

ATRC DAC TA Program

Final Report

August 2023

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ATRC *Active Transportation Resource Center*

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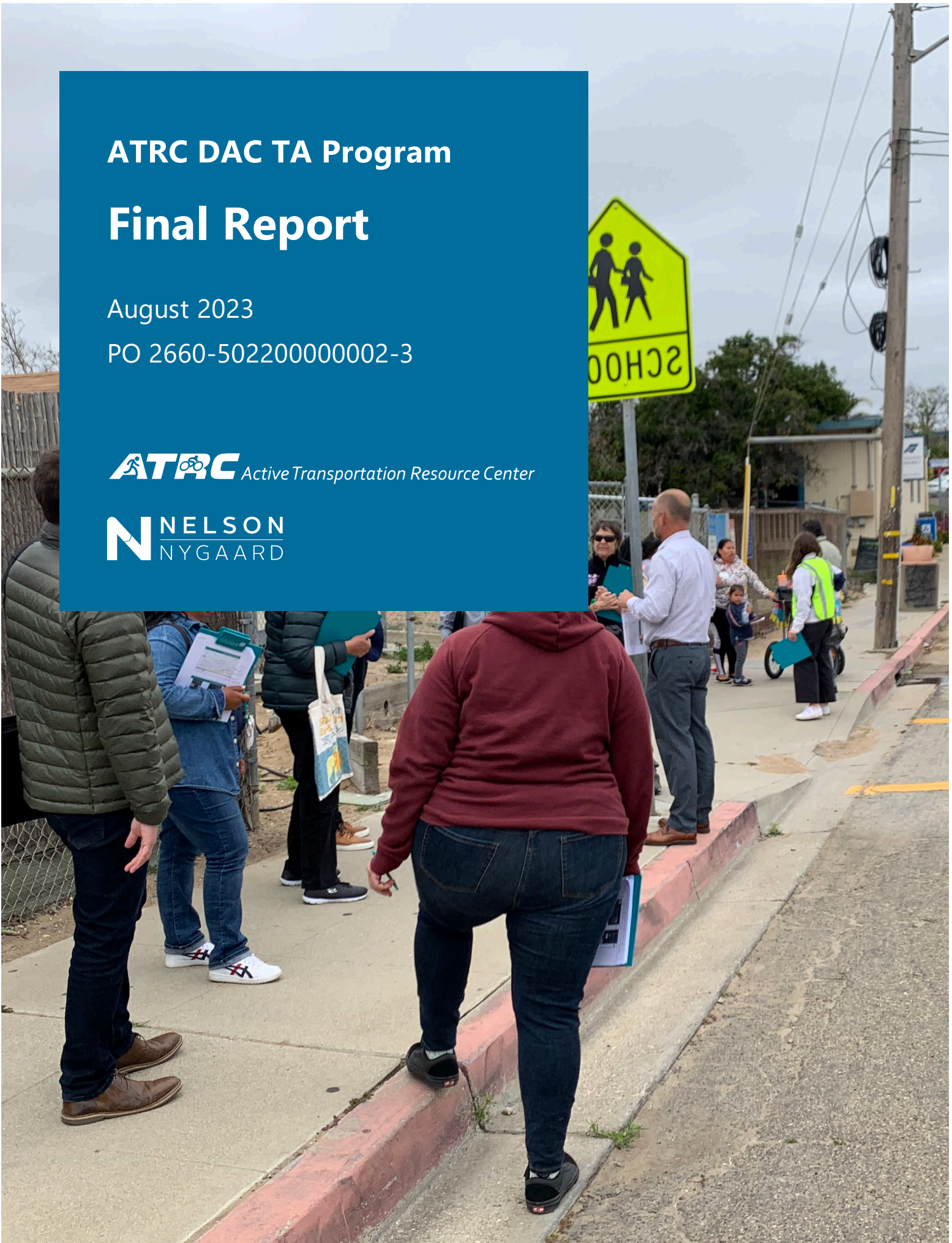


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1 INTRODUCTION

Nelson\Nygaard was hired by Caltrans Division of Local Assistance and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) in 2022 for an eighteen-month contract to provide technical assistance (TA) to disadvantaged communities (DAC). Technical assistance included helping applicants prepare competitive, community-driven active transportation projects and apply for funding under the Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP) in Cycles 6 and 7. The ATP program is overseen by CTC and provides funding for infrastructure projects and programs that promote safe walking and biking throughout the state of California.

The DAC TA Program is an ongoing Caltrans initiative designed to help small and/or rural jurisdictions compete for funding to implement active transportation improvements that make communities safer and more connected. Objectives of the ATRC TA Program are to support the following activities:

- Identify relevant TA recipient community needs and assess how ATP can provide direct, meaningful benefits to address those needs.
- Build local partnerships that can help build a comprehensive, community-driven ATP Project.
- Deliver training and networking workshops to TA recipients based on their identified needs.
- Help TA recipients develop an ATP project scope and application components or get prepared to develop an ATP project scope in the future.
- Provide the TA recipients that were unsuccessful in receiving ATP funding with further suggestions to improve or other funding options to pursue and connect the TA recipients that were successful in receiving ATP funding with Caltrans staff to assist with next steps toward implementation of the project.

Nelson\Nygaard selected and provided technical assistance to the first cohort of Cycle 6 applicants from February 2022 through June 2022. The project team then selected a new cohort of TA recipients and provided technical assistance for Cycle 7 from August 2022 to August 2023. Over the contract period, Nelson\Nygaard provided technical assistance to 12 jurisdictions across the state, including cities, counties, tribes, and councils of government.

The Technical Assistance provided though Cycle 6 included bi-weekly meetings with TA recipients, two joint workshops, an individualized work plan for each jurisdiction to guide recipients through the application process, and an in-person or virtual site visit. The technical

assistance curriculum in Cycle 7 included monthly group TA sessions, optional homework assignments, one-on-one office hours, and in-person site visits.

This report provides an overview of activities completed throughout the contract term, as stipulated in the Scope of Work (see Figure 1). It also includes lessons learned throughout the two cycles of technical assistance and recommendation for future TA programs.

Overview of Scope

Figure 1 Scope of Work

Task	Task Detail	Timeline
Task 1: Timeline and Coordination Strategy	Alongside Caltrans staff, determine a timeline for completing deliverables in conjunction with the upcoming ATP cycle call for projects and coordinate how other TA provider(s) will collaborate to deliver effective assistance for selected recipients.	March 2022
Task 2: Selecting Technical Assistance Recipients	Based on Caltrans' initial needs-based recipient list, assist in finalizing the 10-15 TA recipients.	March 2022
Task 3: Recipient Coordination and Site Visits	Conduct a site visit with each TA recipient and develop an essential course of action to provide support for their active transportation needs.	May-June 2022 April-June 2023
Task 4: ATP Education and Project Development	Provide specialized workshops and training to the selected TA recipients.	March 2022 – June 2022
Task 5: Application Assistance for Upcoming ATP Cycle or Continued Technical Assistance for Subsequent ATP Cycle	Provide direct assistance to TA recipients for the preparation of ATP applications. Work alongside TA recipients to further develop the project and coordinate necessary meetings and communication to discuss and identify budgeting and application components.	July 2022 – August 2023
Task 6: Project Follow-Up TA	After the ATP awards Cycle 6 projects, provide debriefs to the TA recipients that were not awarded and provide initial next steps to those that were awarded.	October 2022- February 2023
Task 7: Technical Assistance Follow Up and Final Report	Gather and compile findings from conducting the TA work.	July 2023 – August 2023

2 TA RECIPIENT SELECTION

ATRC led the DAC TA program application process starting in the fall of 2021, prior to the solicitation and selection of a consultant to provide technical assistance and the initiation of Nelson\Nygaard's contract. The DAC TA application opened on November 17, 2021, and closed on December 16, 2021. ATRC promoted the program via multiple avenues, including:

- Recipient Application posted on ATRC Website, announced through ATRC E-blasts
- Announcement made at CTC ATP Guideline Workshops
- Announcements made at ATP-TAC meetings
- Announced at District-HQ ATP Coordination Meetings
 - Emailed DLAE's and ATP Coordinators in the Districts to specifically to share with Agencies in their region
- Shared with internal Caltrans Divisions to share with their stakeholders:
 - DOTP (Department of Transportation Planning)
 - Tribal Liaison Branch/Core (Core = Racial Equity Group)
 - Sustainability
- Shared with External Groups to share with their stakeholders
 - RTPA Group
 - Rural Counties Task Force
 - CalWalks
 - Safe Routes Partnership
 - Rails to Trails Conservancy
 - LGC/Civic Well
 - CDPH

ATRC received thirty-two applications for the DAC TA Program. Application responses were consolidated into a spreadsheet. ATRC staff developed a draft categorization of high, medium, and low consideration based on an initial screening process, considering:

1. Was the applicant and/or the proposed project location meeting the definition of a DAC (in location/direct benefit and severity)
2. What was the applicant's past history with ATP (if/when applied in previous cycles and success rate)
3. Was the applicant receiving any other technical assistance?
4. What was the level of project readiness (a consideration for both selection and tracking to either Cycle 6 or future cycle support)
5. Was the proposed project compelling/would be competitive and a good fit for ATP?
6. What was the diversity of applicants and projects:
 - a. Geographic (region/Caltrans district/county)
 - b. Land use (urban, suburban, small urban, rural/unincorporated)

- c. ATP project type (Infrastructure project, Non-infrastructure project, Infrastructure project with non-infrastructure (combined), plan only)
- d. Facility Type (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Safe Routes to School, Trail (multi-use or recreational trails), Non-infrastructure)

After Nelson\Nygaard’s contract was executed in late January 2022, Nelson\Nygaard and ATRC staff met to review the spreadsheet and the initial screening and categorization, approximately fifteen applicants were identified for Needs Assessment interviews to further discuss their application, potential project, and technical assistance needs.

Nelson\Nygaard and ATRC staff developed a set of interview questions that focused primarily on the intended project, including but not limited to information about the project goals, budget, timeline, project background, staff capacity, and community input. A copy of the Needs Assessment Questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

The project team interviewed fourteen applicants. Based on the interviews, applicants were identified as either ready to apply for Cycle 6 or recommended for long-term TA to better prepare them for future ATP cycles. Applicants were notified of the cycle recommendation and asked to confirm participation in the DAC TA Program.

Figure 2 Selected TA Recipients and TA Tracks

Cycle 6	Future cycles
City of Barstow	Big Pine Paiute Tribe
City of Coachella	City of Fort Bragg
Modoc County	City of Hanford
Monterey County	City of Live Oak
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG—was initially selected for Cycle 6 but moved to the future cycles assistance due to an unforeseen challenge with their application)	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG moved to the future cycles assistance due to an unforeseen challenge with their application)
San Joaquin County	Tule River Tribe (ultimately declined to participate because of ATP work with local COG)
Solano County	
City of Williams	

Nelson\Nygaard began kick-off calls with each participant in early April 2022 to give them an overview of the technical assistance process and to discuss a workplan and timeline, preferred meeting frequency, overview of filesharing, and site visit format and scheduling. Details on the technical assistance provided between April and June 2022 are discussed in Section 5.

3 SITE VISITS

For both TA cycles, the project teams conducted in-person site visits to work face-to-face with TA recipients. Site visit activities varied by jurisdiction, but generally focused on data gathering and community outreach that would later inform the final application. A brief overview of each site visit is below.

Cycle 6

City of Barstow

The City of Barstow site visit took place in May 2022. City staff shared maps of the proposed project that included the existing and proposed bike network, and shared how other projects (recently implemented or planned) will connect to their proposed ATP project. The visit included a driving tour of the city to show the proposed project scope.

City of Coachella

Nelson\Nygaard visited the City of Coachella in April 2022 to meet with city staff and view the project site. The City gave an overview presentation of their proposed project scope and provided a tour of the project extent. Nelson\Nygaard and the City discussed: 1) project size and scope (e.g., whether to go for the large infrastructure category), 2) the strengths and challenges with the proposed project; 3) the importance of project partners and community engagement, and 4) timeline, steps and, staff capacity to prepare the application.

Figure 3 Bicycle Repair Stations, City of Coachella



Monterey County

Nelson\Nygaard visited Monterey County in May 2022 to meet with county staff and tour the project site in the unincorporated county area of San Ardo. Nelson\Nygaard and county staff walked the proposed project extent, discussing the community needs, challenges with the project and the overall project scope, which includes both infrastructure and non-infrastructure components. This site visit was later in the application timeline, so the visit focused on the finer grain details that were still needing refinement in the application itself.

Figure 4 Existing Conditions at Project Site, San Ardo



Modoc County

Nelson\Nygaard visited Modoc County in May 2022 to meet with county staff, tour the project site, and host in-person community meetings. Nelson\Nygaard and county staff were able to tour the project site with residents to understand the pedestrian concerns and learn about additional safe routes to school concerns. Nelson\Nygaard staff also attended a presentation to the local school board.

San Joaquin County

Nelson\Nygaard visited San Joaquin County in April 2022 to meet with county staff and tour the project site in an unincorporated area of county adjacent to the City of Stockton. Nelson\Nygaard and county staff walked the proposed project extent, discussing the community needs, challenges with the project and the overall project scope, Nelson\Nygaard

provided input on areas to emphasize in the application itself, such as the heavy truck traffic along the route where sidewalks were proposed.

Solano County

Nelson\Nygaard staff visited Solano County in April 2022 to meet with county staff and walk the project site with businesses and other local stakeholders. County staff and local stakeholders shared that the project area had an active bicycling community, with few safe bike routes, sidewalks, and crossings. After seeing the project site, Nelson\Nygaard was able to suggest improved safety countermeasures and discuss ways to increase community engagement.

City of Williams

Nelson\Nygaard visited the City of Williams in April 2022 to meet with augmented city staff from Bennett Engineering Services, who were preparing the ATP application for the City of Williams. Nelson\Nygaard and the augmented city staff walked the proposed project extent, discussing the community needs, challenges with the project and the overall project scope, Like Coachella, the size of project to submit was also discussed (medium infrastructure vs. large) as was the potential to add a non-infrastructure component to the project to submit as a combination project. The importance of community engagement and community voice in the proposed project was also emphasized throughout the visit.

Figure 5 Existing Conditions along Project Site, City of Williams



Cycle 7

Big Pine Paiute Tribe

Nelson\Nygaard visited the Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley in April 2023 for two days of community engagement and project site tours. Engagement events included a project team walk audit with representatives from the Big Pine Paiute Tribe, Inyo County, and Caltrans staff, interviews with Tribal members and pop-up events at the Big Pine School. The team also gave a presentation on the ATP program and Big Pine’s potential project to the Tribal Council.

Figure 6 Walking Assessment of Project Site, Big Pine Paiute Reservation



City of Live Oak

Nelson\Nygaard met with representatives from the City of Live Oak and the Live Oak Unified School District in May 2023 and participated in a walking tour of the potential Safe Routes to School project that would benefit Middle and High School students in the city. The walking tour and subsequent discussions helped Live Oak staff better understand an appropriate scope for their project and the possible inclusion of a non-infrastructure component in their ATP application.

Figure 7 Community Walking Tour of Project Site, City of Live Oak



City of Fort Bragg

Nelson\Nygaard staff visited Fort Bragg in May 2023 to participate in a community walking tour and assessment of the potential project site. Participants included city staff from the Engineering department, representatives from Caltrans District 1, and community members. The outreach activity demonstrated public support for safer walking and biking pathways in Fort Bragg that incorporate public art.

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

Nelson\Nygaard and Caltrans staff visited Oceano, a community in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, on May 2023 to participate in a community outreach event organized by SLOCOG. The purpose of the event was to inform community members about SLOCOG's role and programming and gather feedback on Safe Routes to School improvements around Oceano Elementary School. The event was well attended and community support for the project is high.

The site visit was followed by a meeting in July, 2023 of County, Supervisor, and SLOCOG staff to review upcoming school zone improvements and how to collaborate on the upcoming ATP Cycle 7 application. Nelson\Nygaard facilitated this meeting.

Figure 8 SLOCOG Community Presentation, Oceano



Figure 9 SLOCOG Walkabout



City of Hanford

Nelson\Nygaard traveled to Hanford in May 2023 to visit potential project sites, including the People’s Trail, the upcoming High Speed Rail station area, and Safe Routes to School project sites. The team also introduced the ATP program to other City of Hanford staff members and discussed ways to increase community engagement and future active transportation planning efforts.

Figure 10 Potential People’s Trail Project Site, City of Hanford



4 ATP EDUCATION

The educational components of both TA cycles were designed to provide both individual and cohort learning opportunities. The consultant team used the application as guidance to identify topics for group TA sessions and focus areas for individual technical assistance.

Because of the abbreviated timeline in Cycle 6, most of the technical assistance provided was individual to meet the applicants where they were in the process and provide targeted help on specific sections of the application. The project team also hosted two group TA sessions to provide broad education on important application topics: “Telling your Safety Story” and “Community Participation and Planning.”

The purpose of the module on community engagement was to demonstrate the process for integrating community perspectives into an ATP application, review best practices for public engagement, and highlight the importance of ongoing feedback for sustaining community relationships throughout the project development and implementation. The workshop directly referenced the ATP evaluation criteria so that applicants understood what evaluators were looking for and could tailor the narrative on their application accordingly.

The module on safety focused on combining data and narrative elements to accurately convey the importance of the project for the community to the evaluators. The presentation discussed how to take a comprehensive approach to telling a safety story, especially in small communities where data is limited, by using other tools like community interviews and surveys, traffic counts, and road network characteristics. The module also covered proven safety countermeasures that applicants could include in their projects to mitigate safety risks.

5 APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

Over the course of the contract period, Nelson\Nygaard provided application assistance to twelve cities, counties, council of governments and tribal communities, seven in Cycle 6 and five in Cycle 7. Each TA recipient was assigned a Nelson\Nygaard TA liaison who served as the primary point of contact for each TA recipient and for Cycle 6, guided the TA recipients through the application process, including application development, review, and submittal.

Cycle 6

Application assistance started in April 2022 after the TA recipients were selected.

Nelson\Nygaard met with TA recipients on a bi-weekly basis, then on a weekly basis as the application deadline of June 12, 2022, approached.

As part of early TA support, TA liaisons worked with their TA recipients to develop a work plan to support on-time application completion and arranged site visits for each TA recipient. A sample workplan is shown in Figure 11. Throughout application development period, Nelson\Nygaard worked with TA recipients to craft a compelling narrative of how project scopes were ideated, refined, and selected, and how community engagement was incorporated throughout that process. In particular, Nelson\Nygaard helped TA recipients with discussing safety concerns that existed at the project location when there was not a history of crashes; the importance of discussing the community's involvement and perspective throughout the narrative and touching on past, present, and future engagement; and the quality of engineering components and the Project Study Report (PSR) equivalent requirements.

As part of the application development, TA recipients drafted sections of their application narrative and the Nelson\Nygaard team reviewed and provided edits for consistency across the application. Nelson\Nygaard reviewed the draft narratives with the application scoring rubric for the application type to ensure the answers were responsive to the scoring criteria and consistent with guidance given to evaluators. Nelson\Nygaard engineers reviewed many of the engineering components of the application. Where needed, Nelson\Nygaard also assisted TA recipients by creating maps and other graphics for the applications.

Figure 11 Sample TA Recipient Work Plan

Cycle 6 ATP Project Checklist			MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE				
Draft	Review & Update Draft	Review Revised Draft & Finalize	28 - 1	4 - 8	11 - 15	18 - 22	25 - 29	2 - 6	16 - 20	23 - 27	30 - 3	6 - 10	15
Part A: Completeness			Initial Information, Data and Guidance			Part A Attachments							
A1 Applicant Information			Master Agreements			Requesting from Client							
A2 General Project Info			Project Partnering Agency Information			Letter of Intent							
A3 Project Type			Project Type and Subtype Identified			Map of project boundaries							
A4 Project Details			Impacted Schools Identified and information entered			School map							
			Bicycle Improvements			School contact info/person							
			Pedestrian Improvements			Statement of support							
			Multi-use Trail Improvements										
			Vehicular Roadway Traffic Calming Improvements										
			Non-Infrastructure Components										
			Plan Type (only intended for Plans)										
A5 Project Schedule			Right of Way Images			Signature Pages							
			PA&E Delivery Phase			Title Sheet							
			PS&E Delivery Phase			R/W Certification							
A6 Project Funding			Right of Way Delivery Phase			Construction Delivery Phase							
			Project Funding			Exhibit 22-F State Funding							
			Project Programming Request (PPR)										
			Demonstrated fiscal needs of applicant										
A7 Screening Criteria			Consistency with RTP			Pages from RTP							
			Implementing as Caltrans										
Part B: Completeness			Narrative Questions			Part B Attachments							
10 points			Disadvantaged Communities			Map of boundaries, scope and destination identification							
52 points			Potential for Increased Walking and Biking										
25 points			Potential for Reducing Number/Rate of Pedestrian and Bicycle Fatalities			Collision heat-map, project area collision map, collision summaries, lists/sports							
10 points			Public Participation and Planning										
3 points			Scope and Plan Layout Consistency Effectiveness										
10 points			Use of CQC or CALCC			CALCC or Tribal Corps							
10 points			Performance on Past ATP Funded Projects										
Part C: Completeness			Part C Attachments										
Attachment A			Application Signature Page										
Attachment B			Engineer's Checklist										
Attachment C			Project Location Map										
Attachment D			Project Layout/Plans showing existing and proposed conditions										
Attachment E			Photos of Existing Conditions										
Attachment F			Project Estimate										
Attachment G			Non-Infrastructure Work Plan (Exhibit 25-R)										
Attachment H			Plan Scope of Work (Exhibit 26-Plan)										
Attachment I			Letters of Support (10 Max) and Support Documentation										
Attachment J			Exhibit 22-F State Funding										
Attachment K			Additional Attachments										

Cycle 6 scores and statewide funding awards were announced in the fall of 2022 and adopted by CTC in December 2022. Four of the seven TA recipients were awarded funding, for a total of nearly \$20 million. Full scores and funding awards are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Cycle 6 ATP TA Recipient Results

TA Recipient	Project	Funding Awarded?	Final Score	Funding Amount
City of Barstow	Pedestrian, Bicyclist, and Safety Improvements	No	69	
City of Coachella	Connecting Coachella	No	55.5	
Monterey County	San Ardo Community and School Connections Through Active Transportation	Yes	96	\$3,448,000
Modoc County	Surprise Valley School Safety and Community Connectivity Project	Yes	86	\$3,021,000
San Joaquin County	Harrison Elementary Active Transportation Improvements	Yes	92	\$3,886,000
Solano County	Benicia Road Complete Streets Project	No	78	
City of Williams	E Street Complete Streets Project	Yes	80	\$9,341,000

Cycle 7

For Cycle 7, the project team developed a comprehensive curriculum to cover a broad range of topics relevant to the ATP program and grant application. Each topic was introduced to the TA recipients at monthly group TA sessions. After each group session, recipients were given a homework assignment related to the month’s topic to complete independently to apply what they learned and develop written content that could be later incorporated into the ATP application. Recipients were also able to schedule one-on-one office hours each month to meet with their designated TA liaison to answer any questions about past module topics, check on the status of their project, or otherwise provide guidance and council.

Figure 13 Cycle 7 TA Curriculum

Module	Learning Objectives	Proposed Delivery Method	Materials/ Template	Date	Homework
1 – Active Transportation for Your Community	Overview of Cycle 7 and Beyond TA Program Discuss active transportation gaps and challenges Draw connections to community needs and potential benefits	Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours	Presentation	Sept 2022	Review Curriculum and Workplan documents Review and document recent planning documents Create list of community needs
2 – Developing Project Scope	Discuss factors to consider when developing project scope, specifically for ATP Provide overview of infrastructure, non-infrastructure, combo projects, and plan project components	Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours	Presentation	Oct 2022	Develop and draft project scope in response to ATP Cycle 6 Prompt

Module	Learning Objectives	Proposed Delivery Method	Materials/ Template	Date	Homework
3 – Building Community Partnerships	<p>Reinforce importance of community engagement for ATP</p> <p>Identify local community partners</p> <p>Develop approaches to outreach and engagement</p> <p>Highlight disadvantaged communities</p>	<p>Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>List of local community partners (e.g., topical subject matter experts, CBOs)</p> <p>DAC Maps and Definitions</p> <p>Request Letters of Support Templates</p>	Nov 2022	<p>List of community partners</p> <p>Create draft outreach and engagement strategy</p> <p>Identify DAC definition for proposed project</p>
S4 – Working with Data and Tools	<p>Provide overview of crash and safety data, socioeconomic data and indexes, tools, and mapping</p> <p>Highlight connections between quantitative and qualitative data analysis and narrative development</p>	<p>Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Crash data, maps, list/links of resources</p>	Jan 2023	<p>TIMS summary outputs</p> <p>DAC outputs (e.g., CalEnviroScreen, Healthy Places Index)</p>
5 – Safety Countermeasures	<p>Identify appropriate safety countermeasures to address crash risk and community needs</p>	<p>Joint Workshop <i>Invited CTC</i></p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>List of potential safety measures</p>	Feb 2023	<p>List of safety measures with draft narrative</p>
<p><i>Site Visits and In-Person Meetings (March - May 2023)</i></p>					

Module	Learning Objectives	Proposed Delivery Method	Materials/ Template	Date	Homework
6 – Preparing for ATP	<p>Determine level of readiness for ATP application</p> <p>Refine project scope</p> <p>Identify agency and community partners to support application development</p> <p>Engineering components (MR)</p> <p>High-Level Overview of ATP Application</p>	<p>Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours</p>	<p>Decision-making tree to assess readiness for ATP and highlight areas of need to support application development</p>	June 2023	<p>Decision-making Tree Exercise</p> <p>Confirmed List of identified community and agency partners</p>
7 – Deep Dive on the ATP Application	<p>Provide overview of Cycle 6 application, scoring rubric, and resources</p> <p>Discuss preparation timeline leading up to Call for Projects</p>	<p>Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours</p>	<p>Presentation Cycle 6 Application and Scoring Rubric</p>	July 2023	<p>List of questions, comments, and feedback on Cycle 6 application and scoring rubric</p>
8 – Additional Funding Opportunities & Cycle 7 TA evaluation	<p>Discuss additional funding opportunities and conduct Cycle 7 and Beyond Evaluation</p>	<p>Group Technical Assistance Presentation with Complementary Office Hours</p> <p>Web-based survey</p>	<p>Presentation List of state funding resources</p>	Aug 2023	<p>Cycle 7 TA Evaluation Survey</p>

6 PROJECT FOLLOW UP TA

After Cycle 6 awards were announced in the fall of 2022, Nelson\Nygaard offered TA recipients the opportunity to hold a debrief call to discuss their results and answer any outstanding questions. Nelson\Nygaard held debriefs with the City of Williams and Monterey County and participated in a debrief for City of Coachella with CTC.

At the debrief meetings, participants discussed their experience with the technical assistance program and their experience with the Cycle 6 application. The group also discussed lessons learned for future ATP cycles, and recommendations for improvement. Feedback from these debrief sessions is summarized in Section 7.

7 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOLLOW UP

Cycle 6

After the Cycle 6 application period closed, Nelson\Nygaard developed a questionnaire for participants to offer feedback on both the TA program and their experience with the ATP application. Nelson\Nygaard received responses from all seven Cycle 6 TA recipients. Key themes from their feedback are summarized below. The full list of questions asked can be found in Appendix B.

Experience with the ATP Application

Several participants reported that they thought many of the questions on the application were similar and felt repetitive, which limited their opportunities to fully tell the story of their project. Some also felt like the instructions and guidance on which attachments were required were unclear.

It was recommended that applications be released earlier, or that significant changes to the application between years should be announced ahead of time. One TA recipient said that if they knew that the application would stay the same between cycles, they could get an early start on time-consuming components such as the maps and cost estimates. There was also a recommendation to include an additional form for non-infrastructure and combination projects. Because they have programmatic elements, the jurisdiction felt that there should be a different way to discuss these types of projects.

Many applicants found the application challenging simply because they were from small agencies with limited staff capacity. They felt that the level of technical detail required, especially the engineering requirements, data analysis, and public outreach, put small communities at a disadvantage compared to big cities that often have more staff and funding available with more tailored expertise. Smaller cities also have fewer plans with less frequent updates, which can be challenging for moving relevant projects forward through the program. Smaller communities also generally do not have access to the same amount of data as larger cities, which can be difficult when data is needed to justify the proposed interventions.

As a solution, it was suggested that CTC could develop an alternative or abbreviated application for smaller and/or under resourced agencies. Another suggestion was that CTC allocate a pool of funds that small and/or disadvantaged communities could apply for to help cover the cost of developing and submitting the ATP application.

Experience with and Assessment of the TA Process

All the TA recipients were generally very satisfied with the TA program and felt that it was a valuable resource to rely on when developing their applications. They appreciated the

emphasis on the scoring criteria and how to discuss the limited data available in their small communities. They also found the QA/QC checks on the written application helpful, as many simply do not have the staff capacity to do it on their own. Many recipients found the narrative sections challenging and really appreciated Nelson\Nygaard's review and support. They also found the frequent check-ins in useful for keeping them accountable and ensuring applications were progressing and thought the in-person site visits were helpful to confirm the project scope and get a better idea of what interventions they would like to propose.

Several TA recipients recommended starting Technical Assistance earlier in future cycles, as many participants felt rushed with their applications and could have used more time with and guidance from the consultant team, and more time to conduct meaningful community engagement. They also recommend providing clearer guidelines on what participants can and cannot expect from the TA program (e.g., the program is more about application guidance, coaching, and review; TA providers will not be writing sections of the application). Another recommendation was to dedicate more TA time to agencies with greater need. Some places might only need 40 hours of assistance, whereas others could use closer to 60 to develop an application of similar quality. TA recipients also mentioned better resources about or opportunities for partnerships with organizations like SafeTREC to do safety assessments that can inform the application.

Cycle 7

In August 2023 after the final module of Cycle 7 technical assistance, the project team administered a feedback survey to the Cycle 7 TA recipients to gather insights on the TA program, including the monthly modules, homework assignments, site visits, and office hours. The full list of questions and anonymous responses can be found in Appendix C. The findings from the survey can be used to improve future technical assistance.

Survey Responses

All five of the Cycle 7 TA recipients responded to the survey and answered all the questions posed. Their responses and feedback are summarized below.

Group TA Modules

Survey respondents reported that the three most beneficial group TA sessions were modules 2, 3, and 4, which covered developing project scope, building community partnerships, and working with data and tools. These three modules were rated as beneficial by four of the five TA recipients. The modules on safety countermeasures, a deep dive on the ATP application, and alternative funding sources were also rated as beneficial by three of the five TA recipients.

Survey respondents appreciated the group discussions, concrete examples of past projects and grant awardees, and emphasis on equity and safety. A recommendation for improvement would be to have more opportunities for sharing experiences between members of the cohort, such as programming and/or takeaways from community outreach, safety/roadway data, and planned safety countermeasures. The commenter believes that sharing regular progress updates could help spur ideas and discussion of context, or ways to address challenges with local agency or community buy-in.

Homework Assignments

All five survey respondents reported completing at least some of the homework assignments. Four out of the five respondents found the homework assignments very helpful or somewhat helpful, and one person found them very unhelpful. Survey respondents appreciated the hands-on learning opportunity, and that the homework assignments compelled them to begin research and data gathering early to make it easier to complete the application later down the line. A recommendation for improvement is to tie in information gathering or storytelling with the rubric on each part of the application to ensure that the sections are consistent with the evaluation criteria.

Site Visits

All five survey respondents found the site visits beneficial, and all appreciated the opportunity to do a walkthrough of the potential project site with the TA team. Other beneficial site visit activities were community outreach and on-site discussion of the project scope. One TA recipient responded that the site visit was the most beneficial element of the TA program and helped them jumpstart community outreach and reduce barriers to interagency coordination. One person suggested that it would be helpful for the TA team to provide post-visit summary notes and recommendations.

Office Hours

While office hours were available to all the TA recipients each month, most survey respondents reported meeting with their TA liaison for a one-on-one meeting fewer than three times over the course of the technical assistance period. Still, all respondents reported that the one-on-one sessions were beneficial. Common feedback was that the sessions were beneficial for discussing specific challenges and brainstorming solutions, but scheduling and staff capacity were barriers to participation.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Throughout the TA process and by gathering feedback from TA recipients, Nelson\Nygaard developed a series of recommendations for future Technical Assistance programming to help improve TA recipient performance and increase the likelihood of TA recipients winning funding for their projects.

- Start the TA support process ideally in the fall prior to the announcement of the next funding cycle (which typically happens in the spring of even numbered years).
- Ask TA recipients to write down their thoughts on potential projects as early as possible so that there is substantial time for iteration, comments, and changes. This should include the proposed project scope and information on who the project will serve.
- Reserve staff time and budget for in-person site visits. It is extremely helpful for the TA recipients and the consultant staff to have an agreed-upon understanding of and on-site discussions about the project site and scope. Site visits also help both parties identify strengths and areas that may need additional support, e.g., the city has great storytelling ability and community voice but a lack of technical expertise or capacity. This can help the consultant team tailor individual work plans and set up the TA recipient for success early on.
- Reiterate to the applicant that the evaluators are likely not familiar with their city or their community. It is important for applicants to bring the project to life and paint a clear picture of the community, the project, and the project benefits in the narrative sections of the evaluation.
- Ensure that applicants work with the rubric as they develop the application. The evaluation criteria determine the final score, and applicants should keep them front of mind as they develop each section to maximize the number of points they can earn.
- Emphasize the difference between community partners and community engagement. Community partners are supporters and collaborators that applicants can work with in tandem throughout the application development process, and who will also be involved in project implementation. Community partners are agencies and organizations that may provide letters of support and assist in developing and delivering non-infrastructure programming.

Community engagement opens the floor to community members to offer feedback on the project scope. Community engagement should also be an ongoing process, with opportunities for people to offer comments, feedback, and recommendations

- through the project development process, from project ideation to application development and construction. Community engagement activities can range on a spectrum from simply providing information to collaborating to identify problems and propose solutions. Both engagement and partnership are especially important and should be described clearly in a way that is easy for the evaluator to understand.
- Begin all TA cycles with an initial workshop walking through the different components of the application, including the technical documents. It is important for applicants to understand the full scope of the endeavor so that they can make a staffing plan and have adequate time to complete and review all sections of the application well before the deadline.
 - Make sure that the TA recipients and the TA providers understand the roles and responsibilities of the other party and reiterate those responsibilities throughout the application development process.

9 APPENDIX A: NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Background

The Nelson\Nygaard Team is working with the Caltrans ATRC to deliver technical assistance to support agencies during the ATP Cycle 6 application and future ATP cycles. As part of this effort, we are interviewing several jurisdictions across the state who responded to ATRC's Technical Assistance questionnaire to better understand their proposed projects, determine what technical assistance might be appropriate, and how we might best support those receiving technical assistance.

ATP Cycle 6 Project Description

- Can you please tell us about your project, including project goals, anticipated budget, and estimated timeline?
- What is the need/impetus for this project? How was the project selected?
- What application type are you thinking of applying for in Cycle 6 (e.g., Small Infrastructure, Medium Infrastructure, Large Infrastructure, Combo (I/NI), Non-Infrastructure, Plan, Quick Build)?
- What are some challenges you anticipate for the upcoming Cycle 6 process?
- Project Readiness

Because the process of submitting an ATP application is so resource intensive, it is important for agencies to have a project that is conceptually well-developed and organized so that the primary focus during the application process is on developing compelling narrative about the project. From our past experience providing technical assistance for ATP Cycle 5, we learned that projects with demonstrated community buy-in and ties to past or existing planning efforts tend to be more competitive.

Technical Assistance

For us to tailor the type of assistance provided, we're interested in learning more about the details of your project.

- How long has your proposed project been in development? What processes has your agency used to integrate public involvement during project ideation, project selection, and scoping? If this process currently does not exist, how do you plan on

- integrating community involvement during project ideation, project selection, and scoping in future cycles?
- Is your proposed project informed by past or recent planning initiatives in your region/city?
 - We want to clarify from your application: What type of technical assistance are you seeking through this program? How can the program assist you with capacity building and long-term planning?
 - What level of capacity does your agency have to complete a Cycle 6 application by the June 15, 2022, deadline? What staff will be involved in the application process and how many hours do they have available to support?
 - Do you have access to outside technical assistance, a hired consultant, or a hired professional grant writing to help develop your application during this Cycle?
 - What outside partners will you be coordinating with on the project such as community based organizations, the regional MPO, partner agencies, neighboring cities, etc.? (think about letters of support, community engagement, etc.)
 - What level of engineering review has your project gone through thus far?

10 APPENDIX B: CYCLE 6 EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of ATP Cycle 6 Technical Assistance Recipients during the Cycle 6 Application development process. All input provided will inform improvements to future rounds of technical assistance for upcoming ATP cycles.

Questions shown in red will be included in both the web-based survey and one-on-one debrief with Cycle 6 TA recipients. Questions shown in black will only be included in the web-based survey.

Cycle 6 Application Experience

1. Reflecting on ATP Cycle 6, on average, how many hours did it take for your agency/organization to complete each application, accounting for staff time and outside assistance beyond the Technical Assistance Program (e.g., professional grant writers or hired consultants) that was provided in the application process?
2. On average, how much did it cost your agency to put together an ATP application, accounting for staff time and outside assistance beyond the Technical Assistance program (e.g., professional grant writers or hired consultants) that was provided in the application process? Please provide the estimated dollar amount value.
3. **What barriers made it difficult for you to prepare responses to the application questions? (Survey & Interview)**
 - i. Insufficient time in application cycle
 - ii. Insufficient staff capacity to prepare applications
 - iii. Unclear or confusing application instructions
 - iv. Lack of prior planning efforts or assessments
 - v. Lack of knowledge/tools for GIS mapping or data analysis
 - vi. Lack of knowledge/tools for evaluating pedestrian and bicycle safety conditions and concerns
 - vii. Lack of knowledge/tools for demonstrating community benefits to disadvantaged communities

- viii. Other (please specify)
4. **Reflecting on ATP Cycle 6, what aspects of the ATP application did you find most challenging to complete? (Survey & Interview)**
- i. Disadvantaged Communities definitions
 - ii. Public Health Measures
 - iii. Safety Calculations Methodology
 - iv. Evidence of Community Engagement
 - v. Description of Safety Countermeasures
 - vi. Narrative Description of Project Benefits
 - vii. Narrative Description of Community and Safety Need
 - viii. Cost Estimates
 - ix. Developing Planning Specifications
 - x. Gathering Letters of Support
 - xi. Other (please specify)
5. **What elements of the application did you feel most required additional support or technical assistance? (Survey & Interview)**
- i. Crash Reports
 - ii. Cost Estimates
 - iii. Disadvantaged Community Analysis
 - iv. Overall Narrative and Readability
 - v. Project Location Maps and Layouts
 - vi. Public Health Assessment
 - vii. Safety Heat Maps
 - viii. Safety Countermeasures
 - ix. Evidence of Community Engagement
 - x. Other (please specify)
6. **What resources did you access beyond technical assistance while developing your application for Cycle 6? (Select all that apply)**
- i. Caltrans ATP Website
 - ii. Active Transportation Resource Center Pre-Recorded Workshops
 - iii. ATP Cycle 6 Scoring Rubrics
 - iv. Other Technical Assistance Programs (e.g., Safe Routes)
 - v. Other (please specify)

7. Did you refer to the scoring rubrics while developing and completing your application(s)? If not, why?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Comment Box

Assessment of TA Process

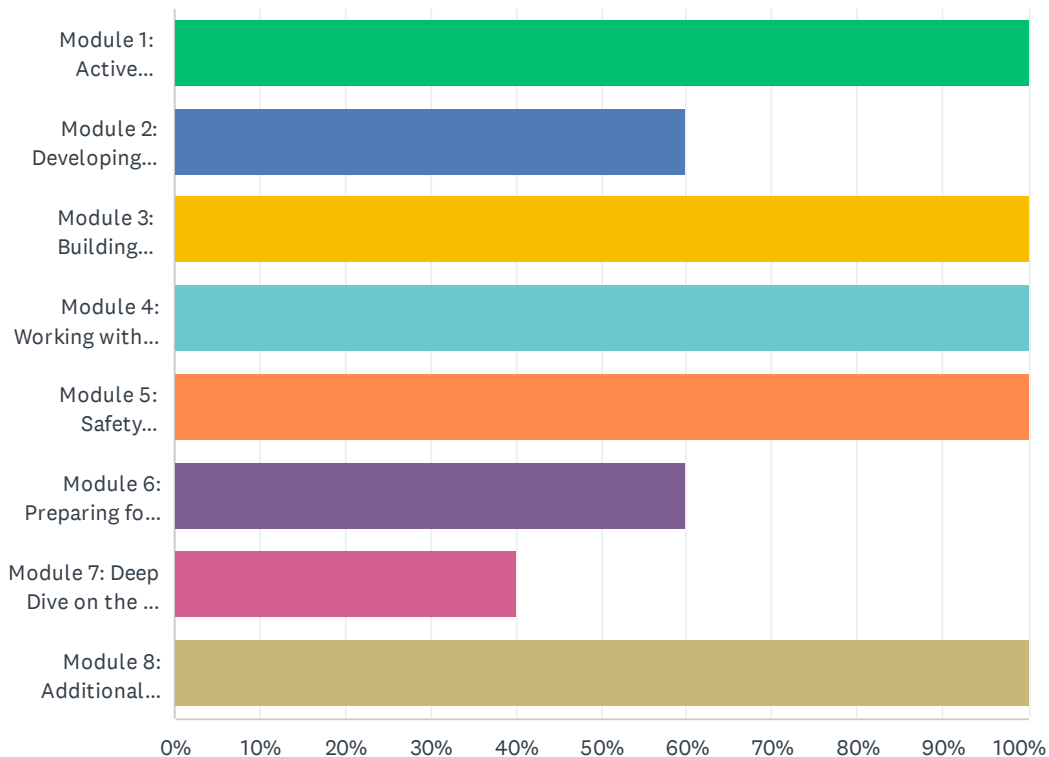
8. What is your overall opinion of the technical assistance provided by the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance Program for Cycle 6? What aspects of the TA process did you feel worked well? (Survey & Interview)
9. Please rate the helpfulness for the following elements of the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance Program (Matrix with Likert Scale with ranging from Least Helpful to Most Helpful)
 - i. Draft Application Review & Feedback
 - ii. Narrative Assistance
 - iii. Scheduled 1-on-1 meetings
 - iv. Quality Control
 - v. Site Visit
 - vi. Engineering Review
 - vii. SAC State Grant Writing Workshop
 - viii. Other (please specify)
10. Please describe how we might improve or increase the usefulness of the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance Program for Cycle 6 elements that you found *least helpful*.
11. Please elaborate on the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance Program for Cycle 6 elements you found *most helpful*. What would you like to continue to see in future technical assistance efforts?
12. How helpful was the *Tell Your Safety Story* joint workshop in developing your Cycle 7 application? (Likert Scale with additional option for "I did not watch.")
13. How helpful was the *Elevating Community Perspectives* joint workshop in developing your Cycle 7 application? (Likert Scale with additional option for "I did not watch.")
14. What do you feel would be most helpful/useful for a technical assistance program?
 - i. Application writing
 - ii. Initial project scoping
 - iii. Narrative review

- iv. Engineering review
 - v. Application feedback
 - vi. Proofreading/editing
 - vii. 1-on-1 meetings
 - viii. Other (please specify)
15. Do you have any recommendations for how to improve the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance Program for future application cycles? (Survey & Interview)
16. What are some of the lessons learned from the Caltrans ATRC DAC Technical Assistance program will you implement as you prepare for future ATP cycles? (Survey & Interview)

11 APPENDIX C: CYCLE 7 TA RECIPIENT SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1 Which group TA session(s) did you attend? Select all that apply.

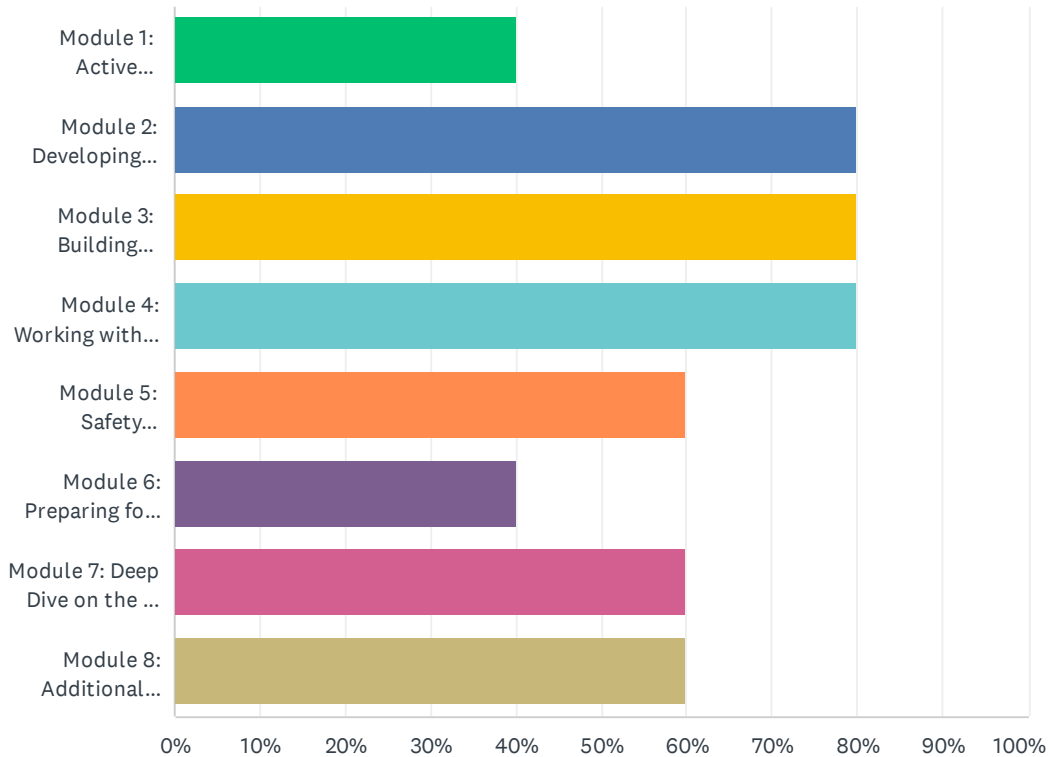
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Module 1: Active Transportation for Your Community	100.00%	5
Module 2: Developing Project Scope	60.00%	3
Module 3: Building Community Partnerships	100.00%	5
Module 4: Working with Data and Tools	100.00%	5
Module 5: Safety Countermeasures	100.00%	5
Module 6: Preparing for ATP	60.00%	3
Module 7: Deep Dive on the ATP Application	40.00%	2
Module 8: Additional Funding Opportunities	100.00%	5
Total Respondents: 5		

Q2 Which group TA session(s) did you feel were most beneficial for you? Select all that apply.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Module 1: Active Transportation for Your Community	40.00%	2
Module 2: Developing Project Scope	80.00%	4
Module 3: Building Community Partnerships	80.00%	4
Module 4: Working with Data and Tools	80.00%	4
Module 5: Safety Countermeasures	60.00%	3
Module 6: Preparing for ATP	40.00%	2
Module 7: Deep Dive on the ATP Application	60.00%	3
Module 8: Additional Funding Opportunities	60.00%	3
Total Respondents: 5		

Q3 What did you enjoy or find helpful about the module format and content?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Need to know information in the slide presentations, group discussions on TA recipients experience and approaches to their projects. Providing real life examples of projects, past awardees.	8/9/2023 10:06 PM
2	It was helpful that each module was essentially a step in the preparation of at ATP application, and that the content followed current planning emphasis areas, such as equity & safety.	8/8/2023 4:41 PM
3	Overall, all of the modules were informative and well-presented.	8/8/2023 4:12 PM
4	The team is highly knowledgeable, and friendly. It was great working with everyone...	8/8/2023 10:20 AM
5	I enjoyed the regular contact from the ATRC team. I felt like the content was appropriate for many other tasks I was working on throughout the duration of the TA.	8/8/2023 10:20 AM

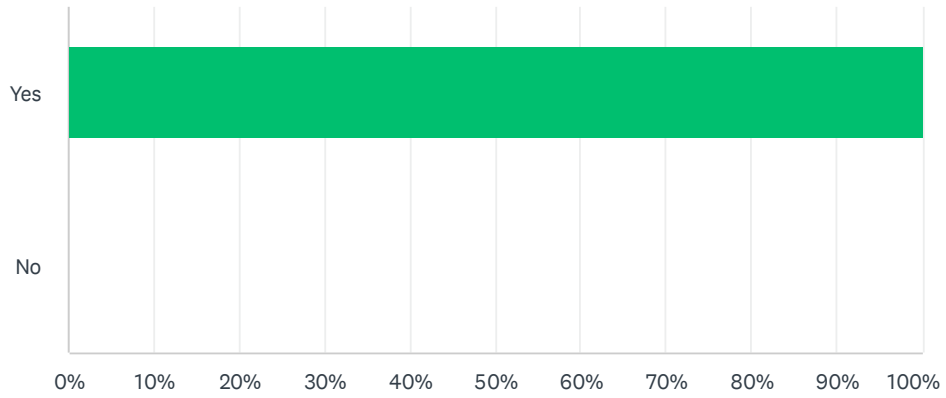
Q4 What could we have done differently to make the modules more beneficial to you?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Can't think of anything.	8/9/2023 10:06 PM
2	Perhaps it'd put undue pressure to complete the voluntary homework, but it might have been informative to see what the other TA recipients produced for the community partnerships, safety/roadway data, and safety countermeasures modules. Spur ideas and discussion of context, local agency or community buy-in challenges, etc.	8/8/2023 4:41 PM
3	N/A	8/8/2023 4:12 PM
4	Nothing...	8/8/2023 10:20 AM
5	N/A	8/8/2023 10:20 AM

Q5 Did you complete any of the homework assignments?

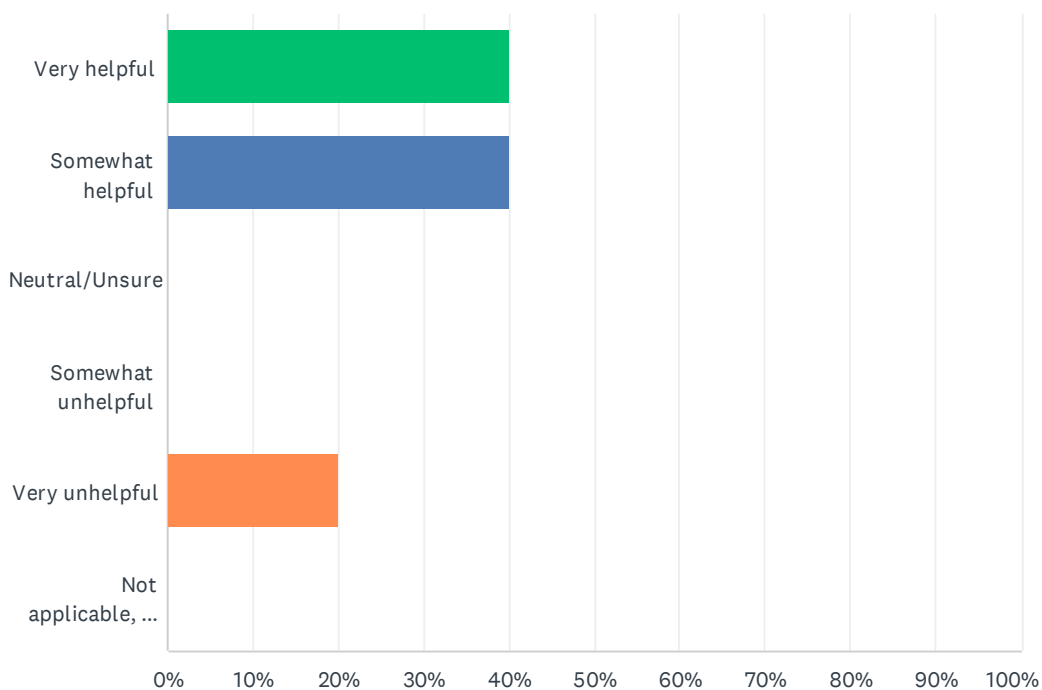
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q6 How helpful did you find the homework assignments? Select only one.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very helpful	40.00%	2
Somewhat helpful	40.00%	2
Neutral/Unsure	0.00%	0
Somewhat unhelpful	0.00%	0
Very unhelpful	20.00%	1
Not applicable, I did not complete the homework assignments	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q7 What did you enjoy or find helpful about the homework assignments?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Had us doing the information gathering and research now which will lessen the workload later. Easier to fill out the application as we go. Helps with less procrastination.	8/9/2023 10:12 PM
2	If nothing else it prompted me to complete or research elements of the ATP application well ahead of the call for projects.	8/8/2023 4:42 PM
3	The homework assignments were helpful. They prompted me to think through our project.	8/8/2023 4:13 PM
4	The hands-on learning aspect.	8/8/2023 10:21 AM
5	Disadvantaged community research tools and heat maps for collisions.	8/8/2023 10:21 AM

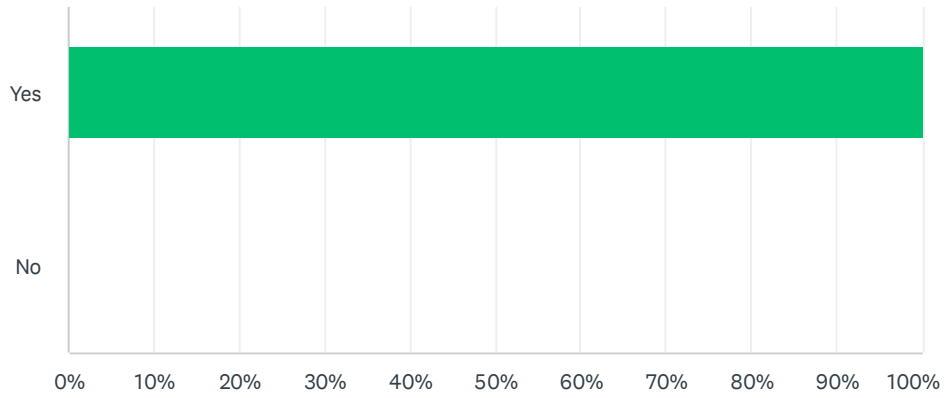
Q8 What could we have done differently to make the homework assignments more useful to you?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Tie in information gathering and explaining or telling the story with the scoring rubric on each part of the application, each module which ever is the case for that TA session.	8/9/2023 10:12 PM
2	Nothing, really.	8/8/2023 4:42 PM
3	Nothing	8/8/2023 4:13 PM
4	N/A	8/8/2023 10:21 AM
5	N/A	8/8/2023 10:21 AM

Q9 Did you find the site visit beneficial?

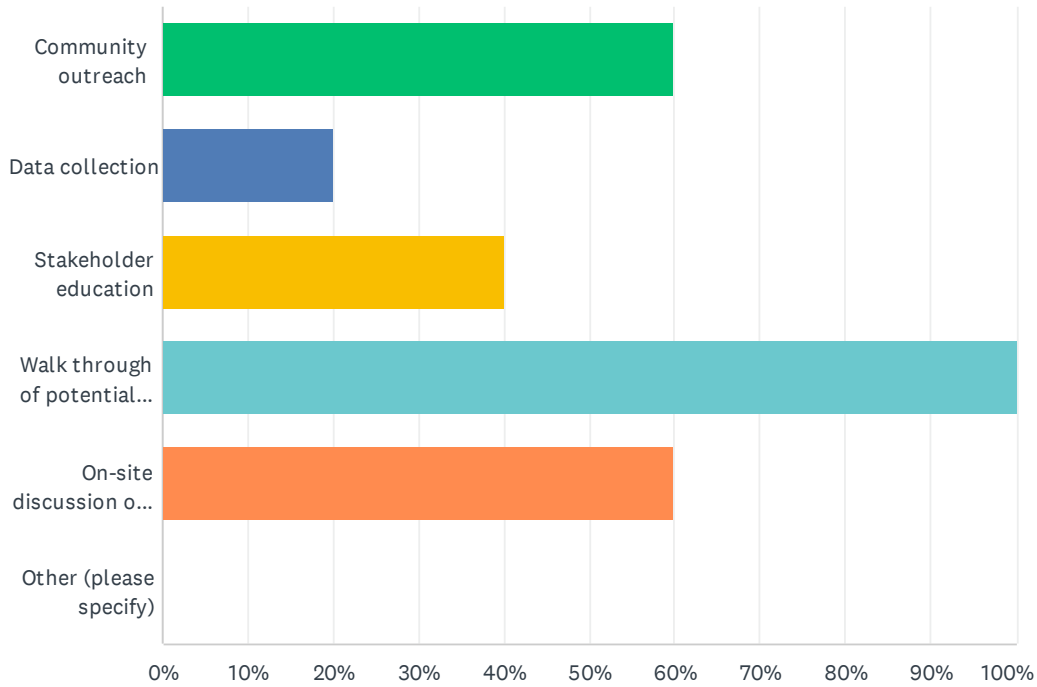
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q10 What site visit activity/activities were most beneficial for you? Select all that apply.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community outreach	60.00%	3
Data collection	20.00%	1
Stakeholder education	40.00%	2
Walk through of potential project location	100.00%	5
On-site discussion of project scope	60.00%	3
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 5		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

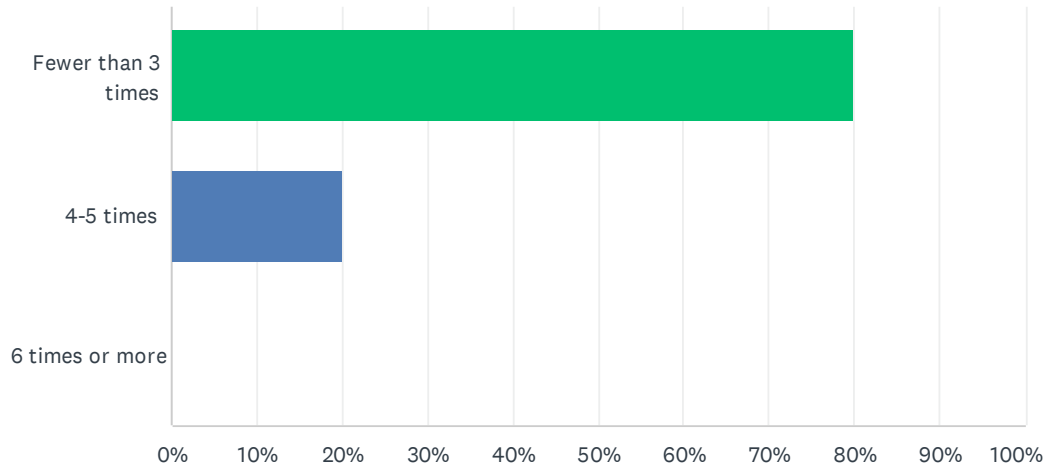
Q11 What could we have done differently to make the site visit more beneficial for you?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Summary notes from the visit, recommendations from the team.	8/9/2023 10:18 PM
2	The site visit was the most beneficial element of the TA program. It really jumpstarted our communication with the County (implementing agency) and tore down some of the barriers that were keeping the communities' project priorities from developing. A++++!	8/8/2023 4:46 PM
3	I believe the site visit was very beneficial. We were able to travel the community and make observations on the current active transportation system in Hanford.	8/8/2023 4:16 PM
4	N/A	8/8/2023 10:21 AM
5	N/A	8/8/2023 10:21 AM

Q12 About how many times did you meet with your TA liaison for one-on-one office hours?

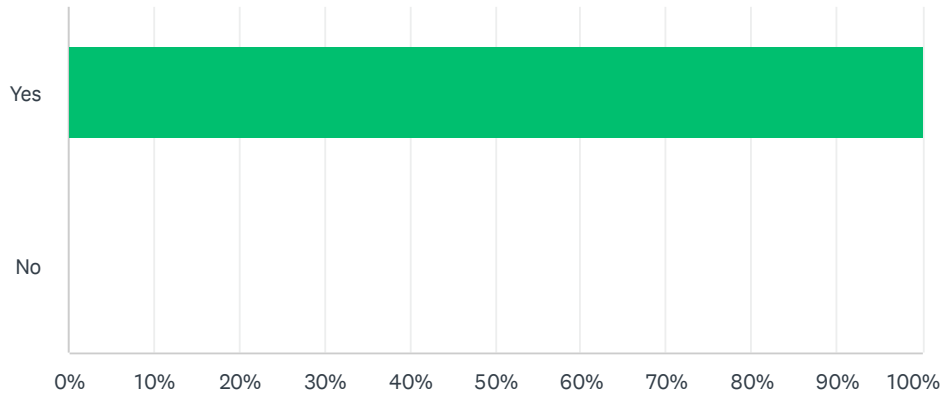
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fewer than 3 times	80.00%	4
4-5 times	20.00%	1
6 times or more	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q13 Were the one-on-one office hours beneficial to you?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Q14 What did you like about the format of office hours? What did you dislike?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I wish I would have attended more of them. I often had overlapping regularly schedule meetings.	8/8/2023 4:47 PM
2	During the one-on-one office hours, we could discuss our specific challenges and brainstorm possible solutions.	8/8/2023 4:17 PM
3	N/A	8/8/2023 10:22 AM
4	I wish I'd had more time/capacity to engage in office hours.	8/8/2023 10:22 AM