

Who we are:

Transportation is so basic that many of us overlook its overwhelming importance in our daily lives. Practically everything used in our homes, offices, or schools across Tennessee – from furniture to food items to clothing – requires a large and complex transportation network. The Tennessee Department of Transportation provides citizens of Tennessee and travelers with one of the best transportation systems in the country. TDOT is a multimodal agency with responsibilities in building and maintaining roads, aviation, public transit, waterways, railroads, cycling and walking. Our involvement ranges from airport improvements to funding transit buses to planning for river ports. The Department of Transportation has approximately 3,500 employees with four statewide region facilities in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Jackson. TDOT Aeronautics is located near the John C. Tune Airport in Nashville, TN.



Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Technical Specialist
Planning Division – Community Transportation Planning Section
\$61,200 - \$70,680 annually

Job Overview

The Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Technical Specialist will support Planning by serving as TDOT's primary point of contact with local governments in the rural areas and performing liaison duties with local agencies, TDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other stakeholders for planning-related matters. This position is responsible for consulting and coordinating with local officials in rural areas of the State to carry out the rural and regional transportation planning process.

This position supports the administration and delivery of transportation planning projects and programs for the RPOs. The RPO Technical Specialist maintains a strong understanding of TDOT project development processes and stays informed on Department-related activities and project status. They communicate this information clearly to local governments and the public to support successful execution of the Department's Work Program. The RPO Technical Specialist coordinates planning efforts across rural Tennessee, ensures timely follow-up on projects, and collaborates effectively within a matrix organization and with external stakeholders to articulate planning concepts and priorities. The RPO Technical Specialist also participates in training activities to build subject matter expertise and support the consistent application of planning practices across the state.

Essential Job duties of Technical Specialist I, II, and III include:

Coordinate the review of RPO and local governments' transportation plans, studies, and related planning products with other TDOT Divisions, Federal agencies, other state and local agencies, and the public, as required. Actively participate in transportation studies coordinated by RPOs and local governments.

Maintain a transportation funding database that includes all transportation-related funding opportunities for rural areas. Inform RPOs and local partners of Federal grant availability, including grant requirements, Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), eligibility requirements, application guidance, and other pertinent grant information.

Serve as TDOT's representative on RPO Executive Boards and Technical Committees. Present project-related information at local government and public meetings. Participate in local government workshops and project public meetings and hearings. Track, document, and report on RPO activities to support transparency, evaluate program effectiveness, and inform planning decisions.

Provide exceptional customer service to project stakeholders by facilitating the sharing of project information that is organized and understandable to technical staff and the general public. Exercise effective listening skills, provide prompt responses, and communicate effectively. Promote transparency, responsiveness, and clarity by removing barriers to communication and maintaining well-organized documentation.

Implement policies, standards, guidance, and a data management system that promotes statewide uniformity and consistency of Community Transportation Planning Section deliverables. Implement records retention policies for use and compliance with Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) requirements.

Research and implement emerging processes, procedures, and technologies that improve the efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, sustainability, and safety of TDOT's transportation network. Stay current on national best practices, regulatory changes, and peer agency innovations.

Assist in the administration of rural transportation planning grant activities by supporting documentation tracking, organizing project files, and compiling basic information for reports. Participate in coordination meetings with local governments and TDOT staff to observe and learn about the implementation of federal planning grant programs and Corridor Management Agreements.

Review and approval of RPO invoices to ensure the effectiveness of the RPO's planning staff in carrying out their responsibilities as agreed to in the approved work plan.

Develop and maintain relationships with local government officials, regional, and planning staff across rural areas to promote long-term engagement with the statewide transportation planning process.

Additional Job duties for the Technical Specialist II and III include:

Administer TDOT Transportation Planning Grant program and other grants for rural areas. Coordinate with local governments and FHWA regarding implementation issues of awarded Federal planning grants. Develop and implement Corridor Management Agreements which coordinate land use and transportation planning.

Evaluate RPO meeting content, participation, and outcomes to recommend enhancements to meeting formats, agendas, or outreach strategies that improve engagement and transparency.

Identify funding or technical assistance opportunities to support high quality planning and meeting work program milestones.

Collaborate with TDOT Communications or Public Involvement teams to improve accessibility of rural planning materials and public outreach campaigns.

Contribute to the development and implementation of policy for consultant submittal requirements and compliance with state and federal procurement regulations.

Assist with preparing and delivering presentations at RPO meetings, workshops, or webinars. Support in communicating planning processes, grant updates, and program information to internal and external stakeholders.

Additional Job Duties for the Technical Specialist III include:

Provide training to Headquarters and Region leadership and staff related to planning requirements, analyses, and documentation. Conduct routine collaboration to address trends, share lessons learned, and promote consistency across statewide planning practices.

Mentor TDOT staff and external planning partners in areas such as RPO processes, planning grant management, and federal documentation requirements. Serve as a subject matter expert on best practices and regulatory compliance related to planning deliverables.

Perform quality assurance reviews of RPO work products and planning documents to ensure all federal and state requirements are met. Ensure that project records, datasets, and critical documentation are consistently maintained and in alignment with TDOT's performance goals and data management standards.

Develop and deliver presentations at statewide conferences, workshops, or interagency meetings; represent TDOT on planning-related policy, strategy, and process improvement topics.

Qualifications

TDOT Technical Specialist I

- Bachelor's Degree

TDOT Technical Specialist II

- Bachelor's Degree
- 1 year of demonstrated competency in State and Regional Transportation Planning, Land Use and Community Planning, Public Administration, or a related field

TDOT Technical Specialist III

- Bachelor's Degree
- 2 years of demonstrated competency in State and Regional Transportation Planning, Land Use and Community Planning, Public Administration, or a related field

The Tennessee Department of Transportation reserves the sole right in determining the level of position based on the applicant's work experience, education, skill level, and all other appropriate factors, including business needs. Within 6 months of hire, employees must demonstrate successful mastery of corresponding work competencies and skill blocks of the Technical Specialist Competency Program for the level of worker for which they were hired. If skills and competencies are not met during that period, the employee can be demoted to the level of worker for which he/she is qualified.

Ideal Candidate

The RPO Technical Specialist I, II, or III possesses a diverse range of abilities that supports transportation Planning. They excel in communication and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders at all levels. Their attention to detail and proactive follow-up is crucial. They ensure document accuracy and compliance with Federal and state planning requirements and established processes. They are committed to fostering collaboration and promoting transparency and thrive in a dynamic, team-oriented environment. The RPO Technical Specialist I, II, or III excels in collaboration and understands that the best outcomes are achieved through proactive and meaningful communication and coordination.