

693JJ324NF00006

FISCAL YEARS 2023 – 2026

BRIDGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

PLANNING AND BRIDGE PROJECT GRANTS

Opening Date: December 20, 2023

SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION: Fiscal Years 2023 through 2026 Bridge Investment Program, Planning and Bridge Project Grants	
Issuing Agency	U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
Program Overview	<p>Provide financial assistance for a project to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect one or more bridges on the National Bridge Inventory (NBI) under 23 U.S.C. 144(b).</p> <p>The purpose of this notice is to solicit applications for two funding categories: (1) Planning and (2) Bridge Project grants (a project with total eligible costs not greater than \$100 million) for awards under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP).</p>
Objective	The goals of the program are to 1) improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges; 2) improve the condition of bridges in the United States; and 3) provide financial assistance that leverages and encourages non-Federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders involved in the planning, design, and construction of eligible projects.
Eligible Applicants	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A State or a group of States;2. A metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area (as designated by the Bureau of the Census) with a population over 200,000;3. A unit of local government or a group of local governments;4. A political subdivision of a State or local government;5. A special purpose district or a public authority with a transportation function;6. A Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA);7. A Tribal government or a consortium of Tribal governments; and8. A multi-State or multijurisdictional group of entities as described above in 1 – 7. <p>Note: Per statutory requirements, during the period of FY 2022 through FY 2026, in each State from which an eligible project is submitted, DOT will award not fewer than one Large Bridge Project that is deemed justified or two Bridge Projects that are deemed justified. An award is not required to be made to an eligible project that was determined to not be justified under an</p>

	evaluation. (23 U.S.C. 124(C)(5)(B)(ii) and (iii)). The States that have already met this statutory requirement are listed on FHWA's Website at BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration (dot.gov) .
Eligible Project Types	<p><i>Bridge Project grants:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect one or more bridges on the NBI under 23 U.S.C. 144(b) (See 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(A)) 2. A project under the BIP Program includes bridge bundling and culverts (23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(B)) <p><i>Planning grants:</i> Project for planning, feasibility analyses, and revenue forecasting associated with the development of a project that would subsequently be eligible to apply for assistance under the BIP (See Division J, Title VIII of BIL)</p>
Funding	<p><i>Bridge Project grants:</i> A total of up to \$9.62 billion in FYs 2023 through 2026 BIP funds for the Large Bridge Project grants and Bridge Project grants funding opportunities. Awards of BIP funds for Bridge Project grants may not exceed 80 percent of total eligible project costs.</p> <p><i>Planning grants:</i> A total of up to \$20 million each in FYs 2023 through 2026 BIP funds for the Planning grant funding opportunity. There is no maximum or minimum award size.</p>
Deadline	<p><i>Bridge Project grants:</i> For FY 2023 and FY 2024 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 19, 2024</p> <p><i>Planning grants:</i> For FY 2023 and FY 2024 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 19, 2024</p>

NOTE: FHWA uses www.grants.gov for receipt of all applications. Applicants must register and use the system to submit applications electronically. Applicants are encouraged to register in advance of the submission deadline and to register to receive notifications of updates/amendments to this notice. Approval of user registrations for the site may take multiple weeks. It is the Applicant's responsibility to monitor the grants.gov site for any updates to this notice.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 through FY 2026 Bridge Investment Program, Planning and Bridge Project Grants

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to solicit applications for two funding categories: (1) Planning and (2) Bridge Project grants (a project with total eligible costs not greater than \$100 million) for awards under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP). This notice establishes a “rolling application” process for Planning and Bridge Project applications by providing the schedule, requirements, and selection process for such projects for the remaining available amounts of the BIP funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or BIL) for FY 2023 through FY 2026, which total up to \$9.7 billion (see section B.1 for details for funds available for each fiscal year). FHWA is soliciting applications for the other BIP project category in a separate NOFO available on Grants.gov, listing number 693JJ323NF00019: Large Bridge Project (a project with total eligible costs greater than \$100 million).

Planning grant funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for planning, feasibility analyses, and revenue forecasting associated with the development of a project that would be subsequently eligible to apply for assistance under the BIP.¹

Bridge Project funds will be awarded on a competitive basis for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection projects with total eligible costs of not greater than \$100 million that: (1) improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges; and (2) improve the condition of bridges in the United States by reducing (a) the number of bridges, and total person miles traveled over bridges, that are in poor condition or that are in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years, or (b) the number of bridges, and total person miles traveled over bridges, that do not meet current geometric design standards or cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network (23 U.S.C. 124(b)). Applications submitted under one funding opportunity may receive funding under a different funding category than identified in the application based on FHWA’s review of the project schedule and total project cost, see Section A.1.b.

This notice describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, applicable program and Federal requirements, and available assistance during the grant solicitation period.

¹ BIL, Division J, Title VIII, Highway Infrastructure Program heading, paragraph (4), third proviso.

ASSISTANCE LISTING (formerly CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE) NUMBER: 20.205 Highway Planning and Construction

DATES:

Planning Applications: For FY 2023 and FY 2024 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 19, 2024. For FY 2025 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EDT on October 1, 2024. For FY 2026 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EDT on October 1, 2025. See Section D.4 for important dates and deadlines for FYs 2023 – 2026 applications.

Bridge Project Applications: For FY 2023 and FY 2024 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on March 19, 2024. For FY 2025 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EDT on November 1, 2024. For FY 2026 funds, applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EDT on November 1, 2025.

The Grants.gov “Apply” function will open by December 20, 2023 for both funding categories and will close after March 1, 2026.

Applications must be submitted electronically through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on the date stated above and in Section D.4. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications in advance of the application deadline; however, awards will not be made until after the application deadline. Applications will be accepted throughout the year until the application deadline for the respective fiscal year of funding. See Sections A.3.c and D.4 for details on the application submittal, evaluation, and award timeline.

WEBINAR: FHWA plans to conduct outreach regarding the BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants in the form of a virtual recorded Webinar which will be posted when available on FHWA's Website: [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.gov/bip-funding-programs-management-and-preservation-bridges-structures-federal-highway-administration-dot-gov).

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted electronically through <https://www.grants.gov/>. Applicants must register and use the system to submit applications electronically. Applicants are encouraged to register in advance of the submission deadline and to register to receive notifications of updates/amendments to this notice. Approval of user registrations for the site may take several weeks. It is the applicant’s responsibility to monitor grants.gov for any updates to this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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DOT will not review applications in advance of their submission, but FHWA staff are available for questions. DOT will not provide technical assistance to any applicant including providing guidance on an application. Please forward your questions to BridgeInvestmentProgram@dot.gov. Questions and Answers (Q&A), previous recordings of Webinars as well as future information on updated Q&As, Webinars, or other events are available on FHWA's Website at [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](http://www.fhwa.gov/bip-funding-programs-management-and-preservation-bridges-structures-federal-highway-administration-dot.gov). In addition, FHWA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications at Grants.gov under this NOFO's page. To ensure an applicant receives accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to contact FHWA directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The organization of this notice is based on an outline set forth in Appendix I to Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 200, to ensure consistency across Federal financial assistance programs. However, that format is designed for locating specific information, not for linear reading. For readers seeking to familiarize themselves with how the BIP multi funding category program application process will work, DOT recommends starting with Section A (Program Description), which describes the goals of the BIP and DOT's purpose for providing separate selection criteria and application periods and

693JJ324NF00006

cut-off dates for consideration for both BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants funding categories and Section E (Application Review Information), which describes how DOT will select among eligible applications for both funding categories.

Each section of this notice contains information and instructions relevant to the application process for the BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants funding categories. The applicant should read this notice in its entirety to submit eligible and competitive applications.

This notice contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act that has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under 2125-0664. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424C, and SF-LLL has been approved by OMB under 2105-0520. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY:..... 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 5

SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION..... 8

 1. Overview..... 8

 a. Program Goals..... 8

 b. BIP Program Requirements and Considerations..... 9

 c. Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals..... 10

 2. Additional Information 11

 3. Changes from the FY 2022 NOFO 12

 a. Multi-Year Planning and Bridge Project Grants NOFO and Available Funding for Large Bridge Grants 12

 b. Application Templates and Merit Criteria 12

 c. Rolling Application Submission and Review Process; Amended Application Submission Opportunity..... 12

 d. Disposition of Bridge Project Grant Applications 15

SECTION B - FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION..... 16

 1. Award Amount Available..... 16

 2. Award Size..... 16

 3. Statutory FY 2022 – FY 2026 Funding Provisions 17

 a. HTF Amounts Available for Bridge Project Grants..... 17

 b. Culvert Limitation..... 17

 c. Unused Amounts..... 17

 d. Prohibited Use..... 17

 4. Availability of Funds 18

 5. Type of Award 19

 6. Period of Performance 19

SECTION C - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION 20

 1. Eligible Applicants..... 20

 a. Eligible Applicants..... 20

 b. Joint Applications 21

 2. Award Size and non-Federal Matching Requirements 21

 3. Eligible Projects 22

a. Eligible Projects	22
b. Eligible Project Requirements	24
c. Additional Eligibility Requirements – Bridge Project Grants	25
d. Eligible Project Costs.....	26
SECTION D - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	29
1. Address to Request Application Package	29
2. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	30
a. Application Forms:.....	30
b. Application Templates	31
c. Project Narrative	31
3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)	44
4. Submission Dates and Times	46
5. Intergovernmental Review.....	47
6. Funding Restrictions	47
7. Other Submission Requirements.....	47
a. Scalable Project Options	47
b. Submission Location.....	47
c. Consideration of Applications.....	47
d. Applications Received After the Application Deadline.....	47
SECTION E - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION	49
1. Criteria	49
a. Statutory Evaluation Requirements.....	49
b. Merit Criteria	51
c. Economic Analysis Rating.....	68
d. Project Readiness Rating	69
e. Overall Application Rating	71
f. Statutory Secretarial Considerations	72
g. Statutory Required Project Selection Priorities	73
h. DOT Priority Considerations	74
2. Review and Selection Process	75
a. Planning.....	75
b. Bridge Project	77
3. Additional Information	80

SECTION F - FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION	82
1. Federal Award Notice	82
2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	82
a. Program Requirements.....	82
3. Reporting.....	84
a. Progress Reporting on Grant Activities	84
b. Performance and Program Evaluation	85
c. BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grant Specific Reporting Requirements	85
d. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance	86
e. Other.....	86
SECTION G - FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACT(S).....	87
SECTION H - OTHER INFORMATION	88
1. Protection of Confidential Business Information	88
2. Publication of List of Applications	88
3. DOT Feedback on Applications.....	88
a. Debriefs during the Application Review Process – Bridge Project Grants Only	88
b. Debriefs for Applications Not Selected to Receive an Award	89

SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Overview

Section 11118 of the BIL, enacted as the IJA (Pub. L. 117-58, Nov. 15, 2021), established the BIP, which is codified at Title 23, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 124. The purpose of the BIP is to provide financial assistance for a project to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect one or more bridges on the NBI under 23 U.S.C. 144(b).

There are three funding categories of BIP funding: Planning, Bridge Project, and Large Bridge Project grants. The purpose of this NOFO is to solicit applications for the BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants. The Large Bridge Project grant BIP funding opportunity was announced under a separate NOFO (available on Grants.gov, listing number 693JJ323NF00019) for combined FY 2023 through FY 2026 funds. The term “bridge project” means an eligible project with total eligible project costs of not greater than \$100,000,000. See Section B.1 for the combined award amounts made available for Large Bridge Project, Bridge Project, and Planning grants for each of FYs 2023 through 2026.

Title VIII of Division J of BIL provides funding for Planning grants from FY 2023 through FY 2026 for planning, feasibility analyses, and revenue forecasting associated with the development of a project that would be subsequently eligible to apply for assistance under the BIP for a Bridge or Large Bridge Project Grant.

a. Program Goals

The goals of the BIP are:

1. To improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges;
2. To improve the condition of bridges in the United States by
 - a. Reducing the number of bridges in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years,²
 - b. Reducing the total person miles traveled over bridges in poor condition, or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years,
 - c. Reducing the number of bridges that do not meet current geometric design standards, or cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network, and

² 23 CFR 490.409 provides definition and methodology for classifying bridges in Good, Fair, and Poor condition. Bridge Condition is determined by the lowest rating of NBI condition ratings for Item 58 (Deck), Item 59 (Superstructure), Item 60 (Substructure), or Item 62 (Culvert). If the lowest rating is greater than or equal to 7, the bridge is classified as Good; if it is less than or equal to 4, the classification is Poor. Bridges rated 5 or 6 are classified as Fair.

- d. Reducing the total person miles traveled over bridges that do not meet current geometric design standards, or cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network;
3. To provide financial assistance that leverages and encourages non-Federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders involved in the planning, design, and construction of eligible projects.

b. BIP Program Requirements and Considerations

DOT will provide FY 2022 through FY 2026 BIP funds for Planning and Bridge Project Grants consistent with the statutory language and the priorities described in this NOFO.³ See Section E.1 for Statutory Requirements, Considerations, and Priorities.

Eligible applicants should be aware that DOT may only make a grant to a Bridge Project if two conditions are met: (1) the project is reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after the date on which BIP funds are obligated; and (2) preliminary engineering is complete for the project. See Section C.3.b for details on this requirement as well as Section B.4 for description of obligation for a BIP Project.

For Planning grants, consistent with the selection criteria and evaluation process described in this notice, DOT seeks to award BIP funds to projects based on an application's evaluation of meeting BIP Program goals, and the project description, schedule, and budget. Upon successful and timely completion of a Planning grant project, project sponsors may apply for a BIP Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project grant. As noted in Section E, during the period of FY 2022 through FY 2026, the Secretary will consider geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(A)(vii).

For Bridge Project grants, consistent with the selection criteria and evaluation process described in this notice, DOT seeks to award BIP funds to projects based on bridge condition, cost effectiveness, project readiness, and other considerations (see Section E for details). In selecting Bridge Project grants, DOT will consider geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the Statutory Required Project Selection Priorities discussed in Section E.1.g and the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities (for details see Section D.2.c).

³ Proper maintenance is an affirmative responsibility of the States as required by 23 U.S.C 116. FHWA's memorandum of February 24, 2023, updated Policy on Using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Resourced to Build a Better America Policy (BBAM), available at [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Building a Better America – Policy Framework | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-building-a-better-america-policy-framework), will help achieve these important goals. In addition, the BBAM is consistent with the BIL and recently issued Presidential Executive Orders (E.O.), including, E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 FR 7619); E.O. 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (86 FR 7009); and E.O. 14030 Climate Related Financial Risk (86 FR 27967).

Per statutory requirements, during the period of FY 2022 through FY 2026, in each State from which an eligible project is submitted, DOT will award not fewer than one Large Bridge Project that is deemed justified or two Bridge Projects that are deemed justified. An award is not required to be made to an eligible project that was determined to not be justified under an evaluation. (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(B)(ii) and (iii)). The States that have already met this statutory requirement are listed on FHWA's Website at [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bip/funding/management/preservation/bridges_structures/). The application review and selection process detailed in Section E.2 will take into account this statutory requirement in order to reach the geographic coverage intended for the program, and this will likely impact an applicant's ability to receive BIP Large Bridge or Bridge Project awards if previous awards were made to projects located in their State. Priority will be given to applications from States that have not yet received awards for one Large Bridge Project or two Bridge Project applications, until every State has received one Large Bridge Project or two Bridge Project awards. This takes into account all applications received from eligible entities within a State listed in Section C.1.a. An awarded Large Bridge Project or Bridge Project that is located in multiple States will count as an award for all States where the project is located. This statutory priority consideration is not applicable for Planning grants and the award of a Planning grant for a project located in a State will not affect this requirement for Large Bridge Project or Bridge Project awards.

To the extent an eligible applicant is unsure if their proposed project will meet the statutory requirements for Bridge Project grants, DOT encourages eligible applicants not to be dissuaded. If during the review FHWA determines an application should be considered for a Large Bridge Project or Planning grant, FHWA will notify the applicant of the determination and evaluate the application under this NOFO for a Planning grant or under the Large Bridge Project Grants NOFO (available on Grants.gov, listing number 693JJ323NF00019) for FY 2023 through FY 2026.

In addition, eligible applicants can apply to be considered for a future fiscal year BIP funding and should clearly specify in their application for which fiscal year funding they would like their project to receive funding. DOT will evaluate and consider these applications for future fiscal year BIP funding and will award selected applications after the application deadline for the applicable fiscal year BIP funding has passed, subject to availability of funds (see Section D).

c. Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals

DOT seeks to fund projects under this NOFO that, in combination with the merit criteria, advance the following:

Safety:

The National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) (issued January 27, 2022) commits DOT and FHWA to respond to the current crisis in traffic fatalities by “taking substantial, comprehensive action to significantly reduce serious and fatal injuries on the Nation’s roadways,” in pursuit of

the goal of achieving zero highway deaths through a Safe System Approach.⁴ The outcomes that are anticipated from the projects funded by the BIP should align with NRSS.

Climate Change and Sustainability:

DOT seeks to fund projects under the BIP that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector, incorporate evidence-based climate resilience measures and features, reduce the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from the project materials, and avoid adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species, and address the disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities, consistent with E.O. 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 FR 7619) , and as identified by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) or M-23-09.

Equity:

DOT seeks to award projects under the BIP that will create proportional impacts to all populations in a project area, remove transportation related disparities to all populations in a project area, and increase equitable access to project benefits, consistent with E.O. 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (86 FR 7009).

Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation:

DOT intends to use the BIP to support the creation of good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and the incorporation of strong labor standards and training and placement programs, especially registered apprenticeships, in project planning stages, consistent with E.O. 14025, *Worker Organizing and Empowerment* (86 FR 22829), and E.O. 14052, *Implementation of the IIJA* (86 FR 64335). DOT also intends to use the BIP Program to support wealth creation, consistent with DOT's Equity Action Plan through the inclusion of local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the use of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms.

Section E of this NOFO, which outlines BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants selection criteria, describes the process for selecting projects that further these goals. Section F.3 describes progress and performance reporting requirements for selected projects, including the relationship between that reporting and the program's selection criteria, and the Administration's goals as appropriate. Applicants are advised to review this NOFO in its entirety before submitting an application.

2. Additional Information

⁴ <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS>

DOT is committed to considering project funding decisions holistically among the various discretionary grant programs available in BIL. In addition, DOT recognizes that applicants may be seeking funding from multiple discretionary grant programs and opportunities. An applicant may seek the same award amounts from multiple DOT discretionary opportunities or seek a combination of funding from multiple DOT opportunities.

The applicant should identify any other DOT programs or opportunities they intend to apply for (or use if the Federal funding is already available to the applicant), and what award amounts they will be seeking, in the appropriate sections in the application.

3. Changes from the FY 2022 NOFO

a. Multi-Year Planning and Bridge Project Grants NOFO and Available Funding for Large Bridge Grants

This FY 2023 through FY 2026 BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grants NOFO makes changes from the FY 2022 BIP NOFO to reflect the amount of funding available for each fiscal year through FY 2026 and is seeking applications for Planning and Bridge Project Grants only. A separate NOFO was issued for eligible entities seeking to submit applications for Large Bridge Project grants with a total eligible project costs greater than \$100 million. As applicable, DOT can update this notice through a NOFO Amendment.

b. Application Templates and Merit Criteria

The Merit Criteria for Bridge Project grants have been revised to clarify what FHWA will evaluate under each criterion, as well as additional considerations for the evaluation of applications for FY 2023 through FY 2026 that will assist in providing clarity to the application and provide additional information. This NOFO updates the application review and selection criteria information found in Section E. Section D.2 also provides updated application templates that FHWA highly encourages applicants to use to provide project information.

c. Rolling Application Submission and Review Process; Amended Application Submission Opportunity

For the FY 2023 through FY 2026 NOFO, eligible applicants may submit an application for a Planning or Bridge Project grant for a specific fiscal year of funding at any time up to the application deadline for that fiscal year. Section D.4 provides the fiscal year application deadlines specific to each funding category. Unless the applicant requests a specific future year of funding, applications submitted after a fiscal year application deadline will be considered for the next round of funding after the announcement of projects selected to receive a BIP award for the current round of funding. For example, a Planning grant application submitted after February 19, 2024, or a Bridge Project application submitted after March 19, 2024, will be reviewed after projects selected to receive the respective FY 2023 and FY 2024 BIP awards have been announced.

After receipt, FHWA will review the Planning or Bridge Project grant application in accordance with the criteria in Section E.1 and follow the review and selection process for the applicable funding category as described in Section E.2 of this NOFO.

i. Planning Grant Applications

Planning grant applications that are determined to be ineligible after the initial eligibility screening or rated Not Recommended after the Merit Criteria review may not be amended and resubmitted for the current round of BIP funding. These applications must be submitted as a new BIP application to be considered for the next round of BIP funding. Applicants who are planning to re-apply for the BIP program using materials prepared for prior competitions should ensure that their new BIP application fully addresses the criteria and considerations described in this NOFO and that all relevant information is up to date and submitted in the proper format.

ii. Bridge Project Grant Applications

For Bridge Project grant applications, FHWA will make every effort to (1) complete the initial eligibility screening within 30 calendar days and (2) complete the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating within 120 calendar days. This timeframe is not guaranteed and is dependent on the number and quality of applications received.

A. Eligibility Determinations

If, after the initial eligibility screening, a Bridge Project grant application is determined to be ineligible on any basis other than compliance with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii of this NOFO, the application will be determined to be ineligible. This determination is final. Applicants will not be notified of this determination and will not have an opportunity to submit an amended application as described in this section.

For Bridge Project grant applications determined to be ineligible solely on the basis of not meeting the requirements for accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii of this NOFO, these applicants will have an opportunity to submit an amended application. The applicants will be allowed to submit only one amended application to address the accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii. Applicants that elect to submit an amended application must do so within 14 calendar days from the date FHWA notified the applicant of the ineligibility determination as described in this section and in Section E.2. FHWA's notification to the applicant of an ineligibility determination will include information about the basis for finding the application ineligible under Section C.3.c.ii. For Bridge Project grant applications, FHWA will not review any amended applications submitted after March 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through March 1, 2026. The last date an applicant will be notified of the eligibility rating is February 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through February 1, 2026. If, after evaluation of the amended application, the application is determined to be eligible, the application will move forward for review under Section E.1. of this NOFO.

These applicants will have an additional opportunity to submit an amended application, as applicable, as described in Section A.3.c.ii.B and Section E.2.

B. Merit Criteria Determinations

If, after the completion of the evaluation of an eligible application against the Merit Criteria an application is rated Not Recommended, that determination will be final, and applicants will not have an opportunity to submit an amended application as described in this section and E.2.

However, applicants may submit a new BIP application to be considered for future fiscal years of BIP funding as described in Section A.3.d. Only those eligible Bridge Project grant applications that receive a medium or higher rating for Merit Criteria will be advanced to have an Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Rating and a Project Readiness Rating completed as described in Section E.1. Therefore, Bridge Project grant applications that receive either a low or medium-low rating for Merit Criteria will not be evaluated for the Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Rating nor the Project Readiness Rating.

For all Bridge Project grant applications determined to be eligible and that receive a medium or higher rating for Merit Criteria, after FHWA completes the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating reviews, FHWA will provide feedback and/or share the outcome/rating of the evaluation with the applicant, and applicants will have an opportunity to submit an amended application as described in this section and in Section E.2. Applicants will be allowed to submit only one amended application to address an overall application rating. Applicants that elect to submit an amended application must do so within 14 calendar days from the date FHWA notified the applicant of the overall application rating or from the date of a debrief as described in this section and in Section E.2. FHWA’s notification to the applicant on the overall application rating will not include detailed information beyond the final application rating. Applicants that would like to receive more information are encouraged to request a debrief within 14 calendar days from the date FHWA notified the applicant. For Bridge Project grants, FHWA will not review any amended applications submitted after July 17, 2024, for FY 2023 and FY 2024 BIP funding and March 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through March 1, 2026. The last date an applicant will be notified of the overall application rating, will be June 17, 2024, for FY 2023 and FY 2024 BIP funding and February 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through February 1, 2026.

BIP Fiscal Year of Funding for Bridge Project Grants	FHWA Applicant Notification Deadline ⁵	Amended Application Submission Deadline ⁵
FY 2023 – FY 2024	June 17, 2024	July 17, 2024
FY 2025	February 1, 2025	March 1, 2025
FY 2026	February 1, 2026	March 1, 2026

⁵ If these dates fall on a weekend, the deadline date will be on the following business day.

d. Disposition of Bridge Project Grant Applications

i. Highly Recommended and Recommended Bridge Project Grant Applications Not Selected to Receive an Award

All Highly Recommended and Recommended Bridge Project grant applications not selected to receive an award under the fiscal year requested in the application will be carried forward for consideration under the next fiscal year of BIP funding. However, if there are any changes to the project, including but not limited to scope, schedule, and budget, an applicant must submit an amendment to the application by the application deadline for the next fiscal year. Applicants are encouraged to submit a summary of all changes with the updated application. The applicant is also responsible for updating an application should an amended NOFO be issued.

ii. Ineligible and Not Recommended Bridge Project Grant Applications

All sponsors of Bridge Project grant applications, including amended applications, that receive a final ineligibility determination or Not Recommended rating must submit a new application for any future fiscal year of BIP funds. Applicants who are planning to re-apply for the BIP Program using materials prepared for prior competitions should ensure that their new BIP application fully addresses the criteria and considerations described in this NOFO and that all relevant information is up to date and submitted in the proper format.

SECTION B - FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Award Amount Available

The BIL provided a total of up to \$20 million each in FYs 2023 through 2026 BIP funds for the Planning grant funding opportunity. In addition, the BIL provided a total of up to \$9.62 billion in FYs 2023 through 2026 BIP funds for the Large Bridge Project grants and Bridge Project grants funding opportunities. These funds are available in part through the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP), which is appropriated budget authority out of the General Funds (GF) of the U.S. Treasury, as well as through the Federal-aid highway program, which is authorized contract authority out of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), as detailed in the table below. Funds cannot be obligated before the fiscal year in which they are made available. As such, as much as \$4.77 billion of the funds in the table can be obligated before FY 2025.

BIP Fiscal Year Funding⁶	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
HIP GF⁷	\$1,779,295,000	\$1,779,295,000	\$1,779,295,000	\$1,779,295,000
HTF⁸	\$543,920,000	\$630,000,000 ⁹	\$653,000,000 ⁹	\$676,000,000 ⁹
Total Available for Large Bridge and Bridge Project Grants	\$2,323,215,000	\$2,409,295,000	\$2,432,295,000	\$2,455,295,000
Total Available for Planning Grants (HIP GF)	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000

2. Award Size

⁶ Funding amounts may be adjusted based on scheduled or projected payments for Large Bridge project grants under multiyear grant agreements.

⁷ Of the \$1.847 billion in advance appropriations for the HIP for each fiscal year of BIL, \$20 million set-aside for Tribal transportation facility bridges, \$20 million set-aside for Planning grants, and \$27.705 million set-aside for operations and administrations of FHWA per fiscal year were excluded.

⁸ The HTF amount is calculated as the authorized contract authority from BIL less a set-aside for Tribal transportation facility bridges and an amount due to the imposition of the annual obligation limitation. For FY 2023 BIP funding, the amount is \$640 million authorized less a set-aside of \$18 million for Tribal transportation facility bridges and about \$78 million due to the imposition of the annual obligation limitation.

⁹ The FYs 2024, 2025, 2026 HTF amounts are subject to the imposition of the annual obligation limitation in future Appropriation Acts by Congress.

For BIP Planning grants there is no minimum or maximum BIP award amount size; however, the cost of the ultimate construction project (the project that will apply for a Bridge Project or a Large Bridge Project grant) must be no less than \$3.125 million.¹⁰

For Bridge Project grants, a BIP grant shall be in an amount that is adequate to fully fund the project (in combination with other funding resources identified in the application) and not less than \$2.5 million, with a maximum award amount of not more than 80 percent of the total eligible project costs. The \$2.5 million minimum BIP award size for Bridge Project grants equates to a minimum \$3.125 million in total eligible project costs in order to meet the non-Federal match requirement and minimum BIP award size. Both Planning and Bridge Project Grants have non-Federal matching requirements as described in Section C.2.

3. Statutory FY 2022 – FY 2026 Funding Provisions

a. HTF Amounts Available for Bridge Project Grants

DOT shall use at least 50 percent of funds made available out of the HTF to carry out this program for Large Bridge Project grants (23 U.S.C. 124(p)(1)). The amounts available for Bridge Project grants out of the HTF are \$320 million, \$325 million, \$337.5 million, and \$350 million in FYs 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026, respectively, before set-asides for Tribal transportation facility bridges and the imposition of the annual obligation limitation.

b. Culvert Limitation

DOT may award no more than 5 percent of funds made available for each fiscal year for the BIP to eligible projects solely consisting of culvert replacement or rehabilitation (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(6)). The culverts are required to be on the NBI under 23 U.S.C. 144(b).

c. Unused Amounts

Of the amounts made available out of the HTF for FYs 2022 through 2026, not less than 50 percent in the aggregate shall be used for BIP Large Bridge Project grants (23 U.S.C. 124(p)(1)). If, in FY 2026, the Secretary determines that grants under the BIP will not meet this requirement, the Secretary shall use the unused amounts to make other grants under the program such as the Bridge Project grants during FY 2026, consistent with 23 U.S.C. 124(p)(2).

d. Prohibited Use

Grant funds may not be used to support or oppose union organizing.

¹⁰ Although there is no minimum or maximum BIP award amount size, no more than \$20 million will be awarded to Planning grants from any one FY of funding.

4. Availability of Funds

The BIP funds are available for obligation for a total of four years (the fiscal year in which they are provided plus 3 additional years). For example, the FY 2023 BIP funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2026. Obligation of BIP grant funds occurs when a selected applicant enters a grant agreement (or a project agreement which is a type of grant agreement as described in Section B.5 (Type of Award) with FHWA. For construction, this is generally after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements.

Once obligated, HIP GF grant funds may be used to reimburse a recipient only for eligible costs incurred up to 5 years after the obligation deadline, whereas HTF funds do not have an expenditure deadline. For example, FY 2023 BIP funds from HIP GF must be expended by September 30, 2031. BIP funds remain available for obligation and expenditure as follows:

BIP Fiscal Year Funding	HIP GF Period of Availability for		HTF Period of Availability for	
	Obligation Deadline (Lapse)	Expenditure Deadline (Cancellation)	Obligation Deadline (Lapse)	Expenditure Deadline
FY 2023	Sep. 30, 2026	Sep. 30, 2031	Sep. 30, 2026	Available until expended
FY 2024	Sep. 30, 2027	Sep. 30, 2032	Sep. 30, 2027	Available until expended
FY 2025	Sep. 30, 2028	Sep. 30, 2033	Sep. 30, 2028	Available until expended
FY 2026	Sep. 30, 2029	Sep. 30, 2034	Sep. 30, 2029	Available until expended

Any such amounts not obligated within the period of availability for obligation shall lapse. Once the period of availability for obligation has expired, BIP funds will only remain available for adjusting and liquidating obligations as authorized in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 1553.

Obligated BIP balances from HIP GF are available for expenses properly charged to the account and incurred until the cancellation of the funds, which occurs 5 years after lapse as shown in the table above. After the dates of availability for expenditure, any unexpended balances of obligated HIP GF BIP funds shall be de-obligated. Any such funds that have not been expended are then cancelled and returned to the U.S. Treasury in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 1552 and shall no longer be available for obligation or expenditure.

The BIP Bridge Project funding category has specific funding restrictions. Refer to Section D.6 for greater detail on funding restrictions.

5. Type of Award

If the successful applicant is a State department of transportation (State DOT) or a State DOT will serve as a pass-through entity to a non-State DOT entity, BIP funds will be awarded upon the execution of a project agreement, which is a type of grant agreement for administration of funds to a State DOT in the Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS).

If the successful applicant is a non-State DOT, funds will be awarded upon the execution of a grant agreement with FHWA. A determination will be made if the successful applicant will administer the project or if the successful applicant included a request for an applicable State DOT, FHWA Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Lands Management Agency (FLMA), or Tribal government to administer the project.

6. Period of Performance

If a grant recipient will be a State DOT or if a State DOT will serve as a pass-through to a non-State DOT entity awarded a grant, DOT Payment System will be “Current Bill” in FMIS and the start of the period of performance will begin on the date BIP funds are authorized in FMIS and end on the project end date in FMIS.

If a grant recipient will be a non-State DOT entity, DOT Payment System will be “DELPHI eInvoicing” and the start of the period of performance will begin on the date the grant agreement is executed by FHWA, which will obligate the BIP funds, and end according to the period of performance listed in the grant agreement.

SECTION C - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

To be selected for a BIP Planning grant, an applicant must meet the eligibility requirements under this Section C including: Eligible Applicant; Eligible Project; Statutory Award Size and non-Federal Match requirements; and Eligible Project Costs. Applications that do not meet all threshold eligibility requirements will not be evaluated under the Merit Criteria in Section E.

To be selected for a BIP Bridge Project grant, an applicant must meet the eligibility requirements under this Section C including: Eligible Applicant; Eligible Project; Statutory Award Size and non-Federal Match requirements; Construction Start Date After BIP Funds Obligation; Preliminary Engineering Completion; Maintenance Commitment; Bike and Pedestrian Accommodation; Eligible Project Costs; and Requirement for Consideration of BIP Grants per State. Applications that do not meet all threshold eligibility requirements will not be evaluated under the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating in Section E.

1. Eligible Applicants

a. Eligible Applicants

Both the Planning and Bridge Project BIP funding categories have the same statutory rules for eligible applicants.

Eligible Applicants for Planning and Bridge Project Grants (23 U.S.C. 124(d))
a. A State or a group of States; ¹¹
b. A metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area (as designated by the Bureau of the Census) with a population over 200,000;
c. A unit of local government or a group of local governments;
d. A political subdivision of a State or local government;
e. A special purpose district or a public authority with a transportation function;
f. An FLMA;
g. A Tribal government or a consortium of Tribal governments; and
h. A multi-State or multijurisdictional group of entities as described above in 1 – 7.

¹¹ The term “State” means any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico (23 U.S.C. 101(a)(28)).

b. Joint Applications

Multiple States or a multijurisdictional group that submit a joint application should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact (POC). The lead applicant must be an eligible applicant. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and should be signed or include a letter of support by each applicant. If selected, the lead applicant will be the recipient of the grant funds and will be responsible for financial administration of the project.

2. Award Size and non-Federal Matching Requirements

For Planning grants, there is no maximum or minimum award size (see Section B.2 Award Size). However, non-Federal matching funds are required for Planning grants, and the total Federal contributions for the project cannot exceed the Federal share payable amounts in 23 U.S.C. 120.

Awards of BIP funds for Bridge Project grants may not exceed 80 percent of total eligible project costs (see Section B.2 Award Size). Per 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(4), Federal assistance other than a BIP award may be combined with a BIP award, in which case total Federal assistance for a BIP project may not exceed the Federal share for the project under 23 U.S.C. 120.¹²

In the case of an eligible project for an off-system bridge, as defined under 23 U.S.C. 133(f)(1) as a highway bridge¹³ located on a public road that is not a Federal-aid highway,¹⁴ Federal assistance other than a BIP award may be combined with a BIP award, as long as the total Federal assistance provided for such project does not exceed 90 percent of the total eligible project costs.

Unless otherwise authorized by statute, non-Federal match may not be counted as non-Federal share for both a BIP grant and another Federal program. For example, for a Bridge Project that receives both a BIP award and a Mega program award under the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program,¹⁵ and that has a Federal share of 80 percent under 23 U.S.C. 120, the project would need to provide a non-Federal match of 20 percent. An example of a Federal

¹² https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/fedshare_fact_sheet.cfm

¹³ Although 23 U.S.C. 133(f)(1) includes low water crossing in the definition of “off-system bridge,” 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(A) defines an eligible project as a project to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect 1 or more bridges on the NBI under section 23 U.S.C. 144(b). Because a low water crossing is not considered a bridge under 23 CFR 650.305, such structures are not included in the NBI. Therefore, a low water crossing is not eligible for BIP funding.

¹⁴ 23 U.S.C. 133(f)(1) defines an “off-system bridge” as a highway bridge or low water crossing located on a public road that is not a Federal-aid highway. “Federal-aid highway” is defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(6) as a public highway eligible for assistance under chapter 1 of 23 U.S.C. other than a highway functionally classified as a local road or rural minor collector. Therefore, an off-system bridge is a bridge whose Item 26 (Functional Classification) from the NBI is coded either 08, 09, or 19 whereas, on-system bridges are those bridges coded 01, 02, 06, 07, 11, 12, 14, 16, or 17.

¹⁵ <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/mpdg-NOFO-2023-2024>

program that may be used for the local match is the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program. (See 23 U.S.C. 603(b)(8)).

For a project under BIP, DOT cannot consider previously incurred costs or previously expended or encumbered funds towards the matching requirement. Matching funds are subject to the same Federal requirements as BIP funds.

Non-Federal sources include State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue, local funds originating from State or local revenue-funded programs, private funds, or other funding sources of non-Federal origin. For each project that receives a grant under this NOFO, DOT expects the project to be completed using at least the amount of non-Federal funding that was specified in the application.

For projects under the program of an FLMA, a Tribal government, or a consortium of Tribal governments, non-BIP Grant funds may be used to pay the remaining share of the cost of a BIP project and there are no maximum Federal involvement limitations, i.e., Federal funds other than those from the BIP may be used to satisfy 100 percent of the non-Federal share (see 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(4)(C)).

Additional information on non-Federal matching requirements can be found at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/policy/memonfmr_tapered20190515.htm.

3. Eligible Projects

a. Eligible Projects

The Planning and the Bridge Project BIP funding categories have different statutory rules for what kinds of projects are eligible for funding under these categories.

Eligible Projects	
Planning Grant	Bridge Project (A project with total eligible project costs of not greater than \$100 million) (See 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(2))
1. Project for planning, feasibility analyses, and revenue forecasting associated with the development of a project that would subsequently be eligible to apply for assistance under the BIP (See Division J, Title VIII of BIL) ¹⁶	1. Project to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect one or more bridges on the NBI under 23 U.S.C. 144(b) ¹⁷ (See 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(A)) 2. A project under the BIP Program includes bridge bundling ¹⁷ and culverts ¹⁸ (23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(B))

Under the BIP Planning grants, environmental review, preliminary engineering, design work, and other preconstruction activities apart from Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) activities are ineligible project activities.

“Replacement” is defined in [Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory](#) as total replacement of a bridge with a new facility constructed in the same general traffic corridor. A nominal amount of approach work, sufficient to connect the new facility to the existing roadway or to return the gradeline to an attainable touchdown point in accordance with good design practice, is also eligible. Please refer to the Additional Guidance on approach work: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/0650dsup.cfm>. The replacement structure must meet the current geometric, construction and structural standards required for the types and volume of projected traffic on the facility over its design life.

“Rehabilitation” is defined in 23 CFR 650.305 as the major work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge as well as work necessary to correct major safety defects. Examples of bridge rehabilitation include but are not limited to: partial or complete deck replacement, superstructure replacement, substructure/culvert strengthening or partial/full replacement, structure widening, or major modification to substantial portions of the bridge.

¹⁶ BIL provides \$20 million per fiscal year specifically for these activities.

¹⁷ This includes a bundle of projects, regardless of whether the bundle of projects meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 144(j)(5), which removes the requirement of the bundled projects having similar Federal and local share matches. Bridge Bundling is the use of a single contract award for preservation, preventive maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement of multiple bridges. Guidance on bridge bundling can be found in the Bridge Bundling Guidebook at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/pdfs/alternative_project_delivery/bridge_bundling_guidebook_070219.pdf.

¹⁸ This includes projects to replace or rehabilitate culverts for the purpose of improving flood control and improved habitat connectivity for aquatic species. The culverts are required to be on the NBI under 23 U.S.C. 144(b).

“Preservation” of bridges is defined in [FHWA’s Bridge Preservation Guide](#) as actions or strategies that prevent, delay, or reduce deterioration of bridges or bridge elements; restore the function of existing bridges; keep bridges in good or fair condition; and extend their service life.

“Protection” of bridges includes, as stated in 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(9), painting, scour countermeasures, seismic retrofits, impact protection measures, security countermeasures, and protection against extreme events.

Bridges included in a Planning grant application, including each of the bridges in a bundle of projects, are required to be on the NBI since these projects should subsequently be eligible to apply for assistance under the BIP. Similarly, bridges included in a BIP Bridge Project grant application, including each of the bridges in a bundle of projects, should be on the NBI. To be eligible, all the bundled bridges should be advertised on the same bridge project contract. In addition, each bridge in the bundle should meet the project eligibility criteria for the bundled project to be eligible for BIP funding.

b. Eligible Project Requirements

Eligible Project Requirements for BIP Awards		
Planning	Bridge Project	Instructions
Not applicable.	1. The project is reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after the date on which BIP funds are obligated for the project. (23 U.S.C. 124(e)(2))	Please provide expected date of obligation (see Section B.4) of BIP funds and construction start date, ¹⁹ referencing project budget and schedule as needed. If the project has multiple independent components, or will be obligated and constructed in multiple phases, please provide sufficient information to show that each component meets this requirement. DOT will base its determination on the project risk as assessed according to the Project Readiness Rating consisting of Environmental Risk, Financial Completeness, and Technical Assessments.
Not applicable.	2. Preliminary engineering is complete for	For a project or independent project component to be based on the results of preliminary engineering, please indicate which of the following activities have been completed as of the date of application submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Assessments • Topographic Surveys

¹⁹ For BIP, construction start date means the anticipated date of project mobilization for physical construction.

Eligible Project Requirements for BIP Awards		
	<p>the project.²⁰ (23 U.S.C. 124(e)(3))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metes and Bounds Surveys • Geotechnical Investigations • Hydrologic Analysis • Utility Engineering • Traffic Studies • Financial Plans • Revenue Estimates • Hazardous Materials Assessments • General estimates of the types and quantities of materials • Other work needed to establish parameters for the final design. <p>If one or more of these activities was included in a larger plan or document not described above, please explicitly state that and reference the document. DOT will base its determination on the assessment by technical evaluators.</p>

c. Additional Eligibility Requirements – Bridge Project Grants

In addition to meeting the BIP statutory project eligibility requirements, applicants for Bridge Project grants must specifically address two title 23, U.S.C. requirements: (1) how the bridge will be maintained and (2) accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

i. Maintenance Commitment

The application must demonstrate how the grant recipient, whether a State DOT or non-State DOT direct recipient, will maintain or cause to be maintained a Bridge Project that receives BIP funds (23 U.S.C. 116(b)). Competitive applications will identify which entity will be responsible for maintaining the BIP funded project, estimated maintenance costs over the life of the project, and sources to fund those costs.

ii. Bike and Pedestrian Accommodation

The BIP Bridge Project grants are subject to requirements for accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 217(e). Under this provision, all projects with Federal

²⁰ Under 23 U.S.C. 124(e)(3), the Secretary may make a grant under BIP only to an eligible entity for a project that is based on the results of preliminary engineering. Although a project may be selected to receive a BIP grant for construction, DOT will not make the grant funds available until all applicable Federal requirements have been met, including completion of preliminary engineering. The BIP grant or “Federal award” will be provided pursuant to a grant agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the award and the Federal award date means the date the grant agreement is signed by the authorized official of FHWA. (2 CFR 200.1 and 200.201).

financial participation (including under BIP) that replace or rehabilitate a highway bridge deck are required to provide safe accommodation of pedestrians or bicyclists, as applicable, on the bridge, when both of the following conditions are met: (1) the bridge is located on a highway on which pedestrians or bicyclists are allowed to operate at each end of the bridge; and (2) FHWA determines that safe accommodation can be provided at reasonable cost.²¹

d. Eligible Project Costs

Planning grants and Bridge Project grants have different statutory rules for what activities are eligible project costs under these categories.

Eligible project costs for Planning grants are planning, feasibility analyses, and revenue forecasting activities for projects in the early phases of project development per the BIP statute in Division J, Title VIII (BIL, Pub. L. 117-58) and 23 CFR 636.103. However, costs of an environmental review, preliminary engineering, design work, and other preconstruction activities apart from PEL activities, are ineligible activities for Planning grants.

The list below restates what activities are eligible project costs for Bridge Project grants per the BIP statute in 23 U.S.C. 124(h) and (i).

1. Development phase activities, including planning, feasibility analyses, revenue forecasting, environmental review, preliminary engineering and design work, and other preconstruction activities,
2. Construction, which includes replacement and preservation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of real property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, acquisition of equipment, and operational improvements directly related to improving system performance,
3. Expenses related to the protection as described in 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(10) of a bridge, including seismic or scour protection, and

²¹ The first step in this process is to assess whether the bridge is located on a highway on which pedestrians or bicyclists are allowed to operate at each end of the bridge. If that is the case, in making a determination as to whether safe accommodation can be provided at a reasonable cost FHWA will rely on its Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning, Program, and Project Development Guidance (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/guidance_2023.pdf); FHWA will presume that safe accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians can be provided at reasonable cost for all BIP projects absent an affirmative showing by the project sponsor that the cost of such accommodation would exceed 20 percent of the cost of the larger transportation project. For instances where such accommodation exceeds 20 percent, the addition of bicyclist and pedestrian accommodation is not required, but FHWA encourages States to consider providing for such accommodation.

4. On the request of an eligible entity carrying out an eligible project, amounts awarded to the entity to pay subsidy and administrative costs necessary to provide to the entity Federal credit assistance under 23 U.S.C. chapter 6 (TIFIA Program).

This list summarizes the statutorily defined BIP eligible project costs for Bridge Project grants. DOT recognizes that there are other eligible project costs, such as community engagement, that may be necessary for performance of a BIP award. Under 23 U.S.C. 139(j), public entities receiving Federal assistance under 23 U.S.C., or chapter 53, of 49 U.S.C., may provide funds to Federal Agencies, State agencies, and Tribes participating in the environmental review process for the project.

i. Determination of Whether a Bridge Project’s Total Eligible Costs Are Not Greater Than \$100 Million

For a Bridge Project, to determine whether total eligible project costs are \$100 million or less, DOT will count all future eligible project costs under the award and some related costs incurred before selection for a BIP Bridge Project grant.

DOT will include previously incurred costs in total eligible project costs only if they were eligible project costs under Section C.3.d and were expended as part of the project for which the applicant seeks funds. Although previously incurred costs may be used for meeting the minimum threshold described in this section, they cannot be reimbursed with BIP grant funds unless DOT has approved a Letter of No Prejudice, nor will they count toward the project’s required non-Federal share.

Bridge Project grant applications will be evaluated and reviewed for the reasonableness of the estimate provided in the application. For projects with total eligible costs near \$100 million, if the reviewer determines the estimate is missing sufficient contingency amounts to cover cost increases or identifies items that are undervalued, they may recommend the project costs be adjusted and potentially be reviewed as a Large Bridge Project grant. If after the selection of grants is made and the project costs increase due to unforeseen circumstances or as a result of required changes to the design or project scope, FHWA will review the application estimates and the revisions and determine if the original application estimates were reasonable. If FHWA determines the original application was reasonable based on the available information at the time of submission of the application, the project will continue to be processed through the grant agreement as a Bridge Project. If after a review, FHWA determines that there was information available to the applicant that should have resulted in a higher estimate, the selection of the award may be revoked.

ii. Letters of No Prejudice

Under 23 U.S.C. 124(k), DOT may pay to an applicant all eligible project costs under the BIP, including costs for an activity for an eligible project incurred prior to the date on which the

project receives BIP funding assistance. Reimbursement for the activity is dependent upon the following:

- a. Before an applicant carries out the activity, DOT approves through a Letter of No Prejudice the activity, with a finding that it is an eligible BIP activity;
- b. The FHWA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project development process is complete for the project with a verifiable Record of Decision (ROD), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or Categorical Exclusion (CE) Determination; and
- c. The activity is carried out without Federal assistance and in accordance with all applicable procedures and requirements.

Interest and other financing costs in carrying out an eligible activity for an eligible project may also be incurred under the process set forth in 23 U.S.C. 124(k)(2).

Applicants interested in seeking approval for an eligible activity for an eligible BIP project are advised that an approval (1) does not constitute an obligation of the Federal Government and (2) shall not alter or influence any evaluation for a Bridge Project application or any recommendation by DOT for providing BIP funds to the project (23 U.S.C. 142(k)(3)).

Applicants interested in seeking a Letter of No Prejudice should do so with the understanding that if approved they are proceeding at risk, as there is no guarantee that costs incurred will be reimbursed by DOT.

SECTION D - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

All application materials may be found on Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Once at Grants.gov, select the Search Grants tab. Then enter one of the following:

- Opportunity Number: **693JJ324NF00006**
- Opportunity Name: **Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 – 2026 Bridge Investment Program, Planning and Bridge Project Grants**
- Assistance Listing Number: **20.205 Highway Planning and Construction**

When at one of these pages, select the Opportunity, which will open to a page with several tabs. The first tab is a synopsis of the opportunity. Select the Application Package tab to download the forms needed to submit an FY 2023 - 2026 BIP Planning and Bridge Project grant application.

For a Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD), please call (202) 366-3993. If potential applicants are unable to download the application package from the Internet, they may send a written request for a paper copy to the below address. Requests should be sent to:

Angela Jones
Agreement Specialist
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email (preferred): BridgeInvestmentProgram@dot.gov
Phone: 202-366-4255

Alternate:

Hector Santamaria
Agreement Officer/Team Leader
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email (preferred): BridgeInvestmentProgram@dot.gov
Phone: 202-493-2402

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2. Content and Form of Application Submission

The content and form of the application submission is described below. Please be advised that DOT may share application information within DOT or with other Federal Agencies if DOT determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

All applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov.

The application package must consist of the following in this order:

a. Application Forms:

i. Standard Form 424

Note: Applicants may leave fields 5a, 5b, 6, 7, and 13 blank on the form.

Note: A number of separate PDF flat files must be attached in Item 15 to provide required project information that is not included in the body of the SF-424.

Instructions for adding Item 15 Attachments:

- Click on "Add Attachments" in Item 15 to open the first pop-up window. Click "Add Attachment" and a second pop-up File Explorer/Directory window will appear, from which you can choose files to attach. Attachments can be added one at a time or all at once by holding down the CTRL key and selecting multiple files. Select "Open" to add the selected files as attachments.
- Click "Done" to finalize the attachments.
- Click "View Attachments" to see a list of files that have been added as attachments.

Required attachment(s): the Project Narrative must be added as Attachments to Item 15 of the SF-424.

ii. Required Forms for Construction Projects

Applicants proposing construction-related projects must submit the Standard Form 424C (Budget Information Construction Programs).

Note: The Standard Form 424C should be supported by a budget narrative. The budget narrative should breakdown costs for each cost classification used on the Standard Form 424C.

iii. Required Forms for Non-Construction Projects

Applicants proposing non-construction-related projects must submit the Standard Form 424A (Budget Information Non-Construction Programs).

Note: The Standard Form 424A should be supported by a budget narrative. The budget narrative should breakdown costs for each cost classification used on the Standard Form 424A.

iv. Mandatory Forms for All Applications

- A. Grants.gov Lobbying Form; and
- B. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (SF-LLL).

Note: All mandatory forms are available for download at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-mandatory-family.html>.

b. Application Templates

Applicants for a BIP Planning grant are strongly encouraged to use the Planning application template. Applicants for a BIP Bridge Project grant are strongly encouraged to use the Bridge Project application template as well as the BIP Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Tool, which are posted on FHWA's Website: [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#). Applicants for a BIP Planning or Bridge Project grant may submit a supplemental project narrative to provide any additional information necessary for DOT to determine that the project meets the statutory eligibility criteria described in Section C and to assess the Merit Criteria specified in Section E.1. The application templates follow the outline below. If a supplemental project narrative is submitted with the application, DOT recommends that the project narrative follow the outline below. Following the outline will also assist evaluators in locating relevant information.

c. Project Narrative

For BIP Planning grant applications, DOT recommends applications include the following sections in their Project Narrative:

I. Basic Project Information – Description, Location, and Parties	See D.2.c.I
II. National Bridge Inventory Data	See D.2.c.II
III. Project Budget – Grant Funds, Sources, and Use of all Project Funding	See D.2.c.III
IV. Merit Criteria	See E.1.b
V. Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals	See D.2.c.VII and Section A.1.c

VI. DOT Priority Selection Considerations	See D.2.c.VIII and Section E.1.h
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For BIP Bridge Project grant applications, DOT recommends applications include the following sections in their Project Narrative:

I. Basic Project Information – Description, Location, and Parties	See D.2.c.I
II. National Bridge Inventory Data	See D.2.d.II
III. Project Budget – Grant Funds, Sources, and Use of all Project Funding	See D.2.c.III
IV. Merit Criteria	See E.1.b
V. Benefit-Cost Analysis	See D.2.c.V
VI. Project Readiness and Environmental Risk	See D.2.c.VI and E.1.d
VII. Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals	See D.2.c.VII and Section A.1.c
VIII. DOT Priority Selection Considerations	See D.2.c.VIII and Section E.1.h

For all Planning and Bridge Project applications, the project narrative should augment information provided in the application template necessary for DOT to do two things: (1) to determine that the project satisfies eligibility requirements described in Section C, the Merit Criteria in Section E.1, and the Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals described in this Section; and (2) to assess the statutory selection criteria and considerations specified in Section E.1 that are applicable to BIP Planning and Bridge Project grants. In addition to the information submitted in an application template, applicants should submit a detailed statement of work, detailed project schedule, and detailed project budget. Applicants may submit a project narrative to support these project elements and should include a table of contents, maps, and graphics, as appropriate, to make the information easier to review.

To the extent practicable, applicants should provide supporting data and documentation in a form that is directly verifiable by DOT. As described in Section A.3 and Section E.2, when DOT notifies an applicant of the overall application rating, DOT may request additional information, including additional data, to clarify supporting data and documentation submitted in an application, but DOT encourages applicants to submit the most relevant and complete

information they can provide. DOT also encourages applicants, to the extent practicable, to provide data in a form that is publicly available or verifiable.

DOT recommends that the project narrative be prepared with standard formatting preferences (i.e., a single-spaced document, using a standard 12-point font such as Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins). The project narrative may not exceed 25 pages in length, Appendices may include documents supporting assertions or conclusions made in the 25-page project narrative and do not count towards the 25-page limit. If possible, Website links to supporting documentation should be provided rather than copies of these supporting materials. If supporting documents are submitted, applicants should clearly identify within the project narrative the relevant portion of the project narrative that each supporting document supports. At the applicant's discretion, relevant materials provided previously to a DOT Modal Administration in support of a different DOT financial assistance program may be referenced and described as unchanged. DOT recommends using appropriately descriptive file names (e.g., "Project Narrative," "Maps," "Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Support," etc.) for all attachments.

I. Basic Project Information – Project Description, Location, and Parties

Project Description

The applicant should provide a concise description of the project, the specific improvement(s) needed for the bridge, how it will address those challenges, and advance one or more goals of the BIP. The project description should discuss the project's history, including a description of any previously incurred costs. The applicant may use this section to place the project into a broader context of other infrastructure investments being pursued by the project sponsor.

Project Location

The applicant should describe in the application the project location, including a detailed geographical description of the proposed project, a map of the project's location and connections to existing transportation infrastructure, and geospatial data describing the project location (shapefiles will be accepted under 200 MB file size).

The application should also identify:

- a. Whether the project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty,²² including the relevant county and/or census tract(s);

²² Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP) means: (1) any county that has consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty during the 30-year period preceding November 15, 2021, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses (see <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/dec/census-poverty.html> for county dataset) and the most recent annual Small Area Income Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of

- b. Whether the project is located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community,²³ including the relevant census tract(s); and
- c. If the project is located within the boundary of a 2020 Census-designated Urbanized Area, the application should identify the Urbanized Area.²⁴

the Census; (2) any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014-2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census (see <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=ACSST1Y2018.S1701&tid=ACSST5Y2018.S1701&hidePreview=false> for 2014-2018 5-year data series from the American Community Survey); or (3) any territory or possession of the United States. A county satisfies this definition only if 20 percent of its population was living in poverty in all three of the listed datasets: (a) the 1990 decennial census; (b) the 2000 decennial census; and (c) the 2021 Small Area Income Poverty Estimates (on December 15, 2022, the 2021 Small Area Income Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Dataset was published at <https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2021/demo/saipe/2021-state-and-county.html>. DOT is updating its APP resources based on the 2021 SAIPE data.) DOT will list all counties and census tracts that meet this definition for Areas of Persistent Poverty at <https://datahub.transportation.gov/stories/s/tsyd-k6jj>.

²³ DOT will apply the definition of “disadvantaged communities” that is consistent with OMB, White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy (CPO)’s Addendum to the Interim Implementation Guidance (https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf). Historically Disadvantaged Communities include (1) certain qualifying census tracts identified by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool as disadvantaged due to categories of environmental, climate, and socioeconomic burdens, and (2) any Federally Recognized Tribes or Tribal entities, whether or not they have land. Applicants should use [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), a new tool by CEQ, that aims to help Federal Agencies identify disadvantaged communities as part of the Justice40 initiative to accomplish the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain Federal investments reach disadvantaged communities. Applicants should use CEJST as the primary tool to identify disadvantaged communities (Justice40 communities). Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the [USDOT Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#) to understand how their community or project area is experiencing disadvantage related to lack of transportation investments or opportunities. Through understanding how a community or project area is experiencing transportation-related disadvantage, applicants are able to address how the benefits of a project will reverse or mitigate the burdens of disadvantage and demonstrate how the project will address challenges and accrued benefits.

²⁴ FHWA will rely on the digital maps and geographic shapefiles for the 2020 Census urban areas depicted on the FHWA HEPGIS maps of [MPO and 2020 Census Urban Areas - FHWA HEPGIS Maps \(dot.gov\)](#) (refer to the “MPO and Air Quality Tab” and then scroll to “MPO and 2020 Census Urban Areas”) which correlates the definitions of “urban” and “rural areas” under title 23, U.S.C. and Bureau of the Census data. A list of 2020 census designated urban areas is available in the Census Bureau’s [December 29, 2022 Federal Register Notice](#) (87 FR 80114). The term “urban area” means an urbanized area or, in the case of an urbanized area encompassing more than one State, that part of the urbanized area in each such State, or urban place as designated by the Bureau of the Census having a population of 5,000 or more and not within any urbanized area in each State, or urban place as designated by the Bureau of the Census having a population of 5,000 or more and not within any urbanized area. (23 U.S.C. 101(35)). The term “urbanized area” means an area with a population of 50,000 or more designated by the Bureau of the Census, within boundaries to be fixed by responsible State and local officials in cooperation with each other, subject to approval by the Secretary. Such boundaries shall encompass, at a minimum, the entire urbanized area within a State as designated by the Bureau of the Census. (23 U.S.C. 101(36)). The term “rural areas” means all areas of a State not included in urban areas. (23 U.S.C. 101(25)).

693JJ324NF00006

Information under (c) will be used during the selection process under Section E.2. In selecting BIP grants, the Secretary shall consider geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(A)(vii)). For the purpose of this NOFO, FHWA will consider communities that are within urbanized areas (i.e., areas with a population of 50,000 or more) to be urban communities and all other areas to be rural communities.

To the extent possible, DOT encourages, but is not requiring, applicants to identify the degree to which the project may contribute to the functioning and growth of the economy, including the extent to which the project addresses congestion or freight connectivity, bridges service gaps in rural areas, or promotes greater land-use productivity, including main street revitalization or locally-driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development.

Lead Applicant

This section of the application should provide details about the lead applicant. The details should include the lead applicant's demonstrated experience with receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway program funds under 23 U.S.C. DOT will consider the degree of experience as part of the Project Readiness Rating. If an application is rated highly under other criteria, but the applicant has no or limited experience with the receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway program funds, DOT may contact the applicant prior to final selection of BIP awards to discuss technical resources that may be available to assist the applicant in obtaining the capacity and expertise to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal requirements and timely delivery of the project.

Other Public and Private Parties

The applicant should describe in detail all other public and private parties who are involved in delivering the project, including a specific description of the role of each entity in delivering the project.

The applicant should state whether or not a private or non-private entity will receive a direct and predictable financial benefit if the project is selected for award. This includes, but is not limited to, private and non-private entities directly benefitting from completion of the proposed project. If this project directly involves or benefits a specific private corporation, a non-public entity, or a public entity, please identify the full name of each entity, separated by a comma.

Additional Eligibility Requirements

The applicant should include a section to specifically address two 23 U.S.C. requirements for Bridge Project Grants: how the bridge will be maintained and accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians as detailed in Section C.3.c.

II. National Bridge Inventory Data

The applicant should provide information from the current NBI for each bridge on which the applicant proposes to use BIP funding. If an applicant uses the recommended application template, the recommended NBI data items for each structure is automatically included in the application template. Additional NBI items can be added if they support the project application. Data, format, and coding information can be downloaded from [Download NBI ASCII files - National Bridge Inventory - Bridge Inspection - Safety Inspection - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/DownloadNBIASCIIFiles.cfm).

III. Project Budget – Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of all Project Funding

The applicant should describe the project’s budget in detail and the plans for covering the full cost of the project from all sources. The applicant may use this section of a project narrative to elaborate on the information provided in the application template.

The project budget should show how different funding sources will share in each major project activity and present those data in dollars and percentages. The budget should identify other Federal funds the applicant is applying for or has been awarded, if any, that the applicant intends to use. Funding sources should be grouped into three categories: (1) Non-Federal; (2) BIP Funds; and (3) Other Federal Funds with specific amounts from each funding source. The project budget should have a budget narrative with breakdown costs for each cost classification used on the Standard Form 424C.

The project budget should identify all Federal funds to be used for future eligible costs of the project, including the requested BIP grant amount, other Federal grants that have been awarded to the project or for which the project intends to apply in the future, and any Federal formula funds that have already been programmed for the project or are planned to be programmed for the project. For each category of Federal funds to be used for future eligible project costs, the amount, nature, and source of any required non-Federal match for those funds should also be identified.

If the project contains components,²⁵ the budget should separate the costs of each project component. If the project will be completed in phases,²⁶ the budget should separate the costs of each phase. The budget should be detailed enough to demonstrate that the project satisfies the BIP statutory maximum Federal involvement requirements described in Section C.2 and non-Federal matching requirements associated with each category of Federal funding.

²⁵ “Project components” means separate projects activities are scheduled to be completed at the same time.

²⁶ “Project phases” means a project will be delivered in phases and completed in sequence such as pre-construction followed by construction or construction will be carried out with multiple phases.

The application should include information showing that the applicant has budgeted sufficient contingency amounts to cover unanticipated cost increases.²⁷ In addition to the information enumerated above, this section should provide complete information on how all project funds may be used, their availability, and funding commitments. For example, if a source of funds is available only after a condition is satisfied, the application should identify that condition and describe the applicant's control over whether it is satisfied. Similarly, if a source of funds is available for expenditure only during a fixed period, the application should describe that restriction. Complete information about project funds will ensure that FHWA's expectations for award execution align with any funding restrictions unrelated to FHWA, even if an award differs from the applicant's request.

IV. Merit Criteria

The applicant should describe how the proposal meets the Merit Criteria listed in Section E.1 and Section D.2.c VII, Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals.

V. Benefit-Cost Analysis

This section describes the recommended approach for the completion and submission of a BCA as an appendix to the project narrative. The purpose of the BCA is to enable DOT to evaluate the project's cost effectiveness by comparing its expected benefits to its expected costs. The results of the analysis should be summarized in the project narrative directly. Applicants should also provide all relevant files used for their BCA, including any spreadsheet files (unlocked versions) and technical memos describing the analysis (whether created in-house or by a contractor). The spreadsheets and technical memos should present the calculations in sufficient detail and transparency to allow the analysis to be reproduced by DOT evaluators. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the BIP BCA Tool to produce and submit the analysis for their project, which is posted on FHWA's Website: [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bip/bca/).

The BCA should carefully document the assumptions and methodology used to produce the analysis, including a description of the baseline, the sources of data used to project the outcomes of the project, and the values of key input parameters. The analysis should provide present value estimates of a project's benefits and costs relative to a no-build baseline. To calculate present values, applicants should apply a real discount rate used in the DOT BCA Guidance (see Website link below) to the project's streams of benefits and costs, which should be stated in constant-dollar terms. The costs and benefits that are compared in the BCA must cover the same project scope.

Any benefits claimed for the project, both quantified and unquantified, should be clearly tied to the expected outcomes of the project. Projected benefits may accrue to both users of the facility

²⁷ [Guidance - Cost Estimating - Major Projects - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bip/bca/)

and those who are affected by its use (such as through changes in emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants). Usage forecasts applied in estimating future benefits should account for any additional demand induced by the improvements to the facility. While benefits should be quantified wherever possible, applicants may also describe other categories of benefits in the BCA that are more difficult to quantify and/or value in economic terms.

The BCA should include the full costs of developing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed project, as well as the expected timing or schedule for costs in each of these categories. Full costs should include both those previously incurred and estimated to occur in the future. The BCA may also include the present discounted value of any remaining service life of the asset at the end of the analysis period.

Detailed guidance from DOT on conducting BCA, estimating benefits and costs, recommended economic values for converting them to dollar terms, and discounting to their present values, is available on the DOT's Website (see www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance-discretionary-grant-programs-0.)

VI. Project Readiness and Environmental Risk

The BIP Bridge Project grant application should include information that, when considered with the project budget information, is sufficient for DOT to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin construction in a timely manner. To assist DOT's Project Readiness Rating, the applicant should provide the information requested on technical feasibility, technical competency, project schedule, project approvals, and project risks, each of which is described in greater detail in the following sections. Applicants are not required to follow the specific format described here, but this organization, which addresses each relevant aspect of project readiness, promotes a clear discussion that assists project evaluators.

Instructions describing how DOT will evaluate a project's readiness is contained in Section E.1.d. of this notice. Applicants also should review that section before considering how to organize their application.

a) Technical Feasibility and Technical Competency.

The applicant should demonstrate the technical feasibility of the project with engineering and design studies and activities; the development of design criteria and/or a basis of design; the basis for the cost estimate presented in the application, including the identification of contingency levels appropriate to its level of design; and any scope, schedule, and budget risk-mitigation measures. Applicants should include a detailed statement of work that focuses on the technical and engineering aspects of the project and describes in detail the project to be constructed.

The applicant should also demonstrate the applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements including, but not limited to, compliance

with Title VI/Civil Rights requirements, to ensure that no person is excluded from participation, denied benefits, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability as described in Section E.1.d.

b) Project Schedule.

The applicant should include a detailed project schedule that identifies all major project milestones. Examples of such milestones include State and local planning approvals (programming on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program STIP)); start and completion of NEPA and other Federal environmental reviews and approvals, including permitting, design completion, right-of-way acquisition, approval of plans, specifications, and estimates; procurement; State and local approvals; project partnership and implementation agreements including agreements with railroads; and construction. The project schedule should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that:

- All necessary activities will be complete to allow BIP funds to be obligated (as defined in Section B.4) sufficiently in advance of the statutory deadline and that any unexpected delays will not put the funds at risk of expiring before they are obligated;
- If applicable, the project can proceed to the next stage of project development within 12 months of a CE Determination, FONSI, or a ROD;
- The project can begin construction quickly upon obligation of grant funds, or no later than 18 months after obligation of grant funds, and that the grant funds will be spent expeditiously once construction starts; and
- All real property and right-of-way acquisition necessary for the project will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR 24, 23 CFR 710, and other applicable legal requirements or a statement that no right-of-way acquisition is necessary. A plan for securing any required right-of-way agreements should be included. If applicable, this section should describe a right-of-way acquisition plan that minimally disrupts communities and maintains community cohesion.

c) Required Approvals

i. Environmental Permits and Reviews

The application should demonstrate receipt (or the schedule for anticipated receipt) of all environmental approvals and permits necessary for the project, including each bridge within a bridge bundle to proceed to construction on the timeline specified in the project schedule and necessary to meet the statutory obligation deadline, including satisfaction of all Federal, Tribal

government, State, and local requirements and completion of the NEPA process.²⁸ This section should also provide:

- Information about the NEPA status of the project. If the NEPA process is complete, an applicant should indicate the date of completion, and provide a Website link or other reference to the final CE determination, FONSI, ROD, and any other NEPA documents prepared. If the NEPA process is underway, but not complete, the application should detail the type of NEPA review underway, where the project is in the process, and indicate the anticipated date of completion of all milestones and of the final NEPA determination. If the final agency action with respect to NEPA occurred more than 3 years before the application date, the applicant should describe a proposed approach for updating this material in accordance with applicable NEPA reconsideration requirements.
- Any information on reviews, approvals, and permits by other Federal and State agencies. An application should indicate whether the proposed project requires reviews or approval actions by other agencies, indicate the status of such actions, provide detailed information about the status of those reviews or approvals and should demonstrate compliance with any other applicable Federal, State, or local requirements, and when such approvals are expected. Applicants should provide a Website link or other reference to copies of any reviews, approvals, and permits prepared.
- Environmental studies or other documents – preferably through a Website link – that describe in detail known project impacts, and possible mitigation for those impacts.
- A description of discussions with FHWA regarding the project’s compliance with NEPA and other applicable Federal environmental reviews and approvals.
- A description of public engagement about the project that has occurred, including details on the degree to which public comments and commitments have been integrated into project development and design including the consideration of ensuring proportional impacts to all populations.

ii. State and Local Approvals

The applicant should demonstrate receipt (or the schedule for anticipated receipt) of Tribal government, State, and local approvals on which the project depends, such as State and local environmental and planning approvals, and STIP or transportation improvement program (TIP) funding. Additional support from relevant State and local officials is not required; however, an applicant should demonstrate that the project has broad public support, including support from impacted communities.

²⁸ [Environmental Review Toolkit | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#) Provides singular gateway to environmental resources that will help applicants better understand the requirements of NEPA for Federal-aid and Federal Lands highway projects.

iii. Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

The planning requirements applicable to the Federal-aid highway program apply to all BIP Bridge Project grants.²⁹ Applicants should demonstrate that a project that is required to be included in the relevant State, metropolitan, and local planning documents has been or will be included in such documents. If the project is not included in a relevant planning document at the time the application is submitted, the applicant should submit a statement from the appropriate planning agency that actions are underway to include the project in the relevant planning document. Applicants should provide Website links or other documentation supporting this consideration.

Because projects have different schedules, the construction start date for each grant will be specified in the project-specific agreements signed by FHWA and the grant recipients, will be based on critical path items that applicants identify in the application, and will be consistent with relevant State and local plans.

iv. Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Project risks, such as procurement delays, environmental uncertainties, increases in real estate acquisition costs, uncommitted local match, lack of support from stakeholders or impacted communities, or lack of legislative approval, affect the likelihood of successful project start and completion. The applicant should identify all material risks and harms to the project and the strategies that the lead applicant and any project partners have undertaken or will undertake to mitigate those risks.³⁰ The applicant should assess the greatest risks to the project and identify how the project parties will mitigate those risks.

To the extent it is unfamiliar with the Federal-aid highway program, the applicant should contact the FHWA Division Office in their State as found at [Field Offices | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#) for information on what steps are prerequisite to the obligation of Federal funds to ensure that their project schedule is reasonable and that there are no risks of delays in satisfying Federal requirements.

²⁹ In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135, all projects requiring an action by FHWA must be in the applicable plan and programming documents (e.g., metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and STIP). Further, in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, all regionally significant projects, regardless of the funding source, must be included in the conforming metropolitan transportation plan and TIP. Inclusion in the STIP is required under certain circumstances. To the extent a project is required to be on a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and/or STIP, it will not receive a grant until it is included in such plans. Projects not currently included in these plans can be amended by the State and metropolitan planning organization. Projects that are not required to be in long range transportation plans, STIPs, and TIPs will not need to be included in such plans to receive a grant.

³⁰ DOT considers an applicant's lack of experience with receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway funds under title 23, U.S.C. a material risk.

VII. Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals

The applicant should include information addressing how the project supports the Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals and references to earlier sections of the narrative along with supporting documentation should be included in the application.

Safety: Applicants must address how their project provides substantial safety benefits. Prior to receiving funds, all projects are expected to, at a minimum, identify and mitigate to the extent practicable any significant safety risks that could result after the project completion. Applicants should include how their project will not negatively impact the overall safety of the traveling public.

Climate Change and Sustainability: Applicants must address how the project will consider climate change and environmental justice in the planning stage and in project delivery. In particular, applicants must address how the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector, incorporates evidence-based climate resilience measures and features, and reduces the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from the project materials. Applicants also must address the extent to which the project avoids adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species, as well as address disproportionate negative impacts of climate change and pollution on disadvantaged or other affected communities, including natural disasters, with a focus on prevention, response, and recovery.

Equity: Applicants must address how their project will include an equity assessment which evaluates whether a project will create proportional impacts and remove transportation related disparities to all populations in a project area. Applicants should demonstrate how meaningful public engagement will occur throughout a project's life cycle. Applicants should address how project benefits will increase affordable transportation options, improve safety, connect Americans to good-paying jobs, fight climate change, and/or improve access to resources and quality of life.

Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation: Applicants must address how their project will create good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union including through the use of a project labor agreement; promote investments in high-quality workforce development programs with supportive services to help train, place, and retain people in good-paying jobs or registered apprenticeship, with a focus on women, people of color, and others that are underrepresented in infrastructure jobs (people with disabilities, people with convictions, etc.); and adopt local and economic hiring preferences for the project workforce or include other changes to hiring policies and workplace cultures to promote the entry and retention of underrepresented populations. Applicants should address how the project promotes local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the use of DBEs, Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms.

Considerations to Support Good-Paying Jobs and Strong Labor Standards

In the table below is a list of potential considerations to support good-paying jobs and strong labor standards. If an action is applicable to the proposed project, please provide a summary as indicated. If an action is not included in the list below, please provide a summary that identifies and describes the action.

Considerations to Support Good-Paying Jobs and Strong Labor Standards
The applicant has adopted or intends to adopt the use of project labor agreements in the overall delivery and implementation of the project. <i>(Summary should identify the relevant agreements and describe the scope of activities they cover.)</i>
The applicant has adopted or intends to adopt the use of local and economic hiring preferences in the overall delivery and implementation of the project, subject to all applicable State and local laws, policies, and procedures. <i>(Summary should describe the relevant provisions.)</i>
The applicant has adopted or intends to adopt the use of registered apprenticeships in the overall delivery and implementation of the project. <i>(Summary should describe the use of registered apprenticeships.)</i>
The applicant will provide training and placement programs for underrepresented workers in the overall delivery and implementation of the project. <i>(Summary should describe the training programs.)</i>
The applicant will support free and fair choice to join a union in the overall delivery and implementation of the project by investing in workforce development services offered by labor-management training partnerships or setting expectations for contractors to develop labor-management training programs. <i>(Summary should describe the workforce development services offered by labor-management training partnerships.)</i>
The applicant will provide supportive services and cash assistance to address systemic barriers to employment to be able to participate and thrive in training and employment, including childcare, emergency cash assistance for items such as tools, work clothing, application fees and other costs of apprenticeship or required pre-employment training, transportation and travel to training and work sites, and services aimed at helping to retain underrepresented groups such as mentoring, support groups, and peer networking. <i>(Summary should describe the supportive services and/or cash assistance provided to trainees and employees.)</i>
The applicant has documented agreements or ordinances in place to hire from certain workforce programs that serve underrepresented groups. <i>(Summary should identify the relevant agreements and describe the scope of activities they cover.)</i>
The applicant participates in a State/regional/local comprehensive plan to promote equal opportunity, including removing barriers to hire and preventing harassment on work sites, and

that plan demonstrates action to create an inclusive environment with a commitment to equal opportunity, including:

- a. Affirmative efforts to remove barriers to equal employment opportunity (EEO) above and beyond complying with Federal law;
- b. Proactive partnerships with the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to promote compliance with E.O. 11246 EEO requirements;
- c. No discriminatory use of criminal background screens and affirmative steps to recruit and include those with former justice involvement, in accordance with the Fair Chance Act and equal opportunity requirements;
- d. Efforts to prevent harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin;
- e. Training on anti-harassment and third-party reporting procedures covering employees and contractors; and
- f. Maintaining robust anti-retaliation measures covering employees and contractors. *(Summary should describe the equal opportunity plan.)*

The applicant has taken or intends to take other actions related to the project to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporate strong labor standards. *(Summary should describe those actions.)*

The applicant has not yet taken actions related to the project to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporate strong labor standards but will do so before beginning construction of the project. *(Summary should describe why actions to improve good-paying jobs and strong labor standards have not been considered yet, such as stage of project development.)*

The applicant has not taken actions related to the project to improving good-paying jobs and strong labor standards and will not take those actions under this award. *(Summary should describe why actions to improve good-paying jobs and strong labor standards will not be taken related to the Project.)*

VIII. DOT Priority Selection Considerations

The applicant should include a section to highlight any DOT priority considerations (see Section E.1.h) the project will address. Detailed information demonstrating how the project supports the priority consideration(s) and references to earlier sections of the narrative along with supporting documentation should be included in the application.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

The Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), required for entities doing business with the Federal government, was replaced by the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in the System for Award

Management (SAM). Applicants must now use their UEI, issued during the SAM.gov registration process, to do business with DOT. If your entity was actively registered, then your UEI was automatically assigned and it is currently viewable in SAM.gov; there is no action for registered entities to take at this time to obtain your SAM UEI. If you are a new entity or your registration has expired, you must register your entity in SAM.gov and you will be assigned a UEI.

Each applicant is required to:

- a. Be registered in SAM before submitting their application;
- b. Provide a valid UEI in their application; and
- c. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding Agency.

Please see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#UEI> for more information on the transition from DUNS to SAM UEI, including what UEI to enter into the UEI field on grants.gov and on application package forms.

DOT may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding Agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

NOTE TO APPLICANTS: The SAM.gov requires the registrant to provide a valid UEI number to complete the registration. These processes can take several weeks to complete so should be started well before the application deadline.

GRANTS.GOV: Applicants must follow the instructions on Grants.gov to successfully use the Website to submit an application. Use of Grants.gov may entail the following steps for those setting up new accounts or first-time users:

- a. Register with SAM at www.SAM.gov
- b. Obtain a valid UEI;
- c. Create a Grants.gov account; and
- d. Respond to the registration email sent to the E-Business POC from Grants.gov, and login at Grants.gov to authorize the Applicant as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Please note that there can be more than one AOR for an organization.

Note: The Grants.gov registration process may take 2 to 4 weeks.

GRANTS.GOV HELP: For Grants.gov training resources, including video tutorials, refer to: [Home | GRANTS.GOV](#). For assistance with Grants.gov registration and application submittal, refer to the Grants.gov Support Center: [Support | GRANTS.GOV](#).

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on the dates identified in the table below (or as updated by a NOFO Amendment, if applicable). The due date/time is the date and time by which FHWA must receive the full and completed application, including all required sections. Applications can be submitted anytime throughout the year after the NOFO opening date until the particular application deadline date to be considered for the corresponding fiscal year BIP funding. FHWA will evaluate the application and will strive to as much as possible provide feedback and/or share the outcome/rating of the evaluation with the applicant within 90 days of the application submittal date for Planning grants and within 120 days of the application submittal date for Bridge Project grants. This timeframe is not guaranteed and is dependent on the number and quality of applications received. Applications submitted after an application deadline will not be considered for the next round of funding until the announcement of projects selected to receive a BIP award for which fiscal year funds are available. See Section E.2 for project review and selection process and Section A.3.c for the rolling application process. As this is a “rolling” NOFO, applications can be submitted any time throughout the year, but applicants are advised to take notice of the due dates for consideration for a particular fiscal year BIP funding as follows:

Fiscal Year BIP Funding	Application Deadline	
BIP Funding Category	Planning	Bridge Project
FYs 2023 and 2024	February 19, 2024	March 19, 2024
FY 2025	October 1, 2024	November 1, 2024
FY 2026	October 1, 2025	November 1, 2025

FHWA will not consider applications received after the application deadline that are the result of failure to register or comply with Grants.gov applicant requirements in a timely manner. If applicants are unable to use the system due to verifiable technical difficulties, applicants must email complete applications directly to FHWA POC listed in Section G no later than the NOFO application deadline cited herein, with an explanation of the technical issue experienced and supporting documents regarding the nature of the technical difficulties. For instance, provide screen capture(s) of the technical issues experienced. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to contact the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. Provide the Grants.gov Help Desk Tracking Number because it will assist FHWA with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the system issue in the event of a late application. If the reported technical issues cannot be validated, late applications may be rejected as untimely.

5. Intergovernmental Review

The BIP is not subject to the Intergovernmental Review of Federal programs under E.O. 12372.

6. Funding Restrictions

Unless authorized by FHWA in writing after FHWA's announcement of applications selected to receive a BIP award, any costs incurred prior to FHWA's obligation of funds for a project ("pre-award costs") are ineligible for reimbursement except as provided under a Letter of No Prejudice as described in Section C.3.d.ii.

7. Other Submission Requirements

a. Scalable Project Options

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case insufficient funding is available to fund a project or a bundled project at the full requested amount. If an applicant advises that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget and the BCA would be affected by a reduced award. DOT may award a lesser amount whether or not a scalable option is provided.

b. Submission Location

Applications must be submitted to www.grants.gov.

c. Consideration of Applications

Except as described in the next section, only applicants who comply with all submission deadlines described in this notice and electronically submit valid applications through *Grants.gov* will be eligible for award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to make submissions in advance of the deadlines.

d. Applications Received After the Application Deadline

Applicants experiencing technical issues with *Grants.gov* that are beyond the applicant's control must contact BridgeInvestmentProgram@dot.gov prior to the application deadline with the username of the registrant and details of the technical issue experienced. The applicant must provide:

- (1) Details of the technical issue experienced;

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- (2) Screen capture(s) of the technical issues experienced along with corresponding Grants.gov “Grant tracking number;”
- (3) The “Legal Business Name” for the applicant that was provided in the SF-424;
- (4) The POC name submitted in the SF-424;
- (5) The UEI associated with the application; and
- (6) The Grants.gov Help Desk Tracking Number.

To ensure a fair competition of limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to complete the registration process before the deadline; (2) failure to follow *Grants.gov* instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Website; (3) failure to follow all instructions in this NOFO; and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant’s computer or information technology environment.

After FHWA reviews all information submitted and contacts the *Grants.gov* Help Desk to validate reported technical issues, FHWA staff will contact late applicants to approve or deny a request to submit a late application through *Grants.gov*. FHWA will not accept appeals of an FHWA decision to approve or deny a request for a late application. If the reported technical issues cannot be validated, late applications will be considered for the next round of funding.

SECTION E - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

DOT will award BIP Planning and Bridge Project grants based on an evaluation of the Merit Criteria, the Economic Analysis Rating, and the Project Readiness Rating including an evaluation of the Statutory Evaluation Requirements, Statutory Secretarial Considerations, and Statutorily Required Project Selection Priorities, as applicable, described in this Section under E.1 and the Selection and Review process described in Section E.2.

1. Criteria

This section specifies the criteria that DOT will use to evaluate applications. DOT will review Merit Criteria for all eligible Planning and Bridge Project grant applications. A subset of competitive Bridge Project grant applications (described in Section E.2) will also receive further analysis consisting of three Project Readiness Rating reviews (Environmental Risk Assessment, Technical Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment) and an Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis. Project Readiness Rating and Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Rating will not be reviewed for Planning grant applications.

a. Statutory Evaluation Requirements

There are no statutory evaluation requirements for Planning grants.

For Bridge Project grants, DOT is statutorily required to evaluate specific benefits under 23 U.S.C. 124. The table below describes each benefit and provides instructions to applicants on how to present information supporting the benefit. To assist applicants, the table identifies the Merit Criteria, the Economic Analysis Rating, and the Project Readiness Rating under which DOT will evaluate the responsiveness of an application to the statutory evaluation requirements.

Bridge Project	Instructions
In this column DOT includes the statutory evaluation requirements for a Bridge Project. The Secretary shall evaluate information on project benefits, including whether the project will generate the benefits specified under 23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i) and (ii).	In this column, DOT offers instructions to applicants on how to address each of the statutory evaluation requirements.
Costs avoided by the prevention of the closure or reduced use of the bridge to be improved by the project (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(I))	Summarize the benefits of providing protection activities and benefits to reduced future maintenance costs, and benefits from prevention of the closure or reduced use of the bridge, highlighting the assumptions made about the timing of potential closure and/or
Benefits from protection as described in 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(10), including improving	

seismic and scour protection (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(VII))	reduced use of the bridge in the absence of the project. DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for State of Good Repair.
Reductions in maintenance costs, including, in the case of a federally owned bridge, cost savings to the Federal budget (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(XI))	
Safety benefits, including the reduction of accidents and related costs (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(III))	Summarize the safety benefits of the project and independent project components. Also summarize the person and freight mobility benefits of the project. DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for Safety and Mobility.
Person and freight mobility benefits, including congestion reduction and reliability improvements (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(IV))	
Person and freight mobility benefits, including congestion reduction and reliability improvements (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(IV))	Summarize the economic benefits and opportunity of the project and independent project components and describe the scale of their impact in national or regional terms with a focus on volume and estimated dollar amount of freight movement and the types of goods being moved. DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity.
National or regional economic benefits (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(V))	
Benefits from long-term resiliency to extreme weather events, flooding, or other natural disasters (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(VI))	
Environmental benefits, including wildlife connectivity (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(VIII))	Summarize the benefits of the project to improve resiliency of the bridge to extreme weather events, flooding, or other natural disasters. Also describe anticipated environmental benefits of the project, including how the project will improve wildlife connectivity, especially for aquatic species, and reduce air and other pollutants (such as stormwater runoff pollutants). DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for Climate Change, Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Environment.

Benefits to nonvehicular and public transportation users (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(IX))	Summarize the benefits of the project to nonvehicular and public transportation users, including how impacted communities are engaged in the project planning process and how the project will improve community connectivity upon completion. DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for Equity and Quality of Life.
In the case of a bundle of projects, benefits from executing the projects as a bundle compared to as individual projects (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(II))	Summarize the benefits the project will earn through the use of innovative design and construction techniques, or innovative technologies, and what cost savings the project may achieve through the use of bundling compared to individual projects. DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Merit Criterion for Innovation.
Benefits of using innovative design and construction techniques or innovative technologies (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i)(X)(aa) and (bb))	
Whether and the extent to which the benefits, including the benefits described in 23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(i), are more likely than not to outweigh the total project costs (23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3)(B)(ii))	Summarize the results of the BCA, including estimates for the categories of benefits described in 23 U.S.C. 124(g)(4)(B). DOT will base its determination on the assessment of this information during the review of the Economic Analysis Rating.

This section specifies the criteria that DOT will use to evaluate applications. DOT will review Merit Criteria, three components of Project Readiness Rating reviews (Environmental Risk Assessment, Technical Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment) and an Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis for all eligible Bridge Project grant applications.

b. Merit Criteria

DOT will evaluate applications using the following Merit Criteria for the FY 2023 through FY 2026 BIP grant applications.

i) Planning

(1) BIP Program Goals: DOT will assess how the proposed planning grant is envisioned to lead to a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project that would achieve one or more of the three BIP program goals (see Section A.1.a). If the project will achieve more than one goal, identify each goal by name and its subsection listed below, and address the respective goal

definition. Please include data (qualitative or quantitative) or evidence (newspaper articles, public meetings, etc.) that supports how the ultimate project will meet each identified goal(s).

DOT will separately rate each goal addressed in the application, as follows:

Highly Qualified: The application describes in detail how the proposed project will advance a BIP goal. Data provided in the application directly supports how the proposed BIP Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project would advance a BIP program goal.

Qualified: The application generally describes with little detail how the proposed project will advance a BIP goal. The data provided in the application is limited or does not directly demonstrate how the proposed Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project would advance a BIP program goal.

Not Qualified: The application does not clearly describe how the proposed project will advance the goal, the data provided in the application does not demonstrate how the project will advance a BIP goal or no data is included in the application.

(2) Project Description: DOT will assess whether the application describes the Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project that the planning process will evaluate. This should include a discussion about the condition of the bridge(s) supported by documented information available at the time of submission of the application. The application should demonstrate how the proposed project would meet the Merit Criteria for a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project as noted in Section E.1.b (State of Good Repair; Safety and Mobility; Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity; Climate Change, Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Environment; Equity and Quality of Life; and Innovation).

DOT will rate the project description included in the application, as follows:

Highly Qualified: The application describes the Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project in detail and provides comprehensive information about the condition of the bridge(s) along with extensive data or other evidence that demonstrates how the proposed project would meet the evaluation criteria for a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project.

Qualified: The application generally describes the Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project. Information provided about the condition of the bridge is not comprehensive and that data submitted to demonstrate how the proposed project would meet the evaluation criteria for a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project is incomplete.

Not Qualified: The application does not describe a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project. The application contains little or no information about the condition of the bridge or how the proposed project would meet the evaluation criteria for a Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project.

(3) Project Schedule: DOT will assess the current status of the planning process, including all activities either completed or under way at the time of the submission of the BIP Planning grant application. All major activities intended to be funded under a BIP Planning grant

should be described in detail with anticipated start and ends dates for each activity. Applications should also include a post-Planning grant schedule with the planned start and end dates of all major activities, milestones, and deliverables that will need to be completed from the end of the BIP Planning grant through the completion of a BIP Bridge Project or Large Bridge Project.

DOT will rate the project schedule included in the application, as follows:

Highly Qualified: Application provides detailed information on the project schedule, including already completed activities and activities currently underway. The project schedule presented in the application includes the anticipated start and end dates for each activity, as well as a detailed post-Planning schedule. The information provided is sufficient for reviewers to evaluate with certainty the feasibility of the project schedule.

Qualified: Application provides information on the project schedule, but it is not detailed. Information provided is vague and reviewers are not able to evaluate the feasibility of the project schedule with certainty.

Not Qualified: Application does not include a project schedule, or it is incomplete. Reviewers are unable to assess the feasibility of the project schedule.

(4) Project Budget: DOT will assess the proposed project budget. The description should include a detailed project budget with the total project cost. The budget should identify all funding sources and amounts, including an estimated BIP grant request amount. Other funding sources, as appropriate, include Other Federal funds; State funds; Tribal funds; local funds; and other funds such as private funds. Competitive applications should include information about all sources of Federal funds that have been requested for the project, information about the amount requested, and whether or not the requested funding was received. If the funding request was not granted, please include a discussion of any documented basis for the denial of the funding. If the funding was received, please provide the date of award and how the funds have been or are expected to be used on the project.

DOT will rate the project budget included in the application, as follows:

Highly Qualified: Application presents a detailed budget including the source of funds and amount for each major project activity, milestones, and deliverables. The application includes a detailed budget that shows the total project cost, all funding sources and amounts, and percentage of total project costs. The application is fully responsive and provides detailed information about all Federal funding requests particularly those that would leverage other Federal funding opportunities.

Qualified: Application includes a cursory budget. The budget includes each major project activity, milestone and deliverable but does not specify the source of funds and amount for each. The budget lacks detail on the total project cost, funding sources and

amounts, and percentage of total project costs. The application is not fully responsive or provides limited information about all Federal funding requests.

Not Qualified: No budget is included in the application. Information contained in the budget is incomplete.

ii) Bridge Project

DOT has designated six Merit Criteria which will be used to evaluate and rate the responsiveness of an application to the Statutory Required Evaluation Requirements and Statutory Secretarial Considerations. In addition, DOT will use the Merit Criteria to assess how a project will advance DOT policy areas of safety, reduction in surface transportation greenhouse emissions, increased resilience to climate change, equitable transportation options and access, promoting competitiveness of the U.S. economy, improving job opportunities, and accommodating new emerging technologies.

Criterion #1: State of Good Repair

DOT will assess how the project will contribute to a state of good repair by: (1) improving the condition of a bridge in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years;³¹ (2) improving protection, such as seismic or scour protection, to provide long-term resiliency to extreme weather events, flooding, or other natural disasters; and (3) reducing maintenance costs. The application should include a detailed plan of the major activities that will be undertaken to address (1) or (2), and (3), with each supported by quantifiable data that supports the anticipated benefits of the project. The data should show how the project will improve the condition of the bridge(s) by reducing the total person miles traveled over the bridge(s): (1) in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within in the next 3 years; and (2) that do not meet current geometric design standards; or that cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network. The application should contain data that classifies each bridge with a condition rating of good, fair, or poor, along with supporting data for the condition classification.³¹ For bridges in fair condition, the application should include verifiable data that demonstrates the risk of the bridge falling into poor condition within the next 3 years from the date of the application deadline, if applicable. DOT will consider whether the project includes a maintenance plan that demonstrates the project funded with BIP grant funds will be maintained in a state of good repair.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
State of Good Repair	The application did not address the State of Good Repair criterion; or The application contains insufficient information to assess any one of (1) or (2) of the following: (1.a) the condition of the bridge to support a finding that the bridge is in poor condition or in fair	The application describes BOTH (1) AND (2) of the following but, without providing quantifiable data for BOTH OR provides quantifiable data or verifiable evidence for only one of the following: (1.a) a bridge that is in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of failing into poor condition within the next 3 years, but the data included in the application is not quantifiable to fully	The application includes quantifiable data that demonstrates BOTH (1) AND (2) of the following: (1.a) the bridge is in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years from the date of the Bridge Project application deadline; or (1.b) that the bridge does not meet current geometric design standards; or cannot meet

³¹ See footnote 1 in Section A.1.a.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
	<p>condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years; or (1.b) whether the bridge does not meet current geometric design standards or cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional network; or (1.c) whether if the bridge is not improved, there is a threat to the future transportation network efficiency, mobility of goods or accessibility and mobility of people, or economic growth due to a closure or reduction in use; or (1.d) how the project will improve protection, such as seismic or scour protection, to improve the bridge's long-term resiliency; OR (2) how the project will reduce maintenance costs.</p>	<p>demonstrate current condition of the bridge or the risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years; or (1.b) a bridge does not meet current geometric design standards or cannot meet the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network, but this is not supported with appropriate geometric requirements established by the State; or (1.c) the application mentions but does not demonstrate that if the bridge is not improved, there is a threat to the future transportation network efficiency, mobility of goods or accessibility and mobility of people, or economic growth due to a closure or reduction in use; or (1.d) the application mentions but does not demonstrate how the project will improve protection, such as seismic or scour protection, to improve the bridge's long-term resiliency; AND (2) The project does not provide details on maintenance costs of the current bridge and reduced costs following the project completion or how the project will be maintained in a state of good repair.</p>	<p>the load and traffic requirements typical of the regional transportation network; or (1.c) the application demonstrates that if the bridge is not improved, there is a threat to the future transportation network efficiency, mobility of goods or accessibility and mobility of people, or economic growth due to a closure or reduction in use; or (1.d) the project will improve protection, such as seismic or scour protection, to improve the bridge's long-term resiliency.</p> <p>The major activities proposed to improve the condition of the bridge are feasible and the application provides a detailed description of the project plan, supported by data, that shows how the project will address one or more of the items listed above, including the number of bridges to be improved and the total person miles traveled that would be impacted by the improvement; AND (2) The application provides quantifiable data that the project will reduce maintenance costs by providing details on current maintenance costs and future maintenance costs following the project completion. And, the application demonstrates the project will be maintained in a state of good repair.</p>

Criterion #2: Safety and Mobility

DOT will assess how the project will improve the safety of the bridge and associated sections of roadway, including the reduction of accidents and related costs. The application should include quantifiable data on: (1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing crashes, injuries, or fatalities due to the project, supported by data from the current/historic and projected number and type of crashes including serious injuries, and fatalities on or affected by the bridge; (2) how the project will target known and documented, if any, safety problems with the bridge, within the project area or wider transportation network; or (3) how the project will protect motorized and non-motorized travelers or communities from safety risks. The application should provide a narrative describing how the project will improve the safety of the bridge and associated sections of roadway. The application should address the inclusion of improvements to safety features such as, but not limited to, traffic signs, pavement markings, multimodal accommodations, and physical bicycle and pedestrian barrier separations. The application should address whether and, if so how, the project has been or could be designed and operated to maximize the existing right-of-way for accommodation of non-motorized modes and transit options that increase safety and connectivity. The application should provide evidence to support the claimed level of effectiveness of the project in improving all safety concerns and proposed improvements for the bridge. Applicants are encouraged to support actions and activities identified in the NRSS ([National Roadway Safety Strategy | US Department of Transportation](#)).

DOT will assess the number of bridges, the total person miles traveled,³² average daily traffic, and average daily truck traffic expected to be impacted by the project or how the project will improve the mobility, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight, accounting for current traffic demands and estimated future demands. In addressing this criterion, competitive applications will provide verifiable data to support how the project will improve the traffic flow of a regional network by addressing current geometric conditions of the bridge or how the project will improve mobility of people and freight by reducing the person miles traveled impacted by these conditions.

³² Person Miles Traveled (PMT) = Average Annual Daily Traffic x Length x Vehicle Occupancy. Please refer to the table provided by FHWA's Office of Highway Policy Information at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2021/vm1.cfm> to calculate vehicle occupancy ratios for various vehicles using the PMT data divided by the Vehicle Miles Traveled data.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
Safety and Mobility	<p>The application did not address the Safety and Mobility criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess any one of the following:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing accidents, injuries, or fatalities due to the project; or</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known, documented, if any, safety problems with the bridge, within the project area or wider transportation network if any and how the project will address these problems; or</p> <p>(3) how the project will protect motorized and non-motorized travelers or communities from safety risks including improvements to, the addition of, or continuation of safety features; or</p>	<p>The application describes one or more of the following:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing crashes, injuries, or fatalities due to the project but does not provide quantifiable data to support these benefits; or</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known, documented, if any, safety problems with the bridge, within the project area or wider transportation network, but does not provide quantifiable data to support these benefits; or</p> <p>(3) how the project will protect motorized and non-motorized travelers or communities from safety risks including improvements to, the addition of, or continuation of safety features, but does not provide quantifiable data to support these benefits; or</p> <p>(4) provides the number of structures, the total person miles traveled, the average daily traffic, and the average daily truck traffic expected to be impacted by the project and improvements to the mobility, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of people and freight through the project corridor accounting for current traffic demands and estimated</p>	<p>The application provides quantifiable data for (1), (2), (3), OR (4) of the following:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing crashes, injuries, or fatalities due to the project supported by data from the current/historic and projected number and type of accidents including serious injuries, and fatalities on or affected by the bridge; OR</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known, documented, if any, safety problems with the bridge, within the project area or wider transportation network; OR</p> <p>(3) demonstrate how the project will protect motorized and non-motorized travelers or communities from safety risks including improvements to, the addition of, or continuation of, safety features; OR</p> <p>(4) provides the number of structures, the total person miles traveled, average daily traffic, and average daily truck traffic expected to be impacted by the project and, provides verifiable data on how the project will improve the mobility, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of people and freight through the project corridor accounting for current traffic demands and estimated future demands.</p>

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
	(4) improvements to the mobility, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of people and freight through the project corridor.	future demands but does not provide data to support claims or projections for long-term benefits.	

Criterion #3: Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

DOT will assess the expected economic impact of the project by evaluating the extent to which it increases the efficiency of freight movement and improves supply chains. Applications should describe those improvements in detail, with verifiable estimates of anticipated improvements, including the anticipated impacts to congestion reduction and travel time reliability improvements. In addressing this criterion, competitive applications will improve the traffic flow of a regional network by addressing current geometric conditions of the bridge and whether those conditions are sufficient for current and future load and traffic requirements of the regional networks. DOT will assess the national and regional economic benefits that are anticipated as a result of the project by supporting a strong economy and labor market. DOT also will evaluate the extent to which the project will promote greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization or locally driven land use reforms that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development.

The application should describe in detail how the project is expected to support a strong economy and labor market and thereby contribute to national or regional significance and benefits. This support includes the creation of good-paying jobs with a free and fair choice to join a union, and the incorporation of strong labor standards including project labor agreements, use of local and economic hiring preferences, workforce development programs and registered, apprenticeships, and labor management partnerships. The application should also describe in detail how the project is expected to support the hiring and retention of historically underrepresented groups of workers, including through use of local and economic hiring preferences, investments in high-quality workforce development programs with supportive services, and other policies.³³

³³ Contracts awarded with geographic hiring preferences are eligible for assistance under the BIP programs.

Efforts to Support Good-Paying Jobs and Strong Labor Standards

DOT intends to use BIP Bridge Project awards to consider national or regional economic benefits of a project including workforce development, job quality, and wealth creation as described under Section A of this NOFO. As part of DOT’s evaluation of Criterion #3 Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity applicants are strongly encouraged to use the table in Section D.2.c under VII, Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals to demonstrate the consideration they have given as to how their project will support the Administration’s goals. The inclusion of the information will be considered under the Highly Responsive rating for Criterion #3, and DOT will consider an application’s responsiveness to Workforce Development, Job Quality and Wealth Creation under the DOT Priority Considerations. (See Section E.1.h.9).

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity	The application did not address the Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess any of the following: (1) Creation of good-paying jobs, which could include a free and fair choice to join a union and strategies to hiring and retention of historically underrepresented groups of workers; or	The application describes one or more of the following: (1) The project sponsor generally describes how the project supports creation of good-paying jobs directly related to the project and equitable access to those jobs, which could include a free and fair choice to join a union, the expansion of training programs, and the incorporation of strong labor standards, which could include strategies such as targeted hiring preferences for bringing in and retention of historically underrepresented workers into the workforce that will result in hiring and	The application includes information that: (1) Describe actions an applicant has considered to support the Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity criterion during the development of the project ³⁴ and how the project supports the creation of good-paying jobs directly related to the project and equitable access to those jobs, which could include, for example, a free and fair choice to join a union, the expansion of training programs, and the incorporation of strong labor standards which could include strategies such as targeted hiring

³⁴ DOT will not evaluate or rate the content of the information provided. DOT is interested in whether an applicant considered these goals in the development of their project as demonstrated by including a narrative about the actions considered.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
	<p>(2) Improvement to supply chains; or (3) National or regional economic benefits; or (4) Greater investments in land-use productivity.</p>	<p>retention of historically underrepresented group into good-paying jobs but does not provide verifiable evidence supporting this benefit; or (2) The project improves supply chains by reducing congestion or improving travel time reliability, highlighting an increase in freight value, but data to support these benefits are not substantiated; or (3) National or regional economic benefits are anticipated by the project, but data to support these benefits are not substantiated; or (4) The project advances greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, without providing details to support the stated benefits.</p>	<p>preferences for bringing in and retention of historically underrepresented workers into the workforce that will result in hiring and result in hiring and retention of historically underrepresented groups into good-paying jobs;³⁵ or (2) Provides verifiable data on how the project improves supply chains by reducing congestion and improving travel time reliability, accounting for current traffic demands and estimated future demands, as a result of addressing current geometric conditions of the bridge and ensuring conditions are sufficient for current and future load and traffic requirements of the regional network, highlighting the increase of the value of freight moving across the project; or (3) Provides data on the national or regional economic benefits that are anticipated as a result of the project by supporting a strong economy and labor market; or</p>

³⁵ The documentation of this consideration may be in the form of a project narrative submitted in support of an application submitted using the application template. However, applicants are encouraged to use the table in section D.2.c.VII, Administration Priorities and Departmental Strategic Plan Goals.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
			(4) Includes verifiable estimates of how the project promotes greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization or locally driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development.

Criterion #4: Climate Change, Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Environment

DOT will assess whether the project will address climate change, improve resiliency, support environmental sustainability, and address environmental justice³⁶ based on data submitted with the application that demonstrates the benefits to each of these areas of consideration. The application should include a detailed discussion of how the project will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, including increasing use of lower-carbon travel modes such as transit and active transportation, and/or incorporate lower-carbon pavement and construction materials; improve resiliency of at-risk infrastructure by improving disaster preparedness and resilience to all hazards, including long-term resiliency to extreme weather events, flooding, or other natural disasters, and the risks associated with climate change such as coastal flooding, coastal erosion wave action, storm surge, or sea level rise; improve wildlife connectivity, especially for aquatic species; or address the disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities such as exposure to elevated levels of air, water, and noise pollution. DOT will evaluate the extent which the project reduces stormwater runoff that would be a detriment to aquatic species. If applicable, applicants are encouraged to make floodplain upgrades consistent with the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, to the extent consistent with current law, in E.O. 14030, *Climate-Related Financial Risk* (86 FR 27967) and E.O. 13690, *Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input* (80 FR 6425.)

³⁶ Environmental justice is defined by E.O. 14096 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/26/2023-08955/revitalizing-our-nations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all>).

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
Climate Change, Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Environment	<p>The application did not address the Climate Change, Sustainability, Resiliency, and the Environment criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) reduction of air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions (including increasing use of lower carbon travel modes such as transit and active transportation and/or incorporating lower-carbon pavement and construction materials); or (2) improve resiliency of at-risk infrastructure; or (3) improve wildlife connectivity, especially for aquatic species; or (4) address negative environmental impacts on disadvantaged communities. 	<p>The application describes one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a reduction of air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions, but does not provide data to support a reduction (including increasing use of lower carbon travel modes such as transit and active transportation and/or incorporating lower-carbon pavement and construction materials); or (2) improved resiliency of at-risk infrastructure without providing data that the project would withstand the likelihood of an event or risk; or (3) indicates an improvement in wildlife connectivity, but does not support current or projected connectivity with data; or (4) describes how disadvantaged communities will not be affected by negative environmental impacts without providing supporting data. 	<p>The application includes quantifiable data that demonstrates one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a reduction of air pollution or greenhouse gases (including increasing use of lower carbon travel modes such as transit and active transportation and/or incorporating lower-carbon pavement and construction materials); or (2) improved resiliency of at-risk infrastructure; or (3) improve wildlife connectivity especially for aquatic species; or (4) addresses the disproportionate negative environmental impacts on disadvantaged communities.

Criterion #5: Equity and Quality of Life

DOT will consider the extent to which a project will improve the quality of life for local, regional, or national users of the facility based on the location of the project. Applicants should provide information about public engagement during the project’s planning,

consideration of quality of life benefits to all affected by the project, and how these contributed to the design of the project. Applicants should also describe (1) the consideration of benefits to nonvehicular and public transportation users, increasing affordable transportation choices, and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing vehicle dependence, and (2) how the project will improve access to critical community services such as housing, jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through vehicles, transit, and/or active transportation. Competitive applications will demonstrate partnerships with State, local, community-based, and private entities in the planning and designing of the project to provide the most benefits to all affected by the project, and the roles of these entities in the planning, design, construction, and operation of the project.

DOT will consider how the project will proactively address equity³⁷ and barriers to opportunity, improve quality of life in rural areas or urbanized areas, and benefit Historically Disadvantaged Communities or populations, or Areas of Persistent Poverty as defined in Section D.2.c. This may include increasing affordable transportation choices, especially for transportation disadvantaged communities. It should also describe how the project has or will meaningfully engage communities affected by the project, with effective public participation that is accessible to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and sex. Equity considerations should be integrated into planning, development, and implementation of transportation investments, including use of DBEs. The application should describe any public involvement plan or targeted outreach, demonstrating engagement of diverse input such as community-based organizations during project planning and consideration of such input in the project decisionmaking. The project application should describe planning and engagement in the project design phase to mitigate and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent physical and economic displacement.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
Equity and Quality of Life	The application did not address the Equity and Quality of Life criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess any of the following:	The application describes one or more of the following: (1) a plan to engage affected communities, but does not provide details on who will be engaged or how engagement will occur or has occurred;	The project has one or more of the following Equity and Quality of Life benefits: (1) the application provides verifiable evidence that demonstrates the project has or will engage Historically Disadvantaged Communities or populations, or Areas of

³⁷ Definitions for “equity” and “underserved communities” are found in E.O. 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, Sections 2 (a) and (b).

	<p>(1) how the project has or will engage communities affected by the project; or</p> <p>(2) how the project plans to mitigate or prevent physical and economic displacement due to the project; or</p> <p>(3) what considerations for nonvehicular and public transportation were included in the project; or</p> <p>(4) how the project will improve access to daily destinations such as housing, jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through vehicles, transit and/or active transportation.</p>	<p>(2) a plan to mitigate or prevent physical and economic displacement required by the project, but does not provide details on how it was affected by the planning and engagement process; or</p> <p>(3) incorporation of nonvehicular and/or public transportation into the project but does not describe benefits realized; or</p> <p>(4) improved access to daily destinations such as housing, jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through vehicles, transit and/or active transportation but does not provide evidence to demonstrate the improvements.</p>	<p>Persistent Poverty with effective public participation that is accessible to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and sex and taking into account consideration of such input in the planning, development, and implementation of the project decisionmaking process; or</p> <p>(2) the application demonstrates how the planning and engagement in the project design phase will mitigate and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent physical and economic displacement, as may be required by the project; or</p> <p>(3) the project incorporates nonvehicular and/or public transportation into the project, thus increasing affordable transportation choices and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing vehicle dependence and provides quantifiable benefits to the quality of life of the users; or</p> <p>(4) the application demonstrates, through verifiable evidence, how the project improves access to daily destinations such as housing, jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through vehicles, transit and/or active transportation.</p>
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Criterion #6: Innovation

Consistent with DOT's Innovation Principles³⁸ to support workers, to allow for experimentation and learn from failure, to provide opportunities to collaborate, and to be flexible and adapt as technology changes, DOT will assess whether and to what extent the applicant describes and documents how the project will deploy innovative project designs or construction techniques, innovative technology, innovative financing, or innovative planning and environmental review process improvements and the benefits of those methods.³⁹

For **innovative project design or construction techniques**, DOT will consider the extent to which the project uses innovative practices in design and contracting practices that facilitate accelerated project delivery or cost savings (such as public-private partnerships and single contractor design-build arrangements), congestion management, asset management, or long-term operations and maintenance. DOT also seeks projects that employ innovative approaches to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the environmental permitting and review to accelerate project delivery and achieve improved outcomes for communities and the environment with an objective is to achieve timely and consistent environmental review and permit decisions. Participation in innovative project design or construction techniques will not remove any statutory requirements affecting project delivery.

DOT will also assess the extent to which the project uses **innovative technology** to significantly enhance the operational performance of the transportation system or uses technology to improve the detection, mitigation, and documentation of safety risks.⁴⁰

DOT will consider the extent to which **innovative financing** is used on the project, including the use of bundling of projects and benefits of executing the project as a bundle compared to individual projects or by using private sector funding or financing or using congestion pricing or other demand management strategies to address congestion. This includes the use of non-traditional sources of transportation funding to leverage traditional Federal sources of funding to expand the overall investment in transportation infrastructure.

³⁸ <http://www.transportation.gov/priorities/innovation/us-dot-innovation-principles>

³⁹ Please refer to FHWA's Office of Innovative Program Delivery at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovativeprograms/> for more resources on transportation innovations.

⁴⁰ For innovative safety proposals, DOT will evaluate safety benefits that those approaches could produce and the broader applicability of the potential results. Please note that all innovative technology must be in compliance with 2 CFR 200.216.

For **innovative planning and environmental review process improvements**, DOT will consider the extent to which the project used Web-based, interactive environmental documents to increase transparency and accessibility for the public, stakeholders, and reviewing agencies. DOT will also consider whether a project utilizes an up-to-date programmatic agreement between an environmental resource agency and a State DOT, or other NEPA lead agency, that establishes a streamlined process for environmental consultations and permits for commonly encountered project types. DOT seeks approaches that reduced the barriers for the public, including historically-under represented communities, to interact with complex NEPA documents, such as accessibility on mobile phones, interactive versus static maps, plain English, and page limits consistent with statutory requirements. DOT also seeks approaches that allowed agencies to collaborate in real-time on NEPA documents and maps to identify and resolve issues earlier, save time, and improve quality.

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
Innovation	The application did not address the Innovation criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess innovation benefits, or the application doesn't have innovation benefits or includes non-innovative practices or components.	The application describes the use of an innovative project design or construction technique, technology, financing methodology, or planning and environmental review process improvements, but does not provide quantitative benefits from using the innovation.	The application includes quantitative benefits for the use of an innovative project design or construction technique, technology, financing, or planning and environmental review process improvements.

Merit Criteria Ratings Definitions

DOT will assign a Merit Criteria rating of high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, or low according to the following table:

Rating	Description
High	Five or more Criteria, including State of Good Repair, and Safety and Mobility, are rated Highly Responsive, and no Criteria are rated Non-Responsive ⁴¹
Medium-High	Four or more Criteria, including State of Good Repair, and Safety and Mobility, are rated Highly Responsive, and no Criteria are rated Non-Responsive ⁴¹
Medium	Three or more Criteria are rated Highly Responsive, and no Criteria are rated Non-Responsive
Medium-Low	Two or fewer Criteria are rated Highly Responsive, and no Criteria are rated Non-Responsive
Low	One or more Criteria are rated Non-Responsive

Only those Bridge Project grant applications that receive a medium or higher rating for Merit Criteria are advanced to have an Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Rating and a Project Readiness Rating completed.

c. Economic Analysis Rating

Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Ratings will not be assigned for Planning grant applications.

For a Bridge Project grant application that received a medium or higher rating for the Merit Criteria, DOT will consider whether and the extent to which the project's benefits are more likely than not to outweigh the total project costs and assign an Economic Analysis Rating. To the extent possible, DOT will rely on quantitative, evidence-based, and data-supported analysis in this assessment. Based on DOT's assessment, DOT will assign an Economic (benefit-cost) Analysis Rating of high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, or low according to the following table:

Rating	Description
High	The project's benefits will exceed its costs, with a benefit-cost ratio of at least 1.5

⁴¹ For the Merit Criteria to receive a High or Medium-High rating, both State of Good Repair, AND Safety and Mobility must be rated Highly Responsive. If either of State of Good Repair or Safety and Mobility criteria are rated Responsive, the highest the Merit Criteria can be rated is Medium.

Rating	Description
Medium-High	The project's benefits will exceed its costs
Medium	The project's benefits are likely to exceed its costs
Medium-Low	The project's costs are likely to exceed its benefits
Low	The project's costs will exceed its benefits

d. Project Readiness Rating

Project Readiness Ratings will not be assigned for Planning grant applications.

For a Bridge Project grant application that received a medium or higher rating for the Merit Criteria, DOT will consider project readiness to assess the likelihood of a successful project. In that project readiness analysis, DOT will consider three evaluation ratings: Environmental Risk Assessment, Technical Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment. The application should contain a section that explicitly addresses Environmental Risk Assessment, but the Technical Assessment and Financial Completeness Assessment will be based on information contained throughout the application.

Environmental Risk Assessment analyzes the project's environmental approvals and likelihood of the necessary approval affecting project obligation as described in Section D.2.c.VI, and results in a rating of "high risk," "moderate risk," or "low risk."

The Technical Assessment will assess the applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements based on factors including the recipient's experience working with Federal Agencies, civil rights compliance (including compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and accompanying DOT regulations, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), previous experience with DOT discretionary grant awards and the technical experience and resources dedicated to the project. This review is partially based on information submitted with the application and partially based on FHWA's knowledge of the applicant's performance. The Technical Assessment will also assess the technical feasibility of the project as described in Section D.2.c.VI. Technical Assessment ratings will be one of the following: "certain," "somewhat certain or unknown," or "uncertain." DOT will assign the highest rating of "certain," if the application demonstrates that: the applicant has extensive experience with Federal funds; the applicant has extensive experience completing projects with similar scope; the applicant has the resources to deliver the project; the project has minimal or no incomplete right-of-way acquisition; the project will comply with all applicable Federal requirements; and the applicant demonstrates the technical feasibility of the project in detail. Lack of previous project delivery according to Federal requirements is not sufficient justification for a rating of "uncertain," but may result in a rating of "unknown."

The Financial Completeness Assessment reviews the availability of funding for the project, including matching funds and whether the applicant presented a complete funding package as described in Section D.2.c.III, and will receive a rating of “complete,” “partially complete,” or “incomplete.” DOT will assign the highest rating of “complete” if the application identifies funding sources for the full project budget, indicates the funding level of commitment or availability, includes documented support such as letters of commitment, and indicates a plan to address potential cost overruns (by including an explicit contingency amount with a funding source, or otherwise). DOT will also consider whether the applicant indicated the level of design that the project is based on. A project with funding estimates that is based on early stages of design (e.g., less than 30 percent design) or outdated cost estimates without specified budget contingencies may receive a lower rating. All applicants should describe a plan to address potential cost overruns and future maintenance and preservation costs and how those costs will be funded. An application could receive an “incomplete” rating if significant project activities that are ineligible for BIP funding are included in the application package, but their funding source is not fully identified and it’s uncertain that funds will be secured to move the project forward.

The Project Readiness Ratings described above will be translated to a high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, or low rating, using the tables below:

Rating	1	2	3
Environmental Risk Assessment	<p>High Risk:</p> <p>The project has not completed or begun NEPA or secured necessary Federal permits and there are known environmental, or litigation concerns associated with the project.</p>	<p>Moderate Risk:</p> <p>The project has not completed NEPA or secured necessary Federal permits, and it is uncertain whether they will be able to complete NEPA or secure necessary Federal permits in the time necessary to meet their project schedule.</p>	<p>Low Risk:</p> <p>The Project has completed NEPA and secured necessary Federal permits, or it is highly likely that the applicant will be able to complete NEPA and secure necessary Federal permits and other environmental reviews in the time necessary to meet their project schedule.</p>
Technical Assessment	<p>Uncertain:</p> <p>The team is not confident in the applicant’s capacity to deliver this project in</p>	<p>Somewhat Certain/Unknown:</p> <p>The team is moderately confident in the applicant’s</p>	<p>Certain:</p> <p>The team is confident in the applicant’s capacity to deliver the project in a manner</p>

	a manner that satisfies Federal requirements. Or, the team is not confident in the technical feasibility of the project or if the project will be successfully completed.	capacity to deliver the project in a manner that satisfies Federal requirements. Or, the team is moderately confident in the technical feasibility and completion of the project.	that satisfies Federal requirements. And, the team is confident in the technical feasibility and completion of the project.
Financial Completeness Assessment	<p>Incomplete:</p> <p>The project lacks full funding, or one or more Federal or non-Federal match sources is still uncertain as to whether it will be secured in time to meet the project's construction schedule. Plan to address potential cost overruns is not provided.</p>	<p>Partially Complete:</p> <p>Project funding is not fully committed but appears stable and highly likely to be secured in time to meet the project's construction schedule. Plan to address potential cost overruns is not fully provided.</p>	<p>Complete:</p> <p>The project's Federal and non-Federal sources are stable and fully committed and there is demonstrated funding available to cover contingency/cost increases. Plan to address potential cost overruns is provided.</p>

Rating	Description
High	All 3's
Medium-High	Two 3's, one 2
Medium	One 3, two 2's
Medium-Low	All 2's
Low	Any 1's

e. Overall Application Rating

i) Planning

DOT will assign each eligible project a rating of Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended for Planning grant requests. The rating will be assigned by DOT on the following basis:

A **Highly Recommended** project is one that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received a Highly Qualified rating on all Merit Criteria.

A **Recommended** project is one that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received one Qualified rating on a Merit Criterion and either a Qualified or Highly Qualified rating on the remaining Merit Criteria.

A **Not Recommended** project is one that does not meet one or more of the statutory eligibility criteria or an eligible application that receives at least one Not Qualified rating on a Merit Criterion.

ii) **Bridge Project**

DOT will assign each eligible project a rating of Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended for Bridge Project grant requests. The rating will be assigned by DOT on the following basis:

A rating of “**Highly Recommended**” will be assigned to a project that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received no less than a Medium-High rating for each of Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating.

A rating of “**Recommended**” will be assigned to a project that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received no less than a Medium rating for each of Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating.

A rating of “**Not Recommended**” will be assigned to a project that:

- Does not meet one or more of eligibility requirements; or
- Received a Medium-Low or Low rating on any of the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, or Project Readiness Rating; or
- Is not otherwise assigned a “Highly Recommended” or “Recommended” rating.

f. **Statutory Secretarial Considerations**

In selecting a Planning or a Bridge Project to receive a BIP grant in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5), the Secretary shall give consideration to:

- a. The average daily person and freight throughput supported by the eligible project;
- b. The number and percentage of bridges within the same State as the eligible project that are in poor condition;
- c. The extent to which the eligible project demonstrates cost savings by bundling multiple bridge projects;

- d. In the case of an eligible project of an FLMA, the extent to which the grant would reduce a Federal liability or Federal infrastructure maintenance backlog;
- e. Geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities; and
- f. The extent to which a bridge that would be assisted with a grant: (i) is, without that assistance, at risk of falling into or remaining in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years; (ii) does not meet current geometric design standards based on the current use of the bridge, or load and traffic requirements typical of the regional corridor or local network in which the bridge is located; or (iii) does not meet current seismic design standards.

g. Statutory Required Project Selection Priorities⁴²

In selecting a Bridge Project for a BIP grant, the Secretary shall:

- a. Give priority to an application for an eligible project that is located within a State for which:
 - i. Two or more applications for eligible projects within the State were submitted for the current fiscal year and an average of two or more applications for eligible projects within the State were submitted in prior fiscal years (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(B)(i)(I)); and
 - ii. Fewer than two grants have been awarded using BIP funds for eligible projects within the State (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(B)(i)(II)).
- b. During the period of FYs 2022 – 2026, in each State from which an eligible project is submitted, DOT shall not:
 - i. Select fewer than one Large Bridge Project the Secretary determines is justified under 23 U.S.C. 124(g)(4); or
 - ii. Two eligible projects that are not large projects that the Secretary determines are justified under 23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3). (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(B)(ii)).
- c. The Secretary is not required to award a grant for an eligible project that the Secretary does not determine is justified under 23 U.S.C. 124(f)(3) or 124(g)(4). (23 U.S.C. 124(c)(B)(iii)).

⁴² 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(B)(i)(I) requires the Secretary to give priority consideration for an eligible project that is located within a State for which two or more applications for eligible projects within the State were submitted for the current fiscal year and an average of two or more applications for eligible projects within the State were submitted in prior fiscal years of the program. For the first fiscal year of the BIP, DOT was unable to take into account eligible projects submitted in a prior fiscal year of the program. DOT will apply this part of the priority consideration during the FY 2023-2026 BIP funds competitions.

h. DOT Priority Considerations

i) Planning

After completing the technical review consisting of the Merit Criteria, DOT will give priority consideration to Highly Recommended Planning grant applications that (1) demonstrate that in the absence of a BIP Planning grant the project sponsor(s) will be unable to begin or complete the planning process for a BIP Large Bridge Project, and (2) are for one of the following:

- A. To complete the planning process for a Large Bridge Project that will replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect a bridge in poor condition on the NBI and an anticipated construction start date within 2 years of completion of the planning process; or
- B. To begin and complete the planning process for a Large Bridge Project that will replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect a bridge in poor condition on the NBI.

ii) Bridge Project

After completing the technical review consisting of the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating, among projects of similar merit, DOT will prioritize a Bridge Project that:

- (A) Plans to improve the condition of a bridge or bundle of bridges in poor condition or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition within the next 3 years, and
- (B) Demonstrates but for a BIP grant the project sponsor(s) will be unable to complete the Bridge Project.

If both of these two considerations are met, DOT will prioritize a project that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1) The applicants are an FLMA that owns the bridge and a State, and Bridge Project application provides evidence that upon completion of the project, the bridge will be divested;
- 2) The project is or will be ready to proceed to the next stage of project delivery within 12 months of a CE Determination, FONSI, or ROD;
- 3) The project includes accommodation for transit and/or multi-modal transportation such as the inclusion of bus rapid lanes on the bridge and pedestrian/bicycle facilities;⁴³

⁴³ This priority consideration does not mean that transit only bridges are eligible for BIP assistance. Transit only bridges are not highway bridges nor are they included in the NBI and therefore do not meet the BIP eligibility criteria.

- 4) The project considers Workforce Development, Job Quality and Wealth Creation such as the creation of good-paying jobs directly related to the project, that may result in equitable access to those jobs, with a free and fair choice to join a union, expand training programs, and incorporates strong labor standards and includes strategies such as targeted hiring preferences for bringing in and retention of historically underrepresented workers into the workforce;⁴⁴
- 5) Without a BIP grant, construction of the project is unlikely to commence before September 30 of the fiscal year plus 3 years (September 30, 2026, for FY 2023 funds, September 30, 2027, for FY 2024 funds, September 30, 2028, for FY 2025 funds, and September 30, 2029, for FY 2026 funds.)

2. Review and Selection Process

a. Planning

DOT will conduct an application intake and eligibility review for Planning grant applications by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the statutory eligibility criteria in Section C. Only an eligible project will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria under Section E.1. The BIP Planning grant eligible application evaluation process consists of the following: (1) a Technical review; (2) a Technical Review Management Team review; (3) an FHWA Senior Review Team (SRT) review; and (4) Office of the Secretary (OST) review of applications recommended for consideration by the FHWA Administrator (the Administrator) and Secretary selection of projects.

i) Application Intake and Eligibility Review

DOT will conduct an Application Intake and Eligibility Review by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the statutory eligibility criteria in Section C. If a determination is made that an application meets the eligibility requirements, the application will advance to the Merit Criteria review. However, if a determination is made that the application does not meet the eligibility requirements, it will not advance to the Merit Criteria review. Only an eligible project will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria in Section E.1. See Sections A.3.c and D.4 for the rolling application process and important dates. All applicants will have the option to request a debrief from DOT after grant awards are announced, see Section H.3.b.

ii) Technical Review

The evaluation of eligible applications will be conducted by a Technical Review Team consisting of individuals from FHWA. The Technical Review Team will evaluate each eligible

⁴⁴ Examples of such consideration may include using a project labor agreement, putting in place a registered apprenticeship usage rate of at least 10 percent with supportive services provided to apprentices, and using local and economic hiring preferences to target hiring to economically disadvantaged areas.

application against the Merit Criteria in Section E.1. Based on the outcome of this review, the Technical Review Team will assign an overall rating of “Highly Recommended,” “Recommended,” or “Not Recommended,” to each application. All applicants will have the option to request a debrief from DOT after grant awards are announced, see Section H.3.b.

The Technical Review Team will also evaluate each Highly Recommended and Recommended application’s responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations for a Planning grant. The Technical Review Team will send the overall project rating for each Planning grant application and evaluation of responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations to a Technical Review Management Team.

iii) Technical Review Management Team

The Technical Review Management Team is composed of managers from FHWA selected to review the individual criterion ratings and overall ratings, including DOT Priority Considerations, for each project from the Technical Review Team. The Technical Review Management Team will also assess funding scenarios for the projects found to be Highly Recommended or Recommended and will send them to the SRT.

iv) FHWA Senior Review Team and Applications Recommended for Consideration by the FHWA Administrator

FHWA SRT consists of senior FHWA officials who have been requested to serve by the Administrator. FHWA SRT, which may include the Administrator’s participation in the SRT review process, advises the Administrator which projects the Administrator should send to the Secretary.

FHWA SRT will determine which Highly Recommended and Recommended projects to advance to the Administrator. When identifying applications to recommend to the Administrator, the FHWA SRT will consider geographic diversity, including as applicable the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities. They may consider an application’s responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations. FHWA SRT will consider Highly Recommended and Recommended projects from a pool of applications from the current fiscal year of funding. FHWA SRT may recommend a Recommended project over a Highly Recommended project by giving consideration to how well the project addressed the Merit Criteria and number of Merit Criteria rated Highly Qualified.

The Administrator will determine which Highly Recommended projects, and any Recommended projects to advance to the Secretary after considering the FHWA SRT recommendations, including responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations.

v) OST Review of Applications Recommended for Consideration by the FHWA Administrator and the Secretary Selection of Projects

The Secretary makes final project selections and will select among the projects advanced by the Administrator. In selecting projects, the Secretary may ask for and receive advice from the Administrator on options for reduced awards, awards under a different funding category than identified in the application, and in the case of a bridge bundle, options for funding certain bridges of the bundle that are immediately ready to proceed to construction upon award, providing separate grants for bridges in the bundle for use after the completion of NEPA, or to remove bridges from the bundle altogether from consideration.

The Planning grant application review process gives the Secretary the discretion to determine which applications best address program requirements, advance the Administration's Priorities and Departmental Plan Strategic Goals, and should be selected. When selecting projects, the Secretary may also consider geographic diversity including, as applicable, the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities and selecting projects that ensure the effective use of Federal funding.

b. Bridge Project

DOT will conduct an application intake and eligibility review for Bridge Project grant applications by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the statutory eligibility criteria in Section C. Only an eligible project will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, and Project Readiness Rating under Section E.1. The BIP Bridge Project eligible application evaluation process consists of the following: (1) a Technical review; (2) a Technical Review Management Team review; (3) an FHWA SRT review; and (4) OST review of applications recommended for consideration by the Administrator and Secretary selection of projects.

i) Application Intake and Eligibility Review

DOT will conduct an Application Intake and Eligibility Review by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the statutory eligibility criteria in Section C. If a determination is made that an application meets the eligibility requirements, the application will advance to the Technical review.

If a determination is made that the application does not meet the eligibility requirements on any basis other than compliance with accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii of this NOFO, applicants will not be notified of this determination and it will not advance to the Technical review. However, for applications determined to be ineligible solely on the basis of not meeting the requirements for accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii of this NOFO, applicants will be notified of this determination along with information about the basis for finding the application ineligible under Section C.3.c.ii. These applicants will have the option to submit an amended application to address the accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii. If an applicant intends to submit an amended application, it must be submitted in no later than 14 calendar days from the date DOT notified the applicant of the ineligibility determination. For Bridge Project grants, DOT will not review

any amended applications submitted after March 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through March 1, 2026. DOT will conduct an eligibility screening for each amended application submitted by the deadline. If a determination is made that the amended application meets the eligibility requirements, the application will advance to the Technical review. However, if a determination is made that the amended application does not meet the eligibility requirements for accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians under Section C.3.c.ii, applicants will not be notified of this determination, the application may not be amended further, and it will not advance to the Technical review.

Only an eligible project will be evaluated against the criteria in Section E.1. If after the initial eligibility screening a Bridge Project grant application, or an amended application as described in this section, is determined to be ineligible, those determinations will be final. The applicants will have to submit a new BIP application for consideration during the next round of BIP funding as described in Section A.3.d and will not have an opportunity to submit an amended application as described in this section and Section A.3.c. See Sections A.3.c, A.3.d, and D.4 for the rolling application process, disposition of applications, and important dates. All applicants will have the option to request a debrief from DOT after grant awards are announced, see Section H.3.b.

ii) Technical Review

The evaluation of eligible applications will be conducted by a Technical Review Team who may consist of individuals from FHWA. The Technical Review Team will evaluate each eligible application against the Merit Criteria in Section E.1. For the eligible applications that received a medium or higher rating for the Merit Criteria, the Technical Review Team will also evaluate the Economic Analysis Rating and the Project Readiness Rating in Section E.1. Based on the outcome of these reviews, the Technical Review Team will assign an overall rating of “Highly Recommended,” “Recommended,” or “Not Recommended,” to each application.

If the eligible application is rated Not Recommended after the completion of the Merit Criteria review (medium-low or low rating), those determinations will be final. Applicants will have to submit a new BIP application for the next round of BIP funding as described in Section A.3.d and will not have an opportunity to submit an amended application as described in this section and Section A.3.c.

For each Highly Recommended and Recommended applications, as well as for each eligible application that received a medium or higher rating for Merit Criteria but was rated Not Recommended due to the Economic Analysis Rating and/or the Project Readiness Rating, DOT will notify each applicant of the overall application rating. With that notification, DOT will inform the applicant that it has the opportunity to submit an amended application to address the rating within 14 calendar days from the date of the notification, or to submit a request for a debrief. If a debrief is requested, an applicant will have 14 calendar days from the date of the debrief to submit an amended application. DOT will not review any amended applications submitted after July 17, 2024, for FY 2023 and FY 2024 BIP funding and March 1 of each calendar year (2025 and 2026) through March 1, 2026. All timely submitted amended applications will be reevaluated under the Merit Criteria, Economic Analysis Rating, or Project

Readiness Rating, as applicable based on the issue(s) addressed in the amended application and assigned an overall application rating based on that reevaluation. See Section A.3.c, A.3.d, and D.4 for the rolling application process, disposition of applications, and important dates. All applicants will have the option to request a debrief from DOT after grant awards are announced, see Section H.3.b.

Beginning with FY 2023, the Technical Review Team will document the following for each State: (1) the number of eligible applications submitted for each fiscal year for which funding is available; (2) the number of eligible applications submitted in each previous fiscal year; and (3) the total number of Bridge Project grants that have been awarded to projects within each State. The SRT, the Administrator, and the Secretary will use this information to give statutorily required project selection priority to applications under 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(5)(B).

The Technical Review Team will also evaluate each Highly Recommended and Recommended application's responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations for a Bridge Project. The Technical Review Team will send the overall project rating for each Bridge Project and evaluation of responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations to a Technical Review Management Team.

iii) Technical Review Management Team

The Technical Review Management Team is composed of managers from FHWA selected to review the individual criterion ratings and overall ratings, including DOT Priority Considerations, for each project from the Technical Review Team.

All Highly Recommended and Recommended applications will be reviewed by the FHWA division office in the State in which the project is located. The division offices will review the respective applications and evaluate whether there are any aspects in the delivery of the proposed project that may prevent the project from timely moving forward upon receipt of a BIP grant. The division offices will provide the outcome of their review to the Technical Review Management Team for consideration.

The Technical Review Management Team will also assess funding scenarios for the projects found to be Highly Recommended or Recommended and will send them to the SRT.

iv) FHWA Senior Review Team and Applications Recommended for Consideration by the FHWA Administrator

FHWA SRT consists of senior FHWA officials who have been requested to serve by the Administrator. FHWA SRT, which may include the Administrator's participation in the SRT review process, advises the Administrator which projects the Administrator should send to the Secretary.

FHWA SRT will determine which Highly Recommended and Recommended projects to advance to the Administrator. When identifying applications to recommend to the Administrator, the FHWA SRT will consider geographic diversity, including as applicable the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities. They will also take into account the statutorily required project selection priority requirements and may consider an application's responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations. FHWA SRT will also consider prioritizing applications from States that have not yet received one Large Bridge Project or two Bridge Project awards, until every State has received one Large Bridge Project or two Bridge Project awards, as discussed in Section A.1.b. See Section E.1.g for Statutory Required Project Selection Priorities. FHWA SRT will consider Highly Recommended and Recommended projects from a pool of applications that were carried over from previous fiscal years as well as those from the current fiscal year of funding. FHWA SRT may recommend a Recommended project over a Highly Recommended project by giving consideration to how well the project addressed the Merit Criteria and number of Merit Criteria rated High as well as the project's High ratings under Economic Analysis and Project Readiness.

The Administrator will determine which Highly Recommended projects, and any Recommended projects to advance to the Secretary after considering the FHWA SRT recommendations, including the statutorily required project selection priorities and responsiveness to the DOT Priority Considerations.

v) OST Review of Applications Recommended for Consideration by the FHWA Administrator and the Secretary Selection of Projects

The Secretary makes final project selections and will select among the projects advanced by the Administrator. In selecting projects, the Secretary may ask for and receive advice from the Administrator on options for reduced awards, awards under a different funding category than identified in the application, and in the case of a bridge bundle, options for funding certain bridges of the bundle that are immediately ready to proceed to construction upon award, providing separate grants for bridges in the bundle that may need to complete NEPA, or to remove bridges from the bundle altogether from consideration.

The Bridge Project application review process gives the Secretary the discretion to determine which applications best address program requirements including the statutorily required project selection priorities, advance the Administration's Priorities and Departmental Plan Strategic Goals, and should be selected. When selecting projects, the Secretary may also consider geographic diversity including, as applicable, the need for a balance between the needs of rural and urban communities and selecting projects that ensure the effective use of Federal funding.

3. Additional Information

Prior to award, each selected applicant will be subject to a risk assessment as required by 2 CFR 200.206. DOT must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently the Federal

Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS)). An applicant may review information in FAPIS and comment on any information about itself. DOT will consider comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants.

SECTION F - FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notice

DOT will announce the awarded projects by posting a list of selected projects at [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#). Following the announcement, successful applicants and unsuccessful applicants will be notified separately.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All awards will be administered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found in 2 CFR Part 200, as adopted by DOT at 2 CFR Part 1201. Applicable Federal laws, rules, and regulations set forth in 23, U.S.C. and 23 CFR shall apply to awards provided under this program.

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this NOFO, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; the conditions of performance, non-discrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of DOT and FHWA; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by OMB. In complying with these requirements, recipients, in particular, must ensure that no concession agreements are denied, or other contracting decisions made on the basis of speech or other activities protected by the First Amendment. If DOT determines that a recipient has failed to comply with applicable Federal requirements, DOT may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

In particular, E.O. 14005 directs the Executive Branch Departments and Agencies to maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States through the terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards. If selected for an award, grant recipients must be prepared to demonstrate how they will maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing their project. Any grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations (FMCSR), or vehicles that are exempt from FMVSS or FMCSRs in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

a. Program Requirements

i. Critical Infrastructure Security, Cybersecurity, and Resilience

It is the policy of the United States to strengthen the security and resilience of its critical infrastructure against all hazards, including both physical and cyber threats, consistent with

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Presidential Policy Directive 21 - Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience and the National Security Memorandum on Improving Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure Control Systems. Each applicant selected for Federal funding under this notice must demonstrate, prior to the signing of the grant agreement, effort to consider and address physical and cyber security risks relevant to the transportation mode and type and scale of the project. Projects that have not appropriately considered and addressed physical and cyber security and resilience in their planning, design, and project oversight, as determined by FHWA and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, will be required to do so before receiving funds.

ii. Domestic Preference Requirements

As expressed in E.O. 14005, Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers (86 FR 7475), the Executive Branch should maximize, consistent with law, the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States. Funds made available under this notice are subject to the domestic preference requirements at Pub. L. No 117-58, div. G §§ 70901–70927. DOT expects all applicants to comply with those requirements.

iii. Civil Rights and Title VI

As a condition of a grant award, grant recipients should demonstrate that the recipient has a plan for compliance with civil rights obligations and nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations (49 CFR 21), the ADA, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all other civil rights requirements, and accompanying regulations. This should include a current Title VI Plan, completed Community Participation Plan, and a plan to address any legacy infrastructure or facilities that are not compliant with ADA standards. FHWA's Office of Civil Rights may work with awarded grant recipients to ensure full compliance with Federal civil rights requirements.

iv. Federal Contract Compliance

As a condition of grant award and consistent with E.O. 11246, EEO E.O. (30 FR 12319, and as amended), all federally assisted contractors are required to make good faith efforts to meet the goals of 6.9 percent of construction project hours being performed by women, in addition to goals that vary based on geography for construction work hours and for work being performed by people of color. Under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and its implementing regulations, affirmative action obligations for certain contractors include an aspirational employment goal of 7 percent workers with disabilities.

The DOL's OFCCP is charged with enforcing E.O. 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. The OFCCP has a Mega Construction Project Program through which it engages with project sponsors as early as the design phase to help promote compliance with non-discrimination and affirmative action obligations. The OFCCP will identify projects that receive an award under this notice and are

required to participate in OFCCP’s Mega Construction Project Program from a wide range of federally assisted projects over which OFCCP has jurisdiction and that have a project cost above \$35 million. FHWA will require project sponsors with costs above \$35 million that receive awards under this funding opportunity to partner with OFCCP, if selected by OFCCP, as a condition of their FHWA award. Under that partnership, OFCCP will ask these project sponsors to make clear to prime contractors in the pre-bid phase that project sponsor’s award terms will require their participation in the Mega Construction Project Program. Additional information on how OFCCP makes their selections for participation in the Mega Construction Project Program is outlined under “Scheduling” on DOL’s Website:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/faqs/construction-compliance>.

v. Climate Change and Environmental Justice

Each applicant selected for BIP Bridge Project grant funding must demonstrate effort to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts. Projects that have not sufficiently considered climate change and environmental justice in their planning, as determined by FHWA, will be required to do so before receiving funds for construction, consistent with E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 FR 7619).

vi. Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

Each applicant selected for BIP Bridge Project grant funding must demonstrate effort to improve equity and reduce barriers to opportunity. Projects that have not sufficiently considered equity and barriers to opportunity in their planning, as determined by FHWA, will be required to do so before receiving funds for construction, consistent with E.O. 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (86 FR 7009).

vii. Labor and Workforce

Each applicant selected for BIP Bridge Project grant funding must demonstrate, to the full extent possible consistent with the law, an effort to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporation of high labor standards. To the extent that applicants have not sufficiently considered job quality and labor rights in their planning, as determined by DOL, the applicants will be required to do so before receiving funds for construction, consistent with E.O. 14025, Worker Organizing and Empowerment (86 FR 22829), and E.O. 14052, Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (86 FR 64335).

3. Reporting

a. Progress Reporting on Grant Activities

Each applicant selected for BIP Planning and Bridge Project grant funding must submit semi-annual progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) to monitor project progress and

ensure accountability and financial transparency in the BIP Planning and Bridge Project grant program.

b. Performance and Program Evaluation

As a condition of grant award, grant recipients may be required to participate in an evaluation undertaken by DOT or another agency or partner. The evaluation may take different forms such as an implementation assessment across grant recipients, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grant recipients, or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. DOT may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation and/or use information available through other reporting. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grant recipients must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor or DOT staff; (2) provide access to program records, and any other relevant documents to calculate costs and benefits; (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the access to relevant information as requested; (4) access to right-of-way to contractor or DOT staff for long-term data and observation collection; and (5) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor or DOT staff.

Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged to incorporate program evaluation, including associated data collection activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting an Agency priority goal(s). Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) urges Federal awarding agencies and Federal assistance recipients and subrecipients to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, to improve equitable delivery, and to elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means “an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.” (5 U.S.C. 311) Credible program evaluation activities are implemented with relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics (OMB Circular A-11, Part 6 Section 290).

For grant recipients receiving an award, evaluation costs are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), unless prohibited by statute or regulation, and such costs may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and evaluation. (2 CFR Part 200).

c. BIP Planning and Bridge Project Grant Specific Reporting Requirements

Each applicant selected for BIP Planning or Bridge Project grant funding must collect and report to FHWA information on the project’s performance based on performance indicators FHWA identifies related to program goals (See Section A.1 for BIP program goals) and other information as requested by FHWA. Performance indicators should include measurable goals or targets that FHWA will use internally to determine whether the project meets program goals, and grant funds to achieve the intended long-term outcomes of the BIP Project. FHWA will work

with the grant recipient to establish a recommended two to four performance measures that enable FHWA to measure and evaluate the outcomes of the individual grant, relative to the program goals (identified in Section A.1). Performance reporting will continue for several years after project construction is completed, for details please refer to the Performance Measurement Guidance for the BIP Discretionary Grant Program:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bip/BIP_FY_2022_Performance_Measures.pdf.

d. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

If the total value of a selected applicant's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, the applicant during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently FAPIIS) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of this award term and condition. This is a statutory requirement under section 872 of Public Law 110-417, as amended (41 U.S.C. 2313). As required by section 3010 of Public Law 111-212, all information posted in the designated integrity and performance system on or after April 15, 2011, except past performance reviews required for Federal procurement contracts, will be publicly available.

e. Other

DOT reserves the right to request additional information, if deemed needed, to better understand the status of the project. The successful applicant will provide additional financial reporting beyond the semi-annual reporting, if such statements are necessary to address DOT's Stewardship and Oversight responsibility of the funds. The successful applicant also agrees to allow periodic project inspections and DOT will provide notice for such inspections.

SECTION G - FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

For questions concerning this NOFO and the BIP Program, please contact:

Angela Jones
Agreement Specialist
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email (preferred): BridgeImprovementProgram@dot.gov
Phone: 202-366-4255

Alternate:

Hector Santamaria
Agreement Officer/Team Leader
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email (preferred): BridgeImprovementProgram@dot.gov
Phone: 202-493-2402

SECTION H - OTHER INFORMATION

1. Protection of Confidential Business Information

All information submitted as part of or in support of any application shall use publicly available data or data that can be made public and methodologies that are accepted by industry practice and standards, to the extent possible. If the applicant submits information that the applicant considers to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information, the applicant must provide that information in a separate document, which the applicant may cross-reference from the application narrative or other portions of the application. For the separate document containing confidential information, the applicant must do the following: (1) state on the cover of that document that it “Contains Confidential Business Information (CBI)”; (2) mark each page that contains confidential information with “CBI”; (3) highlight or otherwise denote the confidential content on each page; and (4) at the end of the document, explain how disclosure of the confidential information would cause substantial competitive harm. DOT will protect confidential information complying with these requirements to the extent required under applicable law. If DOT receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information that the applicant has marked in accordance with this section, DOT will follow the procedures described in its FOIA regulations at 49 CFR 7.29. Only information that is in the separate document, marked in accordance with this section, and ultimately determined to be confidential under 7.29, will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

2. Publication of List of Applications

Following the completion of the selection process and announcement of awards, DOT intends to publish a list of all applications received along with the names of the applicant organizations and funding amounts requested.

3. DOT Feedback on Applications

a. Debriefs during the Application Review Process – Bridge Project Grants Only

As described in Sections A.3.c and E.2, applicants may request a debrief during the application review process for Bridge Project grant applications. A debrief is not available during the application process for Planning grant applications.

During the debrief for an overall application rating, as applicable, DOT will: (1) identify discussion points under each Merit Criterion that were not addressed or did not include information described in the NOFO that resulted in the application receiving the assigned overall rating for Merit Criteria; (2) identify information described in the NOFO that was not included in the applicant’s BCA that resulted in the application receiving the assigned Economic Analysis Rating; and (3) identify discussion points that were not addressed or information that was not included as described in the NOFO that resulted in the application receiving the assigned Project

Readiness Rating. DOT will not provide technical assistance to any applicant, including providing guidance on how an applicant could improve an application or commenting on or reviewing an applicant's proposed amendments to an application.

b. Debriefs for Applications Not Selected to Receive an Award

Debriefs by FHWA BIP staff are available to applicants not selected to receive a BIP award. Debrief requests for Planning or Bridge Project grant applications should be received within 45 calendar days after grant awards are announced. Note during the debrief, DOT will not provide technical assistance to any applicant including providing guidance on how an applicant could improve an application for future fiscal year BIP funding opportunities. All debrief requests should be submitted to BridgeImprovementProgram@dot.gov.