

RTPO Allocation Policy

SFY 2026-2029

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029



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This RTPO capital allocation policy was funded in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of OMEGA expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Ohio Department of Transportation.

1.0 Overview

Investments in federal transportation programs were authorized through 2026 by the United States Congress in 2021 as the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). This federal law reauthorized the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program. The Ohio Department of Transportation has allocated a portion of these funds to Ohio's Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), including the Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA).

OMEGA's program depends on the continuation of federal funding programs and ODOT's policy. Each Ohio RTPO was allocated funding dependent on a base allocation of \$100,000 and a formula-based calculation based on land area and population. Based on these calculations, OMEGA is allocated \$1,133,025 annually in state fiscal years (SFY) 2026-2029. The Ohio General Assembly has established these funds through SFY 2027 and ODOT has forecasted budgets for this program through SFY 2029.

2.0 Process Overview

2.1. Policy Update & Application Process

- The Transportation Advisory Committee will annually review, and update (as needed), the RTPO Allocation Policy prior to the opening of a funding round
- OMEGA will open one funding round per state fiscal year
- OMEGA staff will collect and evaluate submitted projects based on established criteria and scoring metrics
- The OMEGA Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and project sponsors submitting projects will review staff evaluations and make recommendations to the OMEGA Executive (Policy) Board.
- The OMEGA Executive Board approves projects based on TAC recommendations and public comments.

2.2. Funding Process

Once projects are approved for funding by the OMEGA Executive Board, OMEGA staff will inform all applicants and their respective ODOT District office. OMEGA staff will inform ODOT District staff which phases were awarded funding and for which project year. Project funding should be encumbered, not simply obligated, by June 30 of the accompanying SFY. Projects not meeting this deadline will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

3.0 Eligibility Criteria

3.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants **MUST** be a public agency within an OMEGA RTPD County (Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Muskingum, or Tuscarawas) that is legally allowed to enter into a contract with ODOT. Non-profit organizations, school districts, and other non-public organizations are **not** eligible applicants, but they may coordinate / partner with an eligible applicant. The sponsoring agency assumes responsibility for project execution and completion. The sponsoring agency must own, hold an easement, or acquire the land on which the project is located.

The sponsoring agency must approve a resolution or other legislation committing the agency to the project.

3.2. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects must be listed in at least one of the following plans:

- ❖ Current OMEGA Long-Range Transportation Plan
 - Projects may be considered if consistent with the goals and objectives of the current Long-Range Transportation Plan
 - Projects must be submitted for inclusion in future Long-Range Transportation Plans here:
<https://omegadistrict.org/programs/transportation/plan2020/>
- ❖ Current OMEGA Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP)
- ❖ Regionally developed plan.
 - Examples include but are not limited to the Tri-County Active Transportation Plan, a local active transportation or thoroughfare plan, or the Regional Coordinated Public Transit/Human Services Plan.
- ❖ ODOT Approved School Travel Plan

3.3. Eligible Project Locations

All roadway projects **must** be on a federal-aid eligible route. The federal aid status of a roadway is often determined by functional classification. Functional classification is important for program and project prioritization, asset management, safety programs, highway and bridge design, traffic control, access management, and maintenance. The current functional classifications are:

01. Interstate
02. Freeway and Expressway
03. Other Principal Arterial
04. Minor Arterial
05. Major Collector
06. Minor Collector
07. Local

Roadways classified as 07-Local are **not eligible**. Roadways classified as 06-Minor Collector may be eligible if they are located within an urbanized area. Rural Minor Collectors are not eligible.

All bridge projects must meet the federal definition of a bridge, which is a minimum of 20-foot span, to be eligible, even if not on a federal-aid route.

3.3.1. Exception – Safety

Roadway projects addressing a documented safety issue may apply for funding, even if the location is not on the Federal Aid system. Documentation may consist of one or more of the following:

- ❖ Road Safety Audit or other Safety Study/Analysis
- ❖ Regional Road Safety Plan
- ❖ County or locally developed Road Safety Plan
- ❖ Project has ODOT Highway Safety Improvement Program funding committed.
- ❖ Or at the discretion of the TAC based upon the submitted application

3.3.2. Exception – Alternative Transportation Facilities

Projects addressing improvements needed for the safety of vulnerable road users are eligible, even if they are not located on or near federal-aid transportation facilities.

Note: Vulnerable road users are those utilizing the roadway or adjacent facilities who are unprotected by some form of shielding and are thus at a far greater risk of personal injury when involved in a vehicular accident, such as cyclists, pedestrians, and buggies.

3.4. Eligible Costs

Eligible costs include:

- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Preliminary Design
- ❖ Detailed Design
- ❖ Environmental
- ❖ R/W Services (acquisition will not be eligible)
- ❖ Construction
- ❖ Construction Engineering/Inspection

3.5 Maximum Grant

The maximum grant for local plans and studies will be up to \$100,000. Examples of eligible planning projects include traffic studies, safety studies, asset management plans, local transportation plans, or preliminary project planning activities.

The maximum grant for regional planning projects will be up to \$250,000 depending upon availability of funds. Examples of eligible regional planning projects include, but are not limited to freight studies, county or regional thoroughfare plans, and major regional corridor feasibility studies.

The maximum grant for all other eligible activities will be \$500,000, not to exceed 50% of the total project cost for **all** phases.