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# East Alabama Region Transportation Monthly Newsletter

August 2023 Issue

## Calhoun Area MPO Updates

### MPO Meetings

All MPO meetings have resumed to in-person with the option to attend virtually. Meeting notifications will reflect any changes if they occur. GoToMeeting has updated their web application and no longer has a call-in function. However, if you would like to attend virtually you may join any of the Calhoun Area MPO meetings from your computer, tablet, or smart phone via this link: <https://meet.goto.com/132611237>  
To get the app now and be ready before the meetings start use this link: <https://meet.goto.com/install>.

If you are not currently on the MPO notification mailing list and would like to receive mailed or email notifications of upcoming meetings, please email Libby at [elizabeth.messick@earpdc.org](mailto:elizabeth.messick@earpdc.org). All MPO meetings are open to the public.

## July Calhoun Area MPO Project Changes

*The TAC and MPO Policy Committee meetings were cancelled for this month. Project changes will be reflected for the month of August.*

## East Alabama RPO Updates

### ❖ FY 2024 RPO Quarterly Meetings

- [Northern Counties \(Etowah and Cherokee\): TBA](#)
- [Central Counties \(Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, and Talladega\): TBA](#)
- [Southern Counties \(Chambers, Coosa, Randolph, and Tallapoosa\): TBA](#)

All meeting minutes and materials can be found at [www.earpdc.org](http://www.earpdc.org).

If you have any suggestions on where to house future RPO meetings in your area, please contact Lattisha Royal at [lattisha.royal@earpdc.org](mailto:lattisha.royal@earpdc.org) or call 256-237-6741. We would love to have these meetings be both beneficial and enjoyable for all involved.

## Projects Proposed to Let July 28, 2023

### Calhoun County

none

### Coosa County

none

### Chambers County

none

### Etowah County

none

### Cherokee County

none

### Randolph County

none

### Clay County

none

### Talladega County

none

### Cleburne County

none

### Tallapoosa County

none

## Upcoming Funding Opportunities & Deadlines

It's not too early to be thinking ahead!

- ❖ The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of nearly \$11 billion in grants and loan opportunities to help rural energy and utility providers bring affordable clean energy to communities. Funding will be available through two new programs under the Inflation Reduction Act: the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program and the Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) program. USDA will accept Letters of Interest from **June 30 to September 29 for the PACE program and from July 31 to August 31 for the New ERA program.**
- ❖ The US Department of Transportation announces technical assistance grants for transportation projects in rural and tribal communities. **Grants do not require a local match! Applications can be submitted starting 2 pm ET on Monday, August 14, 2023.** The Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program offers technical assistance grants to rural and tribal communities. The NOFO combines two years of funding, \$3.4 million in total, to eligible applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Individual awards will range in value up to the statutory limit of \$360,000. The grants may be used to hire staff or advisors to assist with early development-phase activities including, but not limited to, feasibility studies; preliminary engineering and design; environmental review; revenue forecasting; financial feasibility analysis; statutory and regulatory analysis and drafting and negotiation of agreements. Eligible applicants include local governments or political subdivisions with projects located outside an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents as determined by the Census.
- ❖ The US Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) intends to issue a funding opportunity in March 2023 for up to \$300 million to improve the cost, reliability, environmental impact, and climate resilience of energy systems in rural or remote areas across the country. More about this anticipated funding opportunity announcement can be found here:

[https://www.energy.gov/oced/energy-improvements-rural-or-remote-areas-0?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.energy.gov/oced/energy-improvements-rural-or-remote-areas-0?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

- ❖ In partnership with Main Street America and Smart Growth America, T-Mobile is committing \$25 million toward small town grants over the next five years through its **Hometown Grants program**. The program will award up to 100 towns per year with project funding grants of up to \$50,000 each. The program will focus on revitalizing community spaces in towns with 50,000 people or less. Main Street programs are encouraged to apply. For more information on the program and to apply go to <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>.
- ❖ **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development** is seeking applications for **loans and grants to support rural water and waste disposal systems**. Applications are accepted year-round, and technical assistance is available. USDA's **Water and Environmental Programs** can assist with constructing or improving infrastructure through loans, grants, and loan guarantees. USDA can also partner with rural water and waste service providers to finance infrastructure that aims to protect the cyber security of their facilities. The Water and Environmental Programs at USDA were recently expanded, and guaranteed loans are now available to smaller communities that have the financial strength to take advantage of conventional credit as well as larger communities with populations of up to 50,000. USDA also has technical assistance resources available through partnering organizations. USDA's resources are not limited to communities that have already received a loan or grant through Rural Development. Any water or waste disposal system in an eligible rural area may benefit from technical assistance. For more information on the resources available reach out to your local **USDA Community Program Specialist**. Applications can be submitted through **RDApply** (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rd-apply>).
- ❖ The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) have announced calls for the Traffic and Safety Operations Section's (TSOS) **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** applications. **Deadlines are April 1<sup>st</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, and January 1<sup>st</sup>. Max funding amount per agency for reducing rural land departures is \$2,000,000; for intersection related projects is \$2,000,000, and for safe transportation for every pedestrian (STEP) is \$200,000.** They are also announcing a new Local Roads Safety Initiative within the Alabama HSIP. The initiative will be open to cities and counties for both rural and urban non-State maintained roadways with significant safety risks. Applications submitted through this initiative must be in accordance with the most recent Alabama Strategic Highway Safety Plan and applicable Local Road Safety Plans if one has been developed by the county that the location falls within. The TSOS is also making available Road Safety Review (RSR) service for those cities or counties that have an identified location(s) but would like some assistance in ensuring the most effective countermeasures are chosen. Applications under this initiative will be submitted electronically to the ALDOT State Traffic and Safety Operations Engineer. PE, ROW, UT, and CN phases are eligible for funding, but may make the application less competitive compared to those with only CN phases requested. Contact John-Michael Walker at 334-242-6123 or [walkerjoh@dot.state.al.us](mailto:walkerjoh@dot.state.al.us) with any requests for assistance or questions about the program.
- ❖ **The Environmental Finance Center Network** is offering technical assistance free of charge to small drinking water systems serving 10,000 or fewer people. Services include a resource help desk, financial health check-up, water and wastewater rates analysis tool, and a financial resilience dashboard. See [https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TechnicalAssistanceEFCN\\_COVID.pdf](https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TechnicalAssistanceEFCN_COVID.pdf) for more information.

❖ **Community Heart & Soul is offering \$10,000 in Seed Grant Funding** to small cities and towns. This program provides startup funding for resident-driven groups in communities with populations of 2,500 – 30,000 to implement the Community Heart & Soul model which engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love the most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it. See <https://www.communityheartandsoul.org/seed-grants/> for more information and to apply.

More information regarding deadlines will be distributed as it becomes available. **Please don't hesitate to contact Eric Wright, EARPCD Planning and Development Director, at 256-237-6741 or [eric.wright@earpcd.org](mailto:eric.wright@earpcd.org) for more information.**

<i>August 2023</i>						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Transit Advisory Board Meeting @ 9	9 MPO Technical Advisory Committee @ 10	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

# September 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 EAC Office Closed	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Transit Advisory Board Meeting @ 9	13 MPO Technical Advisory Committee @ 10	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 MPO Citizens Advisory Committee meeting @ 10	21 MPO Policy Committee meeting @ 10	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30