

**2021 Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration
Notice of Funding Opportunity 693JJ321NF-AIDDP**

(Questions submitted to FHWA between July 1, 2021 and August 3, 2021)

Note: While this is a comprehensive list of questions, we recognize there could be others. If your question has not been asked and answered, please do not hesitate to submit a question to FHWA at Innovation@dot.gov.

DATES

<i>Has a date been set for the webinar mentioned in the NOFO?</i>	The AID Demonstration Information Session is planned for July 27, 2021; 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm (EST). This will be a Teams Live event and I anticipate publishing the link to Grants.gov no on July 20, 2021.
<i>What is the expected date of awards for the lucky 10 to 15 applications?</i>	The application cycle closes September 28, 2021. The FHWA anticipates the awards to be made my March 31, 2022. The FHWA will use the Contact Information provided on the SF 424 to inform parties of FHWA's decision regarding award determination.
<i>Are the States going to be able to receive a "timely" response on their submissions?</i>	The application cycle closes September 28, 2021. The FHWA anticipates the awards to be made my March 31, 2022. The FHWA will use the Contact Information provided on the SF 424 to inform parties of FHWA's decision regarding award determination.
<i>What is the application deadline?</i>	The application deadline is September 28, 2021 at 11:59 pm (Eastern Time). Grants.gov will no longer accept submissions after the deadline.

CONTACTS & CONTACT INFORMATION

<i>What is your email address?</i>	Please send information to Innovation@dot.gov .
<i>Who at my state DOT, would I approach to discuss this NOFO?</i>	The State DOT Point of contact will vary from state to state. I would suggest you contact the EDC Coordinator at the FHWA Division in your state. They should be able to identify the appropriate contact at the state DOT.
<i>At what level in State DOT (director / engineer) should the application be made?</i>	Who submits the application will vary from state to state. FHWA does not designate individuals to who submits the applications at the State DOT.

NOTICE OF INTENT

<i>What do you want included in the Notice of Intent?</i>	The Notice of Intent can be submitted to Innovation@dot.gov and should include the following: 1) Organization Name; 2) Point of Contact; 3) Innovation; and 4) Brief project description (1 paragraph).
<i>Is a statement of the notice of the intent to apply a requirement for the submission?</i>	Applicants interested in applying for the AID Demonstration are encouraged but not required to submit a non-binding Notice of Intent. Failure to submit is not grounds for disqualification. Furthermore, prospective applicants that submit a Notice of Intent and decide not to apply will not be penalized.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

<i>How do I apply for this funding opportunity?</i>	Responses to this funding opportunity must be submitted to Grants.gov .
<i>How do I navigate Grants.gov to file electronically?</i>	Applicant resources are available on the Grants.gov site.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

<i>Most states have a lengthy process to get funds into the STIP, obligated, and contracted. Is there any leniency in that 3-year performance period?</i>	The Period of Performance for AID Demonstration awards is one to three years from the effective date of the grant award. (Section B - 4 Period of Performance)
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<i>All work in an awarded project and final report must be complete in 3 years from date of award. Is this correct?</i>	The Period of Performance for AID Demonstration awards is one to three years from the effective date of the grant award. This time frame is inclusive of project implementation (up to 30 months) and report preparation (up to six months). The recipient must submit the grant closeout report to FHWA within 90 days after the end of the grant award period of performance. (Section B - 4 Period of Performance)
ELIGIBLE ENTITY	
<i>Are regional planning commissions eligible as a DOT partner?</i>	The FHWA will award AID Demonstration grants to State DOTs, FLMAs, and Tribal governments. The MPOs and local governments may apply through the State DOT as a subrecipient. (Section C – 1. Eligible Applicants)
<i>Can a university apply as a subrecipient of an award?</i>	The FHWA will award AID Demonstration grants to State DOTs, FLMAs, and Tribal governments. The MPOs and local governments may apply through the State DOT as a subrecipient. (Section C – 1. Eligible Applicants)
<i>In addition to DOT's, are Expressway Authority's qualified to pursue these grants?</i>	The FHWA will award AID Demonstration grants to State DOTs, FLMAs, and Tribal governments. (Section C – 1. Eligible Applicants)
<i>I may have misheard this- If applicants have been previously awarded funds, they cannot submit for new projects?</i>	The FHWA is seeking a diverse pool of applicants and a variety of innovations and project types to consider for award. The FHWA encourages eligible applicants that have not previously received an award to apply. The FHWA will give priority consideration to projects using innovations that have not previously been funded through the AID Demonstration Program along with those projects using innovations that have not advanced to mainstream, widespread use and practice. (Section A - 5)
<i>As a local agency potentially seeking funding, what is the process of applying as a subrecipient through the State DOT? Would the State DOT need to submit an application on our behalf, or would the City submit its own application, but funds then awarded to the DOT and passed through to the City?</i>	Subrecipients must apply through the state department of transportation (DOT). Each state DOT has a process to determine how they will select subrecipient application. Some are very structured and involve a voting process, while others are determined by submission date. Since there is early interest, I encourage you to contact your state DOT to find out what process they use to select local projects for consideration.
<i>I saw the following description in the related documents: "Entities eligible to apply include State departments of transportation (DOTs), Federal land management agencies, and tribal governments as well as metropolitan planning organizations and local governments which apply through the State DOT as subrecipients." Can private entities apply for this grant?</i>	Funding Opportunity 693JJ321NF-AIDDP states "The FHWA will award AID Demonstration grants to State DOTs, FLMAs, and Tribal governments. Consistent with other FHWA funding provided to Tribes, any Federally recognized Tribe identified on the list of "Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs" (published at 77 FR 47868) is eligible to apply for AID Demonstration grants. The MPOs and local governments may apply through the State DOT as a subrecipient." (Section C – 1. Eligible Applicants)

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<i>We are working with a University that has tested a product in a controlled space. The DOT would like to pilot the first highway application. Can AID Demonstration funds be used for this pilot?</i>	An eligible project must be a pilot deployment for the applicant of a proven innovation previously deployed by others. The innovation must be proven in a real-world highway transportation application with documented benefits.
ELIGIBLE INNOVATIONS & PROJECTS	
<i>Would Virtual Public Involvement be eligible?</i>	Virtual Public Involvement is an Every Day Counts (EDC) – 6 Initiative. The FHWA encourages the use of innovations included in the EDC initiative. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>What project activities are eligible?</i>	Eligible project activities include planning, financing, operation, structures, materials, pavements, environment, and construction or in any phase of a highway transportation between project planning and project delivery. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>Can you provide additional information on the TRL?</i>	TRL Assessment is a tool for determining the maturity of a technology. The Exploratory Advanced Research Program Technology Readiness Level Guidebook is accessible online (https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/ear/17047/index.cfm). Since we don't have a chat pod, the website to the guidebook can be found on page 7 of the NOFO.
<i>We are working with a University that has tested a product in a controlled space. The DOT would like to pilot the first highway application. Can AID Demonstration funds be used for this pilot?</i>	An eligible project must be a pilot deployment for the applicant of a proven innovation previously deployed by others. The innovation must be proven in a real-world highway transportation application with documented benefits (in a form that is publicly available or verifiable). (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>What is a "Graduated" innovation?</i>	FHWA, in partnership with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Innovation Initiative and the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association, has determined that certain transportation innovations from past cycles of the Every Day Counts program have advanced to mainstream, wide-spread use and practice, and are deemed to have “graduated” from consideration for funding under the AID Demonstration Program. The list can be found on the AID Demonstration Webpage .
<i>If we are interested in using a graduate innovation, who do we contact? Should this be done in advance?</i>	Innovations that have advanced to mainstream widespread use and practice will graduate from AID Demonstration funding eligibility. FHWA will consider use of graduated innovations on a case by case basis. The applicant should contact the Program Manager prior to submitting such an application. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>Is e-Construction still considered a "graduate" since e-Ticketing, an e-Construction technology, is an innovation under EDC-6?</i>	Projects that include innovations that have graduated into widespread practice will be considered on a case by case basis. Applicants should contact the Program Manager for a determination prior to submitting an AID Demonstration application that includes a graduated innovation. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)

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Notice of Funding Opportunity 693JJ321NF-AIDDP

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<i>Is the list of graduated innovations current per the AID Demonstration website?</i>	Yes, the list is current. The FHWA will consider applications that propose graduated innovations on a case by case basis. The NOFO states “Innovations that have advanced to mainstream widespread use and practice will graduate from AID Demonstration funding eligibility. Projects that include innovations that have graduated into widespread practice will be considered on a case by case basis.” We recognize that application preparation takes time, so the applicant should contact the Program Manager for a determination prior to submitting the application to Grants.gov. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>If a state or local has never tried or used a graduated innovation, then an application for that innovation might be considered for this round? Is this correct?</i>	Projects that include innovations that have graduated into widespread practice will be considered on a case by case basis. Applicants should contact the Program Manager for a determination prior to submitting an AID Demonstration application that includes a graduated innovation. (Section A – 5. Eligible Projects)
<i>An Institution of Higher Education is conducting research on an innovation, can the DOT partner with the IHE on this project.</i>	Eligible applicants can submit applications for projects that include an innovation with a TRL of 7 or above. (Section C – 1. Eligible Applicants)
FUNDING & MATCH	
<i>If the funding request is more than the available funding, would a portion of the requested funds be provided, or would the entire project be denied?</i>	The FHWA will evaluate applications as submitted. If during the review process it is determined the proposed amount should be adjusted, the FHWA also reserves the right to award less than the maximum amount presented in the proposal (Section B – 1. Funding and Number of Awards).
<i>What kind of State match is allowed?</i>	The FHWA will consider the following funds or contributions as a local match for the purpose of this program: •Non-Federal funds •Toll credits under Section 120(i) of Title 23. (Section C - 2. Cost Sharing or Matching) Further, State DOTs may use matching strategies available to them under the Federal-aid highway program such as “tapered match.” However, FHWA cannot consider the following funds or contributions as a match: •Funds already expended (or otherwise encumbered) •Funds for which the source is ultimately a Federal program whose legislation does not allow use on other Federal projects.
<i>I thought I heard something about "Matching Funds". Was that correct? If so, can you please elaborate?</i>	Cost sharing or matching is required, with the maximum Federal share being 80 percent of the total cost of the project. Awardees must provide at least 20 percent of the total project cost (not 20 percent of the Federal share) as a matching share. (Section C - 2. Cost Sharing or Matching)
<i>A 20% matching share is required for the grant. This can be in-kind or cash (non-federal funds). Will the mix of in-kind v. cash matching funds have an impact on the scoring?</i>	The mix of matching funds will not have an impact on the scoring.

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PROJECT READINESS	
<i>You stated applicants are required to identify where the project is in the programming document. What is the purpose of this requirement?</i>	The AID Demonstration Program accelerates the implementation and adoption of innovation into highway transportation and this requirement supports the overall program objective.
SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION	
<i>What if the demonstration is not successful and cannot be deployed as standard practice?</i>	While we want all projects to be successful, it is understood that this is not always the case. With that said, the innovation may not be right for you and telling your story may be helpful to another “like” organization that may be considering this innovation. Sometimes knowing some of the issues and challenges you faced in advance may allow another agency to plan differently and still possibly use the innovation.
EVALUATION CRITERIA	
<i>There is a considerable amount of criteria that will be considered. If projects do not meet the criterion 1-6. Will applications be considered if they meet the additional criteria listed?</i>	Applications must meet the technical merit criteria. After evaluating proposals using Criterion 1-6, the FHWA will further consider if the application meets the additional criteria.
<i>Will applications be considered if the applicants do not demonstrate how the project has incorporated climate change and environmental justice in terms of a) planning and policy or b) design components with outcomes?</i>	This is required. The evaluators will look for this as it is specifically called out in Criterion #3.
<i>If the AID Demonstration project is part of a larger project that addresses racial equity and barriers, can this be referenced.</i>	AID Demonstration projects can stand alone or be part of a larger effort. If AID Demonstration project is part of a larger project, this should be identified in the application. Applicants should identify how the larger project addresses the requirement and demonstrate the benefit of the AID project to the overall effort.
<i>What if the demonstration is not successful and cannot be deployed as standard practice?</i>	While we want all projects to be successful, it is understood that this is not always the case. With that said, the innovation may not be right for you and telling your story may be helpful to another “like” organization that may be considering this innovation. Sometimes knowing some of the issues and challenges you faced in advance may allow another agency to plan differently and still possibly use the innovation.
<i>Does the project get higher priority if it is part of EDC innovation</i>	The FHWA encourages the use of innovations included in the Every Day Counts (EDC) initiative. the NOFO states "Projects that include EDC innovations or ADCMS technologies, and first-mile/last-mile solutions related to Autonomous Vehicles shall be given additional consideration." (Section E-1)

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<i>The evaluation criteria list racial equity. If the AID Demonstration project is part of a larger project that addresses racial equity and barriers, can this be referenced.</i>	AID Demonstration projects can stand alone or be part of a larger effort. If AID Demonstration project is part of a larger project, this should be identified in the application. Applicants should identify how the larger project addresses the requirement and demonstrate the benefit of the AID Demonstration project to the overall effort. The evaluators will look to see how racial equity and barriers were addressed, as it is specifically called out in Criterion #3.
REPORT	
<i>Is there a requirement to submit a project completion report of lessons learned?</i>	The Grant Recipient must prepare and electronically submit the Final Report to the AID Demonstration Program Manager within six months after project completion. The Final Project Report follow the AID Demonstration Final Project Report Template. This document and instruction guide is available on the AID Demonstration Webpage .
<i>When is the final report due?</i>	The Grant Recipient must prepare and electronically submit the Final Report to the AID Demonstration Program Manager within six months after project completion.
<i>I have taken a look at the NOFO, there is now a reporting section. Can you please explain what this is?</i>	Yes, in Section F – Federal Award Administration Information you will see Reporting. The FHWA is required to track recipient activities and requires reports on a routine basis. Recipients must submit a semi-annual progress report which shall include an up-to-date summary of accomplishments and performance metrics by the recipient; obstacles and problems encountered, remedies or proposed solutions; noteworthy activities, events, or successes; and a Financial Statement of funds expended to date. While semi annual reports are new, the Final Report requirement remains the same. Grant Recipients must prepare and electronically submit an AID Demonstration Final Report to the Program Manager within six months after project completion. The Final Project Report should follow the AID Demonstration Final Project Report Template. This document and instruction guide is available on the AID Demonstration Webpage . (Section F – 3. Reporting)