

Wednesday, August 16  
11:00 AM ET

# United For **Infrastructure**

A PROJECT OF ACCELERATOR FOR AMERICA ACTION

## Submitting for Competitive NOFOs: Understanding Best Practices and Pitfalls

**NLC** NATIONAL  
LEAGUE  
OF CITIES  

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CITIES STRONG TOGETHER



# Introductory Remarks



**Ross Van Dongen**  
Director of Infrastructure  
and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Accelerator for America



**Clarence Anthony**  
CEO and Executive  
Director  
National League of Cities



**Mary Ellen Wiederwohl**  
President and CEO  
Accelerator for America



# Featured Speakers



**Aubrei Barton**  
Transportation Policy  
Analyst- RAISE and  
MPDG Grants Team  
USDOT



**Kim Bathrick**  
Transportation Policy  
Analyst- RAISE Grants  
Team  
USDOT



**Stephanie Pollack**  
Coordinator for Project  
Delivery Support;  
Co-Director,  
BIL Implementation (interim)  
Office of the Secretary, USDOT



**Mariia Zimmerman**  
Strategic Advisor for Technical  
Assistance and Communities  
Solutions;  
Co-Director,  
BIL Implementation (interim)  
Office of the Secretary, USDOT





U.S. Department  
of Transportation



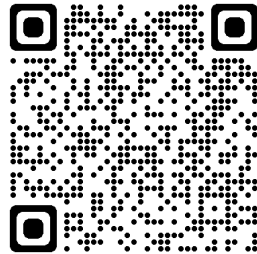
## *Tips, Dos and Don'ts: USDOT Talks NOFOs*

US DOT Presentation to United For Infrastructure,  
August 16, 2023

# DOT Navigator

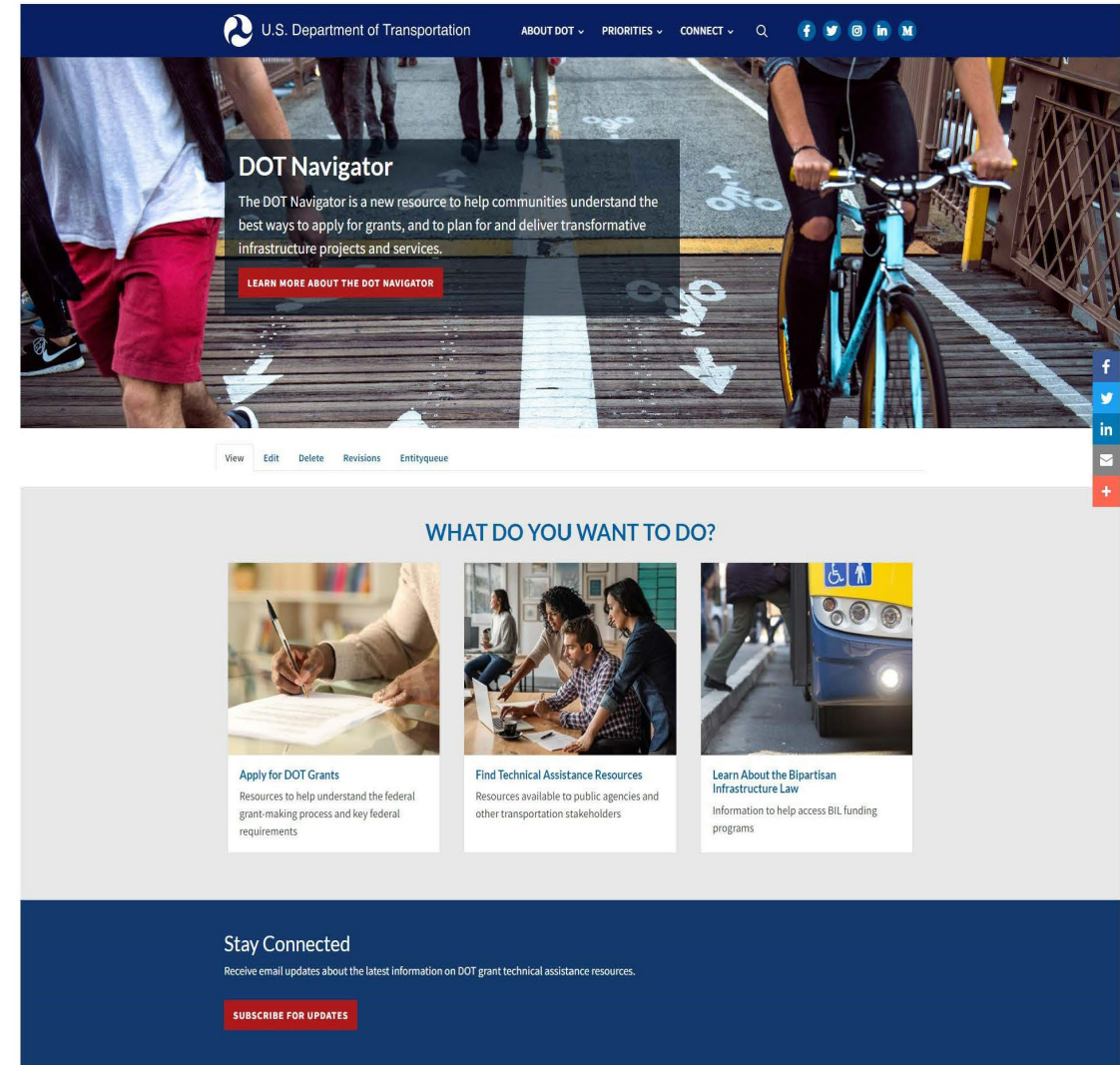
## Coordinating and Improving Access to the range of DOT Technical Assistance Resources

<https://transportation.gov/dot-navigator>



## Sample Grant Application Resources

- Overview of DOT Funding and Financing
- **FY23 USDOT Discretionary Preparation Check List**
- Understanding Federal Match Requirements
- Workforce Development and Climate Checklists
- Use of DOT Funds for Public Involvement
- Is Federal Funding the Right Fit for My Organization?



# How to Identify and Prepare for Grant Opportunities

<https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity> -

Funding Opportunity	Application Deadline
<a href="#">Safe Streets &amp; Roads for All</a>	Just closed (July 10)
<a href="#">Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program</a>	August 1, 2023
<a href="#">PROTECT Program</a>	August 18, 2023
Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity ( <a href="#">Mega</a> , <a href="#">INFRA</a> , and <a href="#">Rural</a> )	8/21/2023
Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program (RCN) = <a href="#">Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (BIL)</a> and <a href="#">Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (IRA)</a>	9/28/2023
<a href="#">Transit-Oriented Development Pilot Program</a> (FTA)	10/10/2023
<a href="#">Thriving Communities Program</a> (OST)	Anticipated to September 2023
<a href="#">Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program</a> (OST)	10/10/2023
<a href="#">Bridge Investment Program</a> (FHWA)	Coming



# DOT Checklists to Help with Grant Preparation

## DOT Discretionary Grant Preparation Checklist, at a Glance

1. [Coordinate Between Agencies and Stakeholders](#)
2. [Get Familiar with the DOT Calendar of Funding Opportunities](#)
3. [Budget for and Secure Your Non-Federal Match](#)
4. [Ensure Your Project Is on the TIP/STIP](#)
5. [Get Ready to Apply for and Administer Federal Funding](#)
6. [Know Your Justice40 Designated Census Tracts](#)
7. [Prepare Your Capital Project's Benefit-Cost Analysis](#)
8. [Budget for Meaningful Public Involvement](#)
9. [Build a Strong Workforce Development and Labor Plan](#)
10. [Understand NEPA and Other Federal Requirements as You Consider Whether to Seek Funding](#)

## Grant Application Checklist for a Strong Transportation Workforce and Labor Plan

### Three Core Components of a Strong Plan

Most U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) discretionary grants include selection criteria associated with creating good jobs and expanding workforce opportunities. Although the criteria may differ among grants, a strong job quality and workforce plan consists generally of three core components, listed below:

1. Creating good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union.
2. Expanding high-quality training and education programs to help train and place people in good-paying jobs, with a focus on women, people of color, and other populations facing systemic barriers to employment such as people with disabilities and people with convictions.
3. Implementing policies both during procurement and during project implementation that will promote the hiring and retention of underrepresented workers.



Source: USDOT/Getty

The checklist below provides additional information on the components of an ideal plan. The checklist is furnished to spark thoughts and ideas that applicants may want to share. Applicants are not required to address everything on the list in order to be competitive for a particular grant's selection criterion. Please review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the specific program you are considering to ensure you are responsive to that particular application.

This checklist is also meant to encourage greater partnership between transportation and workforce agencies at the state and local levels. Transportation agencies should be aware that the U.S. Department of Labor has also sent an advisory notice to the federal workforce system on how to partner with transportation entities on infrastructure law implementation. [See that advisory notice here.](#)

## Checklist for a Strong Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience Grant Application

### Two Core Components of a Strong Project

Most U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) discretionary grants include selection criteria associated with climate change. Although criteria may differ among grant programs, a strong application in this area generally consists of two core components:

1. Reducing transportation greenhouse gas emissions (also called greenhouse gas mitigation, climate change mitigation, or decarbonization)
2. Incorporating climate adaptation and resilience features

This checklist is furnished to spark thoughts and ideas for applicants to consider in developing a strong application. Not everything listed here needs to be addressed to be competitive. Review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the specific program you are considering to be responsive to its priorities or requirements.



Summary of transportation decarbonization strategies. Source: [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#)

# Connecting with those who applied for DOT grants

## Snapshot of BIL Discretionary Grant Applications

Interested in seeing who has applied to grants funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and managed by the USDOT Office of the Secretary? [View the list of eligible applicants for the 2022 rounds of RAISE, INFRA, Mega, Rural, RCP, SS4A, and SMART.](#)

Includes information on applicant, project and state for all of those who applied, noting which were successful.

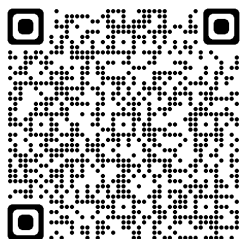
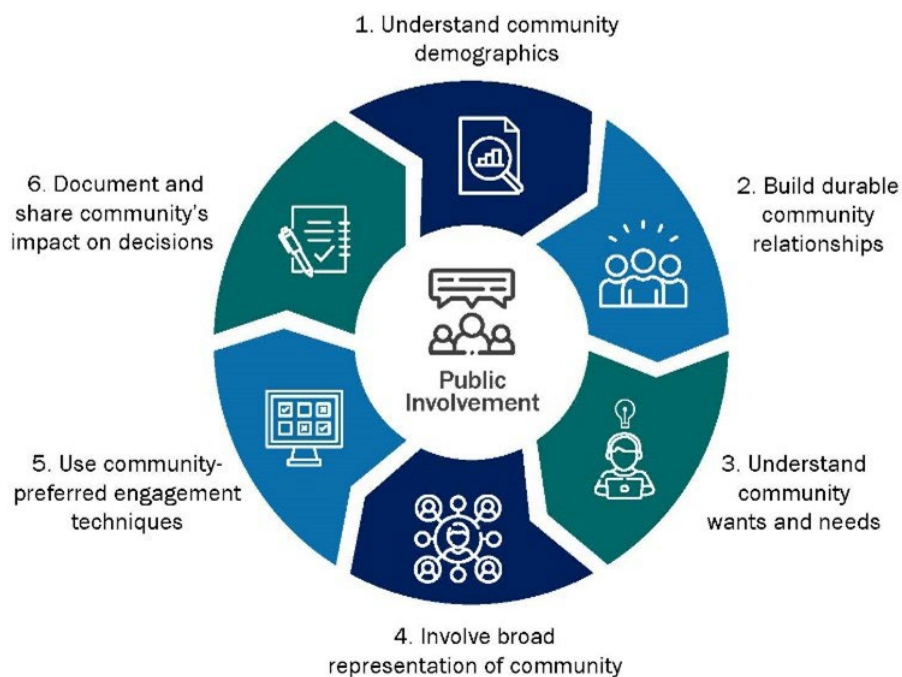
- Connect with successful applicants: opportunities to partner on implementation and/or support their capacity to succeed?
- Connect with unsuccessful applicants : opportunities to improve applications for future submissions and/or support planning or project needs through other funding venues at federal, state or local level?

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/snapshot-bil-discretionary-grant-applications ->





## Federal transportation funding can be used for public engagement activities throughout the planning and project delivery phases.



<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/use-of-dot-funds-for-public-involvement>

## Use of DOT Funds for Public Involvement

### *Can I include public involvement activities in my grant application budget?*

Meaningful public involvement is an essential set of activities required by DOT funding recipients to meet the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and Federal planning regulations.

When developing grant applications, consider the types of activities that you may undertake to ensure meaningful public involvement occurs—whether in the planning, project development, or project delivery phases—to inform and engage community stakeholders to help individuals and communities have a greater voice in the transportation decisions affecting them.

These costs should be reflected in the project budget, description, and set of proposed activities or deliverables provided in your grant application.

To support grantees undertaking meaningful public involvement activities in transportation planning, DOT published a set of [promising practices](#) to help leaders in all modes of transportation in various roles—including policy, planning, engineering, operations, civil rights, grants and program management, environmental justice, and public involvement—understand meaningful public involvement, why it's important, and how to build organizational capacity for it.

Public involvement costs should be included in project budgets or can also be supported through other Federal formula funds that State departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, or transit agencies may receive.

The following frequently asked questions are provided to help understand what types of costs may be eligible. In addition, be sure to carefully review the funding opportunity to which you are responding, as it may include additional details on public involvement requirements, specific eligible costs or activities, and information about how community engagement may be considered within the application evaluation and rating process.

### Frequently Asked Questions about Public Involvement Costs

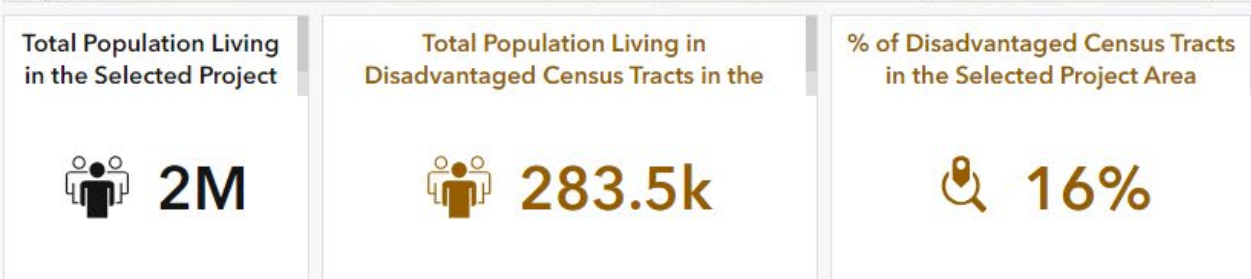
Q1. What are some ways to fund public involvement activities with Federal transportation funds?



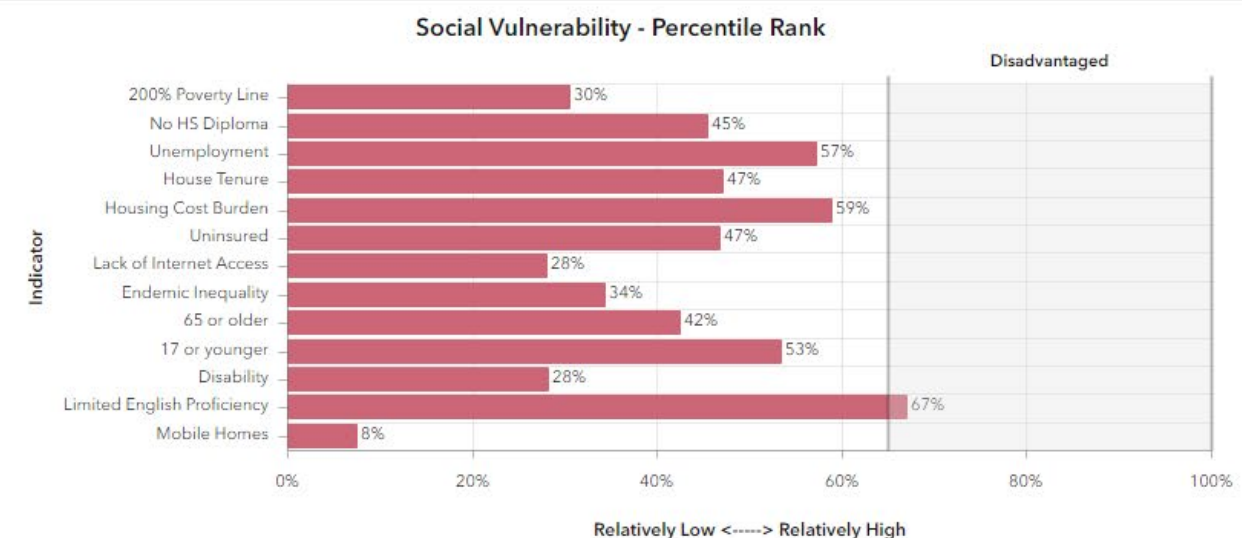
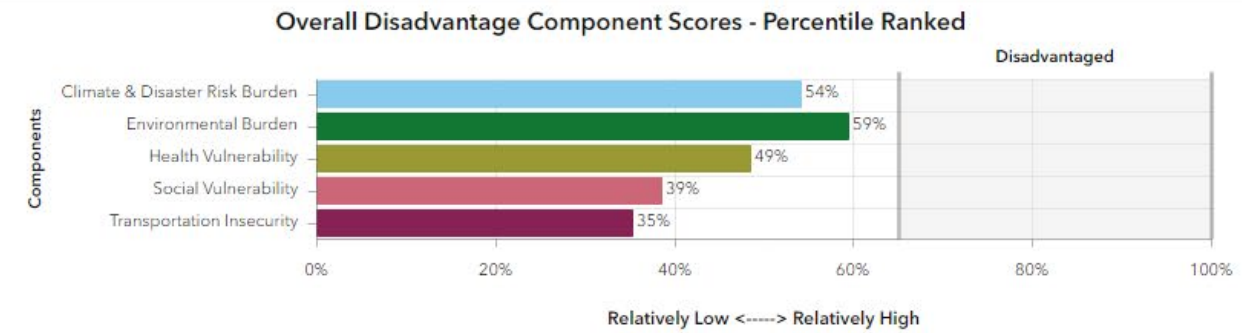
U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg meets with Atlanta's Soccer in the Streets to learn about the development of a soccer field as part of transit-oriented development in the East Point neighborhood of Atlanta. (Stanley Leary/USDOT photo)



# ETC Explorer | US DOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer



- Component Scores are distinct from Indicator Scores. For more information please see - Understanding the Data.  
- Index scores for Alaska, Hawaii and the territories are calculated separately due to unavailable data for certain indicators. The Explorer

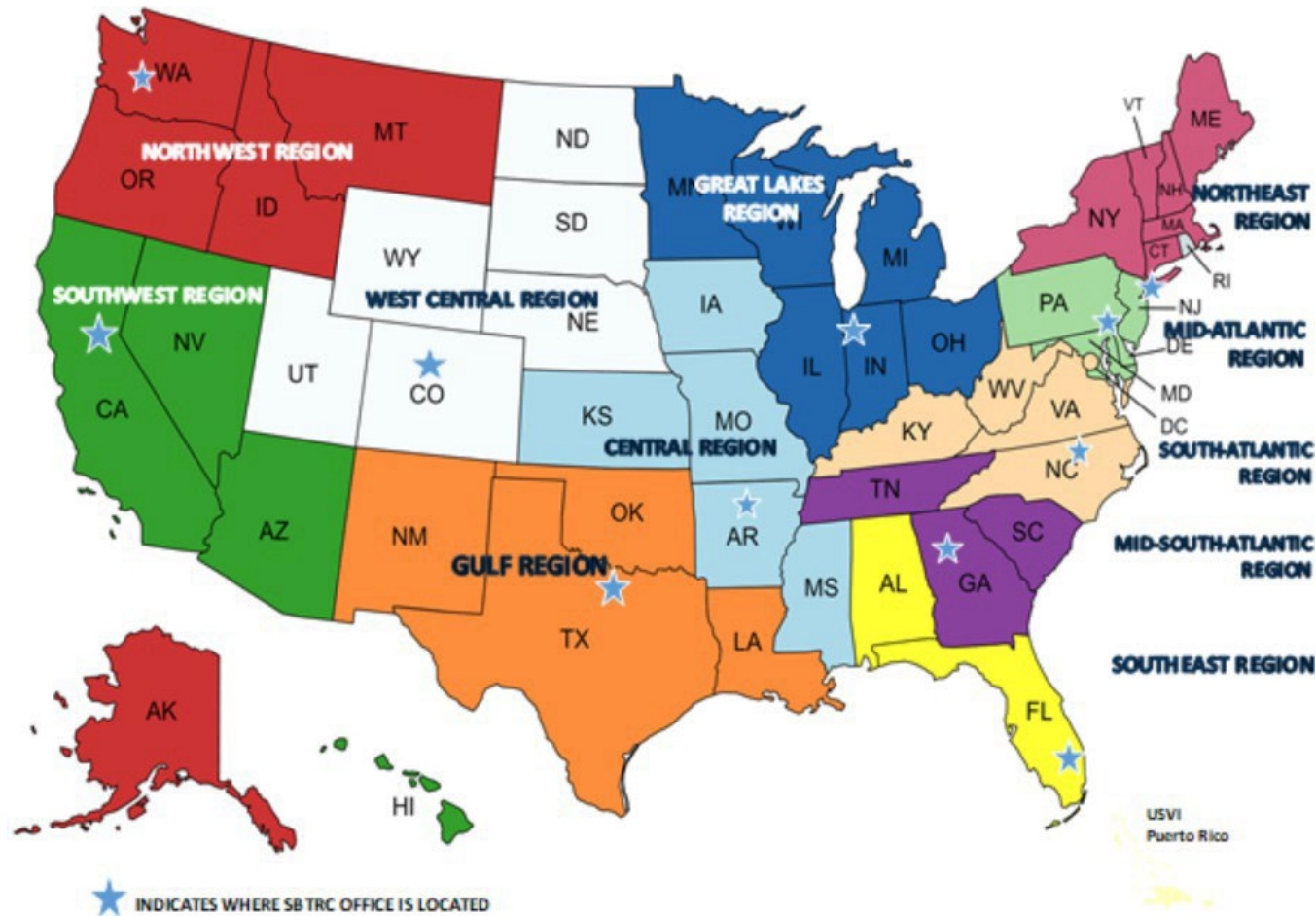


Social Vulnerability

Nationwide: 59% of households in the lowest income quintile (less than \$42k) cannot access a grocery store or medical facility within 15 minutes of walking and have limited to no transit access.



# Small Business Transportation Resource Centers (SBTRC)



- **11 regional centers create a network** to provide services to the Continental US, US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico
- Deliver a **comprehensive package of business training & technical assistance and disseminates info** to increase the ability of small business transportation enterprises to compete and obtain transportation related contracts
- **Provide USDOT programming:** Bonding Education Program, Access to Capital, and Women and Girls in Transportation Initiative
- Engage with **transportation-related contracts and BIL-funded projects** by fostering key relationships with prime contractors and stakeholders





## Planning Ahead: How Will You Make the Project Happen?

- Even before submitting a grant you should think ahead to how you will get your project built, including
  - How will you pay for the project?
  - How long will it take until your project is ready to build?
  - How will you permit the project?
  - How will you deliver the project?
- Also think about how you will ensure that you can comply with **important federal requirements** that must be met **BEFORE** funds can be obligated
  - All federal grants must comply with 2 CFR 200 that details federal requirements including for financial reporting and oversight.
  - All federal grants must comply with civil rights requirements such as Title VI





## How will you pay for the project?

- Most grants require a **non-federal match** that must be identified in the application and secured by the time of grant obligation.
- Most USDOT grants are provided as **reimbursable funds**; not lump sum or upfront payments.
  - In many cases a recipient will have to pay costs as they are incurred and submit requests for reimbursement, requiring grant recipients to have access to sufficient non-grant funding to manage cash flow associated with the project
  - Under some circumstances, USDOT or operating administrations may use “pre-award authority” for costs associated with a project, such as costs associated with environmental review.





## How long will it take until your project is ready to build?

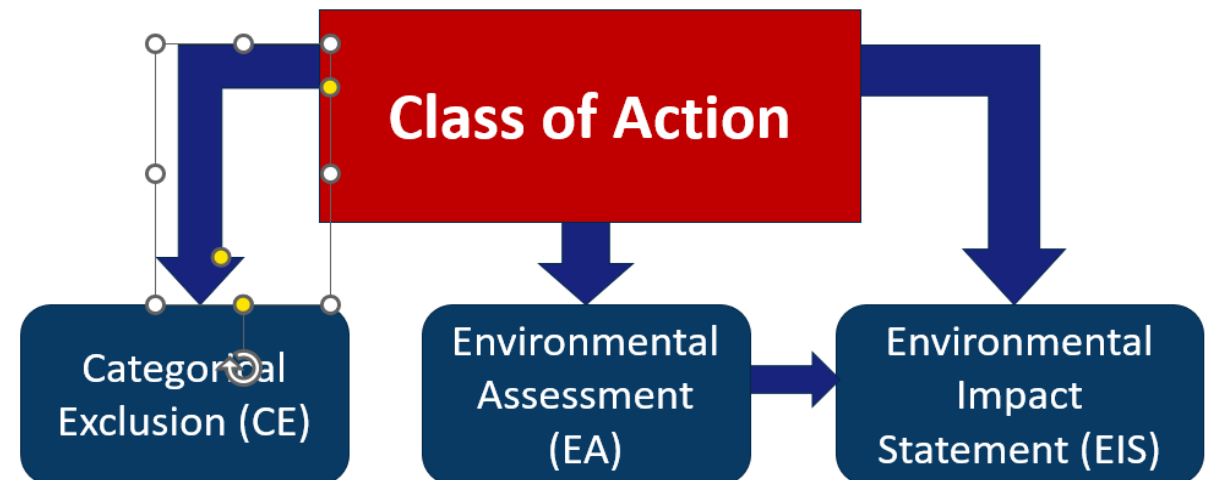
- Most grant programs have deadlines for grants to be both **obligated** and **expended**
- •The **obligation deadline** is the date by which a grant award recipient must have all necessary environmental approvals and, in many cases, a signed and executed grant agreement in place
- •The **expenditure deadline** is the date by which all grant funding must be expended

*The strongest grant applications and grants are for projects that can comfortably be completed within the grant's financial deadlines*



## How will you permit the project?

- The National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA, is an environmental law that establishes the decision-making process that must be followed prior to the design and construction of transportation projects using Federal funding
- In most cases, DOT grants cannot be “obligated” until the NEPA process has been completed
- You can learn more about NEPA requirements on the website of the Council on Environmental Quality and from courses offered by both the National Highway Institute and National Transit Institute







# How will you deliver the project?

**Effective Project  
Delivery Happens Before  
Your Construction  
Project Even Starts**



*Welcome to the USDOT*  
***Project Delivery***  
***Center Of Excellence***



The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Project Delivery Center of Excellence at the USDOT Volpe Center enables the successful implementation of the Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by accelerating completion of local transportation infrastructure investments—**on time, on task, and on budget.**

**VISIT THE PROJECT DELIVERY TOOLBOX**

**<https://www.volpe.dot.gov/project-delivery>**





# Check out the resources in the Project Delivery Toolbox

## Welcome to the Project Delivery Toolbox

USDOT  
**PROJECT DELIVERY**  
Center of  
Excellence

The USDOT Project Delivery Center of Excellence's Project Delivery Toolbox is a collection of resources and best practices across USDOT to help you successfully implement your construction project  
**—on time, on task, and on budget.**



### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Project delivery success begins with effective, ongoing, and meaningful public engagement. [Learn more.](#)



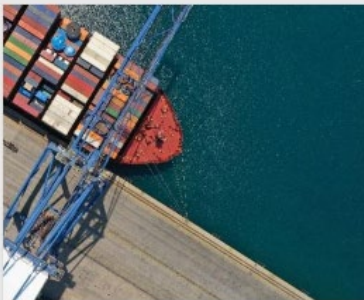
### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Early consideration of your project's impact to the environment is required. [Learn more.](#)



### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Factor equity and accessibility into planning and delivering your project. [Learn more.](#)



### RISK MANAGEMENT

Prepare for risks to deliver your BIL-funded project on task, on time, on budget. [Learn more.](#)



### CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

Explore proven and innovative ways to administer your construction project. [Learn more.](#)



### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Delivering an effective BIL-funded project—on task, on time, on budget—requires careful project management. [Learn more.](#)



### FINANCING

Access your funding and avoid obstacles to progress your project without delays. [Learn more.](#)



### PRE-CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

Your designs need to be ready to execute when your BIL funding is in. [Learn more.](#)





# Delivering the Project: Requesting the State DOT to Administer the Grant

- Direct recipients receive funding directly from DOT.
  - “Designated recipients” have been designated by the state governor or their designee to receive &/or sub-allocate (ie. State DOT or Transit Agency)
- A direct recipient can work with their State DOT to assist with the delivery of a project associated with a grant.
  - Non-State recipients may enter into a contractual agreement with their State DOT for assistance with project activities that comply with state law and the applicable procurement standards (see 2 CFR 200.318 through 200.327).
  - In this relationship, the non-State recipient would reimburse the State DOT for eligible project activities as outlined in their contractual agreement.
  - Direct costs incurred by the non-State recipient during the period of performance that satisfy the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, subpart E, including 2 CFR 200.403, are allowable and eligible for reimbursement by the Federal agency.

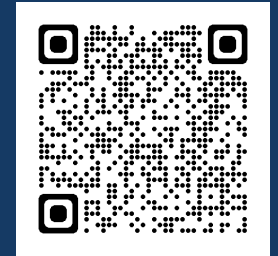


# Questions?

Email us at [USDOTassist@dot.gov](mailto:USDOTassist@dot.gov)

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## Stay Connected

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U.S. Department  
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# Q & A

USDOT will not be able to answer questions about applications pertaining to open NOFOs or questions about specific applications that have been submitted and are under consideration.

Virtual attendees: Please use Q&A function in the chat.

In-person attendees: Please use the notecards distributed upon arrival.