaeological planning and research projects.

Eligible Projects

Working within Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, each state Department of Transportation (DOT) determines the eligibility of TA projects for funding. Examples of projects that may be considered eligible include:

- Research, preservation planning, and interpretation;
- Developing interpretive signs, exhibits, and guides;
- Inventories and surveys.

Under the MAP-21 transportation bill (effective October 1, 2012), only projects related to the impacts of implementing a transportation project are eligible for funding under this category. Other archaeological activities related to surface transportation may be eligible for funds apportioned under the previous transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU.

Examples of Successful Projects



Fishdam Ford Battlefield, South Carolina. A bridge replacement project for SC route 72, led to the rediscovery of a Revolutionary War battlefield. Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act would require archaeological excavation of 30 acres of the 275 acre battlefield site, an activity that could be funded under this category. Instead, TE funding was used to acquire the entire battlefield and turn it over to the SC Department of Natural Resources, and the bridge was

realigned to pass adjacent to the site. This project was awarded an Exemplary Human Environment Initiatives award by USDOT in 2008. Contact: South Carolina DOT, 803-737-1952.

Natchitoches Front Street, Louisiana. Front Street in Natchitoches, LA, is a brick-paved main street that runs through two historic districts. A repaving project was needed to bring the deteriorating road up to state and federal standards. With the use of TE funding, numerous significant archeological artifacts were discovered in the course of the project, including building foundations, American and European pottery, Native American artifacts, gun parts, horseshoes, and a 1900 silver dollar. The project incorporated pedestrian (activity #1) and drainage



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(activity #9) improvements and reused over 200,000 of the original paving bricks. The project was an AASHTO Regional Award winner in 2009. Contact: Louisiana DOT, 225-379-1232.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/project_examples for additional project examples.

Federal Guidance

Projects that use TA funds must qualify as one or more of the 10 designated activities and be related to surface transportation in order to meet basic federal eligibility requirements. Previously archaeological activities related to surface transportation but not required as part of a Federal-aid highway project were eligible; however, now under MAP-21, this activity is restricted to only those archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project.

Visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm> for a full copy of the FHWA TA Guidance.

Project Funding

Most states require TA project sponsors to provide at least 20 percent of project costs, also referred to as matching funds. In many states, the value of donated property, materials and services, the labor of state and local government employees and the costs of preliminary engineering may count towards the matching requirement. Federal, non-DOT funds can often be used as matching funds. Check with your state TA manager whether these innovative financing options are available in your state. Additional funds for this activity may come from state agencies, local governments, foundations, nonprofit organizations or other federal agencies.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/funding_sources for more suggestions on potential funding sources.

Related Resources

- FHWA Historic Preservation and Archaeology Program: <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/histpres/>
- National Association of State Archaeologists: www.uiowa.edu/~osa/nasa/
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov or 202-606-8503
- Archnet, a database of laws and papers related to archaeology: <http://archnet.asu.edu/archnet/>
- Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.nthp.org or 202-588-6000

To Get Started

Inquiries about the TA application process should be directed to the TA manager at your state DOT. Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/contacts for TA manager contact information.