



MTC Community Action Resource and Empowerment (CARE) Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from Info Session #1 (7/12/23)

1. Does MTC's legacy Lifeline program still exist?

MTC's Lifeline program is evolving into MTC's Community Action Resource and Empowerment (CARE) Program. The legacy Lifeline Transportation Program was originally funded with a mix of federal and state sources since 2005. The State Transit Assistance (STA) portion of the Lifeline program went away a few years ago when MTC transitioned MTC's State Transit Assistance Population-Based funding policy to the County Block Grant. Now, County Transportation Agencies have the flexibility to determine how to spend funds that used to be siloed into Lifeline, Paratransit, and North Bay/Small Operator funding pots. Some counties maintained a "Lifeline" program, whereas most did not. The State Transit Assistance funds will not go away and so if a County is using them to fund a Lifeline-like program of their own, that will remain.

2. What is the fund source difference between MTC's legacy Lifeline and MTC's new CARE Program?

The legacy Lifeline program was most recently funded with just FTA 5307 funds (Cycle 6). Now, with the switch to Surface Transportation Program (STP)/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) (One Bay Area Grant 3) funding, we have the opportunity to fund transit and non-transit projects through the CARE program (5307 and STA could only be spent by transit operators), allowing the program to support Community-Based Transportation Plan projects regardless of mode. The CARE program is being funded by \$13 million in OBAG 3 (STP/CMAQ) and \$8 million in one-time state Regional Early Action Program (REAP 2.0) funds.

3. Role of County Transportation Agency Staff?

The role of CTAs will be similar to legacy Lifeline. MTC staff will continue to work with CTA/Lifeline Administrator staff.

4. Is the proposed minimum county nomination target of \$1M a minimum?

No, the \$1M county nomination target is a goal that MTC would like to meet but is not a minimum.

5. Are there minimum or maximum budgets for proposed projects?

No, at this "Call for Interest" stage, there is no minimum or maximum budget for proposed projects.

6. When should funds be expended?

Projects that are awarded REAP 2.0 funds must expend funds by June 2026. Projects awarded funding via OBAG3 (STP/CMAQ) must obligate funds by January 31, 2027.



7. What level of effort should be demonstrated for community engagement outside of formal Community-Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) or Participatory Budgeting (PB) processes?

This is in response to the high-priority neighborhood project category. CARE is prioritizing outcomes versus defining a specific “level of effort” to be conducted. Did the strategies result in a diverse representation of the community? Were the strategies inclusive? A learning objective of this first Cycle is to understand what strategies are/have been most effective in a “robust” community engagement effort by geography and demographic. There is also an awareness in the various levels of staffing, access, and amount of resources available to conduct community engagement. Applicants should describe the type and level of community engagement conducted as well as the outcome of those activities.

8. Are capital projects funded by OBAG 3 subject to Resolution 3606?

Yes. Projects will be subject to the requirements associated with their respective fund source. MTC staff will determine fund source eligibility for each submitted project.

9. We have Community Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) with fully developed community-prioritized projects, many of which have not yet been implemented. Our cities/county have not had the structure set up to do participatory budgeting, nor the steady resources to deliver projects prioritized through a participatory budgeting process. Could you help me understand whether the CARE program could provide construction funding for CBTP project implementation?

The first category called “CBTP Project Development” is intended to move a project within a CBTP to a more viable/competitive project so a PB process is not required. This category does not include construction funds. The second category, “High-priority neighborhood level project (Participatory Budgeting Implementation)” is meant to incentivize robust community engagement through a PB process (or similar robust community engagement) with funds linking the planning effort with project implementation funds. *Construction of a high-priority community project aligns closely with this second category.* We understand that the practice of participatory budgeting is relatively new to the region which calls for flexibility. The ultimate goal is to strengthen civic engagement from all demographics, and in particular those that are disadvantaged and historically excluded. If your county/CBTP has not done PB, please describe the engagement and outreach approach that was implemented that informed the CBTP that the proposed project is a high priority, with impact that will benefit disadvantaged demographics/community.

10. Questions about eligible projects:

a. Bike share subsidy pilot – could funds be used to work with a CBO to implement this? Please submit via the survey. It seems like a good project candidate.



b. Bus operator recruitment continues to be a major struggle for most bay area transit operators. Would partnering with CBOs to assist in the recruitment of operators be an eligible project?

Please submit via the survey. It seems like a good project candidate.

Useful links:

[MTC's CARE Program](https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/community-action-resource-empowerment-care-program) at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/community-action-resource-empowerment-care-program>

[One Bay Area Grant 3](https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/federal-funding/federal-highway-administration-grants/one-bay-area-grant-obag-3) at <https://mtc.ca.gov/funding/federal-funding/federal-highway-administration-grants/one-bay-area-grant-obag-3>

[Regional Early Action Planning \(REAP 2.0\)](https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/programs-active/regional-early-action-planning-grants-of-2021) at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/programs-active/regional-early-action-planning-grants-of-2021>

[Community Based Transportation Plans](https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/community-based-transportation-plans-cbtps) at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/community-based-transportation-plans-cbtps>