



DRAFT Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number 693JJ320NF00006

“National Operations Center of Excellence Support”

NOFO Issue Date: December 15, 2020

Application Due Date: 60 days after NOFO issue date

Estimated Cooperative Agreement Award Date: July 30, 2021

## SUMMARY

|                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Funding Opportunity Summary:                          | Set-aside award to the <i>American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials</i> (AASHTO) to continue to support the National Operations Center of Excellence.                                                                               |
| Federal Agency Name:                                  | U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)<br>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)<br>Office of Acquisition and Grants Management<br>1200 New Jersey Avenue SE<br>Mail Drop: E65-101<br>Washington DC 20590<br><br>Attention: Angela A. Jones                  |
| Funding Opportunity Title:                            | “National Operations Center of Excellence Support”                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Eligibility:                                          | Eligibility for this funding opportunity is limited to AASHTO                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Announcement Type:                                    | This announcement is a follow-on to Cooperative Agreement No. DTFH6114H00024 to AASHTO entitled “National Operations Center of Excellence Support”                                                                                                           |
| Funding Opportunity Number:                           | 693JJ320NF00006                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Type of Award:                                        | Cooperative Agreement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CDFA) Number: | 20.200                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Application Due Date:                                 | Submission Deadline by 11:00 pm ET on TBD via Grants.gov (See Section D).                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Questions:                                            | Submit Questions by email to: (no later than January 25)<br><br>Primary Point of Contact: <a href="mailto:Angela.Jones@dot.gov">Angela.Jones@dot.gov</a><br>Secondary Point of Contact: <a href="mailto:Sarah.Tarpgaard@dot.gov">Sarah.Tarpgaard@dot.gov</a> |

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**NOTE:** The FHWA uses [www.grants.gov](http://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 of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Approval of user registrations for the site may take multiple weeks. It is the Applicant's responsibility to monitor for any updates to this NOFO.

## **SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### **1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this cooperative agreement is to provide financial and technical support to the Recipient, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), to continue the operations of the National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCoE). Under this award, AASHTO shall continue to operate and manage the existing NOCoE Web portal to provide continued access to the Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) community to support their efforts to reduce congestion, improve reliability, and advance overall TSMO efforts across the United States. AASHTO shall continue to operate and improve the Enhanced Knowledge Transfer System (EKTS) that serves as the cornerstone of the NOCoE. In addition, AASHTO shall expand and improve the resources and capabilities of the existing NOCoE.

The NOCoE was originally developed as an extension of the enhanced knowledge transfer system developed under a previous FHWA Cooperative Agreement No. DTFH61-10-H-00008 with AASHTO. AASHTO further developed and has been operating the NOCoE under FHWA Cooperative Agreement DTFH6-11-H-00024 and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America). The NOCoE addresses the need for a centralized and comprehensive set of resources to serve the TSMO community. The NOCoE has built an extensive collection of technical resources; provides an interface for in-person and virtual peer interaction through events and Webinars; and advances TSMO and the state-of-the-practice through a newsletter, case studies, workforce development resources, and outreach.

This planned follow-on cooperative agreement seeks to maximize the benefits being generated from establishing the NOCoE by continuing an institutional support structure for collecting and disseminating best practice information, identifying research needs and capabilities, highlighting successful TSMO projects and practices, and providing technical support services. AASHTO will continue to operate, maintain, and upgrade the NOCoE and seek further investment and activity from third parties in order to maintain a sustainable operational environment.

### **2. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The authority to award an agreement for this effort is found in 23 U.S.C. 502(b)(3)(C), which authorizes the FHWA to enter into cooperative agreements with AASHTO to carry out research, development, and technology transfer activities related to transportation with respect to all phases of transportation planning and development to include TSMO.

The funding for this effort is authorized in 23 U.S.C. 502(b)(5)(B), which states “The Secretary shall use funds made available to carry out this chapter to develop, administer, communicate, and promote the use of products of research, development, and technology transfer programs under this chapter.”

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 502(c)(3)(A), the Federal share of the project shall not exceed 80 percent.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

Over the last decade, the emerging TSMO community and discipline have become widely recognized for their importance. Unlike some more established transportation disciplines, TSMO did not have an institutional support structure or a centralized home for collecting and disseminating best practice information and identifying research needs and capabilities. The NOCoE was developed to meet these needs. The establishment of the NOCoE was supported by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 298, Operations Center of Excellence, which concluded that the next logistical step in meeting the needs of the TSMO Community of Practice was the creation of a NOCoE to serve the TSMO community. The NOCoE is a partnership of three key organizations: AASHTO, ITE, and the ITS America. The FHWA supports the need to continue the NOCoE and leverage the efforts of these three organizational partners in equipping State and local transportation agencies, TSMO practitioners, and other TSMO stakeholders in better operating and managing the transportation system.

The NOCoE has become an established presence in the TSMO community among national, State, regional and local practitioners by delivering key resources and, in the process, raising the level of awareness of and support for TSMO. The development of this audience and community of practice, and the delivery of resources, is in large part due to the NOCoE's active involvement with each association's committee(s)/initiatives with a TSMO focus as well as DOT departments focusing on TSMO:

- AASHTO's Committee on Transportation System Operations has leveraged product delivery and dissemination through the NOCoE in its strategic plan, and its members have provided information on effective practices and case studies.
- ITE's TSMO Council is directly involved in the NOCoE student outreach efforts and the Council leadership has identified multiple actions for sharing knowledge.
- ITS America's members are working with the NOCoE to continue supporting Emergency Response Day.
- DOT's FHWA Office of Operations provides content for Webinars, peer exchanges, and input into other technical services, and extends the reach of its research products through the NOCoE's Knowledge Center database of technical resources. In addition, the ITS Joint Program Office works closely with the NOCoE on the Transportation Technology Tournament and other workforce development activities.

The NOCoE has become widely recognized as the leading place to go for TSMO resources and TSMO engagement activities. No other place has the recognition and reach of the NOCoE for reaching the full spectrum of members of the TSMO audience. The FHWA intends to continue to support the NOCoE as an effective way to reach key stakeholder groups and advance TSMO practice nationally through its online portal with an extensive collection of technical resources, bi-weekly newsletters, interfaces for peer interaction, and its technical services as a source of

in-person events, Webinars, training, and more.

#### **4. GOALS**

The goals of this agreement are to support, manage, and operate the NOCoE, and perform associated stakeholder outreach activities, to support the TSMO community. To achieve the goals, AASHTO shall continue to operate and manage the existing NOCoE Web portal to provide continued resources to the TSMO community to support their efforts to reduce congestion, improve reliability, and advance overall TSMO efforts across the United States. The AASHTO shall continue to operate and improve the EKTS that serves as the cornerstone of the NOCoE. In addition, AASHTO shall expand and improve the resources and capabilities of the existing NOCoE. The AASHTO shall collaborate with the FHWA to accomplish the goals of this project.

#### **5. STATEMENT OF WORK**

Under this agreement, the AASHTO shall perform the following activities to meet the goals of the award:

- Management and Operation of NOCoE;
- NOCoE Web Portal Maintenance and Content;
- Development and delivery of Stakeholder Engagement Activities; and
- Delivery of Technical Services.

#### **DELINEATION OF TASKS**

##### **Task 1: Management and Operation of NOCoE**

This task shall support the overall management and operation of the NOCoE. The Recipient shall:

- Provide staff and other support to carry out the role envisioned for the NOCoE to meet the goals set forth above and the task described herein. Staff shall also be identified, whether from the Recipient or from one of the MOU participants, to support the NOCoE, including the Website and related services.
- In coordination with FHWA, identify, define, and establish a Strategic Advisory Council (SAC), a Technical Committee, and a Managing Director for the NOCoE per below:
  - The SAC's primary role shall be to provide strategic guidance and direction to the NOCoE, conduct an annual review of the NOCoE's accomplishments, and provide input to the annual NOCoE Business Plan which describes the planned programs and services. The membership of the SAC shall include representatives from the Recipient, ITE and ITS America, as well as the FHWA Associate Administrator for Operations as a non-voting member. The SAC shall hold a minimum of one meeting per year and may meet more frequently either in person or via conference call or Webinar as necessary.

- The Technical Committee will include representatives of the Recipient, ITE, ITS America, and FHWA, and provide technical input to the annual NOCoE Business Plan and ongoing services.
- The Managing Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the center and shall report to the NOCOE SAC. The Managing Director shall lead the NOCoE's team of staff and consultants to establish and execute a business plan and suite of products and services in fulfillment of the NOCoE's strategic plan. The Managing Director shall promote the center's products and services, proactively engage the broad TSMO community, and, as appropriate, deliver some of the center's services.
- Administer the NOCoE funding programs and subcontracts.
- Convene a meeting at least quarterly of the association executives or their staff designees and the FHWA Associate Administrator for Operations or their designee to review delivery of current and planned technical services, budget status and overall performance.
- Develop a strategic plan to guide the overall direction of the NOCoE.
- Assess the effectiveness of the NOCoE and its services in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

## **Task 2: NOCoE Web Portal Maintenance and Content**

The Recipient shall share and transfer knowledge around TSMO programs and practices to provide resources for TSMO practitioners and other interested parties through the maintenance and continued development of the Knowledge Center and Website, including housing a repository of best practices, research products, tools, resources, and current national initiatives. This task shall support the ongoing development, enhancement, coordination, and support of the NOCoE online Web portal, and shall consist of, at a minimum:

- Website maintenance and improvements, including configuration management, administration, troubleshooting, and fixing links; adapting to new Web standards; and search engine optimization requirements and updates to ensure the Website and its resources are easily accessible to practitioners.
- Maintenance and update of the Knowledge Center to ensure it includes the latest reports, research, and other resources relevant to TSMO.
- Providing material from NOCoE events and activities, such as peer exchanges and summits, for the benefit of the broader TSMO community.
- Providing forums for managing and sharing effective practices and case studies, lessons learned, emerging technologies, and research and development opportunities and capabilities.
- Establishing Web pages for key topics such as syntheses of best practices and key information and tools and communities of practice in high priority areas. (Example Web pages include: TSMO workforce development; cybersecurity; research results and ideas; active traffic management; traffic incident management; traffic management systems; connected vehicle-to-infrastructure systems; and cooperative automated transportation.)

- Providing a calendar of events of interest to the TSMO community.
- Providing direct links and access to resources and activities supported by other groups (FHWA, Operations Academy, AASHTO, ITE, ITS America, etc.)
- Providing integration with existing industry tools, resources, and databases to leverage these existing information sources to deliver tools and resources needed by TSMO practitioners. (Examples include integration with the FHWA Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Knowledge Management System and databases of available training courses.)
- Enhancing knowledge transfer delivery methods to meet the communications needs of the users, such as features to increase accessibility through closed captioning and audio services, and improving upon video delivery methods.
- Providing deployment information for key TSMO practices and technologies by collecting and displaying the deployment of technologies and TSMO practices around the country in a readily accessible format.

### **Task 3: Stakeholder Engagement Activities**

The Recipient shall establish a strategy for engaging the TSMO stakeholder community to share about TSMO resources and practices and the NOCoE's own resources and services, foster a TSMO community of practice, identify emerging needs, and provide opportunities for offering feedback, guidance, and advice on the NOCoE's programs and services to ensure the NOCoE meets the expectations of the user. A proactive engagement of the TSMO community will be critical to the continued success of the NOCoE to ensure the use of resources by practitioners and that the NOCoE continually adapts to meet TSMO community needs.

This task shall consist of, at a minimum:

- Developing and maintaining a stakeholder outreach and engagement plan for engaging active users, identifying potential users, and connecting with the broader TSMO community to share information and assess user and other stakeholder needs, as well as to market the NOCoE's programs, projects, and activities. Continued support to existing users, as well as continued efforts to engage and grow potential users (e.g., local agencies, rural areas).
- Publishing a bi-weekly email newsletter that is delivered to TSMO practitioners, and made available on the Website. Ongoing analysis of readership, click rates, and user feedback to allow for continued improvements in the style and content of the newsletter.
- Collecting input from the TSMO community, including practitioners and researchers. This input shall include collecting feedback/evaluations from participants in NOCoE events (e.g., Webinars, peer exchanges, summits, tournaments) and users of its products and services (e.g., the Web portal, newsletter), as well as periodically from the broader TSMO community, partners, and potential users. Analysis of the feedback to allow for continued improvements in products and services.



- Fostering a TSMO community of practice by bringing practitioners together to share ideas and develop a peer network through peer exchanges, forums, Webinars, and collaboration opportunities.
- Establishing and leveraging partnerships with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) committees, ITE Councils, ITS State chapters, and other organizations to share information and advertise resources and activities. (Examples include strategic partnerships on National Traffic Incident Management Awareness Week, research idea collection and ranking, and the Transportation Technology Tournament.)
- Using social media and association outlets to increase awareness of NOCoE events and resources, drive practitioners to the Web portal and other TSMO resources, and educate the broader transportation industry on the importance of TSMO.
- Running an annual TSMO Awards Program to identify and recognize noteworthy TSMO practices and projects.
- Providing content and material for trade media, including working with the communications departments of AASHTO, ITE, and ITS America, as well as DOT to broadcast significant TSMO successes and activities to the wider transportation industry.
- Providing updates to key industry groups (e.g. TIM Network, TRB Freeway Operations Committee, TRB Regional Transportation System Management and Operations (RTSMO) Committee, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and NOCoE constituent members).

#### **Task 4: Technical Services**

The Recipient shall deliver a set of technical services that will expand over time as additional needs and topics emerge. These technical services are intended to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of practitioners and advance the practice of TSMO. The products and services that the NOCoE should address when it comes to supporting the knowledge, skills, and abilities of practitioners shall include efforts to:

- Provide ongoing support and championing of TSMO practice and its institutionalization.
- Encourage deployment of effective TSMO strategies through knowledge sharing.
- Provide programs that increase readiness of the current and prospective TSMO workforce.
- Capture and translate the knowledge on emerging topical areas such as asset management, cybersecurity, Mobility as a Service, Mobility on Demand, Smart Communities, urban mobility, and congestion pricing for the TSMO practitioner.
- Work in coordination with NOCoE partners to improve the readiness of all DOTs for connected and automated transportation.

The Recipient shall develop an annual business plan that identifies technical services planned for the year and considers the input of the SAC, Technical Committee, users, and other stakeholders.

Technical services shall consist of, at a minimum:

- Synthesis of resources and best practice experience and results – at least four per year to make large amounts of information more accessible to busy practitioners;
- Peer exchange Webinars - at least 1 per month (at least 12 per year);
- TSMO best practice in-person peer exchanges - spread through the year (at least four per year);
- Virtual peer exchanges - based on stakeholder requests;
- National TSMO topic summits and follow-up proceedings, action plan, and activities - at least one summit every 2 years;
- Case study development – at least 10 per year to capture and share best practices and lessons learned from the industry to help advance the practice overall;
- Assistance to practitioners, States, and other organization(s) - to identify best practice material, tools, contacts, and other resources to assist with the development of TSMO programs and the deployment of TSMO practices and strategies and address technical and policy issues;
- Research needs database – to support identifying key research needs (ongoing);
- Workforce development activities, such as:
  - Transportation Technology Tournament that allows students to work with industry leaders to solve real-world transportation problems using TSMO strategies and practices.
  - Student contest that promotes the development of ePortfolios to encourage students to identify and communicate their career goals and unique skills as they look to enter the workforce.
  - Examination of academic and industry collaboration models to capture case studies, identify TSMO career pathways, and spotlight the career developments of TSMO leaders to encourage TSMO careers.
  - Support for advancement and adoption of the TSMO Workforce Guidebook developed by the NCHRP project on TSMO Workforce and updates as the workforce evolves.
  - Developing resources for the TSMO paraprofessional workforce that includes technicians, operators, first responders, maintenance, and other trade related fields important to TSMO.
- Practice area forums where practitioners can exchange technical information and advice, including a workforce development forum for the TSMO industry to contribute, organize, and share workforce development resources on an ongoing basis; and
- Implementation of additional technical services as defined by an updated Business Plan.

## **SECTION B – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. FUNDING**

The total estimated value of this cooperative agreement is \$3,125,000 (which consists of a Federal share of \$2,500,000 and a Non-Federal share of \$625,000), to be expended over a 5-year period of performance subject to the availability of Federal funds.

The Government's obligation under this award is contingent upon the availability of funding from which payment for agreement purposes can be made. No legal liability on the part of the Government for any payment may arise until funds are made available to the Agreement Officer (AO) for this award and until the awardee receives notice of such availability, confirmed in writing by the AO.

### **2. NUMBER/TYPE OF ASSISTANCE INSTRUMENT**

The Government anticipates making one (1) award as a result of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The planned award type is a cooperative agreement.

### **3. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The period of performance is for five (5) years from the effective date of award.

### **4. DEGREE OF FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT**

The FHWA anticipates substantial Federal involvement between it and the Recipient during the course of this project. The anticipated Federal involvement will include:

- Technical assistance and guidance to the Recipient;
- Close monitoring of performance;
- Involvement in technical decisions; and
- Participation in status meetings, including kick off meeting, technical committee and partner meetings, and annual budget reviews.

## **SECTION C – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Application eligibility limited to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), as allowed under 23 U.S.C. Sec. 502(b)(3)(C).

### **2. COST SHARING OR MATCHING**

Cost sharing or matching is required under this agreement.

The Federal share of the cost of activities carried out by AASHTO under 23 U.S.C. Sec. 502(b)(3)(C), must be a maximum of eighty (80) percent.

Note: Program income must be handled in accordance with SECTION F.

## SECTION D - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applications may be obtained at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

The Applicant must complete and submit all forms included in the application package for this notice as contained at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

NOTE: Applicants must have a registered Grants.gov account to use the system. Obtaining an account can involve multiple steps and numerous days. Please see the Grants.gov website for detailed instructions, training videos, an online user guide, and a help desk.

NOTE: Since high-speed Internet access is not yet universally available for downloading documents, and applicants may have additional accessibility requirements, potential applicants may request paper copies of materials, for delivery by U.S. Postal Service, by contacting the individual(s) listed in NOFO Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contacts.

### 2. CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

- Applications must be prepared on 8½ x 11- inch paper. Pages that exceed this size, such as foldouts, are not allowable.
- Narrative text must be printed using a font size no less than 12-point font.
- Tables are permitted. Text in tables may be smaller than 12-point font but must be legible.
- Page margins must be a minimum of 1 inch top, bottom, and each side.
- Page numbers may be located within the 1 inch margin.
- A Header or Footer identifying the Applicant/Team and the Volume or Part, may be located within the 1 inch margins.
- Resumes are limited to one page each.
- PAGE LIMITS: Application volumes shall adhere to the page count limitations listed below. The page limit includes all narratives, figures, tables, appendices, and all other ancillary materials with the exception of the following. EXCEPTION ON PAGE LIMITS: The following items DO NOT count against the page limitation.
  - a. Document covers;
  - b. Cover letters;
  - c. Title pages
  - d. Divider pages;
  - e. Table of contents;
  - f. Lists of acronyms;
  - g. Letters of intent to participate from proposed subcontractors, consultants, partners and proposed new hires; and
  - h. Resumes. (Note: Resumes shall not exceed 1 page each).

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

- 1) **Volume 1 – Technical Application** as described below – 35 single spaced pages limit (Parts I, II and III combined)
  - Part I – Technical and Management Approach (included in the pages limitation)
  - Part II – Experience (included in the pages limitation)
  - Part III – Staffing Approach (included in the pages limitation; resumes are not included in the pages limitation and can be an Attachment to Volume I)

In the event a technical application exceeds the page limitation the Government will evaluate only the pages identified within the limitation above.

- 2) **Volume 2 – Budget Application** as described below - no page limit
  - Part I – Application Forms
  - Part II – Cost Information and Other Financial Information

Submit your application in the following format:

### **Volume 1 - Technical Application**

**Volume 1 – Technical Application** as described below (see page limitations above)

a. **Part I – TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH:**

Provide a detailed technical and management plan describing in detail how you would proceed to carry out the work specified in Section A if awarded this agreement.

The application will:

- Describe in detail the approach to carry out the work specified in Task Areas 1 through 4 of the Statement of Work. Provide a sound, feasible, and achievable technical approach to the Task Areas, including the steps necessary to complete the tasks.
- Discuss the ability to clearly meet the goals and needs, the manner in which they will be addressed, the role the NOCoE plays within the larger context of transportation and agencies in meeting these goals and needs, and how the effectiveness of the NOCoE and its services will be measured.
- Discuss and describe milestones and deliverables. Provide a table listing all proposed milestones/deliverables and estimated dates, based on time from award.
- Describe how stakeholder input and collaboration will occur, and how this will be used to improve NOCoE services and resources, expand the reach of its products and services, as well as evolve the NOCoE to sustain its value for TSMO and transportation over time.

## b. Part II – EXPERIENCE:

Provide a description of organizational and staff experience relevant to this project, including:

- Project title, description, value, and dates;
- Sponsor/customer point of contact to include sponsor/customer name, title, organization, email address, phone number;
- Role of Applicant in project;
- Explanation of why or how the project is considered relevant or similar to the effort required by this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO); and  
Note: In determining relevancy, consideration should be given, but not limited to, such things as product/service similarity, size and complexity, agreement type, division of company proposing, and sub-recipient interaction.
- Explanation of the project goals accomplished and any cost growth or schedule delays encountered. For any project, which did not/do not successfully achieve its goals, a brief explanation of the reason(s) for such shortcomings and any demonstrated corrective actions taken to avoid recurrence.

NOTE: Prior to award, FHWA may contact past sponsor/customers to support the Agency's risk assessment of the application.

NOTE: If an Applicant does not have a history of relevant experience, or if past performance information is not available, the Applicant's experience will be considered to be neutral.

## c. Part III – STAFFING APPROACH:

Provide an organizational chart identifying proposed staff members assigned to this effort. The chart must be supported with narrative text to include the title and a brief description of each position's responsibilities, as well as the proposed level of effort and allocation of time (percent in relation to their other duties) for each position on a yearly basis and in summary format. The level of effort may be displayed (single spaced) in a table format. One table can be presented if the level of effort will be constant overall years, and the table is annotated as such. The hours in this table must be consistent with the information presented in Volume II, Parts I and II, as part of the detailed budget plan. Provide brief *tailored* resumes for the proposed Program Manager/Principal Investigator and other key personnel to include name, experience, education and proposed role in project.

## **Volume 2 - Budget Application**

**Volume 2 – Budget Application** as described below - no page limit

## a. Part I - APPLICATION FORMS

## 1. SF424

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

## 2. SF424A

Note: Section A:

- Block 1(a): Print opportunity title listed on page 1;
- Block 1(b): Print CFDA number listed on page 1;
- Block 1(c): Print Total Federal Funds Requested in dollars; and,
- Block 1(d): Print Total Cost Share in dollars, and leave columns (e), (f), and (g) and rows 2, 3, and 4 blank.

## 3. SF424B

## 4. SFLLL

Note: The form must be completed and submitted even if no lobbying to report. If no lobbying to report insert none or n/a in the relevant blocks.

## b. Part II – COST INFORMATION AND OTHER FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Provide a separate detailed budget plan for each year and summarize the information for all years for all activities. Clearly show Federal share; Non-Federal share; and Total.

Spreadsheets can be formatted similarly to the format in DOT Form 4220.44, located at: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/aaa/pdfs/frm4220\\_44.pdf](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/aaa/pdfs/frm4220_44.pdf).

The detailed budget plan must include each of the following items/sub-items:

1. Detailed excel (or compatible) workbook containing spreadsheets/tabs (formatted to be printed out) and supporting information clearly delineating and supporting all estimated costs: with columns for Federal Share, Cost Share (if applicable) and Total Costs (per year and in summary form) as follows:
  - a. Labor Rates - Direct labor-by-labor categories to include hours, rates and escalation. Anticipated promotions for any personnel must be included with the escalation calculation. The annual direct labor escalations rate and its basis should be clearly stated with the proposal. Discuss your proposed rate as compared to historical experience and include when and how escalation will be calculated/implemented.
  - b. Indirect Rates – Each applicant should submit its Federally negotiated indirect cost rate in alignment with 2 CFR 200.414. Identify all the various specific indirect rates including what they are (pool and base), and what they are based on (e.g., labor overhead based on direct labor dollars), and how they are applied/calculated. Provide dollar values as well as percentage. Please provide any audit information to support these rates (for example, a copy of the signed U.S. Department of Health and Human Services rate agreement).



Note: Per 2 CFR 200.414(f), Indirect (F&A) Costs, an Applicant may elect to propose a de minimis indirect rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs.

- c. Other Direct Costs - Applicants must provide a breakout and justification of Other Direct Costs by Category (travel, equipment, etc.)
- d. If subcontractors/subrecipients (lower-tiered organizations and/or individual consultants) will be used in carrying out this project, the following minimum information concerning such, must be furnished:
  - i. Name and address of the organization or consultant.
  - ii. Description of the portion of work to be conducted by the organization or consultant.
  - iii. Cost details for that portion of work.
  - iv. **Applicant's cost/price analysis of each sub-recipient/contractor(s) showing how their price is fair and reasonable; and Applicant's cost/price analysis of each sub-recipient/contractor(s) showing how their price is fair and reasonable (this includes any sub-recipient/contractor(s) that will be included in the Federal share or the non-Federal share); and**
  - v. Letter of commitment from each sub-recipient/contractor(s) (this includes any sub-recipient/contractor(s) that will be included in the Federal share, the non-Federal share or in a non-paid (volunteer) capacity).
  - vi. Provide detail and support for cost share as part of overall project budget.
  - vii. Clearly delineate cost share match versus Federal share.
2. Identify any exceptions to the anticipated award terms and conditions as contained in Section F, Federal Award Administration Information. Identify any preexisting intellectual property that you anticipate using during award performance, and your position on its data rights during and after the award period of performance.
3. The use of a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is required on all applications for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Please provide your organization's DUNS number in your budget application.
4. A statement to indicate whether your organization has previously completed an A-133 Single Audit and, if so, the date that the last A-133 Single Audit was completed.
5. A statement regarding Conflicts of Interest. The Applicant must disclose in writing any actual or potential personal or organizational conflict of interest in its application that describes in a concise manner all past, present or planned organizational, contractual or other interest(s), which may affect the Applicants' ability to perform the proposed contract in an impartial and objective manner.

Actual or potential conflicts of interest may include but are not limited to any past, present or planned contractual, financial, or other relationships, obligations, commitments or responsibilities, which may bias the Applicant or affect the Applicant's ability to

perform the agreement in an impartial and objective manner. The AO will review the statement(s) and may require additional relevant information from the Applicant. All such information, and any other relevant information known to DOT, will be used to determine whether an award to the Applicant may create an actual or potential conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, the AO may (a) disqualify the Applicant, or (b) determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of the United States to contract with the Applicant and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the agreement pursuant to 2 CFR 200.112.

6. A statement to indicate whether a Federal or State organization has audited or reviewed the Applicant's accounting system, purchasing system, and/or property control system. If such systems have been reviewed, provide summary information of the audit/review results to include as applicable summary letter or agreement, date of audit/review, Federal or State point of contact for such review.
7. Terminated Contracts - List any contract/agreement that was terminated for convenience of the Government within the past 3 years, and any contract/agreement that was terminated for default within the past 5 years. Briefly explain the circumstances in each instance.
8. Describe how your organization will obtain the necessary resources to fund and fulfill the proposed cost share, as applicable.
9. The Applicant is directed to review Title 2 CFR Part 170 ([http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl)) dated November 12, 2020, and Appendix A thereto, and acknowledge in its application that it understands the requirement, has the necessary processes and systems in place, and is prepared to fully comply with the reporting described in the term if it receives funding resulting from this NOFO. The text of Appendix A will be incorporated in the award document as a General Term and Condition as referenced under this NOFO's Section F, Federal Award Administration Information.
10. Disclose any violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 entitled Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment. (See also 2 CFR Part 180 and 31 U.S.C. 3321).
11. If a nonprofit or not-for-profit status, please provide evidence of this status preferably from the Internal Revenue Service.
12. Acknowledgement of acceptance of the NOFO terms and acknowledgement and acceptance of any Amendments issued to this NOFO. List Amendment numbers and issue dates, if any.

### **3. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD (SAM)**

The Applicant is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an Applicant until the Applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier 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.

### **4. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES**

The application must be received electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by the application due date/time listed on page 1 of this NOFO.

The deadline stated on page 1 is the date and time by which the agency must receive the full and completed application, including all required sections.

A late application will not be reviewed or considered unless the AO determines that doing so is in the FHWA's best interest.

### **5. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW**

An application under this NOFO is not subject to the State review under Executive Order 12372.

### **6. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

The FHWA will not reimburse any pre-award costs or application preparation costs under this proposed agreement.

### **7. OTHER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The Applicant must complete and submit all forms included in the application package for this agreement as contained at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

In the event of system problems or technical difficulties with the application submittal, Applicants should contact the FHWA point of contact designated in Section G of the NOFO. If Applicants are unable to use the system due to technical difficulties, Applicants must e-mail applications to the FHWA point of contact listed on page 1 no later than the application deadline cited above.

## SECTION E - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### 1. EVALUATION CRITERIA

#### A. CRITERIA

The Government will evaluate applications on the following criteria:

**MERIT:** The Government will evaluate the application against the following technical evaluation criteria. These criteria are distinct from eligibility criteria (see Section C) that are addressed before an application is accepted for review.

#### 1. Operate and Maintain Center

- a. **Training and Education:** Demonstrated knowledge and commitment to carry out TSMO education and workforce development programs and outreach activities to advance the knowledge and practice of TSMO within agencies and practitioners at the State, regional, county, local, and Tribal levels.
- b. **Technology Transfer and Deployment:** Ability to disseminate research results, share effective practices, and spur implementation.
- c. **Understanding of the Need for the Center:** Demonstrated knowledge and comprehension (depth and breadth) of the value of the center and its role within the larger context of transportation and agencies, including a comprehensive and complete Strategic Plan.
- d. **Leadership:** Demonstrated ability to make significant contributions to the solution of immediate and long-range TSMO problems.
- e. **Collaboration:** Commitment to forming and fostering collaborative relationships among TSMO professionals and agencies.
- f. **Marketing:** Practical, efficient plan to market the NOCoE's programs, projects, and activities.
- g. **Assessment:** Demonstrated approach and measures for assessing the effectiveness of the NOCoE and its services in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

#### 2. Experience

- a. Experience providing training and education, technical assistance, information sharing of practices, and research to state, regional, county, local, and tribal government agencies.
- b. Experience with providing TSMO Program support locally and nationally.
- c. Experience collaborating with transportation partners and stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

#### 3. Staffing

- a. Knowledge and relevant experience of the proposed staff, and sub-recipients, in completing the proposed tasks.

- b. Knowledge and relevant experience of the proposed NOCoE Managing Director in completing the proposed tasks.

**COST:** Relative cost will be considered in the award decision. The budget application will be analyzed to assess cost reasonableness and conformance to applicable cost principles. This evaluation factor will not be rated.

Funding availability will also be considered in the award decision.

## **B. DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES**

After applying the above criteria, FHWA will take into account the following key Departmental objectives:

- (A) Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- (B) Utilizing alternative funding sources and innovative financing models to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- (C) Accounting for the life-cycle costs of the project to promote the state of good repair;
- (D) Using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and
- (E) Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance and achieving specific, measurable outcomes identified by grant applicants.

The Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this Notice in accordance with the President's September 2, 2020, memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*, consistent with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget and the Attorney General and with all applicable laws.

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department recognizes that rural transportation networks face unique challenges. To the extent that those challenges are reflected in the merit criteria listed in this section, the Department will consider how the activities proposed in the application will address those challenges, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

## **2. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

The FHWA will utilize the following merit review process to evaluate applications:

A panel of FHWA experts will evaluate all eligible technical applications using the merit criteria listed above. The panel will individually evaluate the technical applications. The panel will then collectively determine the application's technical acceptability or unacceptability.

Agency personnel from the FHWA Office of Acquisition and Grants Management will evaluate the cost criteria listed above, and conduct a risk assessment of the Applicant prior to award as described below.

The Government reserves the right to not make an award to the Applicant based on the results of this risk assessment. The AO is the official responsible for final award selection. The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this NOFO.

### **Risk Assessment**

The Government will assess the risks posed by an Applicant before they receive an award. This Risk Assessment will include evaluation of some or all of the following items relative to the Applicant and/or sub-applicants as applicable:

- (1) Applicant's financial stability;
- (2) Applicant's quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200;
- (3) Applicant's history of performance;

Note: If applicant previously received Federal awards, history of performance includes the Applicant's record in managing Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards, and if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards. The Government will evaluate the relevant merits of the Applicant's history of performance based on its reputation and record with its current and/or former customers with respect to quality, timeliness and cost control. The history of performance will be reviewed to assure that the Applicant has relevant and successful experience and will be considered in the risk assessment. In evaluating history of performance, the Government may consider both written information provided in the application, as well as any other information available to the Government through outside sources.

- (4) Applicant's audit reports and findings from audits performed on the Applicant pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart F—Audit Requirements or the reports and findings of any other available audits;
- (5) Applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities;
- (6) Applicant's potential for conflict of interest if applicable; and

Note: FHWA will review information provided by the Applicant, and any other relevant information known to DOT, to determine whether an award to the Applicant may create an actual or potential conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, the AO

may (a) disqualify the Applicant, or (b) determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of the United States to award to the Applicant and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the Agreement pursuant to 2 CFR 200.112.

(7) Applicant's eligibility to receive Federal funding. Per the guidelines on governmentwide suspension and debarment in 2 CFR Part 180, the Government will confirm that the Applicant and any named sub-applicants are not debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal programs or activities.

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200.205, prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required to review information available through any Office of Management and Budget - designated repositories of governmentwide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), D&B, and "Do Not Pay." (see 41 U.S.C. 2313) The Government's review of this information will occur as part of the risk assessment. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. FHWA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, 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 as described in § 200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

Note: If an Applicant is determined to be high risk, additional reporting requirements or other special conditions may apply to the resulting award to mitigate risks.

### **4. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND FEDERAL AWARD DATES**

The FHWA anticipates, but does not guarantee, making award on or about July 30, 2021

## **SECTION F – FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**The following terms and conditions will apply to any award made based on this NOFO.**

### **1. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES**

The award document, signed by the AO, is the authorizing document. Only the AO can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

General terms, conditions, and governing regulations that apply to this agreement are available online at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/aaa/generaltermsconditions.cfm>

The online list entitled “General Terms and Conditions for Assistance Award (for award effective after June 22, 2015),” shall apply to the resulting award.

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this notice, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; statutory, regulatory, and public policy requirements, including without limitation, those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment, and prohibiting discrimination; the conditions of performance, non-discrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of the Department of Transportation; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget. 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 the Department determines that a recipient has failed to comply with applicable Federal requirements, the Department may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

#### **A. PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS**

The Applicant agrees that the resulting deliverables/documentation submitted to FHWA under this agreement may be posted online for public access and/or shared by FHWA with other interested parties. The FHWA anticipates the documents cited herein may be posted on an FHWA Website or other appropriate Website.

#### **B. INDIRECT COSTS**

Indirect costs are allowable under this agreement in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414.



**C. DATA RIGHTS**

The Recipient must make available to FHWA copies of all work developed in performance with this agreement, including but not limited to software and data. Data rights under this agreement shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.315, Intangible property.

**D. PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII)**

The PII as defined at CFR § 200.79 and 2 CFR § 200.82 will not be requested unless necessary and only with prior written approval of the AO with concurrence from the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR).

**E. KEY PERSONNEL**

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308(c)(2), the Recipient must request prior written approval from the AO for any change in Key Personnel specified in the award.

**F. PROGRAM INCOME**

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.307, program income earned during the agreement period must be added to the Federal award and used for the purposes and under the conditions of the Federal award, unless otherwise approved by the AO. Program income must not be used to offset the Federal or Recipient contribution to this project.

**G. SUBAWARDS**

Recipients must follow the procurement standards in 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.326.

**H. CONFERENCE SUPPORT RESTRICTIONS**

The Recipient must obtain written approval from the AOR prior to incurring any costs for conference support. See the definition of conference as contained in 2 CFR 200.432.

Food and beverage costs are not allowable conference expenses for reimbursement.

Note: Costs of meals are allowable as a travel per diem expense for individuals on travel status and pursuant to the Travel clause of this agreement.

**I. TRAVEL**

Travel and per diem authorized under this agreement will be reimbursed in accordance with the travel costs section of 2 CFR Part 200, as applicable based on recipient or subrecipient type. In the absence of an acceptable, written institution policy regarding travel costs, the rates and amounts established in the Federal Travel Regulations in effect at the time of travel will apply.

### 3. REPORTING

#### ADDRESSES FOR SUBMITTAL OF REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The Recipient shall submit all required reports and documents, under transmittal letter referencing the cooperative agreement number, as follows:

Submit an electronic copy to the Agreement Specialist as the following address: TBD

Submit an electronic copy to the AOR at the following address: TBD

#### QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

The Recipient shall provide Quarterly Progress Reports, including a Federal Financial Report, to the Agreement Specialist and AOR.

Submit an electronic copy of the report, to the AOR and the Agreement Specialist on or before the 30th of the month following the calendar quarter being reported.

Calendar quarters are defined as:

1st: January – March  
2nd: April – June  
3rd: July – September  
4th: October – December

Reports due on or before:

April 30th  
July 30th  
October 30th  
January 30th

Quarterly Progress Reports shall include the following:

1. Standard Form – Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR). (The SF-PPR content directions are available online in various locations such as <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/29485>. In block 10 of the form, state “see attached” and attach the remaining information).
2. Narrative of activities and accomplishments by task for the reporting period, supporting information, and projected activities by task for next reporting period.
3. Identification of any problems, planned solutions, and/or requests for DOT assistance.
4. Current status of measures being used for assessing the effectiveness of the NOCoE and its services in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.
5. Summary of costs incurred for the reporting period and to date. Report costs incurred by major cost elements such as Direct Labor, Travel, Subcontractor Costs, Indirect Costs, etc.
6. Comparison of total costs incurred to the total budgeted costs for the reporting period and to date.
7. Projected total cost-to-complete.

8. Standard Form (SF) 425, Federal Financial Report, and SF-425A, Federal Financial Report Attachment (if applicable). The SF 425 is available online at: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/contractor\\_recip/grant\\_agreement\\_form.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cfo/contractor_recip/grant_agreement_form.cfm).

#### **ANNUAL BUDGET REVIEW AND PROGRAM PLAN**

The Recipient must submit an electronic copy and one hard copy of the Annual Budget Review and Program Plan to the AOR and one electronic copy and one hard copy to the Agreement Specialist 60 days prior to the anniversary date of this agreement. The Annual Budget Review and Program Plan must include the required certification pursuant to 2 CFR 200.415. The Annual Budget Review and Program Plan must provide a detailed schedule of activities, estimate of specific performance objectives, include forecasted expenditures, and schedule of milestones for the upcoming year. If there are no proposed deviations from the Approved Project Budget, the Annual Budget Review must contain a statement stating such. The Recipient must meet via teleconference or Web conference with FHWA to discuss the Annual Budget Review and Program Plan. Work proposed under the Annual Budget Review and Program Plan must not commence until AO's written approval is received.

## **SECTION G – FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

Address any questions to:

Angela A. Jones, Agreement Specialist  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management  
[Angela.Jones@dot.gov](mailto:Angela.Jones@dot.gov)  
202-366-4255

Secondary point of contact is:

Sarah Tarpgaard, Agreement Officer  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Acquisition and Grants Management  
[Sarah.Tarpgaard@dog.gov](mailto:Sarah.Tarpgaard@dog.gov)  
202-493-3225

<end of section>