Questions and Answers from the:

Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA) Program Webinar on 9/21/2021

Webinar Recording Link: https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/p6uq7hnl26um/

Total Registration #	Total Attendance #
41	27

Q&A Log – Answered Questions

Question #1: Does the user based alternative revenue mechanism strategy considered have to focus on a mileage based/RUC/VMT fee?

Answer: No, it does not. While the majority of applications that we have awarded funds to are applications we have received based on those types of strategies. Any type of user based alternative revenue mechanisms that utilize a user fee structure to maintain the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund based on the FAST Act 6020 language are eligible to be considered for a grant award.

Question #2: May an entity other than a State DOT manage the project (grant award)?

Answer: As stated in the NOFO, only State Departments of Transportation and Multi-State partnerships established to develop regional or national proposals are eligible applicants because FAST Act 6020 permits as "eligible" even if it will be administered through 1 state. If an applicant is a multi-state partnership, one State DOT must administer the Federal funding. However, there are a number of existing projects where another entity is managing the project as a subrecipient on behalf of the State or multi-state partnership. For instance, the Washington State DOT received an award, but the Washington State Transportation Commission manages the day-to-day activities of the program. Additionally, The Eastern Transportation Coalition manages the project that the Delaware DOT was awarded grant funds.

Question #3: If an applicant lists within its application a vendor with which it would like to partner on its project, can that vendor support the subsequent project (if awarded) without a competitive procurement?

Answer: One State DOT must administer the Federal funding. The State DOT must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds for selecting team members for the STSFA program.

Question #4: Just to clarify: ONLY State DOTs are eligible, correct? But other partners can work with them? I'm not entirely sure how you're defining "State agencies" as some Transit Agencies, Commissions, etc. are consider State agencies.

Answer: The STSFA program is designed to award grants through the State DOT. If another transportation agency would like to apply to the program it should coordinate with the DOT, because the grant funding is distributed through the State DOT. This answer is posted as an FAQ #5 for the 2016 NOFO

<u>Question #5:</u> The NOFO says, that "It is expected that all relevant State agencies (e.g., Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Revenue) as needed will be actively involved in the planning and operation of the demonstration". Does this allow or include local agencies such as county, city or MPOs?

Answer: The FHWA recognizes that it may be useful for State's interested in the program to coordinate with a variety of agencies including an MPO. If there is an MPO or local transportation agency that is interested in the STSFA program, FHWA recommends reaching out to State DOT contacts to collaborate.

<u>Question #6:</u> Please confirm that proposed projects only need to test ONE alternative, not "two or more" as listed on slide 12?

Answer: States are not required to consider two or more alternative revenue mechanisms**.** A proposal is eligible and acceptable if it is looking at only one strategy.

<u>Question #7:</u> Is there a cap for in-kind donations as a percentage of the total match? Or, could in-kind contributions comprise 100% of the cost share?

> **Answer:** In-kind cost share is acceptable. As discussed in Section C of the NOFO, cost sharing must comply with 2 CFR Part 200. 2 CFR 200.306(b), states that cost sharing or matching contributions must meet all the following criteria:
>
> (1) Are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records;
>
> (2) Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;
>
> (3) Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
>
> (4) Are allowable under subpart E of this part;
>
> (5) Are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;
>
> (6) Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
>
> (7) Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

<u>Question #8:</u> Would the FHWA consider versions of a proposal from a State that has been submitted for other federal grants? If the project were funded from another source, we could respectfully withdraw our STSFA application or otherwise seek the Department's guidance on how to proceed.

Answer: There are no restrictions that prohibit a State from applying to other programs. The State must follow the cost share requirements described in Section C of the NOFO including the restriction on using federal grant dollars awarded from another federal project as the non-federal cost share for the STSFA required cost share.

__Question #9:__ **Could the FHWA award a grant greater than the $4.5 million ceiling amount listed in the STSFA grants.gov synopsis page**? **How would the ceiling be applied (a total amount to a state or based on awards to individual projects)?**

Answer: An individual grant award under this NOFO may be greater than $4.5 million. The total amount of funds available for award under this NOFO is $18,310,894. Under this NOFO, FHWA anticipates making multiple awards. FHWA reserves the right to make an award for less that the requested amount in an application package.