

Would a collision avoidance system be an eligible project?

Dave Harris: I will probably be the standard bureaucrat here, but not knowing the details of the collision avoidance system, I would say it could definitely be an eligible part. If you look at the technologies that are identified in the legislation, I think a collision avoidance system could be part of an overall project, yes.

What does the RFP mean by, "Examples include... technologies that support workforce development"? Would seminars, workshops, training on technologies being deployed be appropriate under this RFP? See Page 12 of the RFP, for example.

Harris: As part of an overall project, again, I kind of caveat most of these answers in that Congress is specifically looking for the rapid deployment of advanced technologies. That is the thrust of this discretionary grant program. But subsets that could include training or other activities that bring—for example as mentioned in the NOFO—traditionally disadvantaged populations back into the workforce or elevate people's positions that they are qualified for, sure. That could be an eligible portion.

Can private agencies be engaged through existing public-private partnerships?

Jeffrey Martin: I think the short answer here is yes. It's part of the technical application. We would want to see a detailed explanation of the organizational structure associated with that project and public partnership. That is kind of the management framework behind that entity overseeing the project.

Harris: I think it's also good to point out here that while there may be existing public-private partnerships, any application that is selected for award under this would still need to follow all of the applicable Title 23 rules and regulations. For example, regarding procurement of services or technical support. That is something to keep in mind.

Martin: I would also just add here that it is the recipient's responsibility to officially designate other entities as sub-recipients or contractors under the resulting agreement, so that would be something that we would look for – that designation officially in the application or in post-selection discussion.

What type of private partnerships are intended, and how can that participation be used for the match requirement?

Harris: As far as what types of public-private partnerships are intended, I think that is specifically addressed in an earlier slide. I will not go back to that one, but again, it is something that the Department definitely encourages. I would harken you back to that slide.

For the match requirement, there are a variety of mechanisms open. I will start on it and Jeff—if he has anything to add—can add upon it. I will say from the past two years, we have

seen actual, getting down to money, we have seen cash matches that have been provided by the private sector. We have seen in-kind matches, which could be things like donations – for example, donations of time; donations of software; donations of hardware. It really runs the gamut.

Martin: I would just further add that any nonfederal cost share from an in-kind contribution needs to be verified and also valued – there needs to be evaluation done of the proposed value of that share. If it's going to be an equipment in-kind or an equipment contribution, we have to have some sort of financial valuation of the fair market value for that cost share. In event that a third party is providing in-kind contributions or cost share, we would likely need to see itemized cost information to kind of support that value of the cost share.

The table on Page 17 of the NOFO indicates a 30-page limit for Volume I (resumes not counted). Page 22 seems to indicate 30 pages just for Section II, Project Narrative; no page limit for Section III, Management Structure; and five additional pages for Section IV, Staffing Description; as well as 30 more pages for exhibits and attachments. Which is correct, Page 17 or Page 22?

Martin: The total page limit for Volume I, Technical Application, is 30 pages, and the staffing description shall not exceed five pages. If you had five pages for your staffing description, then the rest of your technical application could not exceed 25 pages, so 30 pages in total.

Harris: The wording, we agree – we will improve upon that next year. But essentially, yes, it's a 30 page limit for the technical application, as well as the 30 pages for exhibits and attachments.

Are there any restrictions on how much one city/entity/applicant can be awarded in successive years?

Harris: Not in successive year, no. The only limitation that is in law is the \$12 million to a single recipient in a single fiscal year.

Are the NOFOs pretty much consistent in application requirements from year to year?

Harris: I would say pretty much. As I mentioned, as I went over the Program Goals and objectives, those are in law so they are not privy to change. Things that have been revised from year to year are the Focus Areas, but between FY17 and FY18, there were no changes to the Focus Areas. Also, I would direct you to Page 5 where we try to make it easy on the reader. We have a listing of substantive changes from the FY17 NOFO. Those are all identified in that section.

Do allowable grant costs include Operations & Maintenance (O&M)?

Harris: O&M can definitely be an eligible portion of a project. Not to sound like a broken wheel, but Congress's intent is the rapid deployment of an advanced technology, so that is first and foremost the purpose, but O&M is considered to be part of that. As a matter of fact, Congress even makes a provision in there that up to 5% of grant funds can be spent on planning and reporting so there is flexibility there.

Can future O&M costs be counted within the match, and can existing roadside technology built within 2018 be counted as an in-kind match?

Harris: The simple way I will answer this is if a project is selected for award, no pre-award costs are eligible for reimbursement. By pre-award, we consider an award to be when the oversight agreement is executed, so it's not the press release or the announcement by the Secretary of DOT. It's down the road a bit when we execute that agreement between Federal Highway and the appropriate partners. Future O&M, I would say if it's within the period of performance of the application, then certainly.

Would a broad proposal with many smaller projects be more desirable, or would one large, refined, and focused project be more desirable?

Harris: I think we've gotten this question every year, and I would direct you back to the FY16 and FY17 projects that have been selected for award. I think they have really run the gamut of multiple smaller projects, as well as single large-scale projects. The answer is yes.

Regarding the maximum federal share not to exceed 50% of the "project cost," could these total costs include research, project development, construction costs, operational costs (including testing), etc.?

Harris: I would say anything that is reasonably attributed to a project would count as part of that 50%.

The NOFO states that the file name should be "Applicant_organization-2017-ATCMTD-fileID (e.g., Vol-1, Vol-2)." Shouldn't it be "2018"?

Harris: Yes, it should be 2018. That will be one of the revisions to the NOFO.

Form 424A, Section B - does this include all years of O&M spending for the life of the technology?

Martin: It just includes the life of the proposed project for the period of performance of the agreement. If there is O&M stretching beyond the actual performance of the agreement, then no, it would just include the active period of performance of the agreement.

Page 22 of the NOFO indicates that the 30 page limit exclude exhibits and attachments. Can this be confirmed?

Harris: Yes. There is one 30 page limit for the Project Narrative—the Vol. 1 portion—and there is another 30 page limitation for exhibits and attachments.

Do the standard forms count against the 30 page limit?

Martin: The standard forms are part of the Vol. 2 budget application, which has no limit.

With respect to matching funds, can a local certified acceptance organization use another non-FA project in the TIP as an in-kind match?

Harris: Use another non-federal aid project as a match...yes that would be, for example, if it's a project funded by state or local funds, sure, and is specifically related to the project and the application, yes.

Martin: I would just add that those costs couldn't be incurred before the execution of the agreement, so it couldn't be an ongoing project for which you wanted to count cost share for costs previously incurred before the execution of the Federal Highway ATCMTD agreement.

Harris: Pre-ord costs, the prohibition on that definitely applies.

Is this webinar being recording and will a link to it be provided?

Answer: Yes, the webinar is being recorded. We here at the Volpe center be sending out post-webinar content to you all including a feedback form which will be highlighted later. With that there will be information about the archived webinar. In our post-webinar wrap up we will post the information on where you can find that.

Can projects already underway be utilized for matched funding? Can you please provide a bit more detail about allowable grant costs for example hardware, software, personnel training, etc...

Harris: The short answer is no, projects that are currently underway cannot be used as part of the match. However, and we have seen this, that applicants in the past have had projects that are underway and if they draw a clear distinction in the application, for example, phase a project that they identify in the application that phase one is currently under construction, it is related to the overall application but it does not count towards the match and then any subsequent phases, phase two, is part of the application and it's a continuation of that project, that could be counted.

Martin: Just to add, all those other direct costs would be eligible that were described if they were part of the scope of the project, so those don't raise any flags for us.

If my jurisdiction is considering partnering with a private company should I list that company directly in the proposal or would that company need to undergo competitive bidding? What if there was a sole-source justification?

Martin: An agency in its application may identify a consulting firm to work as a private sector partner under the grant application, however the agency is still required to follow its own procurement procedures and comply with the procurement standards set forth in 2-CFR-200, 317 thru 326, so they would have to justify any sole-source designation to any contractor that they wanted to incorporate into the application and that would have to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

If a traffic signal monitoring and management system that would be used to coordinate a signal system would be eligible?

Harris: Yes, that could be an eligible project.

Where could one find information about past awarded projects to get a feel for what the committee might be considering?

Harris: I believe on the links that we provided on one of the first slides, I think that will direct you there but if not we can make that available. There is a site that lists the FY16 and FY17 awards on the Federal Highway website.

Martin: We can email it to them as well, that's something we can do on our end at Volpe.

Harris: Because we have all the registrants. Okay, we will do it that way.

If an entity has more than one project, is there a concern or need to prioritize the projects?

Harris: This deals with project phasing. If there are multiple phases of a project, it is acceptable to have multiple phases within an application. There is not a need to prioritize, however, there is some wisdom in doing that given that, for example, in past awards the award amount sometimes has not be for the entire requested amount, it's less than the request amount due to budget constraints, so at that point as we enter into working on the

cooperative agreement we also work on an updated scope of work where the project is pared back to reflect the federal and non-federal funding.

Must any deployment done through this grant remain permanently in place or can it be removed or altered?

Harris: If there are thoughts of removing or altering the technology deployment that that should specifically be identified in the application itself.

Would a city-wide fiber network installation to support current and future ITS technologies be an eligible project?

Harris: It could be an eligible component of a project. Again, we are looking at advanced technologies. The mere instillation of fiber and this is speaking to the audience, I would say keep in mind this is a highly competitive grant program. To give you a scope, roughly about 10% of the projects are selected for an award, so you are going to want to be as competitive as possible. We have seen instillation of fiber network be part of the project but not the major part of a project.

Should the staffing description and organizational chart discuss and identify personnel beyond the five who are identified as key?

Harris: It certainly can. The five was specially identified so that Federal Highway could make a determination of the eligibility and expertise of those five key individuals. Certainly welcome to describe other individuals.

If not currently registered, is there enough time to become registered before the June 18th deadline?

Martin: Yes, I would recommend that that applicant try to register as soon as possible. That registration process involves grant.gov and it is not something that we can influence or facilitate. As we indicated earlier it can take up to 2-4 weeks so we would strongly encourage anyone who is not registered to do so immediately.

Can private companies partner with the university and state or local government as an applicant?

Harris: Short answer is yes.

Would a state DOT and university—university being the sub-contract---would that partnership be valued in the review process?

Harris: As identified again, Federal Highway does give particular emphasis to multi-jurisdictional applications. So, yes.

Regarding the organizational information on slide 41, are there standard forms or statements available for use?

Martin: The short answer, no. We just identified these bullets and points as items that the applicants should address in their budget application. A brief narrative describing each one of these bullets would suffice or a statement acknowledging the requirements of any one of these bullets as well.

Have previous awards been made to public transit agencies?

Harris: Yes, there have been several and again when the links are forwarded to the FY16 and FY17 awards summaries, you can specifically go there and read more details on it.

Do you need resumes for consultants involved in the project?

Harris: The specific resumes that the applicant wants to include are up to the applicant. We define it as resumes of key personnel so that would be how the applicant defines key personnel.

How should we name partners and are formal partner letters of support required or desired?

Martin: Partners can either be defined as cost-sharing partners who are providing in-kind contributions or financial assistance to the project. A recipient can also define project partners as being either sub-recipients or contractors. That is a determination that the recipient would need to make in conjunction with 2-CFR-200, 330---sub-recipient and contractor determinations. It's really incumbent upon the applicant to define the role of each entity included as part of the organizational framework to deliver the project.

Can a private industry project partner be a participant in part of the matching funds?

Harris: Yes, just identify it in the application.

Does the proposed project have to be in the TIP?

Harris: Actually, no, there was not that provision in the law but again on the cover page, that is one of the questions to be answered.

Are you looking more for proven or un-proven technologies to be deployed?

Harris: I would say based on previous awards, it can be both.

Within how many years of the grant being awarded would the proposed system have to be operational?

Harris: I'd say given the intent, the guidance we usually give is somewhere in the 2-4 year timeframe. That is not a hard and fast. Not saying after 4 years the money stops or anything. That's just the timeline we give folks.

Do you need audit information from all partners involved in the application?

Martin: We need the single audit information for the recipient. Depending on the application, organizational framework, there could be an instance where we request additional single audit information or we could obtain that ourselves too. I think for the purposes of the response of this application, the applicant should provide the single audit information.

Can other federal funding be used as match?

Harris: Short answer is no. A little more detail would be--that would specifically need to be in the authorizing legislation and it was not for ATCMTD.

Can a future phase of a current non-federally funded project be included as part of the match?

Harris: It can't be an on-going project. It's subject to the pre-award costs so that portion of the project would have to be started after the project is selected and the agreement is signed.

Martin: It would have to be part of the scope of the application as well.

If the project involves in-pavement sensors, would the maintenance of the pavement following installation be considered eligible as match?

Harris: Yes, certainly.

If we were considering partnering with a private company, should we list that company in the proposal?

Martin: Yes.

Is there any feedback provided to applicants who have not been selected?

Harris: Yes, the Federal Highway as a routine practice we offer what we call “debriefs” for non-selected applicants. An applicant can contact us and we essentially go over the technical evaluation panels finding, the strengths and weaknesses associated with the application.

Are applications actually scored?

Harris: There is no scoring, it is purely the ranking that I referred to earlier, which is highly recommend, recommend and not recommended. I would add that the link www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact if you go there and scroll down that is where the ATCMTD program information is available, specifically there’s a link for the FY16 program which includes the selected projects. Same for FY17.