DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program, Amendment No. 1

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary (OST), US Department of Transportation (DOT)

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION: RAISE Grant Opportunity	
Issuing Agency	Office of the Secretary, US Department of Transportation
Program Overview	RAISE grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, per statute, for planning or constructing surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety; environmental sustainability; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation.
Objective	• Invest in surface transportation that will have a significant local or regional impact; and • Support projects that are consistent with the Department's strategic goals: improve safety, economic strength and global competitiveness, equity, and climate and sustainability.
Amendment No. 1	• This notice is amended on February 23, 2024 to reflect the Department may consider, on a case-by-case basis, recipient requests for advance payment, as described in 2 CFR 200.305(b), and to make clerical corrections.
Eligible Applicants	• States • District of Columbia • any territory or possession of the United States • a unit of local government • a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States • a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority • a Federally recognized Indian Tribe or a consortium of such Indian Tribes • a transit agency • a multi-State or multijurisdictional group of entities that are separately eligible

Eligible Project Types	• highway or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code • public transportation projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code • passenger and freight rail transportation projects eligible under title 49 • port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure and land ports of entry) • the surface transportation components of an airport project eligible for assistance under part B of subtitle VII of title 49, United States Code • intermodal projects whose components are otherwise an eligible project type • projects to replace or rehabilitate a culvert or prevent stormwater runoff for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species while advancing the goals of the RAISE program • projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land and for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government • any other surface transportation infrastructure project that the Secretary considers to be necessary to advance the goals of the program
Funding	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58, November 15, 2021, "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law," or "BIL") provides $1.5 billion annually for FY 2022 – 2026
Deadline	• FY 2024 Deadline: February 28, 2024 at 11:59 pm Eastern • FY 2025 Deadline: January 13, 2025 at 11:59 pm Eastern • FY 2026 Deadline: January 13, 2026 at 11:59 pm Eastern

This notice describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, and applicable program and Federal requirements.

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 20.933 National Infrastructure Investments

DATES: Applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern on **February 28**, **2024**

WEBINAR: OST plans to conduct outreach regarding the FY 2024 RAISE NOFO in the form of webinars. The webinar schedule will be posted when available on the RAISE outreach webpage.[1]

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: DOT will not review applications in advance of their submission but RAISE program staff are available for questions. For further information concerning this notice, please contact the RAISE grant program staff via e-mail at

[1] https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach

RAISEgrants@dot.gov or call Andrea Jacobson at 202-366-9603. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993. In addition, DOT will regularly post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on the FAQ website[2] as well as information about webinars for further guidance on the RAISE program website.[3]

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. Each section of this notice contains information and instructions relevant to the application process for these RAISE grants, and all applicants should read this notice in its entirety so that they have the information they need to submit eligible and competitive applications.

Table of Contents

A. Program Description

1. Overview
2. Program Goals and Objectives
3. Changes from the FY 2023 NOFO

B. Federal Award Information

1. Amount Available
2. Award Size
3. Restrictions on Funding
4. Availability of Funds
5. Previous RAISE/BUILD/TIGER

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants
2. Federal Cost Share
3. Eligible Projects
4. Definition of Rural and Urban Areas
5. Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities
6. Project Components
7. Application Limit

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package
2. Content and Form of Application Submission
    a. Project Description
    b. Project Location
    c. Project Budget
    d. Merit Criteria
    e. Project Readiness
    f. Benefit-Cost Analysis

[2] https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-application-faqs
[3] https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management
4. Submission Dates and Timelines
5. Funding Restrictions
6. Other Submission Requirements

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria
    a. Merit Criteria
    b. Project Readiness
    c. Benefit-Cost Analysis
2. Review and Selection Process
3. Additional Information

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices
2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements
3. Reporting

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

H. Other Information

1. Protection of Confidential Business Information
2. Publication and Sharing of Application Information

A. Program Description

1. Overview

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58, November 15, 2021, "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law," or "BIL") authorized and appropriated $1.5 billion annually to be awarded by the Department of Transportation ("DOT") 2022 – FY 2026 for Local and Regional Project Assistance Program Grants under National Infrastructure Investments. The program is codified at 49 U.S.C. 6702.

The BIL requires the DOT to publish a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) no later than 60 days after funds are made available for the program, which for FY 2024 is November 30, 2023. In order to comply with this requirement, this NOFO solicits applications for projects to be funded under the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program, known as the RAISE Grants program.

If the FY 2024 Appropriations Act, or other subsequent Acts, provide additional funding or significantly alter requirements for the RAISE Grant program, the Department will amend this Notice with guidance on additional requirements.

The FY 2024 – 2026 rounds of RAISE will be implemented, as appropriate and consistent with law, in alignment with the priorities in Executive Order 14052, *Implementation of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act* (86 FR 64355), which are to invest efficiently and equitably, promote the competitiveness of the U.S. economy, improve job opportunities by focusing on high labor standards, strengthen infrastructure resilience to all hazards including climate change, and to effectively coordinate with State, local, Tribal, and territorial government partners.

2. Program Goals and Objectives

The goal of the RAISE program is to fund eligible surface transportation projects that will have a significant local or regional impact that advance the Departmental priorities of safety, equity, climate and sustainability, and workforce development, job quality, and wealth creation, consistent with law, and as described in the Department's Strategic Plan[4] and in executive orders.

The Department seeks to fund projects under the RAISE program that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector; incorporate evidence-based climate resilience measures and features; 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 Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 FR 7619).

In addition, the Department seeks to award projects under the RAISE program that proactively evaluate whether a project will create proportional impacts to all populations in a project area

[4] See U.S. Department of Transportation Strategic Plan FY 2022–2026 at https://www.transportation.gov/dot-strategic-plan.

and increase equitable access to project benefits, consistent with Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (86 FR 7009).

The Department also seeks to award projects that address environmental justice, particularly for communities that have experienced decades of underinvestment and are most impacted by climate change, pollution, and environmental hazards, consistent with Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 FR 7619). The RAISE program advances President Biden's Justice40 Initiative which set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain climate, clean energy, and other covered Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

In addition, the Department intends to use the RAISE program 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 Executive Order 14025, *Worker Organizing and Empowerment* (86 FR 22829), and Executive Order 14052, *Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (86 FR 64335). The Department also intends to use the RAISE program to support wealth creation, consistent with the Department's Equity Action Plan, through the inclusion of local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms.

The BIL included provisions for Metropolitan Planning Organizations to consider integrating transportation planning, housing, employment opportunities, and economic development strategies. [5] The Department strongly encourages applicants to utilize these new planning coordination opportunities in their proposed projects and describe them in their applications. **Note, the RAISE program can only fund the surface transportation infrastructure elements** of a project that may also include housing, employment opportunities, and economic development strategies.

Section E of this NOFO, which outlines FY 2024 RAISE Grant merit 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.

The FY 2024 RAISE NOFO includes a Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program Extra element. Applications for the FY 2024 RAISE grant program that have identical project scope to applications that were submitted and evaluated under the FY 2023 Reconnecting Communities Neighborhoods Program competition and received the designation of "RCN Program Extra," will automatically advance for second-tier analysis if they receive an overall merit rating of "Recommended" and have at least one "High" rating in a priority criterion. See Section E.2. The Department expects projects that rated well under the FY 2023 RCN Program criteria will do well under the FY 2024 RAISE program criteria. Applicants should note in the

[5] See BIL div. A § 11201., *Transportation Planning*, which amends 23 U.S.C. 134.

FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form whether their FY 2024 RAISE application was also submitted under the FY 2023 RCN competition and received a RCN Program Extra designation.

3. Changes from the FY 2023 NOFO

This FY 2024 RAISE NOFO makes changes from the FY 2023 RAISE NOFO to:

- Simplify the NOFO with the use of plain language and tables to organize information.
- Refine the merit criteria rating rubric. For example, this NOFO provides more examples of project elements that align with a "High" rating under Safety, Environmental Sustainability, and Innovation. Please see the merit criteria rating rubric in Section E for more details.
- Clarify what applicants should provide in the Project Budget document for the Financial Completeness Review.
- Update data used to determine Urban, Rural, and Areas of Persistent Poverty designations, and uses the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), created by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), to identify Historically Disadvantaged Communities.

In addition to providing the application, obligation, and expenditure deadlines for FY 2024 funding, the Department outlines the application, obligation, and expenditure deadlines for FY 2025 and 2026 funding for awareness. The Department intends to publish subsequent NOFOs for FY 2025 and 2026, which may incorporate additional changes as necessary and appropriate.

Additionally, FY 2024 Projects of Merit, which are Highly Rated applications not selected for award, will automatically be carried forward for consideration under FY 2025 RAISE funding. However, if there are any changes to the FY 2024 project being considered in the FY 2025 round, including but not limited to scope, schedule, and budget, an applicant must submit an amendment to the application by the FY 2025 application deadline in order to be considered. Applicants are encouraged to submit a summary of all changes with the updated application. The applicant is also responsible for updating an application should the FY 2025 RAISE NOFO include program or policy changes from this FY 2024 NOFO.

Applicants who are planning to re-apply for the RAISE program using materials prepared for prior competitions should ensure that their prior application fully addresses the criteria and considerations described in this Notice and that all relevant information is up to date and submitted in the proper format outlined in Section D.

B. Federal Award Information

1. Amount Available

The BIL authorized and appropriated $1.5 billion to be awarded by the Secretary for RAISE grants under the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program for FY 2024.

2. Award Size

For capital grants, the minimum RAISE grant award is $5 million in urban areas and $1 million in rural areas. There is no minimum award amount for planning grants. The maximum grant award for capital and planning grants is $25 million.

If selected for award, the Department may decrease the RAISE funding request amount if some elements of the project are ineligible or to comply with statutory set asides such as awarding funding evenly between projects located in rural and urban areas.

3. Restrictions on Funding

No more than 15 percent (or $225 million) made available for RAISE grants may be awarded to projects in a single State. DOT must award at least 5 percent (or $75 million) to planning projects and at least one percent (or $15 million) to projects located in historically disadvantaged communities or areas of persistent poverty. Not more than 50 percent of the funds provided for RAISE grants (or $750 million) shall be awarded to rural projects (as defined in section C.4) and not more than 50 percent of the funds provided for RAISE grants (or $750 million) shall be awarded to urban projects (as defined in section C.4). The Department may retain up to $30 million for oversight and administration of grants.

The Department may use up to 20 percent of available funds (or $300 million) to pay the subsidy and administrative costs of a project receiving credit assistance under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998 (TIFIA) or Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) programs, particularly transit and transit-oriented development (TOD) projects. Note, applicants must apply to both the RAISE program and TIFIA or RRIF loan to be eligible for the Department to pay for subsidy and administrative costs associated with credit assistance. In October 2022, the Secretary approved the "TIFIA 49 Initiative," which authorizes transit and transit-oriented development (TOD) projects to borrow up to 49 percent of eligible project costs for projects that meet eligibility requirements. TIFIA loans have historically been capped at 33 percent of eligible project costs.

4. Availability of Funds

FY 2024 RAISE grant funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2028. Obligation occurs when a selected applicant and the Department enter into a written grant agreement after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, such as transportation planning and environmental review requirements for capital construction projects. Note, some grant recipients enter into phased obligations with the Department.

Unless authorized by the Department in writing after announcement of FY 2024 RAISE awards, any costs incurred prior to the Department's obligation of funds for a project ("pre-award costs") are ineligible for reimbursement.[6]

In general, RAISE Program funds are administered on a reimbursement basis. Grant recipients will generally be required to pay project costs upfront using their own funds, and then request reimbursement for those costs. If a recipient cannot complete a project on reimbursement basis, DOT will—on a case-by-case basis—consider recipient requests to use alternate payment methods as described in 2 CFR 200.305(b), including advance payments.

FY 2024 RAISE funds must be expended (the grant obligation must be liquidated or paid out to the grant recipient) by September 30, 2033. After this date, unexpended funds are no longer available to the project.

In the table below, the Department outlines the different application deadlines as well as the obligation and expenditure deadlines for each year of funding.

BIL Fiscal Year Funding	BIL Funding Obligation Deadline	BIL Funding Expenditure Deadline
FY 2024	September 30, 2028	September 30, 2033
FY 2025	September 30, 2029	September 30, 2034
FY 2026	September 30, 2030	September 30, 2035

5. Previous RAISE/BUILD/TIGER

Recipients of RAISE (formerly named Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)) grants may apply for funding to support additional phases of a project previously awarded funds in the RAISE/BUILD/TIGER program. However, to be competitive, the applicant should demonstrate the extent to which the previously funded project phase has met estimated project schedules and budget, as well as the ability to realize the benefits expected for the project. A previous RAISE/BUILD/TIGER award, or application, does not affect competitiveness under the FY 2024 RAISE competition.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for RAISE grants are: States and the District of Columbia; any territory or possession of the United States; a unit of local government; a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States; a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority; a Federally recognized Indian Tribe or a consortium of such Indian Tribes; a transit agency; and a multi-State or multijurisdictional group

[6] Pre-award costs are costs incurred after award announcement, but directly pursuant to the negotiation of a grant agreement where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work, as determined by DOT. Costs incurred under an advance construction (23 U.S.C. 115) authorization before the DOT announces that a project is selected for a FY 2024 RAISE award cannot be charged to FY 2024 RAISE funds. Likewise, costs incurred under an FTA Letter of No Prejudice under Chapter 53 of title 49 U.S.C. before the DOT announces that a project is selected for a FY 2024 RAISE award, cannot be charged to FY 2024 RAISE funds.

of entities that are separately eligible. Federal agencies are not eligible applicants for the FY 2024 RAISE program.

Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and also identify the primary recipient of the award. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant.

DOT expects that the eligible applicant submitting the application will administer and deliver the project. If the applicant seeks a transfer of the award to another agency, that intention should be made clear in the application and a letter of support from the otherwise eligible, designated entity should be included in the application.

2. Federal Cost Share

The Federal share of the costs of an eligible project carried out using a grant provided under the RAISE grant program shall not exceed 80 percent unless the project is located in a rural area, a historically disadvantaged community (HDC), or an area of persistent poverty (APP). Urban area and rural area are defined in Section C.4 of this notice. HDCs and APPs are defined in Section C.5.

Applicants should use the following equation when determining the cost share for their project:

$$\frac{(\boldsymbol{RAISE\ Grant\ Request + Other\ Federal\ Funds})}{\boldsymbol{Total\ Project\ Cost}} = \boldsymbol{Federal\ Cost\ Share}$$

Federal cost share may not exceed 80 percent for urban projects that are not located in an APP or HDC.

For the RAISE Program, Total Project Cost means the sum of future eligible Federal and Non-Federal costs that have not yet been incurred. Total Project Cost cannot include any previously incurred costs.

The Department does not use an applicant's cost share when evaluating applications on merit. The Department considers an applicant's cost share during the evaluation and selection process only to confirm eligibility for urban projects that are not located in an APP or HDC.

Non-Federal sources include State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue, local funds originating from State or local revenue-funded programs, or private funds. The BIL also allows for the following Federal funds to be considered "non-Federal" for the purpose of the RAISE program: (A) tribal transportation program funds under section 202 of title 23; (B) Federal lands transportation program funds under section 203 of title 23; (C) TIFIA program funds (as defined in section 601(a) of title 23); and (D) Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program under chapter 224. Toll credits under 23 U.S.C. 120(i) are considered a Federal source under the RAISE program and, therefore, cannot be used to satisfy the statutory cost sharing requirement of a RAISE award. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, funds used

to satisfy the non-Federal cost-share requirements of a different Federal program may not be counted as the non-Federal cost-share for both the RAISE grant and another Federal grant program. DOT will not consider previously incurred costs or previously expended or encumbered funds towards the non-Federal cost-share requirement for any project. Non-Federal cost-share funds are subject to the same Federal requirements described in Section F.2. as awarded funds. If repaid from non-Federal sources, Federal credit assistance is considered non-Federal share.

See Section D.2 for information about documenting cost sharing in the application.

For each project that receives a RAISE grant award, **the terms of the award will require the recipient to complete the project using at least the level of non-Federal funding that was specified in the application**. **If the actual costs of the project are greater than the costs estimated in the application, the recipient will be responsible for addressing the funding shortfall and maintaining the level of non-Federal funding stated in the application**. If the actual costs of the project are less than the costs estimated in the application, the Department will generally reduce the Federal contribution to ensure federal cost share requirements are met.

3. Eligible Projects

Capital Projects

Eligible projects for RAISE grants are surface transportation capital projects within the United States[7] or any territory or possession of the United States that are: (1) highway or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code; (2) public transportation projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code; (3) passenger and freight rail transportation projects; (4) port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure and land ports of entry); (5) the surface transportation components of an airport project eligible for assistance under part B of subtitle VII of title 49, United States Code;[8] (6) intermodal projects whose component parts are otherwise an eligible project type; (7) projects to replace or rehabilitate a culvert or prevent stormwater runoff for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species while advancing the goals of the RAISE program; (8) projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land and for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government; and (9) any other surface transportation infrastructure project that the Secretary considers to be necessary to advance the goals of the program.[9]

---

[7] In addition to projects located in the United States, eligible projects for RAISE grants include projects that are necessary for reconstruction of the Alaska Highway from the Alaskan border at Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory, to Haines Junction in Canada and the Haines Cutoff Highway from Haines Junction in Canada to Haines, Alaska, as provided in 23 U.S.C. 218.

[8] Eligible surface transportation components of eligible airport projects are those projects listed in "Appendix P: Road and Surface Transportation Projects" of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) handbook, available at https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip_handbook/?Chapter=Appendix#PP00. For more details on airport project eligibility, please see the Frequently Asked Questions at https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-application-faqs.

[9] DOT may award a RAISE grant to pay for the surface transportation components of a broader project that has non-surface transportation components, and applicants are encouraged to apply for RAISE grants to pay for the surface transportation components of these projects. However, costs for non-surface transportation components are not eligible to count as matching funds for the RAISE grant.

The Secretary considers the following projects necessary to advance the goals of the program, and therefore eligible: public road and non-motorized projects that are not otherwise eligible under title 23, United States Code; surface transportation components of transit-oriented development projects; and surface transportation components of mobility on-demand projects that expand access and reduce transportation cost burden.

If an application includes right-of-way acquisition, the project will be considered a capital project. Projects that include right-of-way acquisition should include a timeline for construction.

The following projects are not considered necessary to advance the goals of the program, and, therefore, they are ineligible: school bus electrification and broadband deployment as a standalone project. Furthermore, improvements to Federally owned facilities are ineligible under the FY 2024 RAISE program, unless they are projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land and for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government. If a project type is not described as explicitly eligible or ineligible above, then applicants should explain in their application why the project is necessary to advance the goals of the program, and the Department will determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

Research, demonstration, or pilot projects are eligible only if they will result in long-term, permanent surface transportation infrastructure that has independent utility as defined in Section C.6.

Planning Projects

Activities eligible for funding under RAISE planning grants are related to the planning, preparation, or design— for example environmental analysis, equity analysis, community engagement, feasibility studies, benefit-cost analysis, and other pre-construction activities—of eligible surface transportation capital projects described in Section C.3 that will not result in construction with RAISE FY 2024 funding.

In addition, activities eligible for RAISE planning grants include those related to multidisciplinary projects or regional planning, such as: (1) development of master plans, comprehensive plans, transportation corridor plans, and integrated economic development, land use, housing, and transportation plans; (2) zero emissions plan for transit fleet; (3) planning activities related to the development of a multimodal freight corridor, including those that seek to reduce conflicts with residential areas and with passenger and non-motorized traffic; (4) planning activities related to zero emissions goods movement; (5) development of port and regional port planning, including State-wide or multi-port planning within a single jurisdiction or region; and (6) risk assessments and planning to identify vulnerabilities and address the transportation system's ability to withstand probable occurrence or recurrence of an emergency or major disaster.

As stated above, projects that include right-of-way acquisition are capital projects and, therefore, not eligible for RAISE planning grants.

4. Definition of Rural and Urban Areas

Rural and urban definitions are different in other DOT programs. For the RAISE program:

> **Urban** - A project is designated as urban if it is located within (or on the boundary of) a Census-designated urban area[10] that had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.[11]
>
> **Rural -** A project is designated as rural if it is located outside a Census-designated urban area that had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.

The Department will have an interactive map on the RAISE website to show Census-designated urban areas with populations greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.

A project located in both an urban and a rural area will be designated as urban if the majority of the project's costs will be spent in urban areas. Conversely, a project located in both an urban area and a rural area will be designated as rural if the majority of the project's costs will be spent in rural areas. For RAISE planning grants, the location of the project being planned, prepared, or designed will be used for the urban or rural designation.

This definition affects four aspects of the program: (1) not more than 50 percent (or $750 million) of the funds provided for RAISE grants are to be used for projects in rural areas; (2) not more than 50 percent (or $750 million) of the funds provided for RAISE grants are to be used for projects in urban areas; (3) for a capital project in a rural area, the minimum award is $1 million, while the minimum capital award for urban areas is $5 million; and (4) the Secretary may increase the Federal share above 80 percent to pay for the eligible costs of a project in a rural area.

5. Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities

The definition for Areas of Persistent Poverty is found in the RAISE statute:

> **Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP)** – (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[12] decennial census and the most recent annual Small Area Income Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of 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;[13] or (3) any territory or possession of the United States. A

[10] Lists of 2020 UAs as defined by the Census Bureau are available on the Census Bureau website at https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/2020-census-urban-areas.html.
[11] For the purpose of this NOFO, the definition of urban and rural is based on the 2020 Census-designated urbanized areas. The Department is required by the BIL to use the most recent decennial census information. See https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/urbanized-areas for a list of 2020 Census-designated UAs.
[12] See https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/dec/census-poverty.html for county dataset.
[13] See https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=ACSST1Y2018.S1701&tid=ACSST5Y2018.S1701&hidePreview=false for 2014-2018 five year data series from the American Community Survey

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.[14] DOT will list all counties and census tracts that meet this definition for Areas of Persistent Poverty RAISE website as well as provide an interactive map on the RAISE website.[15]

The definition of historically disadvantaged communities follows the Justice40 Interim Guidance Addendum, issued by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and Climate Policy Office (CPO):[16]

> **Historically Disadvantaged Communities (HDC)** – (1) any census tract or tracts identified as disadvantaged in the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (geoplatform.gov) (CEJST),[17] created by CEQ, which identifies such communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.; (2) any Federally Recognized Tribe or Tribal entity, whether or not they have land. DOT will list all census tracts that meet this definition for Historically Disadvantaged Communities as well as provide an interactive map on the RAISE website.

6. Project Components

An application may describe a project that contains more than one component and may describe components that may be carried out by parties other than the applicant. The Department expects, and will impose requirements on recipients to ensure, that all components included in an application will be delivered as part of the RAISE project, regardless of whether a component includes Federal funding.

The status of each component should be clearly described (for example, in the project schedule). The Department may award funds for a component, instead of the larger project, if that component: (1) independently meets minimum award amounts described in Section B and all eligibility requirements described in Section C; (2) independently aligns well with the selection criteria specified in Section E.1; and (3) meets National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements with respect to independent utility. Independent utility means that the component will represent a transportation improvement that is usable and represents a reasonable expenditure of DOT funds even if no other improvements are made in the area and will be ready for intended use upon completion of that component's construction. All project components that

[14] 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.
[15] www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc
[16] M-23-09 (Jan. 2023), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/M-23-09_Signed_CEQ_CPO.pdf.
[17] https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/

are presented together in a single application must demonstrate a relationship or connection between them. See Section D.2 for Required Approvals.

Applicants should be aware that, depending upon the relationship between project components and applicable Federal law, DOT funding of only some project components may make other project components subject to Federal requirements as described in Section F.2.

DOT strongly encourages applicants to identify in their applications the project components that have independent utility and separately detail costs and requested RAISE grant funding for those components. If the application identifies one or more independent project components, the application should clearly identify how each independent component addresses selection criteria and produces benefits on its own, in addition to describing how the full proposal, of which the independent component is a part, addresses selection criteria.

7. Application Limit

Each lead applicant may submit no more than three applications. Unrelated project components should not be bundled in a single application for the purpose of adhering to the limit. If a lead applicant submits more than three applications as the lead applicant, only the first three received will be considered.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

All application materials may be found on Grants.gov at www.grants.gov. Instructions for submitting applications can be found on the RAISE program website[18] along with forms and attachments required for submission.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov at www.grants.gov. The Department expects the application to include these files in the following order, using the following file names:

Information	File Name	NOFO Section	Page Limit
SF-424	SF-424	D.2	N/A
Project Information Form (Excel file)	FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form	D.2	N/A
Project Description	Project Description	D.2	5 pages
Project Location File	Project Location File	D.2	N/A
Project Budget	Project Budget	D.2	5 pages
Funding Commitment Documentation	Funding Commitments	D.2	N/A
Merit Criteria	Merit Criteria Narrative	D.2 and E.1	15 pages
Project Readiness	Project Readiness	D.2 and E.1	5 pages

[18] https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/apply

Benefit-Cost Analysis Narrative (capital projects only)	BCA Narrative	D.2 and E.1	N/A
Benefit-Cost Analysis Calculations (capital projects only, unlocked Excel file)	BCA Calculations	D.2 and E.1	N/A
Letters of Support (Optional)	Letters Of Support	D2 and E.1	N/A

The Department expects the application files be prepared with standard formatting preferences (a single-spaced document, using a standard 12-point font such as Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins), and documents should be submitted in PDF, unless otherwise specified (i.e., project information form should be in Excel, project location map files can be Shapefiles, GeoJSON, KML or KMZ, and the BCA calculations should be submitted in Excel).

The application files should collectively include all information necessary for the Department to determine that the project satisfies project requirements described in Sections B and C and to assess the selection criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department expects applications to be complete upon submission.

The Department may ask any applicant to supplement data in its application, but an applicant is not required to do so. Unsupported claims related to the selection criteria (merits, project readiness, economic benefits, etc.) will negatively affect competitiveness of the application, as described throughout Section E.2.

Supporting documents may be attached in addition to the listed files, but merit criteria evaluators are not required to review supporting documents attached to the application or provided on websites as part of the merit criteria review described in Section E.

The Department expects application files to include the following detailed information:

Standard Form 424
The SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance must be completed. Applicants may leave the following fields on the form blank: 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 6, 7, 11, 13, and 14. A number of separate files must be attached in Item 15 to provide required project information that is not included in the body of the SF-424.

FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form
The project information form can be downloaded from Grants.gov or from the RAISE program website at https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/apply. The FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form on will be used to determine applicant and project eligibility for the program as described in part C of this notice.

Information such as applicant name, RAISE amount requested, other Federal funding, non-Federal funding, etc. may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF-424 and the FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form. Applicants must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms.

a. Project Description

This file must provide a description of the project that is to be planned or constructed and should include a detailed statement of work that focuses on the technical and engineering aspects of the project, the current design status of the project, the transportation challenges that the project is intended to address, and how the project is expected address those challenges. This file may also discuss the project's history, including a description of any previously completed components. The applicant may use this file to place the project into a broader context of other transportation infrastructure investments being pursued by the applicant.

This file should also describe the project location in a narrative fashion, including a detailed geographic description of the proposed project and map(s) of the project's location, to supplement the geographic project map provided in the project location file. The project location description should narratively identify:

- **Area of Persistent Poverty** - Indicate whether the project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty, including the relevant County and/or census tract(s);

- **Historically Disadvantaged Community** – Indicate whether the project is located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community based on the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST); and

- **Urban areas** – Indicate the Census-designated urban area in which the project is located.

b. Project Location

Applicants should submit one of the following file types for project location identification. This will be used to verify the urban/rural designation and the APP/HDC designations described in the Project Description file. These location designations, together with budget information, could affect eligibility under the FY 2024 RAISE grants program, as described in NOFO Section C. Therefore, accuracy in the location file is important. Acceptable file types are: Shapefile (compressed to a .zip file containing at least the .shp, .shx, .dbf, and. prj components of the Shapefile), GeoJSON, KML, or KMZ. Applicants may use Google Earth, a publicly available online mapping tool, to prepare a KML file. **These spatial files should include only the direct physical location of the project, and not a broad service area or area of impact.**

c. Project Budget

This file should describe the budget for the RAISE project using tables as well as include a narrative section. The RAISE project budget should show **future eligible project costs** and should not include any previously incurred expenses.

The RAISE project budget table should show the **total project cost** broken into different funding sources by major project activity or cost classification and present those amounts in dollars and percentages. Funding sources should be grouped into three categories: (1) RAISE funding request; (2) other Federal funds; and (3) non-Federal Funds. Identify the specific funding amount, type (grant, loan, bond, etc.), and source of all funds. If multiple non-federal and other-federal funding are being utilized, identify each specific source by name and the amount that

source will contribute to the project's budget. The RAISE project budget table should also show that the project satisfies the statutory cost share or non-federal funds matching requirements described in Section C.2 if applicable.

If needed, the Department may request additional budget information to clarify an application. The Department encourages applicants to submit the most relevant and complete information they can provide.

If the project contains **components**,[19] the budget should separate the costs of each project component.

Table 1:

	[Component 1]	[Component 2]	Total Funding
Funding Source	**Funding Amount**	**Funding Amount**	
RAISE Funds:	[$XXX]	[$XXX]	[$XXX]
Other Federal Funds:	[$XXX]	[$XXX]	[$XXX]
Non-Federal Funds:	[$XXX]	[$XXX]	[$XXX]
Total Project Cost:	[$XXX]	[$XXX]	[$XXX]

If there is only a single component, remove "Component 2" column. If there are more than 2 components, add columns.

Applicants should complete and include the following tables in their project budget file. The Department will use these tables to determine where the majority of project costs occur for the purposes of making APP, HDC, and Urban designations. The total project cost listed in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c should match the total project cost listed on the SF 424 and the FY 2024 RAISE Project Information Form. Applicants should refer to the Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool to identify census tracts and urban designations.

[19] "Project components" means separate projects activities are scheduled to be completed at the same time.

Table 2a:

Note: Please refer to the *Census Tracts (2020 Census)* layer in the Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool to identify 2020 Census tracts.

2020 Census Tract(s)	**Project Costs per Census Tract**
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
	Total Project Cost: $

Add more rows for additional census tracts, if needed.

Table 2b:

Note: Please refer to the *Census Tracts (2010 Census)* layer in the Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool to identify 2010 Census tracts.

2010 Census Tract(s)	**Project Costs per Census Tract**
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
[XX.XX]	$
	Total Project Cost: $

Add more rows for additional census tracts, if needed.

Table 2c:

Note: Please refer to the *Census Designated Urban Areas with Population Greater Than 200,000 (2020 Census)* layer in the Grant Project Location Verification mapping tool to identify urban areas.

Urban/Rural	**Project Costs**
Urban *(2020 Census-designated urban area with a population greater than 200,000)*	$
Rural *(Located outside of a 2020 Census-designated urban area with a population greater than 200,000)*	$
	Total Project Cost: $

The project budget narrative should include:

- **Sources, Uses, and Availability** – Provide complete information on how all capital or planning project funds may be used, their availability, and documented 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. Examples of documentation include, but are not limited to, a letter signed by a governing official or chief financial officer confirming the amount and source of funding, a page or pages from the STIP or TIP (please do not include a link to the entire STIP/TIP), a signed city ordinance, or a county administrator committing previously approved general obligation bonds.
- **Contingency Amount** – Indicate the specific contingency amount included in the budget to demonstrate there is sufficient funding to cover unanticipated cost increases and describe a plan to address potential cost overruns. Planning projects are not required to include a contingency amount but must describe a plan to address potential cost overruns.
- **Level of Design** – Indicate the degree of design completion (e.g., no design, 30, 60, 90 percent design) for which the cost was estimated in the case of a capital project;
- **Cost Estimates** – Indicate how, when, and by whom project costs were estimated. Cost estimates should be no older than a year from February 28, 2024. If older, please apply an inflation factor.
- **Cost Share or Non-Federal Funding Match –** Explain how the project budget satisfies the statutory cost share or non-federal funds matching requirements shown in the project budget table, if applicable.

The budget should clearly identify any expenses expected to be incurred between time of award and obligation because these expenses are not eligible for reimbursement, as described in Section B.4. Similarly, non-Federal funds incurred prior to obligation are not eligible to count as matching funds nor eligible to count towards meeting the level of non-Federal that is being committed in the application, as described in Section C.2. Unless authorized by the Department in writing after the Secretary's announcement of FY 2024 RAISE awards, any costs that a

recipient incurs before DOT executes a grant agreement for that recipient's project are ineligible for reimbursement and are ineligible match for cost share requirements.

d. Merit Criteria

The merit criteria narrative file should demonstrate how the project aligns with each of the 8 statutory merit criteria described in Section E of this notice. The narrative should explain how and why the proposed transportation infrastructure project will address the surface transportation problem and achieve benefits under each criterion. To do this, applicants should:

- organize merit criteria in the order in which they are described in the Section E of the NOFO;
- address each criterion separately;
- identify the elements of the proposed project that align with items listed under each criterion under the merit rating rubric; and
- support estimated benefit claims with data, details, and/or qualitative descriptions

Applicants are encouraged to use the Department's Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer (arcgis.com) as a resource to describe how their project area is experiencing transportation related disadvantage as it relates to safety, affordable transportation options, pollution, access to good-paying jobs, climate change, and/or improving quality of life.

Insufficient information to assess any criterion will negatively impact the project rating. Applicants should note that merit reviewers will focus on this file and will not be required to reference links or the other files in the application package; therefore, **all relevant information to demonstrate alignment with the merit criteria, as described in Section E, should be included in this file.**

Guidance describing how the Department will evaluate projects against the Selection Criteria listed in Section E of this notice. Applicants should review that section before preparing their application.

e. Project Readiness

Project readiness describes an applicant's preparedness to move a proposed project forward once it receives a RAISE grant. The Project Readiness file should include information that, when considered with the project budget information, is sufficient for the Department to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin the capital or planning project in a timely manner and meet both the obligation and expenditure deadlines. Applicants can see a Project Readiness checklist on the DOT Navigator website.[20] The Project Readiness file should include the following sections:

Project Schedule (capital and planning projects)
The Project Readiness file should include a detailed project schedule that identifies all major project activities and milestones. For capital projects, examples of such milestones include State and local planning approvals; start and completion of NEPA and other Federal environmental

[20] https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator

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 start and end. For planning projects, examples of milestones may include start dates, schedule for public engagement and completion dates. The schedule should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that:

- all necessary activities will be complete at least six months in advance of the obligation deadline[21] to allow sufficient time for unexpected delays and not put the funds at risk of expiring before they are obligated;[22]
- the capital project can begin construction upon obligation of grant funds and that those funds will be spent expeditiously once construction starts, with all funds expended by September 30, 2033;
- all real property and right-of-way acquisition will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and other applicable legal requirements or a statement that no right-of-way acquisition is necessary; and the applicant will or has meaningfully sought community input through public involvement, particularly disadvantaged communities or other communities with environmental justice concerns that may be affected by the project where applicable.

Environmental Risk Assessment (capital projects only)
This section of the application should include sufficient information for the Department to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin construction in a timely manner consistent with all applicable local, State, and Federal requirements. To assist the Department's environmental risk review, the applicant should provide the information requested on project schedule, required approvals and permits, NEPA class of action and status, public involvement, right-of-way acquisition plans, risk and mitigation strategies.

Required Approvals

This section should 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 Categorical Exclusion, Finding of No Significant Impact, Record of Decision, 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

[21] The statutory obligation deadline is September 30, 2028. The Department assesses risk against an earlier deadline of June 30, 2028 to allow time to complete administrative processing and address challenges before the statutory deadline.
[22] Obligation occurs when a selected applicant and DOT enter into a written grant agreement after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements.

application date, the applicant should describe a proposed approach for updating this material in accordance with applicable NEPA reconsideration requirements.

- **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,[23] 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 link or other reference to copies of any reviews, approvals, and permits prepared.

- **Environmental studies or other documents**, through a link, that describe in detail known project impacts, and possible mitigation for those impacts.

- **A description of discussions with the appropriate DOT operating administration field or headquarters office** regarding the project's compliance with NEPA and other applicable Federal environmental reviews and approvals.

- If applicable, **right-of-way acquisition plans**, with detailed schedule and compensation plan.

- **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.

State and Local Approvals

This section should provide:

- **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 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (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.

  Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning. The planning requirements applicable to the relevant operating administration apply to all RAISE grant projects, including projects located at airport facilities. 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

[23] Projects that may impact protected resources such as wetlands, species habitat, cultural or historic resources require review and approval by Federal and State agencies with jurisdiction over those resources.

appropriate planning agency that actions are underway to include the project in the relevant planning document. To the extent possible, freight projects should be included in a State Freight Plan and supported by a State Freight Advisory Committee (49 U.S.C. 70201, 70202), if these exist. Applicants should provide links or other documentation supporting this consideration such as letters of support from the State DOT if the project is intended to be included in the State Freight Plan, or results from application of the FHWA Freight Mobility Trends Tool.[24]

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Project risks, such as procurement delays, environmental uncertainties, increases in real estate acquisition costs, uncommitted local match (non-federal funding), 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. The applicant should assess the greatest risks to the project and identify how the project parties will mitigate those risks.

Project risks can also include the unavailability of vehicles that either comply with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or are exempt from Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards in a manner that allows for their legal acquisition and deployment, unavailability of domestically manufactured equipment.

If an applicant anticipates pursuing a waiver for relevant domestic preference laws, the applicant should describe steps that have been or will be taken to maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing its project. To the extent the applicant is unfamiliar with the Federal program, the applicant should contact the appropriate DOT operating administration field or headquarters offices, as found in contact information on the RAISE program website, for information on the pre-requisite steps to obligate Federal funds in order to ensure that their project schedule is reasonable and that there are no risks of delays in satisfying Federal requirements.

Technical Capacity Assessment (capital and planning projects)
All applications should include a section in the Project Readiness file that demonstrates their technical capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements including, but not limited to, compliance with Title VI/Civil Rights requirements and Buy America provisions, described in Section E.1 of this NOFO. The applicant should address the following in the technical capacity section of the Project Readiness file:

- **Federal Funding –** Experience implementing federally funded transportation projects.
- **Federal Regulations** – Understanding of federal contract and procurement requirements, Buy America, Americans with Disabilities Act, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, Davis Bacon Act, etc.

[24] https://fpcb.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/mobility_trends_tool.aspx

- **Project Planning –** Practice incorporating projects into long-range development plans or adding projects to the TIP/STIP through the MPO planning process.
- **Project Delivery** – Examples of successfully delivered projects of similar size, scope, and complexity.

f. Benefit-Cost Analysis (capital projects only)

The purpose of the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) is to enable the Department to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project by comparing its expected benefits to its expected costs relative to the current problem often referred to as the "baseline" or "no-build alternative." The baseline defines the world without the proposed project.
Any benefits claimed for the proposed project, both quantified and unquantified, should be clearly tied to the expected outcomes of the proposed project. 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.

There should be two BCA files included in the application: (1) a narrative description of the BCA; and (2) an unlocked spreadsheet revealing the underlying calculations.

- **Narrative Description of Analysis** - The BCA narrative should describe the current baseline, the sources of data used to estimate the benefits of the project, document any assumptions, and the values of key input parameters. Applicants may also provide a table similar to the one shown below summarizing the impacts of the project and how those impacts would translate into expected benefits. This is shown as an example only:

Baseline / Current Status and Problem to be Addressed	**Change to Baseline / Proposed Project to Address Problem**	**Example Impacts**
A freeway divides two neighborhoods	A new street will be constructed to connect neighborhoods on each side of the freeway	Reduced travel time for pedestrians and cyclists by X miles per day due to a more direct route, as well as reduced emissions, vehicle operating costs, and travel time for vehicle occupants by lowering VMT by Y miles per year
A roadway with a high number of pedestrian fatalities has no sidewalks or marked crosswalks	Sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, and upgraded lighting will be added to the roadway	Reduced pedestrian fatalities and injuries by X and Y per year, respectively, as well as amenity benefits of wider

		sidewalks for Z daily pedestrian trips

- **Spreadsheet Revealing Underlying Calculations** - The BCA spreadsheet file should present the calculations in sufficient detail and transparency to allow the analysis to be reproduced by Department evaluators. While DOT does not have a prescribed format for the BCA spreadsheet submitted by the applicant beyond ensuring that it is unlocked, to allow review, the Department is also developing a new BCA spreadsheet template that will be available to assist applicants in structuring their analysis.

Applicants should review the Department's detailed guidance on how to conduct a BCA. Both the guidance document and spreadsheet template will be available on the RAISE program website.[25]

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

Each applicant must obtain a UEI and register with SAM.gov. Each applicant is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency

The Department may not make a RAISE grant to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DOT is ready to make a RAISE grant, DOT may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a RAISE grant and use that determination as a basis for making a RAISE grant to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern on February 28, 2024 for FY 2024 RAISE. Grants.gov attaches a time stamp to each application at the time that submission is complete. Applications with a time stamp after the deadline will not be considered. The Department does not accept applications via mailed paper, fax machine, email, or other means. In addition to the FY 2024 NOFO dates, tentative future NOFO publication dates and application deadlines for FYs 2025 and 2026 are listed in the table below.

BIL Fiscal Year Funding	RAISE NOFO Publication Date	Application Deadline
FY 2024	November 30, 2023	February 28, 2024
FY 2025	October 15, 2024	January 13, 2025
FY 2026	October 15, 2025	January 13, 2026

[25] www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/additional-guidance

To submit an application through Grants.gov, applicants must:

- Obtain a UEI number;[26]
- Register with the SAM at www.SAM.gov;
- Create a Grants.gov username and password; and
- The E-Business Point of Contact (POC) at the applicant's organization must respond to the registration email 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.

Please note that the SAM registration process takes a **minimum of 2 weeks to complete if not longer**. Failure to register for SAM or comply with Grants.gov applicant requirements in a timely manner will not be considered for exceptions to the submission requirements and deadline. The Department is not able to assist with technical issues related to Grants.gov or SAM registration. For information and instruction on each of these processes, please see instructions at grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqshttp://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html. If applicants experience difficulties at any point during the registration or application process, please call the Grants.gov Customer Service Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726.

5. Funding Restrictions

Recipients of RAISE Grant awards will not receive lump-sum cash disbursements at the time of award announcement or obligation of funds. Instead, RAISE funds will reimburse recipients only after a grant agreement has been executed, allowable expenses are incurred, and valid requests for reimbursement are submitted.

Unless authorized by the Department in writing after the Secretary's announcement of FY 2024 RAISE awards, any costs that a recipient incurs before DOT executes a grant agreement for that recipient's project are ineligible for reimbursement and are ineligible match for cost share requirements.

Federal funds awarded under this program may not be used to support or oppose union organizing, whether directly or as an offset for other funds.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Submission Location

Applications must be submitted to Grants.gov. The Department does not accept applications via mailed paper, fax machine, email, or other means.

Consideration of Applications

Only applicants who comply with all submission deadlines described in this notice and electronically submit valid, on-time applications through Grants.gov will be eligible for award.

[26] On April 4, 2022 the Federal government stopped using the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to uniquely identify entities. Entities doing business with the Federal government must use a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) created in SAM.gov. If your entity is currently registered in SAM.gov, your UEI has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations.

Late Applications
Any applications that Grants.gov time stamps after 11:59 PM on February 28, 2024 will not be accepted. Applicants are strongly encouraged to make submissions days, if not weeks, in advance of the deadline. Applicants facing technical issues are advised to contact the Grants.gov helpdesk well in advance of the deadline.

Compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
The Department encourages applicants to submit documents that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 508 guidelines are available at https://www.access-board.gov/ict/.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

This section specifies the criteria the Department will use to evaluate applications.

TIER 1 All Eligible Applications	
Merit Criteria Review	
TIER 2 All applications rated "Highly Recommended" under the merit criteria review automatically advance for second tier analysis. The Senior Review Team (SRT) can advance applications rated "Recommended" for second tier analysis.	
Project Readiness Review	
Environmental Risk Assessment	Capital Projects
Technical Capacity Assessment	Capital and Planning Projects
Financial Completeness Assessment	Capital and Planning Projects
Benefit-Cost Analysis	Capital Projects

The Department will review merit criteria for all applications. Highly Recommended capital applications will automatically advance to receive second-tier analysis consisting of three Project Readiness reviews: (1) Environmental Risk Assessment; (2) Technical Capacity Assessment; and (3) Financial Completeness Assessment, as well as a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). Highly Recommended planning applications will automatically advance to receive second-tier analysis consisting of two Project Readiness areas: (1) Technical Capacity Assessment; and Financial Completeness Review. Environmental Risk Assessment and BCA will not be reviewed for planning applications. The SRT can advance select Recommended capital and planning applications for second-tier analysis under the circumstances described in Section E.2.

The Department does not consider the amount of non-Federal contribution as a selection criterion or a competitiveness factor. However, general budget information may be evaluated as part of the financial completeness in the readiness review or under the Innovation criteria in the merit review. See Sections E.1.a and E.1.b for more details.

a. Merit Criteria

For each merit criterion, the Department will evaluate whether the application uses data-driven and evidence-based methods to demonstrate that the project will provide the anticipated benefits, which will result in a rating of "high, "medium," "low," or "non-responsive" as described in the rubric below.

Individual Merit Criteria Ratings	
High	The criterion must be addressed as a primary project purpose (not an ancillary or incidental consideration, except for the Partnership and Collaboration and Innovation criteria), must include clear, direct, data-driven (capital projects only), and significant benefits, and must align with at least one of the benefits described in the high column of the merit criteria rubric.
Medium	The criterion may not be a primary project purpose, or the project benefits do not meet at least one of the requirements for a 'high' rating, as described in the merit criteria rubric.
Low	The application contains insufficient information to assess that criterion's benefits.
Non-Responsive	The proposed project negatively affects the criterion, or the application does not address the criterion.

Planning grant applications will be evaluated against the same merit criteria as capital grants. Planning grant applications should include data on the problem intended to be addressed, but information does not need to be as driven by data as a capital project when estimating benefits of the implemented project since data is often an outcome of the project to be planned. The Department will consider how the plan, once implemented, will ultimately further the merit criteria.

The combination of individual criterion ratings will inform one overall Merit Rating: Highly Recommended, Recommended, Acceptable, or Unacceptable, as shown below.

Overall Merit Rating	
Highly Recommended	• six or more of the eight merit criteria ratings are "high" • none of the merit criteria ratings are "non-responsive"
Recommended	• one to five of the merit criteria ratings are "high" • no more than three of the merit criteria ratings are "low" • none are "non-responsive"
Acceptable	• a combination of "high," "medium," "low," or "non-responsive" ratings that do not fit within the definitions of Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Unacceptable
Unacceptable	• three or more "non-responsive" ratings

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
Safety	Application did not address the Safety criterion OR Project negatively affects safety	Application contains insufficient information to assess safety benefit	The project has one or more of the following safety benefits, but safety may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Protect non-motorized or motorized travelers from safety risks; or • Reduce any number of fatalities and/or serious injuries	Safety is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only), and significant benefits that targets a known, documented safety problem, by doing one or more of the following: • Protect non-motorized travelers from safety risks; or • Reduce fatalities and/or serious injuries in underserved communities to bring them below the state-wide average; or • Incorporate and cite specific actions and activities identified in the Department's National Roadway Safety Strategy plan or Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit report, or FTA's Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions; or • Incorporate specific safety improvements that are part of a documented risk reduction mitigation strategy and that have, for example, port-wide or transit system impact.
Environmental Sustainability	Application did not address the Environmental Sustainability criterion OR Project negatively affects environmental sustainability	Application contains insufficient information to assess environmental sustainability benefits	Project has one or more of the following environmental sustainability benefits, but environmental sustainability may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Reduce transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; or • Reduce vehicle miles traveled; or • Incorporate lower-carbon pavement/construction materials; or • Redevelop brownfield sites; or • Improve resilience of infrastructure to current and future weather and climate risks; or • Make basic stormwater improvements	Environmental sustainability is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only), and significant benefits that explicitly considers climate change and environmental justice, by doing one or more of the following: • Reduce transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in disadvantages communities; or • Address the disproportionately negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities such as by reducing exposure to elevated levels of air, water, and noise pollution; or • Align with the applicant's State Carbon Reduction Strategy, State Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan, or other State, local, or tribal greenhouse gas reduction plan; or • Align with the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization; or • Implement transportation-efficient land use and design, such as drawing on the features of historic towns and villages that had a mix of land uses, compact and walkable development patterns, accessible green space, and

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
				neighborhood centers that make it convenient to take fewer or shorter trips; or • Reduce vehicle miles traveled specifically through modal shift to transit, rail, or active transportation; or • Reduce emissions specifically by shifting freight to lower-carbon travel modes; or • Incorporate energy efficient investments, such as electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure; or • Improve the resilience of at-risk infrastructure to be resilient to extreme weather events and natural disasters caused by climate change, such as by using best-available climate data sets, information resources, and decision-support tools; or • Incorporate nature-based solutions or natural infrastructure with the use of native plants; or • Referenced in a Resilience Improvement Plan or similar plan; or • Remove, replace, or restore culverts for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species; or • Avoid adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species
Quality of Life	Application did not address the Quality of Life criterion OR Project negatively affects quality of life	Application contains insufficient information to assess quality of life benefits	Project has one or more of the following quality of life benefits but quality of life may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Increase affordability for travelers; or • Reduces vehicle dependence	Quality of life is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following: • Increase affordable transportation choices by improving and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing vehicle dependence, particularly in underserved communities; or • Reduce transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed-use development and a diversity of housing types, including affordable housing, with multimodal transportation infrastructure; or • Coordinate and integrate land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning in order to create more livable communities and expand travel choices; or

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
				• Improve access to daily destinations like jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through transit and active transportation; or • Implement transit-oriented development that benefits existing residents and businesses, low-income and disadvantaged communities, and minimizes displacement; or • Improve public health by adding new facilities that promote walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation; or • Mitigate urban heat islands to protect the health of at-risk residents, outdoor workers, and others; or • Proactively addresses equity.
Mobility and Community Connectivity	Application did not address the Mobility and Community Connectivity criterion OR Project negatively affects mobility and community connectivity	Application contains insufficient information to assess mobility and community connectivity benefits	Project has one or more of the following mobility and community connectivity benefits, but mobility and community connectivity may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Increase accessible transportation choices; or • Include ADA improvements	Mobility and community connectivity is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following: • Improve system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility, and mobility on-demand; or • Implement plans, based on community participation and data, that addresses gaps identified in the existing network; or • Remove physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options; or • Include transportation features that increase the accessibility for non-motorized travelers in underserved communities; or • Incorporate Universal Design including details of how the improvements go beyond ADA requirements by designing environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design such as a Complete Streets approach; or • Directly increasing intermodal and multimodal freight movement; or • Consider last-mile freight plans in a Complete Streets and multimodal approach

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity	Application did not address the Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity criterion OR Project negatively affects economic competitiveness and opportunity	Application contains insufficient information to assess economic competitiveness and opportunity benefits	Project has one or more of the following economic competitiveness and opportunity benefits, but economic competitiveness and opportunity may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Improve travel time reliability; or • Improve movement of goods; or • Create jobs related to the project's delivery and on-going operations	Economic competitiveness is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only), and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following: • Improve intermodal and/or multimodal freight mobility, especially for supply chain bottlenecks; or • Facilitate tourism opportunities; or • Promote local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms; or • Promote wealth building; or • Promote long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits; or • Create good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union including through the use of a project labor agreement; or • 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; or • Promote 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
State of Good Repair	Application did not address the State of Good Repair criterion OR Project negatively affects state of good repair	Application contains insufficient information to assess state of good repair benefits	Project has one or more of the following state of good repair benefits but state of good repair may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Routine or deferred maintenance; or • Create new infrastructure (not in a remote community) that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or • Identify the party responsible for maintenance and describe how the new or improved asset(s) will be	State of good repair is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, **data-driven** (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following: • Restore and modernize (such as through road diets and complete streets approaches) the existing core infrastructure assets that have met their useful life; or • Reduce construction and maintenance burdens through efficient and well-integrated design; or • Create new infrastructure in remote communities that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or • Address current or projected transportation system vulnerabilities for underserved communities; or

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
			maintained in a state of good repair; or • Resolve the current or projected transportation system vulnerabilities	• Prioritize improvement of the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint
Partnership and Collaboration	Application did not address the Partnership and Collaboration criterion OR Project negatively affects partners or community members (e.g. negative impacts from ROW acquisition, lack of support for the project, etc.)	Application contains insufficient information to assess the partnership and collaboration benefits	Project has one or more of the following partnership and collaboration benefits but partnership and collaboration may not be a primary project purpose or does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating: • Collaborate with public and/or private entities; or • Document support from local, regional, or national levels	Project has, or demonstrates plans to, support and engage diverse people and communities by doing one or more of the following: • Engage residents and community-based organizations to ensure equity considerations for underserved communities are meaningfully integrated throughout the lifecycle of the project, for example, by citing and describing how the project aligns with the Department's Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide; or • Coordinate with other types of projects such as economic development, commercial or residential development near public transportation, power/electric infrastructure projects, or broadband deployment; or • Partner with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms; or • Partner with high-quality workforce development programs with supportive services to help train, place, and retain people in good-paying jobs or registered apprenticeships. These programs should have a focus on expanding access for women, people of color, and others that are underrepresented in infrastructure jobs (people with disabilities, people with convictions, etc.); or • Partner and engage with unions and/or worker organizations in the development of the project and the

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High
				lifecycle of the project, including the maintenance or operation of the completed project; or • Partner with communities or community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups to develop workforce strategies; or • Establish formal public-private partnerships or joint ventures to expand or create new infrastructure or economic development capacity; or • Participate in the Thriving Communities Network

Innovation	Application did not address the Innovation criterion.
	
	OR
	
	Includes non-innovative practices or components
		Application contains insufficient information to assess innovation benefits	Project has one or more of the following innovation benefits but does not meet the description(s) of a 'high' rating:
			• Deploy technologies, project delivery, or financing methods that are new or innovative to the applicant or community
				Project has, or demonstrates plans for, one or more of the following innovative benefits.
				• Innovative Technologies
				  ○ Enhance the environment for electric, connected, or automated vehicles to improve the detection and mitigation of safety risks; or
				  ○ Improve safety using Advanced Driver Assistance Systems on public transit vehicles, including functions such as precision docking; lane keeping or lane centering; or
				  ○ Use sensors or small unmanned aerial vehicles to enhance infrastructure inspection and asset management processes; or
				  ○ Use sensors to monitor real-time conditions of pavement quality, signage, crosswalks, transit headways, or other public infrastructure; or
				  ○ Use low-carbon or other innovative materials; or
				  ○ Use caps, land bridges, or underdecks; or
				  ○ Use active grade crossing detection systems to enable responsive traffic management; or
				  ○ Use detection systems on railroads to target and deter trespassing; or
				  ○ Digitalize curb management to optimize use across purposes and modes, including freight, pick-up drop-off, and transit usage
				• Innovative Project Delivery
				  ○ Use practices that facilitate accelerated project delivery such as single contractor design-build arrangements, Advanced Digital Construction Management, Accelerated Bridge Construction,

Merit Criteria:	Non-Responsive	Low	Medium	High

				Digital as-builts, or 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.
				• Innovative Financing
				  ○ Secure TIFIA, RRIF, or private activity bond financing; or
				  ○ Use congestion pricing or other demand management strategies

Safety

The Department will assess how the project targets a known safety problem and seeks to protect motorized or non-motorized travelers from safety risks on roadways, transit, rail, or ports. Applicants are highly encouraged to include data-driven information when addressing the safety criterion such as the current and projected number or rate of crashes, fatalities and/or serious injuries among transportation users and how those compare to the statewide average; details about the transportation user that will reap the safety benefits such as whether the project addresses vulnerable roadway users[27] or whether the project addresses inequities in crash victims. If applicable, applicants should describe how the project incorporates specific actions and activities identified in the Department's National Roadway Safety Strategy,[28] or Improving Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Accessing Transit report, or FTA's Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions.

Environmental Sustainability

The Department will consider the extent to which the project incorporates considerations of climate change and environmental justice in the project planning or project delivery stage. Environmental justice means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people: (i) are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and (ii) have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.

The Department will evaluate whether and how the project demonstrates environmental sustainability benefits. For this assessment, the Department will consider, for example, how the project will significantly reduce transportation-related pollution like air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; aligns with the applicant's State, regional, county or city carbon-reduction plan or the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization; address the disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation such as exposure to elevated levels of air, water, and noise pollution; or implement transportation-efficient land use and design, such as drawing on the features of historic towns and villages that had a mix of land uses, compact and walkable development patterns, accessible green space, and neighborhood centers that make it convenient to take fewer or shorter trips.

The Department will assess whether and how the project is expected to reduce emissions, such as shifts to lower emissions vehicles, transit, or active transportation; shift freight to lower-carbon travel modes to reduce emissions; improve the resiliency of at-risk infrastructure[29] to withstand

[27] As defined by FHWA's Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment Guidance, a vulnerable road user is a non-motorist and may include people walking, biking, or rolling as well as highway workers on foot in a work zone.
[28] www.transportation.gov/NRSS
[29] For the RAISE program, at-risk infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that is subject to, or faces increased long-term future risks of, a weather event, a natural disaster, or changing conditions, such as coastal flooding, coastal erosion, wave action, storm surge, or sea level rise, in order to improve transportation and public safety and to reduce costs by avoiding larger future maintenance or rebuilding costs.

extreme weather events and natural disasters caused by climate change such as by using best-available climate data sets, information resources, and decision-support tools, and incorporating nature-based solutions or natural infrastructure; or incorporates lower-carbon pavement or construction materials as described in the Environmental Protection Agency's interim guidance on low-carbon materials[30] or the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization.

The Department will also consider whether and how the project will incorporate energy efficient investments such as electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure; redevelop brownfield sites; remove, replace or restore culverts to improve passage of aquatic species; or avoid adverse impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered 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 Executive Order 14030, *Climate-Related Financial Risk* (86 FR 27967) and 13690, *Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input* (80 FR 6425.)

Quality of Life

The Department will consider whether and how the project will improve quality of life, such as by increasing affordable transportation choices and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing vehicle dependence; reduce transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed use development and a diversity of housing types (including affordable housing) with multimodal transportation infrastructure; coordinate and integrate land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning in order to create more livable communities and expand travel choices; reduce vehicle dependence and improve access to daily destinations such as jobs, healthcare, grocery store, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks such as by adding new facilities that promote walking, biking; implement transit-oriented development that benefits existing residents and businesses; mitigate urban heat islands to protect the health of at-risk residents, outdoor workers, and others; or proactively address racial equity.[31]

Mobility and Community Connectivity

The Department will assess whether and how the applicant will improve mobility and community connectivity. For this assessment, DOT will consider, for example, how the project will address system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility, and mobility on-demand; implement plans, based on community participation and data, that identifies and addresses gaps in the existing network; remove physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options; include transportation features that increase accessibility for non-motorized travelers, such as through a Complete Streets approach; incorporate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Universal Design[32] improvements; directly increase intermodal and multimodal freight movement; or considers last-mile freight plans in a Complete Streets and multimodal approach.

---

[30] https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-01/2022.12.22%20Interim%20Determination%20on%20Low%20Carbon%20Materials%20under%20IRA%206050 3%20and%2060506_508.pdf

[31] Definitions for "racial equity" and "underserved communities" are found in Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Sections 2 (a) and (b).

[32] Definition for "Universal Design" found on the General Services Administration's Section508.gov website and states, "Universal design is a concept in which products and environments are designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design."

Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity
The Department will assess whether and how the project will improve economic competitiveness and opportunity. For this assessment, DOT will consider, for example, how the project will improve intermodal or multimodal freight mobility, especially for supply chain bottle necks; facilitate tourism; promote local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms; wealth building; long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits; create good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union including through the use of a project labor agreement; or 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. DOT 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 density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development.

State of Good Repair
The Department will assess whether and to what extent the project improves state of good repair. For this assessment, DOT will consider, for example, how the project will mitigate current or projected system vulnerabilities; restore and modernize (such as through road diets and Complete Streets approaches) the existing core infrastructure assets that have met their useful life; reduce construction and maintenance burdens through efficient and well-integrated design; create new infrastructure *in remote communities* that will be maintained in a state of good repair; prioritize improvement of the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint; conduct routine or deferred maintenance; create new infrastructure *(not in a remote community)* that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or identify the party responsible for maintenance and how the new or improved asset(s) will be maintained in a state of good repair.

The Department encourages applicants to improve the condition and safety of existing state and locally owned transportation infrastructure within the right-of-way before proposing projects that add new general purpose travel lanes serving single occupancy vehicles.

Partnership and Collaboration
The Department will consider the extent to which the project has or will support and engage diverse people and communities. For this assessment, DOT will consider, for example, how the project has or will collaborate with public and/or private entities; documents support from local, regional, and/or national levels; engage residents and community-based organizations to ensure equity considerations for underserved communities are meaningfully integrated throughout the project. Applicants should describe how the project incorporates specific actions and activities identified in the Department's Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide;[33] coordinate with other types of projects such as economic development, commercial or residential development near public transportation, power/electric infrastructure projects, or broadband deployment; partner with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or 8(a) firms; partner with high-quality workforce development programs

[33] https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/equity/promising-practices-meaningful-public-involvement-transportation-decision-making

with supportive services[34] to help train, place, and retain underrepresented communities in good-paying jobs or registered apprenticeships including through the use of local and economic hiring preferences, linkage agreements with workforce programs that serve underrepresented groups, and proactive plans to prevent harassment; partner and engage with local unions or other worker-based organizations in the development and lifecycle of the project, including through evidence of project labor agreements and/or community benefit agreements; or partners with communities, or community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups, to develop workforce strategies; or establish formal public-private partnerships or joint ventures to expand or create new infrastructure or economic development capacity. DOT will assess the level of detail and description provided about the partnerships listed above. Applications that provide more details and descriptions about the project partnership will be rated higher than those that do not, in alignment with the merit rating rubric.

The Department will consider whether the applicant is participating in the Thriving Communities Network.[35] Applications that include right-of-way acquisition plans that minimally disrupts communities and maintains community cohesion will be more competitive than right-of-way acquisition plans that disrupt communities. For projects involving other Federal agencies, or requiring action from other Federal agencies, DOT will consider the level of involvement and commitment from those agencies. For example, relevant port projects should demonstrate alignment with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers investment strategies.

Innovation

The Department will assess the extent to which the applicant uses innovative: (1) technologies; (2) project delivery; or (3) financing. If this project is the first time the applicant or community will deploy specific innovations, the Department will consider them innovative, to the extent applicants provide enough detail to determine whether the innovations being deployed are new or innovative to the applicant or community regardless of whether other applicants or communities have implemented these innovations.

> **Innovative Technologies -** The Department will consider how the project enhances the environment for connected, electric, or automated vehicles to improve the detection, mitigation, and documentation of safety risks. Examples include the use of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems on public transit vehicles and detection systems on railroads to target and deter trespassing. The Department will assess the extent to which the project uses innovative technology that significantly enhances the operational performance and maintenance of the surface transportation system including sensors to inspect infrastructure and manage assets or to monitor real-time conditions of pavement quality, signage, crosswalks, or transit headways; active grade crossing detection systems to enable responsive traffic management; or digitalized curb management to optimize use across purposes and modes, including freight, pick-up drop-off, and transit usage. The

[34] Supportive services are critical to help women and people facing systemic barriers to employment be able to participate and thrive in training and employment. Recommended supportive services include childcare, 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 like mentoring, support groups, and peer networking.

[35] https://www.transportation.gov/federal-interagency-thriving-communities-network

use of low-carbon materials as well as the use of caps, land bridges, or underdecks are also considered innovative.

Please note that all innovative technology must be in compliance with 2 CFR § 200.216.[36] If an applicant is proposing to deploy autonomous vehicles or other innovative motor vehicle technology, the Department will consider whether and how the applicant demonstrates that all vehicles will comply with applicable safety requirements, including those administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Specifically, the Department will consider whether the vehicles acquired for the proposed project will comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). If the vehicles may not comply, the Department will consider applications that do one of the following more competitive than applications that do not: either (1) show that the vehicles and their proposed operations are within the scope of an exemption or waiver that has already been granted by NHTSA, FMCSA, or both agencies or (2) directly address whether the project will require exemptions or waivers from the FMVSS, FMCSR, or any other regulation and, if the project will require exemptions or waivers, present a plan for obtaining them.

Innovative Project Delivery - The Department will consider the extent to which the project utilizes innovative practices in contracting (such as public-private partnerships and single contractor design-build arrangements), single contractor design-build arrangements, project bundling, Advanced Digital Construction Management, Accelerated Bridge Construction, Digital as-builts, or an up-to-date programmatic agreement between an environmental resource agency and a state DOT, or other NEPA lead agency, establishing a streamlined process for environmental consultations and permits for commonly encountered project types.

Innovative Financing - The Department will assess the extent to which the project incorporates innovations in transportation funding and finance, for example through private sector funding or financing, using congestion pricing or other demand management strategies to address congestion, securing a TIFIA or RRIF loan, or receiving an allocation for private activity bonds through DOT's Build America Bureau.

b. Project Readiness

Capital project applications that receive second-tier analysis[37] will be reviewed for Project Readiness and assigned three evaluation ratings: Environmental Risk Assessment, Technical Capacity Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment.

Planning project applications that receive second-tier analysis will be reviewed for Project Readiness and assigned two evaluation ratings: Technical Capacity Assessment and Financial

[36] https://ecfr.federalregister.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-C/section-200.216
[37] The process for determining which applications receive second-tier analysis is described in Section E.2 of this notice.

Completeness Assessment. (Environmental Risk Assessment will not be performed for planning applications).

Low ratings in any of these readiness areas do not disqualify projects from award, but competitive applications clearly and directly describe achievable risk mitigation strategies. A project with mitigated risks or with a risk mitigation plan is more competitive than a comparable project with unaddressed risks.

Environmental Risk
The Environmental Risk Assessment analyzes the project's environmental approvals and likelihood of the necessary approval affecting project obligation funds will be spent expeditiously once construction starts as described in Section D of the NOFO, and results in a rating of "high risk," "moderate risk," or "low risk."

Technical Capacity
The Technical Capacity Assessment will assess the applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements as well as the recipient's experience working with Federal funds, civil rights compliance, and previous experience delivering infrastructure projects. This review is partially based on information submitted with the application and partially based on DOT Operating Administration knowledge of the applicant's performance. Technical Capacity ratings will be one of the following: "certain," "somewhat certain," 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; and the project will comply with all applicable Federal requirements including, but not limited to, Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and/or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

If an applicant is proposing to adopt innovative technology or other innovative practices, DOT will assess whether the applicant's capacity to implement those innovations, the applicant's understanding of applicable Federal requirements and whether the innovations may require extraordinary permitting, approvals, exemptions, waivers, or other procedural actions, and the effects of those innovations on the project delivery timeline.

Financial Completeness
The Financial Completeness Assessment reviews the project budget to confirm the availability of funding for the project and whether the applicant presented a complete funding package based on reasonable cost estimates. Financial Completeness ratings are: "complete," "partially complete," or "incomplete."

DOT will assign the highest rating of "complete," if the application identifies all funding sources for the project budget, documents all funding is available and committed to the project, includes contingency amount in the project budget and describes a plan to address potential cost overruns, and cost estimates are no more than a year old or include an inflation factor. Planning grants are

not required to include a contingency amount but must discuss a plan to address potential cost overruns.

Projects with funding estimates that are based on early stages of design (e.g., less than 30 percent design) or outdated cost estimates without specified budget contingencies will receive a lower rating. All applicants, including those requesting 100 percent grant funding, should describe a plan to address potential cost overruns.

c. Benefit-Cost Analysis

For capital projects that receive second-tier analysis, the Department will consider the costs and benefits of projects seeking RAISE grant funding in determining whether a project is cost effective. To the extent possible, the Department will rely on quantitative, evidenced-based and data-supported analysis to assess how well a project addresses this criterion, including an assessment of the project's estimated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) based on the applicant-supplied BCA described in Section D.2.f.

To evaluate the costs and benefits of a proposed project, the Department will assign the project as either negative net benefits (costs exceed benefits) or positive net benefits (benefits exceed costs.) Projects with negative net benefit ratings will not be selected for an award, unless the project demonstrates exceptional benefits for underserved or disadvantaged communities, as identified by the Senior Review Team.[38]

2. Review and Selection Process

This section explicitly addresses the BIL requirement to describe the methodology for evaluation in the NOFO. The RAISE grant program review and selection process consists of Merit Criteria Review; Project Readiness Review (consisting of Technical Capacity Assessment, Environmental Risk Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment); Benefit-Cost Analysis; and Senior Review. The Secretary makes final project selections.

Teams comprising Department and contractor staff review all eligible applications received by the deadline for a Merit Review and assign ratings as described in Section E. Using the Merit Review rubric described in section E, the combination of eight merit criteria ratings will result in one overall Merit Rating: Highly Recommended, Recommended, Acceptable, or Unacceptable.

"Highly Recommended" projects automatically advance for second-tier analysis.

The Senior Review Team (SRT) reviews all "Recommended" projects to determine if the benefits of a particular criterion are so significant that the project merits advancing for second-tier analysis. The SRT can advance a "Recommended" project only if:

1. the project received a "high" in one or more of the priority criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, mobility and community connectivity, or quality of life, and the benefits in that criterion are exceptional; or

[38] The Senior Review Team, and its role in the application evaluation and selection process, is described in section E.2 of this notice.

2. if the SRT provides additional information to demonstrate that a criterion has benefits that are aligned with a "high" rating for one or more of the priority merit criteria listed above (whether or not the Merit Review Team assigned a "high" rating) and the benefits in that criterion would be exceptional.

Senior Operating Administration staff and OST staff may make recommendations to the SRT for which projects should advance based on exceptional benefits of a particular priority criterion.

"Recommended" projects designated a "RCN Program Extra" project under the FY 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program competition that receive at least one "High" in a priority criterion during the FY 2024 RAISE application evaluation process will automatically advance for second-tier analysis.

Second-tier analysis consists of:

- **Capital Projects** - Cost-Benefit Analysis and Project Readiness: (1) Environmental Risk Assessment; (2) Financial Completeness Assessment; and (3) Technical Capacity Assessment.

- **Planning Projects** – Project Readiness: (1) Financial Completeness Assessment; and (2) Technical Capacity Assessment.

Following completion of second-tier analysis, the SRT determines which projects are designated as Highly Rated.

Using the discretionary authority provided in statute, the Secretary selects projects from the Highly Rated List for award, consistent with the selection criteria and statutory requirements for geographic and modal diversity. The Secretary may, depending on the pool of qualified applications, seek to award at least one project per state or territory.

Projects for which an FY 2024 RAISE application is advanced by the Senior Review Team to the Highly Rated List, but that are not awarded, are automatically designated as "Projects of Merit." Projects with this designation will be carried over into FY 2025 RAISE and considered by the SRT for advancement to the Highly Rated List, along with other FY 2025 applications eligible for advancement to the Highly Rated List.

The BIL mandates that RAISE grant award selections be announced by June 27, 2024.

Consistent with past practice and statute, the Department offers debriefs to applicants not selected for award to receive information about the RAISE project's evaluation. Due to overwhelming demand, the Department is unable to provide a RAISE award to every competitive project that applies.

3. Additional Information

Prior to award, each selected applicant will be subject to a risk assessment as required by 2 CFR § 200.206. The Department must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. DOT will consider comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, 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.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices

Following the evaluation outlined in Section E, the Secretary will announce awarded projects by posting a list of selected projects on the RAISE program website.[39] Recipients will be notified by email. Notice of selection is not authorization to begin performance or to incur costs for the proposed project. Following that announcement, the RAISE program Office and relevant operating administration will contact the point of contact listed in the SF-424 to initiate negotiation of the grant agreement for authorization.

Recipients of RAISE Grant awards will not receive lump-sum cash disbursements at the time of award announcement or obligation of funds. Instead, RAISE funds will reimburse recipients only after a grant agreement has been executed, allowable expenses are incurred, and valid requests for reimbursement are submitted.

Unless authorized by the Department in writing after the Secretary's announcement of FY 2024 RAISE awards, any costs that a recipient incurs before DOT executes a grant agreement for that recipient's project are ineligible for reimbursement and are ineligible match for cost share requirements.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Administrative Requirements

Please visit the RAISE program website[40] for the General Terms and Conditions for FY 2023 RAISE awards. The FY 2024 RAISE Terms and Conditions will be similar to the FY 2023 RAISE Terms and Conditions, but it will include relevant updates consistent with this notice.

All awards will be administered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found in 2 C.F.R part 200, as adopted by DOT at 2 C.F.R part 1201. Federal wage rate requirements included in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, U.S.C., apply to all projects receiving funds under this program, and apply to all

[39] www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants
[40] https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/raise/raise-grant-agreements

parts of the project, whether funded with RAISE Grant funds, other Federal funds, or non-Federal funds.

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; 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 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.

Additionally, applicable Federal laws, rules and regulations of the relevant operating administration administering the project will apply to the projects that receive RAISE grant awards, including planning requirements, Service Outcome Agreements, Stakeholder Agreements, Buy America compliance, and other requirements under DOT's other highway, transit, rail, and port grant programs. For projects that are eligible under RAISE but are not eligible under DOT's other programs or projects that are eligible under multiple DOT programs, the RAISE program will determine the appropriate requirements to ensure the project is delivered consistent with program and Department goals. In particular, Executive Order 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. RAISE grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations, or vehicles that are exempt from Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

For projects administered by FHWA, applicable Federal laws, rules, and regulations set forth in Title 23 U.S.C. and Title 23 C.F.R generally apply, including the 23 U.S.C. 129 restrictions on the use of toll revenues, and Section 4(f) preservation of parklands and historic properties requirements under 23 U.S.C. 138. For an illustrative list of the other applicable laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, polices, guidelines, and requirements as they relate to a RAISE grant project administered by the FHWA, please see the RAISE program website.[41]

For RAISE projects administered by the Federal Transit Administration and partially funded with Federal transit assistance, all relevant requirements under chapter 53 of title 49 U.S.C.

[41] https://www.transportation.gov/grants/raise/raise-fy2023-fhwa-exhibits-june-23-2023

apply. For transit projects funded exclusively with RAISE grant funds, some requirements of chapter 53 of title 49 U.S.C. and chapter VI of title 49 CFR apply.

For projects administered by the Federal Railroad Administration, FRA requirements described in 49 U.S.C. Subtitle V, Part C apply.

b. Program Requirements

Climate Change and Environmental Justice Impact Consideration
Each applicant selected for RAISE grant funding must demonstrate effort to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts as described in Section E, consistent with Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 FR 7619). In the grant agreement, applicants will be required to memorialize commitments they have made in their applications in one or more of the activities in Section E.1.

Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity
Each applicant selected for RAISE grant funding must demonstrate effort to improve racial equity and reduce barriers to opportunity as described in Section E, consistent with Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (86 FR 7009). In the grant agreement, applicants will be required to memorialize commitments they have made in their applications in one or more of the activities listed in Section E.1.

Labor and Workforce
Each applicant selected for RAISE 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 strong labor standards as described in Section E, consistent with Executive Order 14025, *Worker Organizing and Empowerment* (86 FR 22829), and Executive Order 14052, *Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (86 FR 64335). In the grant agreement, applicants will be required to memorialize commitments they have made in their applications in one or more of the activities listed in Section E.1.

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 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 the Department of Homeland Security, will be required to do so before receiving funds.

Domestic Preference Requirements
As expressed in Executive Order 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 domestic preference requirements based on the Operating Administration that administers the project, including 23 U.S.C. 313 (FHWA projects); 49 U.S.C. 5323(j) (FTA projects); 49 U.S.C. 22905(a) (FRA projects); and section 70914(a) of the Build America, Buy America Act (all projects). The Department expects all applicants to comply without needing a project-specific waiver for domestic preference requirements.

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 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (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. DOT's and the applicable Operating Administrations' Office of Civil Rights may work with awarded grant recipients to ensure full compliance with Federal civil rights requirements.

Federal Contract Compliance
As a condition of grant award all Federally assisted contractors are required to make good faith efforts to meet the goals of EO 11246, Equal Employment Opportunity (30 FR 12319, and as amended). 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 U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is charged with enforcing Executive Order 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. 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. 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. DOT 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 DOT award.

Project Signage and Public Acknowledgements
Recipients are encouraged for construction and non-construction projects to post project signage and to include public acknowledgments in published and other collateral materials (e.g., press releases, marketing materials, website, etc.) satisfactory in form and substance to DOT, that

identifies the nature of the project and indicates that "the project is funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act." In addition, recipients employing project signage are required to use the official Investing in America emblem in accordance with the Official Investing in America Emblem Style Guide. Costs associated with signage and public acknowledgments must be reasonable and limited. Signs or public acknowledgments should not be produced, displayed, or published if doing so results in unreasonable cost, expense, or recipient burden. The Recipient is encouraged to use recycled or recovered materials when procuring signs.

3. Reporting

Progress Reporting on Grant Activities
Each applicant selected for RAISE grant funding must submit quarterly progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) to monitor project progress and ensure accountability and financial transparency in the RAISE grant program.

Performance Reporting
Each applicant selected for RAISE grant funding must collect and report to the DOT information on the project's performance based on performance indicators DOT identifies related to program goals (e.g., travel time savings, greenhouse gas emissions, passenger counts, level of service, etc.) and other information as requested by DOT. Performance indicators should include measurable goals or targets that DOT will use internally to determine whether the project meets program goals, and grant funds achieve the intended long-term outcomes of the RAISE Grant Program. To the extent possible, performance indicators used in the reporting should align with the measures included in the application and should relate to at least one of the selection criteria defined in Section E.1. Performance reporting continues for several years after project construction is completed, and DOT does not provide RAISE grant funding specifically for performance reporting. RAISE grant performance measures are posted on the RAISE website.[42]

Program Evaluation
As a condition of grant award, RAISE 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. The Department may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grant recipients must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor; (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; and (4) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor or DOT staff.

Recipients and sub-recipients 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 the effectiveness of their projects and strategies. 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

[42] https://www.transportation.gov/grants/raise/raise-performance-measures-update-2023

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" (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 311). For grant recipients, evaluation expenses are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), unless prohibited by statute or regulation, and such expenses may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and evaluation (2 CFR § 200). 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).

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, then the applicant during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the SAM that is made available in 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.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice please contact the RAISE grant program staff via e-mail at RAISEgrants@dot.gov, or call Andrea Jacobson at 202-366-9603. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993. In addition, DOT will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on the RAISE website at www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to contact DOT directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions. DOT staff may also conduct briefings on the RAISE grant selection and award process upon request.

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 and Sharing of Application Information

Following the completion of the selection process and announcement of awards, the Department intends to publish a list of all applications received along with the names of the applicant organizations and funding amounts requested. Except for the information properly marked as described in Section H.1, The Department may make application narratives publicly available or share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

Pete Buttigieg

Issued in Washington D.C. on November 30, 2023