



# FEATURED RESOURCE

## PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY: EXAMPLES AND RESOURCES

There are important considerations when answering the ATP NI application question - "How will a proposed NI program be sustained after completion?" When planning infrastructure programs, it is expected that changes to the built environment will last long after a project is completed. We should be thinking about NI in the same way. So, while there is no one way to answer this question, this article aims to provide some context as to what is meant by NI program sustainability and why is it needed, ideas for how to plan for it, and helpful resources for a more in-depth understanding of this important concept.



### What does “Sustainability” mean?

Program sustainability can mean different things in different contexts[1]. For some, the concept of program sustainability implies the continuity of services and the ability to carry on program services after funding has been exhausted. For others, program sustainability is a marker and reflection of a community’s ongoing collaborations and commitments to longer-term and shared goals (e.g. improvements to mobility, safety, health, equity, environment/climate), despite both foreseeable or unanticipated challenges that may lie ahead.



[1] This article does not address the concept of sustainable transportation, the common term used to acknowledge environmental and climate impacts of a transportation system. However, the concept of program sustainability aligns with the environmental movement and reminders to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

### Why program sustainability matters -

The California ATP is a legislated, competitive funding program, and scoring favors projects that support clear progress towards ATP’s goals of maximizing safe, active travel. As such, prospective applicants that can convincingly demonstrate that the project’s tasks and activities will be delivered in such a way that the project will be sustainable well-past the life of the ATP funding, will receive a favorable score (on that question). According to CTC guidance, ATP cannot fund existing or ongoing program operations.

### Additional Program Sustainability Resources

Still want more? For a deeper dive into the ins and outs of program sustainability, you may wish to review these existing materials:

- [U.S Health and Human Services: Resources Guide for Building Sustainable Communities](#)
- [Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: A Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities](#)
- [Prevention Institute: Sustaining the Work](#)

# 5 WAYS TO PLAN FOR NI

# Sustainability

1.

## Establish a project committee to focus on program sustainability.

Include who will develop and implement the sustainability plan, which should include specific timeline and actionable items related to continuing program components. Having designated individuals who are tasked with leading your sustainability efforts helps to ensure that sustainability will be prioritized from the get-go and throughout the duration of your project. Tap program champions as well as agency decision-makers to build shared-ownership of committee as well as the program's future.

2.

## Continually update the list of program components, their value to the community, and how those components might continue after funding.

Be ready to easily communicate what your program is accomplishing, why it's vital, what might be lost without the program, and different ways the project could continue and how. Sustainability is directly tied to program evaluation and finding acceptable measures to evaluate your program's impact. Keeping track of a distinct program component is important to determine if and how each component could be sustained either by the host organization, or possibly a new entity (e.g., resident or school/parent council).

3.

## Identify and reach out to local and regional funders, partners, and businesses/institutions whose mission and values match with your program, and engage them in supporting ongoing and future efforts.

While the ATP is California's largest source of funding for bicycling and pedestrian projects, it is far from the only source. Become familiar with other sources that fund active transportation. The [Safe Routes Partnership's Frequent Routes to Funding](#) provides a helpful road map for considering diverse partnerships and funding opportunities. Maintaining connection to your region's transportation planning authority will likely yield a better understanding of local/regional funding opportunities beyond ATP.

4.

## Provide active transportation leadership training for community stakeholders – including residents, parents, neighborhood organization staff and volunteers – who can serve as program ambassadors and engage/train/lead others to sustain programs after funding has expired.

One of the clearest examples of a sustainable active transportation education and encouragement program is a community-based train-the-trainer program. Training the trainer means providing proper preparation for those who train or instruct other people. In turn, those instructors offer training and instruction to others. Through the ATP, a number of local agencies have funded resident/volunteer instructor and ambassador programs to prolong bicycling and walking instruction and encouragement to great success.

5.

## Assure that procured equipment is shared with those who are most likely to continue the program.

The importance of this task cannot be understated and often requires the same level of thoughtfulness spent on procuring the equipment in the first place. To enhance program sustainability, local agencies – as part of their program sustainability planning - may wish to consider examples and logistics on how to best set up equipment loan programs.

