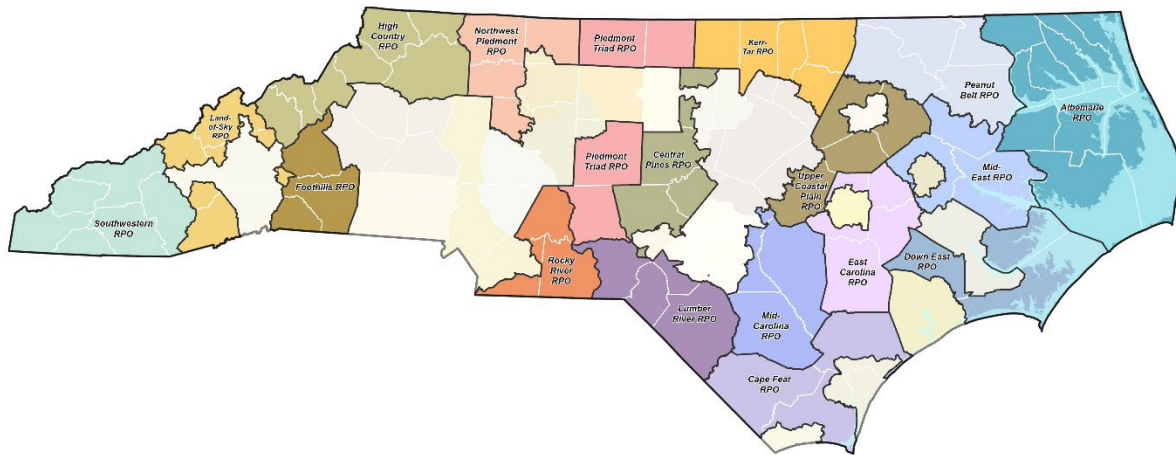


North Carolina Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Manual 2026



Revised May, 2026

RPO Administrative Procedures Manual

Updated Edition

May, 2026

Produced by the NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

In conjunction with the

North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations

Contents

CHAPTER 1 RPO MANUAL	5
SECTION 1.1) THE MANUAL.....	5
SECTION 1.2) RPO MANUAL UPDATES.....	5
CHAPTER 2 RPO ORGANIZATION.....	5
SECTION 2.1) AUTHORITY	5
SECTION 2.2) FORMATION	6
SECTION 2.3) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU).....	7
a) <i>Revising an Existing Memorandum of Understanding</i>	7
SECTION 2.4) BYLAWS	8
a) <i>Revising Existing Bylaws</i>	8
SECTION 2.5) LEAD PLANNING AGENCY (LPA)	8
SECTION 2.6) TECHNICAL (OR TRANSPORTATION) COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)	9
SECTION 2.7) TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC).....	9
SECTION 2.8) CONDUCTING RPO MEETINGS	9
SECTION 2.9) RPO TAC ETHICS OBLIGATIONS	10
CHAPTER 3 RPO RESOURCES.....	12
SECTION 3.1) NCID.....	12
SECTION 3.2) RPO LISTSERV	12
SECTION 3.3) RPO WEBSITE	12
SECTION 3.4) NCARPO	13
SECTION 3.5) NCARPO QUARTERLY MEETINGS	13
SECTION 3.6) OTHER NCDOT RESOURCES	13
CHAPTER 4 RPO ADMINISTRATION	14
SECTION 4.1) PROSPECTUS.....	14
SECTION 4.2) PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (PWP).....	14
a) <i>Preparing a Planning Work Program</i>	14
b) <i>PWP Guidance</i>	15
c) <i>Indirect Cost Documentation Requirements</i>	15
d) <i>PWP Timeline</i>	15
SECTION 4.3) CHANGES TO A PLANNING WORK PROGRAM.....	16
a) <i>PWP Amendment Guidance</i>	16
SECTION 4.4) PREPARING A QUARTERLY REPORT PACKAGE	17
a) <i>Quarterly Report Package</i>	17
SECTION 4.5) QUARTERLY REPORT PACKAGE GUIDANCE	18
a) <i>Quarterly Report Package Timeline</i>	18
SECTION 4.6) YEARLY NARRATIVE	19
SECTION 4.7) ANNUAL REVIEW	19
SECTION 4.8) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)	19
SECTION 4.9) TITLE VI PLAN	19
SECTION 4.10) DOT MEMO PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION	20

SECTION 4.11)	LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN	21
CHAPTER 5	EXAMPLE RPO ACTIVITIES	22
SECTION 5.1)	CTP STUDIES AND TPD’S PRIORITIZATION FACTORS.....	22
SECTION 5.2)	RPO DIRECTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CTP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.....	22
SECTION 5.3)	TCC AND TAC MEETING FACILITATION	24
SECTION 5.4)	LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION	24
SECTION 5.5)	PROJECT PRIORITIZATION SUBMITTAL AND REVIEWING SCORING DATA	24
SECTION 5.6)	LOCAL INPUT POINT ASSIGNMENT.....	25
SECTION 5.7)	STIP REVIEW AND COMMENT	26
SECTION 5.8)	PROJECT DELIVERY NETWORK.....	26
CHAPTER 6	RPO FINANCES	27
SECTION 6.1)	FUNDING.....	27
a)	<i>LPA Funding Agreement</i>	27
b)	<i>Funding Process</i>	27
c)	<i>Revising an Existing LPA Funding Agreement</i>	27
SECTION 6.2)	ACCOUNTING	28
SECTION 6.3)	AUDITS	28
SECTION 6.4)	INDIRECT COST	29
SECTION 6.5)	EXPENDITURES.....	30
SECTION 6.6)	PROCUREMENT, SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT	31
SECTION 6.7)	RPO EQUIPMENT	32
SECTION 6.8)	TRAVEL/TRAINING.....	32
SECTION 6.9)	RPO RETENTION OF RECORDS.....	32
CHAPTER 7	REORGANIZING AN RPO.....	33
CHAPTER 8	APPENDIX	34
SECTION 8.1)	PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AND RELATED DOCUMENTS:	34
a)	<i>Sample LPA Funding Agreement</i> -.....	34
b)	<i>Prospectus</i>	34
c)	<i>PWP and SPR Expense Report Excel file</i>	34
d)	<i>Sample allocation letter</i>	34
e)	<i>Quarterly Invoice Cover Letter</i>	34
f)	<i>Sample Planning Work Program Approval Letter</i>	34
g)	<i>Consultant Procurement Procedures</i>	34
SECTION 8.2)	STANDARD DOCUMENTS, TEMPLATES, AND FORMS	35
a)	<i>Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</i>	35
b)	<i>Bylaws</i>	35
c)	<i>Public Participation Plan (PPP)</i>	35
d)	<i>TAC Abstention Form</i>	35
e)	<i>NCDOT’s W-9 form</i>	35
f)	<i>NCDOT EFT Authorization Form</i>	35
g)	<i>Equipment Request Form</i>	35
h)	<i>Equipment Inventory Form</i>	35

i) <i>Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form</i>	35
SECTION 8.3) <i>VARIOUS REGULATIONS AND REFERENCES</i>	35
a) <i>Senate Bill 1195</i>	35
b) <i>STIP Prioritization</i>	35
c) <i>Merger Process</i>	35
d) <i>Open Meetings Law and Open Records Law</i>	35
e) <i>NCDOT Consultant, Utility, Railroad, and Turnpike Unit (CURT)</i>	35
f) <i>Federal Debarment (SAM.gov)</i>	35
g) <i>State Debarment</i>	35
h) <i>CFR – Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR Part 200)</i>	35
i) <i>NCDOT MPO/RPO web page</i>	35
TRANSPORTATION ACRONYMS	36
TABLE OF RPOs AND COUNTIES THAT ARE MEMBERS OF EACH RPO	43

Chapter 1 RPO Manual

Section 1.1) The Manual

The purpose of this document is to provide each Lead Planning Agency (LPA) with the tools necessary to effectively manage a Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) program. The manual also provides North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) staff with information and timelines for the effective oversight of individual RPOs. The manual is organized by work tasks with detailed timelines, guidance, document templates and examples where necessary. Templates are provided to be the basis for document submittals. Examples are provided to demonstrate the potential scope of a specific document. Revisions to the standard documents, when required, should consider the templates and examples provided in the manual. Dates given in this document should be interpreted as the nearest business day before the date if it happens to fall on a holiday or weekend.

*Note on Word or Excel files linked within this document: If it tries to make you log-in or open in Word or Excel, either use a different browser or use an incognito/private tab so that the system doesn't recognize your NCID.

Section 1.2) RPO Manual Updates

Changes to document templates, procedures and timelines may occur and will be reflected through revisions communicated within updated versions of this manual on NCDOT's Connect page. Proposed changes will be reviewed by designated NCDOT and RPO staff. The most current version of the manual will be made available on the NCDOT website: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/MPO-RPO.aspx>

Chapter 2 RPO Organization

Section 2.1) Authority

In 2000, the State of North Carolina recognized the need for more coordinated transportation planning in rural North Carolina areas not within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) were developed in response to [Senate Bill 1195 by enacting amended General Statute 136, Article 17](#) which directed NCDOT to develop a plan to establish RPOs. NCDOT completed its report in early 2001 and 20 RPOs were established between 2001 and 2003. Since then, 2 RPOs have been dissolved, and their planning areas were incorporated into surrounding MPOs. Currently, there are 18 RPOs.

The boundaries of a RPO may coincide with but not overlap the boundaries of a MPO or another RPO.

GS 136-212 identifies four primary duties for RPOs:

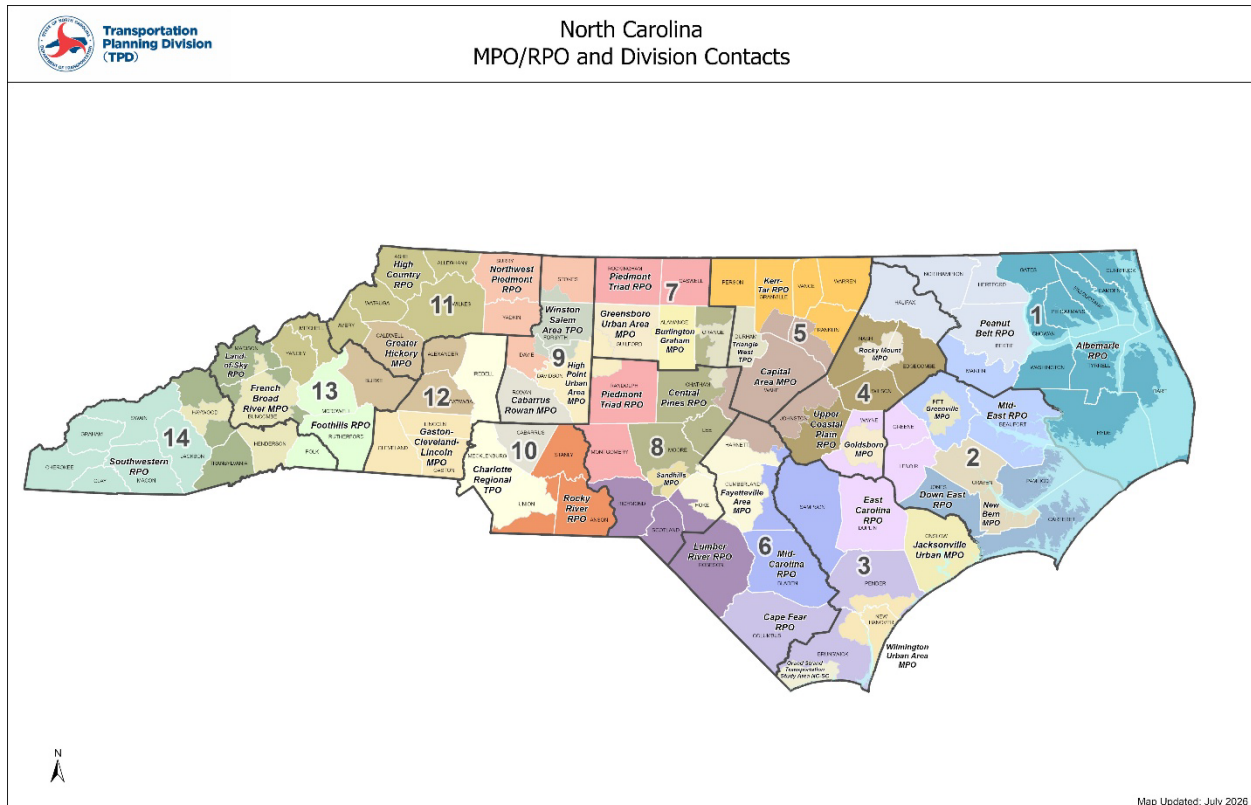
- 1) Developing, in cooperation with the Department (NCDOT), long-range, local and regional multimodal transportation plans;
- 2) Providing a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process;
- 3) Developing and prioritizing suggestions for transportation projects the organization believes should be included in the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); and
- 4) Providing transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations and persons.

Section 2.2) Formation

According to GS 136-211 (b) (updated by Session Law 2012-44 SB 889), an RPO shall consist of three to fifteen contiguous counties, or an area that has a total population of at least 50,000 people. Noncontiguous counties adjacent to the same Metropolitan Planning Organization may form an RPO. Figure 1.01 shows the MPOs and RPOs within North Carolina.

As defined in 136-66.210, an RPO is “a voluntary organization of local officials formed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work cooperatively with the Department to plan rural transportation systems and to advise the Department on rural transportation policy”. An RPO consists of an administrative entity which provides the professional staff to the RPO, a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) consisting of local staff from member governments and agencies and a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of elected and appointed officials.

Figure 1.1 The Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations of North Carolina with NCDOT Divisions



Section 2.3) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The MOU establishes the membership and general purposes and responsibilities of the RPO. All member counties must sign the MOU. Municipalities within the RPO may sign the MOU or adopt a resolution in support of the RPO. Any municipal resolutions must be submitted along with the MOU.

a) Revising an Existing Memorandum of Understanding

NCDOT, the LPA or any other MOU signatory may request a revision to the adopted MOU. Changing the LPA or the membership of RPO counties requires a revision to the MOU. Consultation between the LPA, NCDOT and MOU signatories is required to facilitate any revision to an adopted MOU. An MOU typically needs to be revised when there is a change of membership (City, County, Town, etc) usually resulting from a change in the RPO's

planning boundary. Changes may result from additions or subtractions in planning area or members. Following are the steps for making a revision to the MOU:

- 1) Review and revise the existing MOU to reflect the desired changes.
- 2) Submit draft to designated NCDOT staff for review.
- 3) Prepare final MOU document, reflecting any additional revisions.
- 4) Present final MOU to the RPO TCC and TAC for approval.
- 5) Present final MOU to each county, the LPA and NCDOT for approval.
Municipalities within the boundaries of the proposed RPO may adopt a resolution stating their support for the revised MOU within ninety (90) days of final approval.
- 6) Submit the signed MOU and the municipal resolutions in triplicate to designated NCDOT staff, along with municipal resolutions. One original copy will be returned to the LPA with original signatures. If using digital signatures, emailing the MOU is acceptable.

Section 2.4) Bylaws

RPOs are required to have [Bylaws](#) that define how meetings will be conducted within the RPO. Bylaws govern the membership, voting structure, and meeting procedures of the TCC and TAC. Bylaws for the RPO may be adopted and revised by the TCC and TAC from time to time.

a) Revising Existing Bylaws

A change to the bylaws is typically necessary when some aspects of the bylaws need to be clarified that were not explicitly stated in the bylaws, conflicting laws, a change in the LPA, or an MOU change. For the bylaws to have legal standing, the bylaws must be adopted by the appropriate Committee(s) impacted by the change (TCC and/or TAC and should be signed by the RPO Secretary and the impacted Committee chair).

Section 2.5) Lead Planning Agency (LPA)

The LPA serves as the administrative entity for the RPO and is the fiscal agent for the RPO. Eligible administrative entities include regional council of governments, regional economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and local governments. The LPA receives and expends funds on behalf of the RPO. The LPA provides at least one (1) full time equivalent professional staff member to carry out the duties of the RPO within the context of an adopted plan of work. The LPA is designated in the adopted MOU, and may be changed based on the agreement of the RPO member governments and NCDOT.

Section 2.6) Technical (or Transportation) Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The TCC consists of staff members from local government members, agencies and NCDOT. The TCC provides guidance and recommendations to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TCC membership is established within the adopted MOU.

Section 2.7) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC consists of local elected officials and a North Carolina Board of Transportation member. The TAC is the policy board of the RPO who establishes the goals, priorities and objectives of the RPO and endorses/approves all official documents e.g. comprehensive transportation plans within its boundaries, resolutions, the annual plan of work, and transportation improvement projects for submission to NCDOT. The TAC membership is established in the adopted MOU. As of 2013, TAC members are subject to the State Government Ethics Act. Please review ethic requirements on <https://ethics.nc.gov/>. Detailed information on ethics requirements for TAC members is listed in Section 2.9.

Section 2.8) Conducting RPO Meetings

It is recommended that each RPO conducts at least four (4) meetings per calendar year. Meetings may consist of separate or joint TAC and TCC meetings and should occur at a time and place that supports broad participation by its members. Electronic meetings are permitted as long as public notice is given and a location for public participation in the meeting is provided. A meeting must have a quorum to conduct businesses of any type. A quorum is defined as 51% of the voting membership as outlined in the RPO's adopted bylaws.

The TAC, TCC and any subcommittees are considered public bodies under North Carolina law and are subject to the [Open Meetings Law](#) and [Public Records Law](#).

An alternate may be appointed to attend meetings should the member not be able to attend. Alternates should be addressed in the bylaws and identified by name in the membership roster. Vacant seats as defined in the bylaws will not count against the quorum. Alternate TAC members must file the required forms with the Ethics Commission prior to voting in a TAC meeting. TAC members must be elected officials and be appointed by their respective governing body.

No secret ballot voting is allowed under North Carolina Law. However, written ballots are allowed provided they are signed by each voter and included in the meeting record after the vote is taken. Written ballots shall be available for public inspection immediately

following the meeting at which the written vote took place until the minutes of the meeting are approved.

A schedule of regular meetings should be kept with the clerk of the county in which the meetings are held, with the LPA's clerk, or as described in the adopted bylaws. If the schedule is changed, the changes should be given to the clerk at least one week prior to the meeting.

Notice for meetings not listed on the schedule, other than an emergency meeting, should be posted at the door of the usual meeting room(s), public notice bulletin board and delivered to each media outlet and any individual that has filed a written request for notice 48 hours prior to the meeting.

For an emergency meeting, the committee shall provide notice to local media outlets that have filed a request. Notice for emergency meetings shall be given by the same method used to notify the members of the committee and shall be given immediately following notice to those members.

Section 2.9) RPO TAC Ethics Obligations

For TAC members, the State Government Ethics Act applies. Specifically, TAC members must complete a Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) and Real Estate Disclosure (RED) form annually. An individual appointed to a TAC may not assume his or her position on the TAC (and thus may not participate in TAC meetings as a member, including voting on matters before the TAC) until they have:

- 1) filed a complete Statement of Economic Interest (SEI); and
- 2) filed a complete Real Estate Disclosure Form (RED) with the State Ethics Commission (Commission); and
- 3) received the Commission's written evaluation of their filed SEI.

In addition, annually all voting TAC members and their alternates are required to timely file a complete SEI and a complete RED with the State Ethics Commission on or before April 15th. The yearly filing period commences January 1st and ends April 15th; electronic filing is encouraged. SEIs and REDs filed after April 15th are untimely and subject to penalties and sanctions. The LPA should ensure that new TAC members, in addition to continuing TAC members, understand all the Ethics requirements. This can be accomplished by whatever method works best for the individuals involved: agenda item on a TAC agenda, volunteering to meet with members one-on-one, an orientation session that explains Ethics requirements, or other methods that accomplish this task but not described herein. TAC members can file from [this website](#).

For further information on SEIs and REDs and TAC member filing requirements go to <https://ethics.nc.gov/>. For questions regarding SEIs and REDs and the filing requirements contact the State Ethics Commission at SEI@ethics.nc.gov or by calling 919-814-3600.

For RPO TAC members or those that are soon-to-be members:

In accordance with the [NC Ethics Commission's website](#):

- Those who do not file required SEIs within 30 days of their receipt of a late notice from the Ethics Commission are [subject to a \\$250 fine](#). In addition, members of State boards and State employees may be subject to removal from their position for late filing. MPO and RPO TAC members are subject to an [additional \\$250 fine](#) for failure to file a timely RED and may be subject to criminal penalties for late filing of their SEI and RED.

a) [TAC members must avoid a conflict of interest.](#)

No member or their alternate may participate in any action as a TAC member if the action may result in a reasonably foreseeable financial benefit to the member, the member's extended family, or any business with which the member is associated. A TAC member or their alternate may participate in an action of the RPO if the action is ministerial only and does not require the exercise of discretion. The ethics commission has developed "[recusal guidelines for public servants](#)" that may be of use.

b) TAC members must disclose a conflict of interest in writing.

TAC members and their alternates have a duty to promptly disclose in writing to the TAC any actual or potential conflicts of interest, using the [TAC Abstention Form](#). These disclosures are a public record and must be attached to the minutes of the meeting in which any discussion or vote was taken by the TAC related to that conflicts disclosure.

c) TAC members must not use or disclose confidential information.

TAC members and their alternates shall not use or disclose any nonpublic information gained as a member in a way that would affect the personal financial interest of the member, the member's extended family or a business with which the member is associated.

A TAC member who is no longer serving on the board should be taken off the list, notification email should be distributed to the State Ethics Commission at SEI@ethics.nc.gov.

Chapter 3 RPO Resources

Section 3.1) NCID

The North Carolina Identity Management Service (NCID) is the standard identity and access management platform provided by the Department of Information Technology. NCID is a web-based application that provides a secure environment for state agency, local government, business and individual users to log in and gain access to real-time resources, such as customer-based applications and information retrieval. With an NCID account, users have access to many resources with one account. You use your NCID to sign-in to the [MPO and RPO Planning Grants site](#) to upload your PWP and quarterly invoices. To get an NCID, go to [ncid.gov link](#)

If you have an NCID problem, you can determine whether your NCID account is functioning by attempting to log in to the NCID website: <https://ncid.nc.gov>. If you are able to log in successfully and receive a "Welcome to NCID System" page, your NCID account is functioning properly. After that, if you are unable to access a certain application with your NCID account, please contact the DIT Service Desk at 919-754-6000 or 1-800-722-3946 and tell them you are having problems accessing the application. Be sure to tell them whether you were able to log in successfully to the NCID website with your NCID account or not.

For frequently asked questions go to this [link](#).

Section 3.2) RPO Listserv

There is a listserv used by NCDOT and RPO staff to share ideas, information, and questions relevant to RPOs. To subscribe to the NCRPO Listserv, send an email to: imailsrv@lists.ptrc.org. Leave the subject blank, but in the body of the email enter the following information: **subscribe ncrpolistserv Firstname Lastname**

Section 3.3) RPO Website

RPOs are established by North Carolina law. Currently, RPOs are funded with federal Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funds. As such, RPOs are responsible for meeting [Title VI and other federal requirements](#). In addition, it is recommended that all data used

for planning purposes be maintained in a place where it can be accessed if requested by the public. Websites need to comply with applicable accessibility regulations. More information can be found at this link: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/>

At a minimum, the following should be on the RPOs website:

- TCC and TAC meeting agendas and minutes, and upcoming meeting dates.
- Public Participation Plan
- Title VI Plan
- All transportation related plans (all modes – highway, rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) in their planning region;

To provide additional information to those who access the RPOs website, the RPO may provide links to the following:

- The [State Transportation Improvement Program](#) (including [STI Prioritization](#) Process and local methodology);
- Statewide initiatives/plans e.g.
 - [The Statewide Transportation Plan](#),
 - [Public Transportation Statewide Strategic Plan](#),
 - [Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan](#),
 - Strategic Transportation Corridors
 - [Link 1](#)
 - [Link 2](#);

Section 3.4) NCARPO

Visit [NCARPO.org](https://ncarpo.org) website and contact NCARPO president for access to the RPO Basic Training Modules.

Section 3.5) NCARPO Quarterly Meetings

NCARPO meets on a quarterly basis. Meeting locations vary each quarter. Contact the current NCARPO president for upcoming meeting schedule.

Section 3.6) Other NCDOT Resources

TPD's web site has many resources:

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/TPD.aspx>

Other resources from NCDOT include Division Planning Engineers, Division Engineers, and Corridor Development Engineers.

Chapter 4 RPO Administration

Section 4.1) Prospectus

The [Prospectus](#) is a formal reference guide that provides a detailed description of the full range of potential work elements that are eligible for inclusion in a Planning Work Program. RPOs do not need to adopt a prospectus, but rather use this reference document in their development of the annual Planning Work Program.

Section 4.2) Planning Work Program (PWP)

The PWP is a standard document that consists of a funding table and narrative. ([link to PWP excel file](#)) The PWP is prepared on an annual basis to identify the planning priorities for the coming year and to define the planning work products and activities to be carried out by the RPO staff. These elements should all be found in the RPO Prospectus. Estimated expenditures for each major category of work are provided in the funding table. TPD provides a template PWP excel file for RPO staff use.

a) Preparing a Planning Work Program

An adopted PWP must be submitted to NCDOT annually by mid-May to be eligible to receive reimbursement from NCDOT for RPO work activities in the fiscal year beginning July 1st of the same calendar year. For RPOs whose TACs meet after "mid-May", inform your TPD Coordinator that the adopted PWP will be submitted by May 31st. Costs incurred on work activities outside an adopted PWP will not be reimbursed.

Your PWP should be comprised of a single PDF that includes:

- The budget table
 - (do not include the amendment columns on your first PWP submittal, since you haven't had an amendment yet)
 - Be sure your PWP is signed by the TAC chair (digital signatures are accepted).
- Narrative describing anticipated activity for each task that has a budgeted amount. Narrative needs to provide sufficient description.
 - The narrative section is a different tab in the Excel spreadsheet.
- RPO TAC member roster / listing.

b) PWP Guidance

The use of private consultants by an RPO is permitted with prior approval (See Section 6.6 for information regarding Procurement procedures). Funds allocated for consultant use can still be used in the following fiscal year, but would be invoiced separately using the PO and WBS numbers of the FY it was originally approved. Aside from consultant-allocated funds, any funds which have not been expended at the end of the fiscal year do not carry forward.

c) Indirect Cost Documentation Requirements

The Lead Planning Agency may choose to claim or charge indirect costs in the PWP. To document this, RPO staff are required to submit the proper documentation in accordance with 2 CFR 200. If the LPA is claiming indirect costs, the RPO must submit this information by Feb 28th each year to their TPD contact.

More information can be found in section 6.4 in this document, and in 2 CFR 200.

d) PWP Timeline

- | | |
|----------|--|
| November | Consult with NCDOT staff, RPO member governments and agencies to identify work tasks, review financial assumptions for the upcoming fiscal year and develop PWP. |
| January | Funding Award Letter is received (digitally) detailing available funds and required local match. Prepare draft PWP for designated NCDOT staff review. Release Draft PWP for public review if required by an adopted Public Participation Plan. |
| February | Submit Draft PWP and upcoming Fiscal Year Indirect Cost Allocation Plan and documentation to NCDOT by February 28 for review and comment. NCDOT will return comments and/or approval within 12 business days. |
| March | Prepare revisions to PWP as required. |

April	Conduct TCC/TAC review and adoption process. Prepare revisions to PWP if required. An original signature (or DocuSign) of the TAC Chair must appear on the adopted PWP.
May	Transmit one (1) digital copy of the adopted and signed PWP (PDF format), one (1) digital copy of the PWP (Excel format) to Transportation Planning Division (TPD) Grant site by May 31st.
July	PWP Approval Letter issued by NCDOT.

Section 4.3) Changes to a Planning Work Program

Changes to the Planning Work Program may be required from time to time to detail major shifts in work activities that will impact funding allocations. Revisions to an adopted Planning Work Program are required if there is a significant change in budget, work tasks or expenditure allocation and could be processed throughout the fiscal year (as long as there will be adequate time for the public involvement and approval process through TCC, TAC and NCDOT before the end of fiscal year). There is no limit to the number of revisions in a fiscal year. All revisions to the adopted PWP must be completed by June 30th of the same fiscal year. No amendments can be processed past this date.

a) PWP Amendment Guidance

Review adopted PWP to determine if changes to work tasks are considered Major or Minor revisions:

(a) Minor PWP Revisions

1. **A variance of up to \$5,000 compared to current programmed amount for any category** in the PWP is considered a minor revision and is allowed without amendment if approved in advance by the TPD RPO Coordinator.
2. NCDOT staff will send e-mail to RPO with revision approval.

(b) Major PWP Revisions

- 1) **A variance of more than \$5,000 compared to current programmed amount for any category** in the PWP is considered a major revision and requires amendment. The revision must be reviewed and approved by both the TCC and TAC.

- 2) Prepare an amended PWP noting added or deleted work tasks. Submit revised PWP documents to designated NCDOT staff for review and approval.
- 3) NCDOT staff comments are returned to RPO within 12 business days. If no comments are received, proceed with review and adoption process.
- 4) Conduct public review of the revised PWP if required (as per RPO's [Public Participation Plan](#)).
- 5) Conduct TCC/TAC review and adoption process. The original signature of the TAC Chair must appear on the [Planning Work Program Amendment Template](#).
- 6) Transmit one (1) digital copy of the [Amendment Table](#) of the revised PWP (PDF format) and signed [Planning Work Program Amendment Template](#) and one (1) digital copy of the amended PWP (Excel format) to designated NCDOT staff.

Section 4.4) Preparing a Quarterly Report Package

The Quarterly Invoice details the LPA request for reimbursement of eligible RPO expenses for the quarter with a breakdown of direct and indirect costs. The PWP Expense Report, with narrative tab, contains highlights of the transportation planning work accomplished by the LPA over the last quarter and identifies resulting planning work products.

Reimbursement for planning expenses is facilitated through the submittal of a Quarterly Report Package each quarter to NCDOT. During the quarterly report package review, TPD may request deliverables as deemed necessary. An RPO has 10 business days to provide any requested deliverable(s).

a) Quarterly Report Package

The quarterly report package is a single PDF consisting of the:

- RPO [Invoice Cover Letter](#).
- [PWP Quarterly Expense Report](#)
- Quarterly narrative
- An official agency Invoice. (Recommended)
- Any back up documentation (ex, consultant invoices, proof of payment, etc) if/as applicable.

The package is submitted through the [MPO and RPO Planning Grants Portal](#) on the [connect.ncdot.gov](#) site.

Please double check that the WBS and PO numbers are correct for the fiscal year that you're seeking reimbursement.

Section 4.5) Quarterly Report Package Guidance

Reimbursement will only be made for qualifying expenses incurred in executing work tasks described in the PWP.

The Quarterly Report Package will not be processed without all the required documents.

If an RPO anticipates that the invoice cannot be submitted on time, contact your NCDOT TPD staff/coordinator prior to the deadline or as soon as possible.

Final submittal of the Quarterly Report Package consists of one (1) digital signed copy uploaded on the [MPO and RPO Planning Grants Portal](#) on the [connect.ncdot.gov](#).

Revisions to the Quarterly Report Package may be required based on NCDOT review. NCDOT will request revisions within 10 business days. Requested revisions will be returned to the RPO within 10 days of request. (Process repeats if necessary, with 10 business days each time.) Revisions must be completed prior to the payment being processed.

Expenses cannot be charged against PWP categories on the PWP Expense Report without an amount budgeted.

No more than the total funding allocation shall be reimbursed during the fiscal year.

The Yearly Narrative (also known or referred to as: Annual Performance Report) is to be submitted as a separate PDF.

a) Quarterly Report Package Timeline

(actual dates vary slightly year-to-year)

(If the date falls on a weekend or holiday, the due date is the next business day.)

September 30th	First quarter ends
November 10th	First quarter Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff
December 31st	Second quarter ends
February 10th	Second quarter Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff

March 31st	Third quarter ends
May 10th	Third quarter Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff
June 30th	Fourth quarter ends
August 10th	Fourth quarter Report Package and Yearly Narrative (separate PDF) due to designated NCDOT staff

Section 4.6) Yearly Narrative

The Yearly Narrative is a standard document submitted at the same time as the final quarterly report of each fiscal year. The report consists of a narrative review of the accomplishments of the RPO over the past fiscal year in comparison to the adopted planning work program (for the past fiscal year). The document further describes any significant changes to the LPA, local membership or other concerns that impacted the RPO over the past year. This report may also be referred to as the “end-of-year report”, “annual performance and expenditure report”, or “yearly report”.

The yearly narrative is to be submitted as a separate PDF, and not attached to the 4th quarter invoice.

Section 4.7) Annual Review

The Annual Review allows RPOs and TPD staff an opportunity to have an open discussion on accomplishments over the previous year and discuss any challenges or opportunities for improvement for the RPO and TPD. This review will include the RPO planner and LPA Executive director as well as the TPD coordinator, Unit Head and RPO Administrator. If both the LPA and TPD feel there is no need for an in-person meeting, the TPD Unit Head and the LPA Executive Director must both agree to opt out. Meetings will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Section 4.8) Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The [PPP](#) is a formally adopted statement policy or plan regarding public involvement activities related to the work of the RPO. The PPP provides guidance to staff to ensure adequate public review techniques and opportunities are provided, based on specific activities, documents or processes.

Section 4.9) Title VI Plan

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and related federal statutes provide that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency (LEP), sex, age or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be

subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. As a federal-aid recipient, NCDOT must also ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in all NCDOT programs (includes RPOs) and activities whether or not those programs and activities are federally funded, including associated activities performed by NCDOT's business partners. As a federal-aid recipient, RPOs are also responsible for developing programs, policies, and procedures to implement Title VI requirements. NCDOT's Title VI Program will work with the Department's Transportation Planning Division to provide Title VI resources and training to assist RPOs in fulfilling their responsibilities. Every RPO is required to have an adopted Title VI plan, and update it in accordance with federal requirements. NCDOT Office of Civil Rights (OCR) will do periodic audits of RPOs concerning how they carryout Title VI requirements.

Section 4.10) DOT memo prohibiting discrimination

In accordance with FHWA guidance per [this memo](#)

- “Based on binding Supreme Court precedent and these Federal laws, DOT is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, or religion in any of its programs or activities. Moreover, because DOT may not establish, induce, or endorse prohibited discrimination indirectly, it must ensure that discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, or religion does not exist in the programs or activities it funds or financially assists.
- These same principles apply to recipients of Federal financial assistance from DOT, as both a matter of Federal law and by virtue of contractual provisions governing receipt of DOT funding. Accordingly, DOT recipients are prohibited from engaging in discriminatory actions in their own policies, programs, and activities, including in administering contracts, and their employment practices.
- Whether or not described in neutral terms, any policy, program, or activity that is premised on a prohibited classification, including discriminatory policies or practices designed to achieve so called "diversity, equity, and inclusion," or "DEI," goals, presumptively violates Federal law. Recipients of DOT financial assistance must ensure that the personnel practices (including hiring, promotions, and terminations) within their organizations are merit-based and do not discriminate based on prohibited categories. Recipients are also precluded from allocating money received under DOT awards- such as through contracts or the provision of other benefits- based on suspect classifications. Any discriminatory actions in your policies, programs, and activities based on prohibited categories constitute a clear violation of Federal law and the terms of your grant agreements.”

Section 4.11) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

Currently, LEP guidance is temporarily suspended per the [Department of Justice website](#):

- “To implement [Executive Order 14224](#), and pursuant to the [Attorney General’s implementation memo](#), the Department of Justice has temporarily suspended the operations of lep.gov, pending an internal review. These materials will be replaced when new guidance is issued.” (<https://www.justice.gov/crt/limited-english-proficiency>) This statement was updated on the website July 17, 2025, and is still valid as of April 10, 2026.

Chapter 5 Example RPO Activities

Below are some of the major duties performed by RPO Staff and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of RPO activities.

Section 5.1) CTP Studies and TPD's prioritization factors

A Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is a collaborative effort of NCDOT transportation planning staff, RPO staff and local jurisdiction(s). Major highway projects to be considered for funding through the NCDOT prioritization process come from CTPs.

To request a CTP, each jurisdiction must have a land development plan approved within the last five (5) years or be willing to undertake a land development planning process in conjunction with the CTP. The listing of a jurisdiction on the priority list does not guarantee that the study will be assigned or initiated and CTP studies may not be assigned in priority order because of funding, staff resources or other constraints.

The following are prioritization factors that TPD may use to determine the next CTP's that will be undertaken:

- age of plan (consider if amendment has been done since adoption)
- area growth- population and/ or VMT
- area changes- development, TIP projects, other
- local readiness- jurisdictions want plan and staff available locally and at PO
- local land development plans meet GS 136-66.2 requirement (incl. within 5 years)
- TPD staff availability/capacity/skill level, as well as for RPO staff and/ or resource capacity to hire and manage a PEF to support the CTP update.
- consider regional planning option and the status of regional travel demand model development and/ or other tools
- consider other recent or underway plans- Resiliency, Safety Action Plans, Bike Ped Plans, corridor or feasibility studies, etc. Also consider where applicable willingness of MPO to undertake a CTP update in conjunction with the MTP update

Section 5.2) RPO Director Roles and Responsibilities in the CTP Development Process

Below are the 7 phases of the CTP development process and the RPO Director's roles and responsibilities for each phase. In general, an RPO Director's role in meeting facilitation specifically means the following tasks:

- Arrange and reserve CTP Steering Committee meeting location
- Prepare agendas for Steering Committee (and other relevant CTP meeting) in consultation with NCDOT (TPD)
- Facilitate CTP Steering Committee (and other related) meetings
- Send CTP Steering Committee meeting packets to members/stakeholders (including meeting agendas, previous meeting minutes, and any other related CTP information)
- Take minutes for CTP Steering Committees (and other related) meetings

Phase 1: CTP Set Up

- Assist in identifying:
 - the CTP Core Team (typically made up of assigned TPD staff, local NCDOT Division staff (CDE and/or DPE), lead local contact(s) (county planner/manager/etc.), and RPO Director
 - Steering Committee members and stakeholders
- Lead and/or assist in the development of Community Understanding Report
- Work with the TPD Project Manager/Engineer and CTP Core Team to establish steering committee meeting schedule and assist with meeting communication.

Phase 2: Develop Vision

- Assist in the development of the CTP Handbook
- Assist in gathering local plans and ordinances
- Facilitate Development of CTP Vision, Goals, and Objectives
- Assist in the development and distribution of CTP Goals and Objectives Survey

Phase 3: System Assessment

- Facilitate discussion regarding CTP System Assessment

Phase 4: Analyze Alternatives

- Facilitate discussion regarding CTP Alternatives
- Assist in validating CTP alternatives with CTP Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Phase 5: Develop Draft Plan

- Facilitate final CTP alternatives discussion
- Assist with CTP public engagement on draft plan

Phase 6: Adopt Plan

- Assist with presentation of final draft CTP to elected governing boards

Phase 7: Close Out

- Provide TPD all CTP local close out files (notes, meeting minutes taken, etc.)

Section 5.3) TCC and TAC Meeting Facilitation

TCC and TAC meetings are typically conducted on a quarterly basis. There may be instances when RPO staff may need to reschedule meetings, for example, due to inclement weather conditions. RPO staff may need to cancel a regularly scheduled meeting or may need to schedule emergency meetings if quorum was not reached at a regularly scheduled meeting. Duties of meeting facilitation include advertisement of the meetings, development of the meeting agenda and agenda abstracts and compilation of applicable agenda material, development of resolutions, and development of meeting minutes.

Section 5.4) Local Government Coordination

RPO Directors provide input, coordinate local government concerns, request to be placed on local governing body agendas, and present necessary transportation planning related items to ensure coordination and cooperation on these matters.

Section 5.5) Project Prioritization Submittal and Reviewing Scoring Data

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is typically developed by NCDOT every two years. Development of each STIP begins with the Prioritization Process, which is organized and overseen by the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office (SPOT). For more information regarding the overall Prioritization and STIP Process, refer to <https://www.ncdot.gov/strategictransportationinvestmentssti/> and <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/PrioritizationResources.aspx>. Also contact the SPOT Office or STIP Unit at NCDOT with questions. The SPOT office can be reached by emailing spot@ncdot.gov.

To begin each prioritization cycle, RPOs, MPOs, and NCDOT Divisions submit an allotted number of projects for each mode (Aviation, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Ferry, Highway, Public Transportation, and Rail). Submitted projects can come from previous prioritization cycles, long range plans, or other known transportation needs. Identification of these projects should include significant input from local officials and the public. Specific

guidance for submitting projects for prioritization is provided by the SPOT Office separately.

After project submittal, the SPOT office generates all data needed to score projects. This data is released to all RPOs, MPOs, and NCDOT Divisions for a data review period. It is the responsibility of each reviewer to ensure the data to be used for scoring all projects in their area is as reasonable and accurate as possible, and potential corrections should be provided to the SPOT Office.

Section 5.6) Local Input Point Assignment

Each RPO and MPO, is required to have an adopted Local Input Point Assignment Methodology that is approved by NCDOT. It is the responsibility of each organization to develop and update their methodology for each prioritization cycle, as well as to have the methodology approved by NCDOT SPOT office and adopted by their organization. Specific guidance for developing Local Input Point Assignment Methodologies and assigning local input points is provided by the SPOT Office separately.

The Office of Planning and Programming releases the quantitative scores for all projects along with the draft list of projects receiving Statewide Mobility funding. RPOs, MPOs, and NCDOT Divisions receive an allotted number of Local Input Points to assign to projects in the Regional Impact category and are responsible for the assignment of these points to their desired projects. Local Input Point assignment should follow each organization's Local Input Point Assignment Methodology and include significant input from local officials and the public.

After Regional Impact points, the Office of Planning and Programming releases the total scores (quantitative + local input points) for all Regional Impact projects (including those that cascaded from Statewide Mobility) along with the draft list of projects receiving Regional Impact funding. RPOs, MPOs, and NCDOT Divisions receive an allotted number of Local Input Points to assign to projects in the Division Needs category and are responsible for the assignment of these points to their desired projects. Local Input Point assignment should follow each organization's Local Input Point Assignment Methodology and include significant input from local officials and the public.

After Division Needs points, the Office of Planning and Programming releases the total scores (quantitative + local input points) for all Division Needs projects (including those that cascaded from Statewide Mobility and Regional Impact) along with the draft list of projects receiving Division Needs funding.

The draft list of Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and Division Needs funded projects are combined with projects from other processes to create the Draft STIP, which is released by NCDOT for public comment.

Section 5.7) STIP Review and Comment

After a draft STIP is released by NCDOT for public comment, the RPO reviews all information for projects within its region and makes comments as necessary regarding the accuracy of the information and any local issues or concerns.

Section 5.8) Project Delivery Network

RPOs may participate in the delivery of transportation projects as noted within the Departments Project Delivery Network. Information can be found here: [Project Delivery Network](#)

Chapter 6 RPO Finances

Section 6.1) Funding

The RPO program is currently funded on a reimbursement basis using Federal State Planning and Research Funds (SPR), with a 5%, 10%, or 20% local match required, depending on the Tier status of member Counties and regulation per [NCGS 136-214](#), at the time of allocation notification. The latest Tier listing can be found [here](#). Allocations vary based on population and number of counties in the RPO.

a) LPA Funding Agreement

This agreement provides the contractual framework that allows NCDOT to provide funds to the LPA. Each RPO is required to adopt an agreement that establishes rules for disbursement and accounting of funds reimbursable to the RPO that are administered by NCDOT. The Agreement for Disbursement and Accounting of Rural Transportation Planning Funds is the continuing agreement between the LPA and NCDOT. NCDOT may provide reimbursement to the designated LPA only. The LPA may enact sub-agreement(s) pertaining to the local match. A funding allocation letter is provided to the LPA detailing the available RPO funding for the coming fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

b) Funding Process

The funding process has two steps:

1. First, on a yearly basis, TPD emails RPO contacts (in the late fall) of the RPOs funding allocation for the following fiscal year.
2. After July 1st each year, TPD will email RPO contacts the PWP approval letter for the fiscal year that started July 1st.

c) Revising an Existing LPA Funding Agreement

From time to time NCDOT and the LPA may request a revision of the existing LPA Agreement. Changing the LPA, changing the name of the LPA, changing the name of the RPO, changes in the source of RPO funding, or changes to the percent match would trigger a revision to the LPA funding Agreement.

Changes to the amount of funding does not trigger a revision to the LPA Funding Agreement.

- 1) Request the TPD RPO Program Manager to provide the LPA with the latest copy of the LPA Funding Agreement.
- 2) Discuss with NCDOT management the revisions being considered.
- 3) NCDOT management will provide the LPA with the revised LPA Funding Agreement for approval and signatures.
- 4) Present final LPA Funding Agreement to the RPO TCC and TAC.
- 5) TAC approves the revised LPA Funding Agreement.

Section 6.2) Accounting

The LPA shall establish a separate account for the RPO Funds for each fiscal year and shall record all transactions in accordance with acceptable accounting procedures, as approved by the NCDOT. The account established for planning funds will be included in the annual audit of the agency. [2 CFR Part 200](#) outlines standards for grantee financial management systems. Time spent for staff services on work provided for in the PWP should be recorded by work task standard time sheets for each individual and filed and be available for audit purposes. All expenses must be allocated upfront or a method developed to assess costs, based on time spent on the RPO program. Invoices must conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Pursuant to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Regulations, the LPA must furnish its Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) to the State. If this number is not provided, the RPOs may be subject to a 20% withholding on each payment. To avoid this 20% withholding and to ensure that accurate tax information is reported to the Internal Revenue Service and the State, the RPOs must use this [W-9 form](#) to update their “vendor” information to provide the requested information exactly as it appears on file with the IRS.

Section 6.3) Audits

Audits may be conducted by a number of different entities, such as Office of State Auditor, Local Government Commission, FHWA, or NCDOT internal and/or external audit divisions. NCDOT will review audit reports of the RPO maintained with the Local Government Commission for any audit findings associated with federal and state funds. Once the final payment has been made for the fiscal year, the contract for the year will be closed and no further payments may be made (unless a special study is still underway, in which case TPD will still allow reimbursement requests only for LPA-paid consultant invoices on studies that extend beyond the fiscal year). The contract may be updated from year to year. The [NC State Auditors website](#) details a number of different types of audits. Please check the [NC Department of State Treasurer website](#) for the latest information on audit procedures.

The NC State Compliance Supplement is a document used by auditors to identify and test compliance requirements for federal and state programs that receive financial assistance from the State. It helps auditors determine which requirements are relevant to the RPO program and how to test for compliance. The compliance supplement is not intended to be a definitive list of all possible audit procedures. [Compliance supplements can be found at this link from the NC Treasurer's website.](#)

Section 6.4) Indirect Cost

Each RPO is required to annually submit current fiscal year's Indirect Cost Allocation Plan to designated NCDOT staff by February 28th, along with draft PWP.

Indirect Cost Rate Options

LPAs may select from the following options regarding indirect cost recovery for federally funded planning activities:

1. Elect Not to Charge Indirect Costs

LPAs may choose not to recover any indirect costs. No additional documentation is required.

2. Use the De Minimis Indirect Cost Rate (up to 15% of MTDC)

LPAs may elect to use the de minimis indirect cost rate if they meet all federal eligibility criteria, including:

- The organization has never received a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).
- The rate is applied consistently to all federal awards.
- The Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) base is used, as defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#) and [2 CFR 200.414](#).

Note: Under the 2024 revisions to 2 CFR 200, the allowable de minimis rate is up to 15% of MTDC.

3. Submit a Current NICRA

LPAs may submit a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) obtained from their cognizant federal agency. The agreement must not be expired and applicable to the fiscal year. Provisional rates are acceptable provided they are applied in accordance with [2 CFR 200.414\(c\)](#).

4. Submit an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP)

If the cognizant federal agency issues a letter stating that it will not conduct a detailed review because the organization receives less than \$35 million in federal funding, the LPA must submit a complete indirect cost proposal to NCDOT. The package must include:

- a. Letter from the cognizant federal agency
- b. Full Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (ICRP) or Cost Allocation Plan and supporting financial documentation
- c. Signed Certificate of Indirect Costs
- d. Documentation meeting all requirements of [2 CFR 200 Appendix VII](#)

5. LPAs Receiving Federal Funds Only as NCDOT Subrecipients

LPAs that receive federal funding solely as subrecipients of NCDOT are not reviewed by a federal cognizant agency. In these cases:

- NCDOT, as the pass-through entity, is responsible for determining the appropriate indirect cost rates in collaboration with the subrecipients and in accordance with [2 CFR 200.332\(b\)\(4\)](#).
- LPAs wishing to use an indirect cost rate other than the de minimis rate must submit their indirect cost materials to NCDOT for review.
- The indirect cost rate must be agreed upon prior to the approval of the (U)PWP.

Section 6.5) Expenditures

Expenditures will be reimbursed based solely on the provisions of [General Statute 136, Article 17 \(Rural Transportation Planning Organizations\)](#) as they relate to planning requirements. Reimbursement will only be made for qualifying expenses incurred in executing work tasks described in the PWP. Expenses fall into two categories: direct and indirect. Indirect items must be identified in the approved LPA indirect cost plan as directed by [2 CFR Part 200](#). Items not addressed below in Sections 5.04(a) (b) (c) and (d) will be considered on a case by case basis.

a) Permitted Expenditures

- Salaries and payroll additive costs, transportation expenses, office expenses and expendable supplies related to executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- Printing, advertising, copying, computer processing, mapping and aerial photography costs as related to executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- Auditing costs associated with fulfilling State requirements.

- Reimbursements to other LPA agencies, local governments or state agencies for eligible expenditures incurred in executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- The purchase of special equipment and materials required to execute work tasks within an approved PWP. A [request form](#) should be sent to NCDOT TPD RPO Coordinator for approval prior to the purchase. Purchases for the exclusive use of the RPO must be made in accordance with NCDOT purchasing guidelines. If equipment is to be used by other units within the LPA, then expenditure must be allocated upfront or a method developed to assess costs based on usage, as they occur.

b) Permitted Expenditures, with Prior Approval by NCDOT

Computers/Tablets (See RPO Equipment Section 6.06)	Software
Training/Conferences (See Travel/Training Section 6.07)	Capital Expenditures
Equipment (See RPO Equipment Section 6.06)	Professional Services
Overnight Travel (See Travel/Training Section 6.07)	
Building Space & Related Facilities	

c) Unacceptable Expenditures

Food/Beverages for Meetings	Fines & Penalties	Entertainment
Management Studies	Legislative Expenses	Proposal Costs
Contributions & Donations	Commuting Expenses	Contingencies*
Interest & Other Finance Costs	Pre-Agreement Costs	Bad Debt
Under-Recovery of Costs on Grant Agreements		

*From 2 CFR Part 200.433: Contingency is that part of a budget estimate of future costs (typically of large construction projects, IT systems, or other items as approved by the Federal awarding agency) which is associated with possible events or conditions arising from causes the precise outcome of which is indeterminable at the time of estimate, and that experience shows will likely result, in aggregate, in additional costs for the approved activity or project. Amounts for major project scope changes, unforeseen risks, or extraordinary events may not be included.

Section 6.6) Procurement, Suspension and Debarment

For any contracted services, each RPO is required to follow [NCDOT procurement procedures](#).

Each LPA is required to comply with [2 CFR Part 200.214](#) (Suspension and Debarment) which requires entities to not make any award or permit any award at any tier to any party which is debarred or suspended or is otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and

Suspension." The LPA must maintain conflict of interest statements with respect to purchases of goods and services.

Each RPO is required to have procedures in place to annually verify that vendors providing goods and services under a project to the RPO have not been suspended or debarred by the [Federal](#), [State](#) or City/County Government. The adherence to the procurement, suspension and debarment procedure will be reviewed through the annual auditing process.

Section 6.7) RPO Equipment

Prior to the purchase of equipment, the RPO should send in the [equipment request form](#) to NCDOT TPD RPO Coordinator. Any equipment purchased for the sole benefit and use of the RPO shall be maintained through its useful life as defined by the LPA. RPO must include price quote when seeking approval for purchase of equipment. An [equipment inventory](#) must be kept current. If the LPA is changed, all RPO equipment must be transferred or the agreed upon dollar value of RPO equipment must be transferred to the new LPA.

Section 6.8) Travel/Training

Travel compensation will be based on the General Services Administration (GSA) <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> rates for mileage, meals, lodging, etc. These rates are set by fiscal year, effective October 1 each year, except for the mileage rate which is set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on January 1 each year.

NCDOT TPD worked with MPOs, RPOs, and FHWA to develop [Training Pre-approval Guidance](#) for training and conference attendance. A [Travel/Training Eligibility Verification Form](#) must be submitted to NCDOT unit head (copy TPD coordinator on email) five (5) business days prior to training or overnight travel for verification of eligibility of funds, unless already included in approved PWP or is on the list of activities not needing pre-approval in the "Training Pre-approval Guidance". Expense is permitted if no response is received within five (5) business days.

Section 6.9) RPO Retention of Records

Records related to RPO activities and work products must be retained by the LPA for 3 years after NCDOT has submitted the final voucher to FHWA and FHWA has closed the project in their FMIS system. If the LPA is changed, all records must be transferred.

Any records pertaining to the RPO must be made available to the public for free or for a minimal fee that represents the actual cost of copying. Membership records, meeting minutes showing attendance and voting outcomes, documents, electronic files, GIS

layers, recordings and any other documentation are subject to public inspection unless they meet criteria for exemption as described by the Public Records Statutes.

Chapter 7 Reorganizing an RPO

- 1) Identify three to fifteen contiguous counties, or an area that has a total population of at least 50,000 people. Noncontiguous counties adjacent to the same Metropolitan Planning Organization may form an RPO.
- 2) Contact the NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) and prospective LPA to discuss the formation or revision of the RPO.
- 3) Review and revise standard [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to reflect the desired RPO structure. Submit draft to designated NCDOT staff for review.
- 4) Prepare final MOU document, reflecting any additional revisions.
- 5) Present final MOU to each county, the LPA and NCDOT for approval. Original signatures and seals must appear on a single page(s). Municipalities within the boundaries of the proposed RPO may adopt a resolution stating their support for the formation of the proposed RPO within ninety (90) days of final approval.
- 6) Submit the signed MOU in triplicate to designated NCDOT staff, along with municipal resolutions. One original copy will be returned to the LPA with original signatures.
- 7) Submit documentation to designated NCDOT staff to verify the LPA has been authorized by its Board to receive funds on behalf of the RPO.
- 8) Conduct a chartering ceremony in cooperation with NCDOT and participating local officials.
- 9) Complete the Funding Agreement Process returning all signed copies to NCDOT. One original copy will be returned to the LPA.
- 10) Present TCC/TAC with a draft Planning Work Program for consideration and approval. Approval of these documents are required prior to receiving reimbursement by NCDOT.

Chapter 8 Appendix

Section 8.1) Planning Work Program and related Documents:

a) [Sample LPA Funding Agreement -](#)

- Document to be updated as changes in regulations or guidance require

b) [Prospectus](#)

c) [PWP and SPR Expense Report Excel file](#)

contains tabs for the following:

- Quarterly Invoices-- expenditure table and narrative
- PWP amendments
- Yearly narrative

d) [Sample allocation letter](#)

e) Quarterly [Invoice Cover Letter](#)

f) [Sample Planning Work Program Approval Letter](#)

- Letter includes the fiscal year's PO/Contract and WBS numbers.

g) [Consultant Procurement Procedures](#)

- [Procurement Walk-through](#)

Section 8.2) Standard Documents, Templates, and Forms

- a) [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#)
- b) [Bylaws](#)
- c) [Public Participation Plan \(PPP\)](#)
- d) [TAC Abstention Form](#)
- e) [NCDOT's W-9 form](#)
- f) [NCDOT EFT Authorization Form](#)
- g) [Equipment Request Form](#)
- h) [Equipment Inventory Form](#)
- i) [Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form](#)
- j) [Title VI Plan Template](#)

Section 8.3) Various Regulations and References

- a) [Senate Bill 1195](#)
- b) [STIP Prioritization](#)
- c) [Merger Process](#)
- d) [Open Meetings Law and Open Records Law](#)
- e) [NCDOT Consultant, Utility, Railroad, and Turnpike Unit \(CURT\)](#)

The latest "Maximum Allowable Non-Salary Direct Costs"

- f) [Federal Debarment \(SAM.gov\)](#)
- g) [State Debarment](#)
- h) [CFR – Code of Federal Regulations \(2 CFR Part 200\)](#)
- i) [NCDOT MPO/RPO web page](#)
- j) [NC Compliance Supplements](#)

(used by auditors)

Transportation Acronyms

NCDOT Transportation Planning Division - Acronyms		
Acronym	Long Name/Definition	Category*
3-C	Continuing Comprehensive and Cooperative Planning Process	Planning
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic	Planning
AADTT	Average Annual Daily Truck Traffic	Planning
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials	
ACHP	US Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Federal
ACS	American Community Survey	
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990	Law
ADR	Administrative Dispute Resolution Act (1998)	Law
ADT	Average Daily Traffic	Planning
AEC	Area of Environmental Concern	Environmental
AGR	Annual Growth Rate	
APE	Area of Potential Effect	Environmental
AQ	Air Quality	Environmental
AQI	Air Quality Index	Environmental
AQNMP	Air Quality and Noise Management Plan	Environmental
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank	Environmental
AWDT	Average Weekday Traffic	Planning
BA	Biological Assessment - USFWS	Environmental
BEA	Bureau of Economic Analysis	Planning
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs	Federal
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics	
BMP	Best Management Practices	Administrative
BMS	Bridge Management System	
BO	Biological Opinion - USFWS	Environmental
BOT	Board of Transportation	NC/State
BPR	Bureau of Public Roads	Planning
BSIP	Business Systems Improvement Project	Administrative
BTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics	Planning
BUILD Grant	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (Transportation Discretionary Grants program) (started 2018, replaced TIGER)	
BUILD NC Bond	Project Delivery Bond (started 2019)	
CAA	Clean Air Act (1963)	Law
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990	Law

CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee	Administrative
CAD (CADD)	Computer Aided Design (Computer Aided Design and Drafting)	
CAMA	Coastal Area Management Act (1974)	Law
CATS	Cross Application Time Sheet	Administrative
CAV	Connected and Autonomous Vehicle	Planning
CBD	Central Business District	Administrative
CDE	Corridor Development Engineer	DOT
CE	Categorical Exclusion	Environmental
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	Federal
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (1980 - "Superfund" Law)	Law
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	Law
CIA	Community Impact Assessment	Environmental
CIP	Capital Improvement Program	Administrative
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality	Environmental
CMP	Construction Management Plan	Administrative
CMS	Congestion Management Systems	Planning
CO	Carbon monoxide	Environmental
COE	Army Corps of Engineers	Federal
COG	Council of Government	Administrative
CPM	Critical Path Method	Administrative
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions	Administrative
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan	Planning
CTPP	Census Transportation Planning Package	Planning
CUR	Community Understanding Report	Planning
CWA	Clean Water Act (1972)	Law
CZMA	Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972	Law
DA Funds	Directly Attributable Funds	Planning
DAQ	Division of Air Quality, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR)	NC/State
DBPT	NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation	DOT
DCA	Division of Community Assistance	NC/State
DCR	Department of Cultural Resources	NC/State
DDC	Division Design and Construct	DOT
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Environmental
DEM	Division of Emergency Management	NC/State
DEM	Digital Elevation Modeling	GIS
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources	NC/State
DMF	Division of Marine Fisheries	NC/State
DOC	Department of Commerce	Federal
DOI	Department of the Interior	Federal
DOT	Department of Transportation	Federal
DPE	Division Planning Engineer	DOT

DSS	Decision Support System	Administrative
DTM	Digital Terrain Modeling	GIS
DWQ	Division of Water Quality - NCDENR	NC/State
EA	Environmental Assessment	Environmental
EAU	NCDOT Environmental Analysis Unit	Environmental
EDR	Environmental Data Resources	Environmental
EEP	Eco-system Enhancement Program	Environmental
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	Environmental
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	Environmental
EJ	Environmental Justice	Environmental
EO	Executive Order	Environmental
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	Federal
ETDM	Efficient Transportation Decision-Making	
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration	Federal
FAF	Freight Analysis Framework	Planning
FAPG	Federal-Aid Policy Guide	Law
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015)	Law
FC	Functional Classification	Planning
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement	Environmental
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	Federal
FEMP	Federal Energy Management Program	Federal
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Federal
FHWA	U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration	Federal
FNSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	Environmental
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (1966)	Law
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact (alternate to FNSI)	Environmental
FRA	U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration	Federal
FTA	Federal Transit Administration	Federal
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal
FY	Fiscal Year (State: July 1 - June 30; Federal: Oct 1 - Sept 30)	Administrative
G&O	Goals and Objectives	Planning
GIS	Geographic Information System	GIS
GP	General Permit	Administrative
GPS	Global Positioning System	
HBO	Home Based Other	Planning
HBS	Home-Based Shop	Planning
HBSC	Home Based School	Planning
HBU	Home Based University	Planning
HBW	Home Based Work	Planning
HCS	Highway Capacity Software	Planning
HEP	Habitat Evaluation Procedure	Environmental
HOT Lane	High-Occupancy Toll Lane (a.k.a Express Lane)	
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle	
HPO	(State) Historic Preservation Office	NC/State

HQR	High Quality Resources	Administrative
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program	Safety
HSR	High Speed Rail	
HTF	Highway Trust Fund	Law
IAG	Interagency Agreement	Administrative
ICA	Immediate Corrective Action	Administrative
ICE	Indirect and Cumulative Effects	Environmental
ICI	Indirect and Cumulative Impact Assessment	Administrative
IJR	Interchange Justification Reports	Federal
ILT	Interagency Leadership Team	Administrative
IMD	Integrated Mobility Division	
IMR	Interchange Modification Reports	Federal
IP	Individual Permit	Administrative
IPD	Integrated Project Delivery	Administrative
IRT	Interagency Review Team	Administrative
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)	Law
ITRE	Institute for Transportation Research and Education	
ITS	Intelligent Transportation System	
LDD	Local Development District	Administrative
LEDPA	Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative	Environmental
LOS	Level of Service	Planning
LPA	Lead Planning Agency	Administrative
LPO	Local Planning Organization	Administrative
LRS	Linear Referencing System	GIS
LRTP	Long-range transportation plan	Planning
LSC	Limited Service Contract	Administrative
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank	Environmental
MAB	Metropolitan Area Boundary	Administrative
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012)	Law
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement	Administrative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	Administrative
MP	CAMA Major Development Permit	Administrative
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization	Administrative
MSTA	Municipal School Transportation Assistance	NC/State
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Planning
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards	Law
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990)	Law
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System	Planning
NCBOT	North Carolina Board of Transportation	NC/State
NCARPO	North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations	NC
NCCGIA	North Carolina Center for Geographic Information and Analysis	NC/State
NCDCR	North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources	NC/State
NCDENR	North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources	NC/State
NCDOC	North Carolina Department of Commerce	NC/State

NCDOH	North Carolina Division of Highways	NC/State
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation	NC/State
NCDWQ	North Carolina Division of Water Quality	NC/State
NCGICC	North Carolina Geographic Information Coordination Council	NC/State
NCLOS	NC Level of Service	Planning
NCMIN	North Carolina Multimodal Investment Network	NC/State
NCSTM	North Carolina Statewide Transportation Model	Planning
NCTA	North Carolina Turnpike Authority	NC/State
NCWRC	North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission	NC/State
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act (1970)	Law
NHL	National Historic Landmark	Federal
NHO	Non-Home Based Other	Planning
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act (1966)	Law
NHS	National Highway System (last updated 2012)	Law
NHTS	National Household Travel Survey	Planning
NHW	Non-Home Based Work	Planning
NMFS	U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service	Federal
NO2	Nitrogen dioxide	Environmental
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Federal
NOI	Notice of Intent	Administrative
NOV	Notice of Violation	Administrative
NOX	Nitrogen oxides	Environmental
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	Law
NPDWR	National Primary Drinking Water Regulations	Law
NPS	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service	Federal
NPTS	Nationwide Personal Transportation Surveys	Planning
NRCS	National Register of Historic Places	Federal
NRHP	Natural Resource Conservation Service	Federal
NRTR	Natural Resources Technical Report	Administrative
NWP	Nationwide Permit	Environmental
OA	Office Administration	Administrative
OHE	Office of Human Environment	NC/State
ONE	Office of Natural Environment	NC/State
OSA	Office of State Archaeology	NC/State
OSBM	Office of State Budget and Management	NC/State
P5.0/6.0 etc.	Prioritization 5.0/6.0 (increases by 1 every two years)	DOT
PA	Programmatic Agreement	Administrative
PAB	Planning Area Boundary	Planning
PAC	Public Advisory Committee	Administrative
PCE	Programmatic Categorical Exclusion	Administrative
PCE	Passenger Car Equivalent	Planning
PCN	Pre-Construction Notification	Administrative
PDE	Project Development Engineer	DOT

PE	Project Engineer	DOT
PEF	Private Engineering Firm used to outsource work	Administrative
PERT	Program Evaluation and Review Technique	Administrative
Phase II	(of the) Stormwater Regulation/Permit Process – Phase II is also the second phase of an archaeological survey, when NR eligibility is determined. Also, Phase II is the second phase of an environmental site assessment.	Environmental
PHFS	Primary Highway Freight System	Federal
PHO	Public Hearing Officers	
PI	Public Involvement	Administrative
PICS	Public Involvement and Community Studies	Administrative
PIO	Public Information Office	Administrative
PMii	Project Management Improvement Initiative	
POP	Proof of Publication	
PPP	Public Participation Plan	Administrative
PUMS	Public Use Microdata Sample	Planning
PWP	Planning Work Program	Administrative
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report	Administrative
QRFM	Quick Response Freight Manual	Planning
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976)	Law
RFP	Request for Proposals	
RFQ	Request for Qualifications	
RMSE	Root Mean Square Error	Planning
ROD	Record of Decision	
ROW	Right-of-Way	
RPO	Rural Planning Organization	Administrative
RTAC	Rural Transportation Advisory Committee	Administrative
RTCC	Rural Technical Coordinating Committee (advisory staff for RPO)	Administrative
RTK	Right-To-Know	Law
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005)	Law
SASHTO	State Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials	Administrative
SAV	Submerged aquatic vegetation	Environmental
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	Federal
SDEIS	Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Environmental
SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act (1974)	Law
Section 106	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966)	Law
Section 4(f)	Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (1966)	Law
Section 7	Section of the Endangered Species Act (1973)	Law
SEHSR	Southeast High Speed Rail	
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act for North Carolina	NC/State
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer	NC/State
SIP	State Implementation Plan	NC/State
SO2	Sulfur dioxide	Environmental

SOV	Single Occupant Vehicle	
SPOT	NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office	DOT
SPR	State Planning and Research Funds	Administrative
STC	Strategic Transportation Corridors	Planning
STI	Strategic Transportation Investments Law (2013)	Law
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program	DOT
STP	Surface Transportation Program	Federal
STRAHNET	Strategic Highway Network (integral for national defense)	Federal
SUE	Subsurface Utility Engineer	DOT
T&E	Threatened and Endangered Species	Environmental
TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee	Administrative
TAZ	Transportation Analysis Zone	Planning
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee	Administrative
TCM	Traffic Calming Measure	Planning
TCM	Traffic Control Measure	Planning
TDM	Travel Demand Model	Planning
TDM	Transportation Demand Management	Planning
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)	Law
TEAAS	Traffic Engineering Accident Analysis System software	Safety
TECO	Technically Complete	General
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Environmental
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program	DOT
TMA	Transportation Management Area	Administrative
TMP	Traffic Management Plan	DOT
TO	Task Orders	Administrative
TOD	Time of Day	Planning
TPD	Transportation Planning Division	Planning
TRB	Transportation Research Board	Administrative
TSM	Transportation System Management	Planning
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority	Federal
UAB	Urban Area Boundaries	Administrative
UH	Unit Head	Administrative
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program	Administrative
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Federal
USC	United States Code	Law
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard	Federal
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation	Federal
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council	Environmental
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey	Federal
UST	Underground Storage tank	Environmental
UZA	Urbanized Area	Planning
VDF	Volume Delay Functions	Planning
VHT	Vehicle Hours of Travel	Planning

VIUS	Vehicle Inventory and Use Survey	Planning
VMT	Vehicle Miles of Travel	Planning
VOT	Value of Time	Planning
VPD	Vehicles Per Day	Planning
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure	Administrative
WIM	Weigh-In-Motion	Planning
WRC	Wildlife Resources Commission	NC/State

Table of RPOs and Counties that are members of each RPO

RPO name	Member Counties
Albermarle RPO	Hyde, Tyrrell, Washington, Camden, Gates, Dare, Chowan Perquimans, Pasquotank, Currituck
Cape Fear RPO	Columbus, Pender, Brunswick
Central Pines RPO	Lee, Orange, Chatham, Moore
Down East RPO	Jones, Pamlico, Carteret
Eastern Carolina RPO	Greene, Wayne, Lenoir, Duplin
Foothills RPO	Rutherford, McDowell, Polk
High Country RPO	Wilkes, Mitchell, Yancey, Avery, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany
Kerr-Tar RPO	Vance, Warren, Franklin, Person, Granville
Land-of-Sky RPO	Transylvania, Madison, Haywood, Buncombe
Lumber River RPO	Robeson, Hoke, Scotland, Richmond
Mid-Carolina RPO	Bladen, Sampson, Cumberland, Harnett
Mid-East RPO	Beaufort, Martin, Pitt
Northwest Piedmont RPO	Surry, Davie, Yadkin, Stokes
Peanut Belt RPO	Bertie, Halifax, Northampton, Hertford
Piedmont Triad RPO	Montgomery, Randolph, Caswell, Rockingham
Rocky River RPO	Anson, Stanly, Union
Southwestern RPO	Graham, Jackson, Macon, Cherokee, Clay, Swain
Upper Coastal Plain RPO	Wilson, Edgecombe, Nash, Johnston