



Start the Application Process Early

Developing a high-scoring application requires time and methodical preparation. Aim to have preliminary application materials, such as letters of support, disadvantaged community analysis results, crash data, and a checklist of application materials ready in advance. Coordinate with external partners (e.g., local advocacy organizations, consultants, stakeholders who can provide letters of support, and other public agencies) early in the application process to ensure all application materials are submitted on time. Agencies should participate in CTC Guideline Development Workshops for the latest information and policy updates.

Develop Compelling Narratives Focused on Communities

Ideally, the primary focus during the application process is to refine responses to application questions and develop compelling narratives that tell the story about the people and communities your project will impact. Be able to speak to the community's desire for the project, ongoing support, and their involvement in scoping and design. Highlighting the potential benefits the project brings to the community makes for a more competitive application.

Reach Out to Advocacy Groups

The Bay Area is home to numerous transportation equity and pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups such as Bike East Bay, Transform (Regional), Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, SF Bike Coalition & Walk SF, Napa Valley Bike Coalition, Sonoma Valley Bike Coalition, and the Marin County Bike Coalition. Make it a priority to collaborate with local advocacy groups throughout the development of your project and during the application process. Many Bay Area organizations have a wealth of knowledge and experience in project scoping, community engagement, and data collection that can improve applications. Reach out to MTC staff for a complete list of community-based organizations and advocacy groups in your area.

Tell Your Bay Area DAC Story

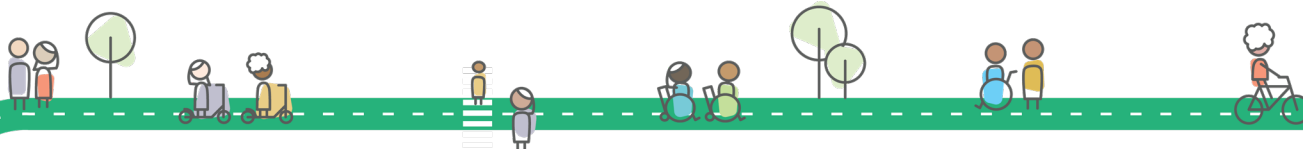
Create a clear and compelling narrative that demonstrates your project's direct, meaningful, and assured benefit to disadvantaged communities. Use different data sources and approaches, such as MTC's EPCs. Highlight how closing the gap or improving connectivity directly meets a clearly defined community need. Consider analyzing needs from multiple perspectives, like housing affordability or environmental justice, and draw connections to other needs dependent on transportation. Also, consider the direct benefits to disadvantaged groups who may live outside of but travel through the study area.

Seek Out Technical Assistance

Whether through MTC's ATP technical assistance program, other grant programs (e.g., Safe Routes National Partnership), or working with a consultant, seek out technical assistance several months before the application is released. Consider project size and complexity, experience in prior application cycles, staff availability, and internal resources when determining the appropriate form of technical assistance. At a minimum, attend CTC and MTC-hosted workshops and have someone from outside your agency who is familiar with the Bay Area, ATP, and application process review and provide feedback on your application, as an evaluator would.

Work Closely with CTC and MTC

CTC and MTC are invaluable partners who can provide guidance and support throughout the application process. Consider requesting a site visit with CTC staff to get direct feedback on project siting, design, and strategies for data collection. Consult with MTC on your project idea. Seek out a debrief meeting with CTC and MTC staff at the end of the application cycle. Debriefs are particularly helpful for understanding gaps in the application and potential adjustments to project scoping that can strengthen an application and one's approach in subsequent application cycles.



ATP - Active Transportation Program
CTC - California Transportation Commission

DAC - Disadvantaged Communities
EPC - Equity Priority Communities

MTC - Metropolitan Transportation Commission
SRTS - Safe Routes to School