



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Pipeline Safety One-Call Grants

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

NOFO Posted Date:	February 21, 2024
Application Due Date:	April 10, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST
Questions Due Date:	April 10, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST

Applicants must be registered at www.grants.gov to apply for the grant. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid delays in submission. Additionally, applicants must have an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and be actively registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.SAM.gov prior to submitting their application in order to receive an award under this grant.

Furthermore, applicants are encouraged to register for an account with FedConnect at www.fedconnect.net before applying. FedConnect is a messaging platform where applicants can communicate directly with PHMSA. Your organization's Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from SAM, is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how to use the portal, view the [FedConnect: Ready, Set, Go! Tutorial](#) under the *Need Help?* section on the FedConnect home page.

Assistance Listing Program Number (formerly CFDA)

20.721 "One-Call Grants"

PHMSA NOFO Number:

693JK324NF0005

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Pipeline and
Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration
(PHMSA)

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name:	United States Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
Funding Opportunity Title:	Pipeline Safety One-Call Grants–Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
Funding Opportunity Number:	693JK324NF0005
Assistance Listing Program (formerly CFDA) Number:	20.721
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MISSION

The mission of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT or Department) is to deliver the world's leading transportation system, serving the American people and economy through the safe, efficient, sustainable, and equitable movement of people and goods. DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) protects people and the environment by advancing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to our daily lives. To do this, PHMSA establishes national policy, sets and enforces standards, educates, and conducts research to prevent incidents. PHMSA also prepares the public and first responders to reduce consequences if an incident does occur. To accomplish this, PHMSA may award grants to states, tribes, territories, localities, communities, and nonprofit organizations that help make sure pipelines operate safely and shipments arrive without incident.

SECTION A – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1 Statement of Purpose

PHMSA prioritizes improving public health and safety by reducing transportation-related deaths and injuries. The specific goal of this grant program is to reduce damage to underground pipelines by excavators, which has historically been a leading cause of pipeline accidents resulting in fatality and injury.

One-Call grants provide funding for state agencies' damage prevention efforts, including training, changing state underground damage prevention laws, related compliance activities, and public education, to assist in reducing damages to underground pipelines. Data on excavation damage performance is collected annually from pipeline operators with the expectation that these efforts help reduce damage trends.

A strong transportation network is critical to the functioning and growth of the American economy. Our nation's industries depend on the transportation network to move the goods they produce and facilitate the movements of the workers who are responsible for that production. When the nation's pipelines, highways, railways, and ports function well, that infrastructure connects people to jobs and increases the efficiency of delivering goods, and thereby cuts the costs of doing business, reduces the burden of commuting, and improves overall well-being.

The Department seeks to fund projects that advance the Departmental priorities of safety, equity, climate and sustainability, and workforce development, job quality, and wealth creation as described in the [USDOT Strategic Plan, the Research, Development and Technology Strategic Plan](#), and in Executive Orders.²

² Executive Order 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (86 FR 7619). Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (86 FR 7009). 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).

A.2 Statute and Program Authority

The One-Call Grant Program was authorized under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (Public Law 105-178); 49 U.S.C. § 60114; the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety (PIPES) Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-260); and 49 U.S.C. § 6106.

A.3 Background

The Secretary is authorized under 49 U.S.C. § 6106 to award grants in support of the One-Call program. The amount of any grant will not exceed \$60,000 for a single recipient. The Secretary may support the improvement of various One-Call damage prevention activities by making a grant of financial assistance to a state. This grant opportunity is open to state agencies that are permitted to conduct pipeline safety inspections per a 49 U.S.C. § 60105 certification and/or a 49 U.S.C. § 60106 agreement with PHMSA to perform pipeline safety inspections.

SECTION B – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1 Funding

PHMSA anticipates awarding \$1,058,000, subject to the availability of funds, under the FY 2024 One-Call NOFO. The amount of each One-Call grant may not exceed \$60,000 per grant recipient. The funds may not be used for lobbying, regulatory compliance activities, the typical operations and maintenance of pipeline facilities, or in direct support of litigation.

Recipients may request 100 percent of the total amount of the award upon execution of the grant agreement.

B.2 Period of Performance

The period of performance is 12 months from the effective date of award for each grant. Applicants may only apply for funding that can be reasonably expended within this time frame and for projects that can be completed within the period of performance. For One-Call grants awarded for FY 2023, PHMSA will extend the period of performance, as allowed in 2 CFR § 200.309, to cover any grant expenditures during calendar year 2024 that may be incurred prior to the award date of the FY 2024 One-Call grant, provided the expenditures support ongoing state damage prevention enforcement program personnel costs.

B.3 Type of Award

This is a discretionary grant award. If funding is made available, PHMSA intends to award multiple grants under this NOFO. The number of awards will depend on the availability of funding, the quality of applications, the number of applications received, and the dollar amounts requested. PHMSA may, at its discretion, award a grant based on the application in its entirety, award funds for only portions of a grant application, or reject the application. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of award.

SECTION C – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

This grant opportunity is only open to state agencies that are authorized to conduct pipeline safety inspections per a 49 U.S.C. § 60105 certification and/or a 49 U.S.C. § 60106 agreement with PHMSA.

To be eligible for a One-Call grant, a state must submit an application that demonstrates it meets the minimum standards established in 49 U.S.C. § 6103 for a One-Call grant award. A state is also eligible to receive a One-Call grant award if the state maintains an alternative One-Call notification program that provides protection for public safety, excavators, and the environment that is equivalent to, or greater than, protection provided under a program that meets the minimum standards set forth in section 49 U.S.C. § 6103. PHMSA requires interested state agencies to answer the following questions and provide sufficient details to clearly demonstrate compliance with these requirements. Failure to provide the requested information may lead to rejection of the application.

- Does the state One-Call notification program allow all underground facility operators, including all government operators, to participate as appropriate? List any pipeline exemptions.
- Does the state One-Call notification program allow all excavators, including all government and contract excavators, to participate, as appropriate?
- Does the state One-Call notification program provide for flexible and effective enforcement under state law? Please provide a citation to the state statute for enforcement and identify the enforcement authority.
- Does the state One-Call notification program require that its notification system requirements are applicable, without exemptions, to municipalities, state agencies, or their contractors? Note: If you are currently classified as ineligible by PHMSA based on this requirement, you do not qualify for this grant.
- Does the state One-Call notification program consider the gravity of the offense and the risk to the public when determining appropriate enforcement?
- Does the state One-Call notification program provide no-cost underground facility locate requests, excluding design locate requests, for all individuals planning excavation activities?
- Does the state One-Call notification program provide for the voluntary participation of underground facility owners or activity of an excavator that the state determined to be a *de minimis* risk to public safety?
- Does the state, to the extent it determines it is appropriate and necessary, provide administrative or civil penalties commensurate with the seriousness of a violation of the state One-Call notification program by an excavator or facility owner?

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no requirements for cost sharing or matching.

SECTION D – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

PHMSA requires applicants for this funding opportunity to apply electronically through www.grants.gov. Applicants must download the application package associated with this funding opportunity by following the directions provided at www.grants.gov. A copy of this NOFO can also be retrieved from www.grants.gov using the following basic search criteria:

- (1) Keyword(s): One Call Program
- (2) NOFO #: 693JK324NF0005
- (3) Assistance Listing Program Number: 20.721

To request a hard copy of the application package, please contact:

Tremayne W. Terry, Agreement Officer
Acquisition Services Division
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, E22-317
Washington, D.C. 20590
E-mail: Tremayne.terry@dot.gov

If you are a hearing-impaired person, please contact the FR/TTY at 1-800-877-8339 or e-mail PHMSA-Accessibility@dot.gov.

D.2 Content and Form of the Application

Each application must consist of the following required documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Project Narrative (template provided by PHMSA)
4. Budget Narrative and Estimates (template provided by PHMSA)
5. Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances
6. Certification Regarding Lobbying

The application forms and templates are available on <http://www.grants.gov> under the “Related Documents” tab with detailed instructions on the application process. Please also reference Section E to ensure that the application addresses the criteria on which PHMSA will evaluate.

Applicants must use Standard Form (SF) 424A through www.grants.gov to submit their budget/cost proposal. The budget should reflect the applicant’s best terms from a cost and technical standpoint to perform the work. No fee or profit should be proposed.

Sharing of Application Information – The Department may 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

Standard Forms

The following forms are found in grants.gov under the FY 2024 One-Call Funding Opportunity and must be completed by the applicant.

1. Standard Form (SF)-424 – Application for Federal Assistance
2. SF-424A – Budget Information
3. Lobbying Form – Certification Regarding Lobbying
4. Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances – Civil Rights Assurances

Description of Cost Categories

Project budgets should show how different funding sources will share in each activity and present those data in dollars and percentages. The budget should identify other federal funds, if any, that the applicant intends to use. Funding sources should be grouped into three categories: non-federal, PHMSA-specific, and other federal with specific amounts from each funding source. The amounts requested for each budget category must be justified in a budget section under each project in applicant responses to this announcement. Budget Narratives must address the following items:

- If your budget includes **personnel costs**, please include a complete breakdown, including *personnel title/position, hourly rate, and the number of hours expected to be spent by each person* on the proposed project.
- If your proposal includes **travel costs**, please include adequate details on how the cost has been calculated including travel fare, etc.
- If your proposal includes **equipment costs**, please include adequate details on how the cost has been calculated, including information on each specific equipment piece(s) required and their individual costs.

Applications that contain a request for indirect costs should include a budget narrative detailing the proposal for indirect costs, where allowable. The budget narrative should include a signed copy of the applicant’s approved negotiated rate agreement that is valid as of the date of the application, if this is not already on file with PHMSA State Programs division. If the applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, the applicant may be eligible for the 10-percent *de minimis* rate provided by 2 CFR § 200.414.

***Please note that in order to comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, and DOT’s Guide to Financial Assistance, PHMSA’s Agreement Officers and Grant Specialists may request additional information pertaining to your application during the application review/evaluation process.**

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

Each applicant is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid UEI number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application under consideration by PHMSA. PHMSA may not make a grant award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements by the time that PHMSA is ready to make a grant award, PHMSA may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. We recommend that applicants review the SAM database to ensure that their UEI number is updated and active at www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. PHMSA will review an applicant's registration status to ensure that the applicant is current on all federal taxes and not on the list of parties excluded from federal awards.

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Complete applications must be received electronically through www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. EST on April 10, 2024. **DO NOT PHYSICALLY MAIL ANY APPLICATIONS.** Applications received after this deadline may not be considered. PHMSA will only accept one application from each applicant.

Questions Due Date & Time: April 10, 2024 by 11:59 p.m. EST. **NOTE: All questions can be submitted via the Message Center in FedConnect or send questions to the Technical Point of Contact in Section G of this NOFO. PHMSA is not responsible for answering questions that are received after the Questions Due Date & Time.**

D.5 Funding Restrictions

- Advance written approval: Changes in project scope, budget, objectives, project period, or key personnel will require advance written approval by the PHMSA Grant Officer.
- Educational items: Federal regulation 2 CFR § 200.421 prohibits the use of grant funding for promotional materials; however, funding may be provided for items that are educational in nature. When requesting funds for educational items, applicants should provide a general description of the items that will be purchased and a plan for the distribution of those items.
- Federal regulation 2 CFR § 200.432 addresses the use of grant funding for meetings and conferences, which is permissible if the primary purpose of the function is the dissemination of technical information beyond the non-federal entity, and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the federal award. The cost of meals, transportation, facility rental, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences may be paid using grant funds. However, funding may not be used to cover costs associated with entertainment, such as shows or sporting events, or the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
- Funds provided under grant awards may not be used for lobbying, advocacy, or in direct support of litigation.

- Construction is not an allowable activity under this announcement.
- Funds should not be used to cover costs associated with the normal operations of the One-Call center, which includes database maintenance and replacement of outdated systems.
- All PHMSA awards are subject to the terms and conditions in the grant agreement and the cost principles in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles.
- Reimbursement of federal pre-award costs is not allowed.
- Funds may not be used for expenses claimed and or reimbursed by another federal assistance program.

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must be registered with <http://www.grants.gov> to apply. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid delays with submission. Failure to comply with the prescribed application requirements as described in this section will result in an application not being reviewed.

Accessing Grant Systems

Grants.gov:

For new users, go to www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html, or go to the main page at <http://www.grants.gov/w> and select “Register.” NOTE: New user registrations for www.grants.gov can take up to two weeks to complete. For additional questions on how to register, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, contact support at 800-518-4726 or e-mail support@grants.gov.

FedConnect:

Applicants are encouraged to register for an account with FedConnect at www.fedconnect.net before applying. Your organization’s Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from SAM, is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how it works, view the Tutorial on the FedConnect home page. For other technical issues or questions, either e-mail fcsupport@unisonglobal.com or call 1-800-899-6665, option 2. The FedConnect Support Center is staffed Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. EST, except federal holidays.

SECTION E – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

DOT is prioritizing projects that help to address transportation insecurity, which is the inability for people to get to where they need to go to meet the needs of their daily life regularly, reliably, and safely due to either the high cost of transportation, lack of access, or lack of safe transportation options. When identifying projects applicants should consider how the project will increase safety.

PHMSA will evaluate applications through administrative, technical, and programmatic reviews based on the evaluation criteria below.

PHMSA developed evaluation criteria to rate and select competing applications. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of award. PHMSA may, at its discretion, award a grant based on an application in its entirety, award only portions of a grant based on its application, or not award a grant at all.

Merit Criteria:

Criterion 1. Relevance to Established Funding Priorities

Within the application, demonstrate the extent to which the project will enhance public safety, protect the environment, minimize risks to excavators, and prevent disruption of vital public services. When evaluating public service disruption prevention, PHMSA will specifically look for projects that reduce the incidence of excavation damage to underground facilities through the voluntary adoption and efficient implementation of One-Call notification programs.

Funding priorities are established and communicated to all potential grant recipients by distribution of the One-Call Grant Application Guidelines, which are updated annually.

Criterion 2. Costs and Project Scope

Within the application, demonstrate the extent to which the project will:

This criterion will be used to evaluate the prospective work under each element in the application and to assess whether the proposed projects will:

- Produce tangible results within the project period.
- Establish clear goals, objectives, milestones, and estimates of project costs.
- Use funds efficiently and effectively.

Selection Considerations:

1. Safety – PHMSA may consider how the project will provide substantial safety benefits compared to existing conditions, including the project’s ability to foster a safe pipeline transportation system for the movement of energy, consistent with the Department’s strategic goal to reduce transportation related fatalities and serious injuries across the pipeline transportation system.
2. Equity – PHMSA may consider the project’s ability to encourage equity by investing in projects that proactively mitigate safety risks in disadvantaged communities. Potential applicants may find it useful to utilize [USDOT Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#) to determine disadvantage community status.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

Administrative Review: PHMSA will conduct an administrative review to ensure the application meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section C – Eligibility Information. Each application will be reviewed for completeness to ensure it includes all the required elements to qualify for the grant. If the application does not meet the required elements, then the application is likely to be rejected.

Technical Review: PHMSA will conduct a technical review of the application to assess how the proposed work is to be performed and whether the application is responsive to the applicable program requirements (i.e., performance measurement, methodology, and technical merit). PHMSA may use outside stakeholders as part of the technical review panel. Outside stakeholder members may be comprised of damage prevention groups with expertise in pipeline safety and environmental protection.

Programmatic Review: PHMSA will conduct a programmatic review to assess programmatic factors. Programmatic factors are relevant and essential to the process of selecting applications that best achieve the program objectives, in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines. Programmatic factors may include history of performance, Administration priorities, program priorities, and other modal needs.

Based on the results from each review, each application will receive an overall rating either as:

Highly Recommended. The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are very well understood, and the approach will likely result in a very high-quality performance. The application clearly addresses and exceeds requirements with no weaknesses. The application contains outstanding features that meet or exceed on multiple dimensions the expectations of the government. The application scope aligns very well with DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is very low.

Recommended. The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are understood, and the approach will likely result in satisfactory performance. The application addresses and meets requirements with some minor but correctable weaknesses. The application demonstrates requisite experience, qualifications, and performance capabilities. The application scope aligns with DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is low.

Acceptable. The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are mostly understood, and the approach will likely result in satisfactory performance for part of the requirements. The application addresses some of the requirements with some weaknesses. The application demonstrates some experience, qualifications, and/or performance capabilities. The application partially aligns with DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is moderate.

Not Recommended. The application does not meet the NOFO requirements. The application fails to address many requirements. The applicant may be ineligible to apply for the grant. The application could not satisfy critical requirements without a major revision and/or a

rewrite of the application or a major redirection effort. The application scope does not align with DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is high.

Selection Process

PHMSA will recommend applications for awards based on the final overall rating as described above. Final award recommendations will be made by PHMSA's Associate Administrator for the Office of Pipeline Safety after taking into consideration recommendations made during the administrative, technical, and programmatic reviews and how well the applications address PHMSA's safety priorities. The PHMSA Administrator will make final award selection decisions.

E.3. Integrity and Performance Review

Prior to making a federal award with a total amount of federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, PHMSA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. PHMSA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in § 200.206.

E.4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Applicants chosen for funding will receive electronic notification of the federal award. Upon notification, the applicant's authorized official must sign and return the award within the timeframe prescribed by PHMSA. PHMSA plans to make awards no later than September 30, 2024, with a proposed period of performance start date on the award agreement.

SECTION F – FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

PHMSA's grant awarding official will award grants to responsible and eligible applicants who submit the most qualified applications under the procedures set forth in this NOFO. All funds provided by PHMSA must be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, and the Department's financial assistance regulations.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not selected for funding.

The grant award agreement, signed by both the PHMSA Agreement Officer and the recipient's Authorized Representative, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic means to the Authorized Representative. The grant award agreement will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

1. The legal name and address of the recipient

2. Title of project
3. Name(s) of key personnel chosen to direct and control approved activities
4. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN) assigned by PHMSA
5. Period of Performance
6. Total amount of financial assistance approved for the project
7. Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued
8. Assistance Listing Program (formerly CFDA) number and name
9. Applicable award terms and conditions
10. Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award and other information or provisions deemed necessary by PHMSA

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and award under this program. See the “Terms and Conditions” of this NOFO for a full list of statutes and regulations that are applicable.

As a condition of a grant award, grant recipients will 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 Part 21), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and 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’ Offices of Civil Rights will work with awarded grant recipients to ensure full compliance with federal civil rights requirements. See “Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances” for the form by the same name that must be completed and returned by the grant applicant.

F.3 Reporting Requirements

Recipients must submit a final performance report no later than 90 days after the end of the grant period of performance. Instructions on how to complete the report will be sent separately to each grant recipient.

Final Reports: Grant recipients must submit a Final Progress Report and Final Financial Status Report (Standard Form 425) no later than 90 days after the end of the grant period of performance.

The Final Progress Report must include:

1. A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.
2. A description of how the funds were used to improve the state damage prevention program.

3. The reasons for delays or missed milestones if established objectives were not met, if applicable.
4. Documentation of actual expenses and detailed cost breakdown to support SF-425 submission.

All applications and reports will be made available to the public upon request.

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

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

For grant recipients receiving an award, evaluation costs are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), unless prohibited by statute or regulation, and such costs may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and evaluation. (2 CFR Part 200). This paragraph does not authorize pre-award costs, and grant recipients must separately obtain PHMSA’s written approval to fund pre-award costs consistent with 2 CFR § 200.458.

SECTION G – FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

*All questions related to the content of this funding opportunity can be submitted via the Message Center in FedConnect.

For technical issues or questions related to FedConnect, e-mail fcsupport@unisonglobal.com, submit questions through the portal on the website, or call 1-800-899-6665, option 2.

Technical Primary Point of Contact

Rex Evans
DOT/PHMSA
Phone: 217-801-8014
e-mail: Rex.evans@dot.gov

Grant Agreement Officer

Tremayne W. Terry
DOT/PHMSA
Phone: 202-503-5041
e-mail: Tremayne.terry@dot.gov

For technical issues or questions related to www.grants.gov, please e-mail support@grants.gov.

SECTION H – OTHER INFORMATION

Given the complexity of some aspects of the application process, technical assistance is available to inexperienced or under-resourced applicants to help with the application process. Please contact the technical primary point of contact listed in Section G for technical assistance.

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.