



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**
Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Community Safety Grants

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021

NOFO Posted Date: January 13, 2021
Applications Due Date: March 15, 2021, 11:59 pm ET
Questions Due Date: February 23, 2021, 11:59 pm ET

Applicant must be registered at www.grants.gov to apply online. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid delays in submission. Additionally, applicants must maintain an active registration in the System for Award Management at www.SAM.gov.

Furthermore, applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. 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 (formerly CFDA)

20.703 "Interagency Hazardous Materials Public Sector Training and Planning Grants"

**PHMSA Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
693JK321NF0009**

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

Funding Opportunity Title: “Community Safety Grants – FY 2021”

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: **693JK321NF0009**

CFDA Number: 20.703

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MISSION

The mission of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT or Department) is to ensure our Nation has the safest, most efficient and modern transportation system in the world. 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, the agency establishes national policy, sets and enforces standards, educates, and conducts research to prevent incidents. We also prepare the public and first responders to reduce consequences if an incident does occur. To accomplish this, PHMSA awards grants to States, tribes, territories, localities, communities, and nonprofits that help make sure pipelines operate safely and shipments arrive without incident.

SECTION A - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1 Statement of Purpose

This funding opportunity is associated with Assistance Listing 20.703. The purpose of this grant is to enhance communities' capability to respond to hazardous materials incidents and to assist in ensuring that State and local enforcement personnel are adequately trained in the Hazardous Materials Regulations.

Funding under this award is critical to ensuring communities are prepared for and responding to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials or training State and local personnel responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials. PHMSA's goal is to ensure that responders or enforcement personnel who receive training under the grant will have the ability to identify and protect nearby persons, property, and the environment from the effects of accidents or incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials.

PHMSA requires that applicants identify specific training projects based on jurisdictional needs and maintain a record of the following: 1) number trained, 2) course type, 3) cost of training, 4) location of training, and 5) a detailed accounting and description of each grant expenditure, including the amount of, and purpose for, each expenditure. PHMSA measures performance based on the projects included in the approved grant application and whether those projects fulfilled the training needs outlined in the statement of need.

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

Rural transportation networks play a vital role in supporting our national economic vitality. Addressing the deteriorating conditions and disproportionately high fatality rates on our rural

transportation infrastructure is of critical interest to the Department, as rural transportation networks face unique challenges in safety, infrastructure condition, and passenger and freight usage. Consistent with the R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative, the Department request applicants to consider how the project will address the challenges faced by rural areas in advancing pipeline and hazardous materials (hazmat) transportation safety.

A.2 Statute and Program Authority

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, (P.L. 114-94, codified at 49 U.S.C. § 5107(i)) authorizes PHMSA's Community Safety grant program. PHMSA, through this competitive grant opportunity, is requesting applications from nonprofit organizations to (1) conduct national outreach and training programs to assist communities in preparing for and responding to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids by rail; and (2) to train State and local personnel responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids.

A.3 Background

The Community Safety Grant (CSG) program is authorized by the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. § 5107(i)). CSG is a competitive hazardous materials transportation training grant program for nonprofit organizations to (1) conduct national outreach and training programs to assist communities in preparing for and responding to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids by rail; and, (2) train State and local personnel responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids.

A.4 Funding Priority

For FY 2021, PHMSA has identified a need to train State and local personnel responsible for fire and life safety code enforcement. Specifically, PHMSA is aware that inspectors or code enforcement officers encounter hazmat situations where it is vital to know when to call for assistance and what protocols should be used. Training these individual is important so that they can effectively recognize and analyze hazardous materials risk, classify the materials, and apply the codes, standards, and regulations to prevent incidents and mitigate threats to life and property.

SECTION B - FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1 Funding

The funds for this notice are subject to the availability of appropriations. PHMSA anticipates \$1,250,000 will be available for the CSG program.

The expected amounts of individual CSG awards for organizations range from \$250,000 to \$1,250,000. PHMSA anticipates awarding between one and four grants.

B.2 Period of Performance

The period of performance is a minimum of 12 months from the effective date of award for each grant. Applicants must 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. An applicant may request a period of performance up to 24 months.

B.3 Type of Award

Discretionary grant award.

B.4 Previous Awards

Applicants who received a previous CSG award may also apply for a FY 2021 CSG award.

SECTION C - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**C.1 Eligible Applicants**

The FY 2021 CSG program is open to nonprofit organizations with the ability to train State and local personnel responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials; or that have the ability to conduct national outreach and training programs to assist communities in preparing for and responding to accidents and incidents involving the transportation of hazardous materials.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no cost-sharing or matching requirements.

SECTION D - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**D.1 Address to Request Application Package**

PHMSA requires applicants for this funding opportunity to apply electronically through Grants.gov. Applicants must download the application package associated with this funding opportunity by following the directions provided at Grants.gov. To request a hard copy of the application package, please contact:

Carla Sheppard
Office of Hazardous Materials Safety
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, E23-446
Washington, DC 20590
Email: HMIT.grants@dot.gov
Phone: (202) -366-1109

FAX: (202) 366-3753

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

Applications will only be accepted via Grants.gov. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

The application package contains the required electronic forms and the ability to upload attachments for the budget, budget justification, project narrative, assurances, and certifications. The applicant must submit the information outlined in the Application Guide in addition to the program-specific information below.

To begin the process, applicants must be registered with www.Grants.gov to submit an application. 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 may result in an application not being reviewed.

Accessing Grants.gov:

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

Carla Sheppard may also be able to help answer questions on applying for Grants.gov usernames/passwords as they specifically relate to the CSG program. Please contact Carla Sheppard by phone at 202-366-2738 or by email at Carla.Sheppard@dot.gov.

Accessing FedConnect:

Applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. 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. For other technical issues or questions, either email fcsupport@unisonglobal.com or call us at 1-800-899-6665 option 2. The FedConnect Support Center is staffed Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., ET, except Federal holidays.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department encourages applicants to describe how activities proposed in their application would address the unique challenges facing rural transportation networks, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

Applications should be clear, concise, and free of mathematical errors in the line-item budget and budget narrative. Program narratives should have the sections clearly identified and follow the structure requested in this NOFO.

Applications for FY 2021 Community Safety Grant funding should be submitted in electronic format in Grants.gov according to the following outline. There are two overall sections: (1) standard forms that the applicant will upload and complete from Grants.gov under the FY 2021 Community Safety Grant funding opportunity; and (2) attachments the applicant will need to create and upload.

1. Standard Forms

These forms are found in Grants.gov under the FY 2021 Community Safety Grant Funding Opportunity and must be completed by the applicant.

- a) Standard Form (SF)-424 - Application for Federal assistance
- b) SF-424A - Budget Information
- c) ED-80-0013 - Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, Drug- Free Workplace etc.
- d) Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances - Civil Rights Assurances

2. Applicant Attachments to be submitted

These forms must be created by the applicant and uploaded to Grants.gov under the FY 2021 CSG Funding Opportunity.

- a) Project Narrative Attachment
- b) Budget Narrative Attachment
- c) Indirect Cost Agreement; and/or Statement claiming 10 percent de minimis (if applicable)
- d) Letters of Support (if applicable)
- e) Additional Optional Attachments (if applicable)

3. Project Narrative Required Sections

The following sections are required. To facilitate the application review and award process, these sections should be submitted in sequential order and labeled as stated below. Applicants should clearly identify the sections in the project narrative.

- a) Organization Information and Capacity. Briefly provide information about your nonprofit organization. This should include: (1) your organization's mission; (2) a brief overview of the structure of your organization, programs, leadership, and special expertise; and (3) your organization's experience and capacity to manage Federal grant programs.
- b) Contact Information. Identify the designated project director, including the name, position, address, email address, and telephone number of the individual(s) who will be responsible for coordinating the funded activities. Additionally, identify authorized individuals who should receive computer system access to accept any awarded grant document, as well as submission of required Federal financial reports.

4. Statement of Need

- a) Describe the identified need for a specific form of community awareness programs that will assist communities in preparation and response to incidents involving the transport of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids by rail; or
- b) Describe the identified need for training of State and local personnel that are responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials (including code enforcement). The level of need may be described based upon macro-level national data, or specific examples of locations with deficiencies in hazmat enforcement training, or a combination of both.
- c) Briefly explain how the proposed activities will help to address the identified need.

5. Proposed activities/outputs and timeline

Describe the proposed activities that will take place under the proposed grant and provide quantifiable and measurable outputs planned for the grant's period of performance.

Outputs are quantitative data that describe the proposed activities. The delivery of outputs should include:

- a) The number and type of training courses delivered;
- b) The numbers of projected students trained for each course and the total projected to be trained;
- c) The location of the activities if known, (if unknown explain the methodology for selecting locations);
- d) The timeframe when the activity will take place. The timeline should include benchmarks and milestones that will assist with monitoring of the project's success; and
- e) Any curriculum or instructor development activities should be described and included in the timeline of events.
- f) Additionally, broader outcomes or goals may be provided to describe the intended impact of the outputs. This may be either quantitative or qualitative, and should reflect the projected impact of the grant activity outputs.

6. Curriculum

Provide any training curriculum that will be used for training or a detailed description of the curriculum. If you are a grantee for the prior grant cycle and have submitted a curriculum the prior year and no changes have been made to the curriculum, you must indicate this in this section. If curriculum will be developed during the grant's period of performance, provide a detailed description of the curriculum that will be developed.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of activities

Provide an explanation of monitoring events to be undertaken to ensure grant program success. These may include, but are not limited to, site visits, random examinations, inspections, and audits of training to maximize the cost effectiveness and impact of the program.

8. Qualified Opportunity Zones

Provide a statement on whether any proposed training areas are located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone designated pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 1400Z-1.

9. Budget Narrative Required Sections

A budget narrative is a narrative explanation of each budget component, which supports the costs of the proposed work. The budget narrative should focus on how each budget item is required to achieve the proposed project goals and objectives. It should also justify how budget costs were calculated. The budget narrative should be clear, specific, detailed, mathematically correct, and correspond to the SF-424A line-item categories.

Provide a budget narrative justification by Object Class (listed below) that corresponds to the amount listed on the SF-424A and why the amount is needed to implement the project as proposed in the project narrative. The budget narrative must correspond to the costs requested in the SF- 424A line item budget, and vice versa.

A well-developed budget narrative is an effective monitoring tool for both the awarding agency, and grant recipient. However, a budget narrative that does not represent a project's needs makes it difficult to recommend for full funding and to assess financial performance over the life of the project. A description of the object class category is provided below:

- a) **Personnel** costs are the employee salaries working directly on the grant project. Include the number, type of personnel, the percentage of time dedicated to the project, hourly wage (or salary) and total cost to the grant.
 - a. At least 75 percent of grant funding must be used for CSG programmatic activities, no more than 25 percent of Federal funding may be used for maintenance and administration costs (M&A). Applicants should breakout the organization's staff who directly carry out training activities to ensure the 25 percent administrative cap does not include these costs. This does not include indirect costs.
 - b. This category is limited to only persons employed by your organization. Those not employed by your organization shall be classified as subrecipients or contractors and should be listed under the "Contractual" or "Other" object class.
 - c. The costs should be consistent with that paid for similar types of work within the organization.
- b) **Fringe Benefit** costs are the allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe costs are benefits paid to employees, including the cost of employer's share of FICA, health insurance, workers' compensation, and leave. Include how the fringe benefit amount is calculated (i.e., actual fringe benefits estimate, approved rate, etc.). Include a description of specific benefits charged to a project and the benefit percentage. Additional considerations:

- a. The personnel salaries should have corresponding fringe and vice-versa. PHMSA cannot pay fringe benefits for a position that is not listed in the Personnel section.
 - b. Explain what is included in the benefit package and at what percentage.
 - c. Fringe benefits are only for the percentage of time devoted to the grant project.
 - d. The applicant should not combine the fringe benefit costs with direct salaries and wages in the personnel category.
- c) **Travel** costs are those costs for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items requested for fieldwork or for travel to professional meetings associated with grant activities. Provide the purpose, method of travel, number of persons traveling, number of days, and estimated cost for each trip. If details of each trip are not known at the time of application submission, provide the basis for determining the amount requested.
- d) **Equipment** costs includes those items which are tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit - unless the applicant has a clear and consistent written policy that determines a different threshold. Equipment costs must comply with 2 CFR § 200.439. Include a description, quantity and unit price for all equipment.
- a. Purchases of less than \$5,000 should be listed under “Supplies” or “Other.”
 - b. Each item of equipment must be identified with the corresponding cost. General-purpose equipment must be justified as to how it will be used on the project.
 - c. Analyze the cost benefits of purchasing versus leasing equipment, particularly high-cost items and those subject to rapid technical advances. List rented or leased equipment costs in the “Contractual” or “Other” category, depending upon the procurement method.
- e) **Supplies** are tangible personal property other than equipment necessary to carry out the Federal award. Include the types of property in general terms. It is not necessary to document office supplies in detail (for example; reams of paper, boxes of paperclips, etc.). However, applicants should include a quantity and unit cost for larger cost supply items such as computers and printers.
- f) **Contractual** costs are those services carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement or subaward relationship. There are two ways to capture costs in this category: subgrants and contracts.

A **Subaward** – is an award provided by a pass-through entity (Prime Grantee Recipient) to a subrecipient. That subrecipient carries out part of a program for which the Prime Grantee Recipient received Federal support. A subrecipient has its performance measured in relation to whether objectives of a Federal program were met; has responsibility for programmatic decision making; is responsible for adherence to applicable Federal program requirements specified in the Federal award; and (in accordance with its agreement), uses the Federal funds to carry out a program for a public purpose specified in authorizing statute, as opposed to providing goods or services for the benefit of the pass-through entity.

A **Contract** – is a legal instrument by which a Grantee Recipient purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under an award. A contract/contractor provides the goods and services within normal business operations; provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers; normally operates in a competitive environment; and provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the Federal program.

When procuring goods, or services a grantee/recipient under a Federal award must follow the procurement standards of the 2 CFR Part 200 including Appendix II. All procurement transactions must be a full and open competition unless the application demonstrates that one of the exceptions for procurement by noncompetitive proposals is met. If applicants plan to subcontract part of its award to another organization(s), the application must reflect that procurement standards were complied with or provide a statement verifying that upon award, the organization will fully comply with procurement standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200.

For all contractual line-item costs, include the rationale for the costs and include the specific contract goods and/or services provided and the related expenses for those goods and services. Simply entering the statement “contractual services” will not be considered sufficient for the requirement of completing this section.

- g) **Other** costs do not fit any of the aforementioned categories, such as rent for buildings used to conduct project activities, utilities, leased equipment, employee training tuition, etc. “Other” direct costs must be itemized.
- h) **Indirect Costs (must include IDC agreement or statement claiming de minimis rate)** are allowable in the Community Safety Grant. Indirect costs are incurred for common or joint objectives that benefit more than one project and are not readily assignable to one project, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. The applicant must include a current and fully executed agreement in the application if claiming indirect costs. The rate must be applied to the appropriate base in the approved agreement. If the rate will not be approved by the application due date, attach the letter of renewal or letter of request that you sent to your cognizant agency to your application. The applicant must include a signed copy of the approved negotiated rate agreement that is valid as of the date of the application. A non-profit entity that has never received a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. Applicant intending to charge the de minimis rate, must include a statement verifying that the organization has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate and that the organization has elected to charge the de minimis rate.
- i) **Match** not applicable for the CS grant program.

***** Further, 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 and evaluation process. ***

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier (Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM (SAM.gov) before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration and DUNS with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration. PHMSA may not make a grant award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements by the time that PHMSA is ready to make a grant award, PHMSA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

NOTE: PHMSA recommends that Applicants review the SAM database to ensure that their DUNS number is updated and “active.” Link: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Completed applications must be received electronically by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 15, 2021. Applications received after this deadline may not be considered.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement under the FY 2021 CSG Program:

- Certain personnel costs such as overtime, backfill, stipends, and fees for the State and local personnel receiving training.
- Entertainment, alcohol, or morale costs.
- Excessive costs for general office supplies, equipment, computer software, printing and copying.
- Expenses claimed and or reimbursed by another program.
- Expenses counted as match funds toward another Federal program.
- Any additional costs disallowed or stated as ineligible in 2 CFR Part 200.

SECTION E - APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department recognizes that rural transportation networks face unique challenges. To the extent that those challenges are reflected in the merit criteria listed in this section, the Department will consider how the activities proposed in the application will address those challenges, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

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

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.

1. Technical Review Criteria:

A. Outreach to Communities – For applications submitted for conducting national outreach to communities:

- 1) Does the application show a plan to engage with the State and local response community to ensure preparedness and response to hazardous materials transportation event?
- 2) Does the application show a plan to engage with community planners to advise municipalities, school districts, businesses, and residents of the types of hazardous materials that move in the community?
- 3) Does the application include a plan to involve public outreach and engagement to raise awareness of the types of hazardous materials that move in the community?
- 4) Does the application contain preparedness and response steps that should be taken for public safety in the event of a hazardous materials transportation incident?
- 5) Does the applicant have the ability to collaborate and capture input from industry groups that transport hazardous materials, emergency response, and community planning subject matter experts?
- 6) Does the applicant provide a strategy to publish and widely distribute best practices guidance to applicable stakeholders?

B. Training State and Local Enforcement Personnel in the Hazardous Materials Regulations — For applications submitted for training State and local enforcement personnel for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials:

- 1) Does the applicant have the existing capacity to reach and train State and local enforcement personnel on the safe transportation of hazardous materials?
- 2) Does the applicant have the ability to establish a curriculum that complies with the relevant Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR)?
- 3) Does the applicant have the ability to establish a curriculum in accordance with the Hazardous Materials Transportation Investigator/Inspector Uniform Training Performance Standards?
- 4) Did the applicant provide comprehensive needs assessment related to the deficiency of training for State and local personnel that are responsible for enforcing the safe transportation of hazardous materials, including Class 3 flammable liquids?
- 5) Does the applicant possess the capacity to effectively deliver an established training curriculum to State and local personnel responsible for enforcing of the safe transportation of hazardous materials? (Curriculum may either include: (1) web-based training; or (2) direct training (on-site); or (3) a combination of the two.)

- 6) Does the organization have prior experience in providing hazmat training and the proposed site-specific facilities/mechanisms in place to conduct the training?

2. Programmatic Review Criteria

- 1) Does the applicant provide information about the organization including their mission, the structure of the organization, and their experience and capacity to manage Federal grant programs?
- 2) Does the applicant describe the goals for the intended impact of the outputs either in the form of quantitative or qualitative?
- 3) Does the applicant how the proposed activities will help to address the identified need?
- 4) Does the applicant provide a description of the proposed activities that will take place under the proposed grant?
- 5) Does the applicant provide quantifiable and measurable outputs planned for the
- 6) grant's period of performance?
- 7) Does the applicant provide the number and types of activities/courses proposed?
- 8) Does the applicant provide the location and timeframe of the proposed activities?
- 9) Does the applicant provide an explanation of monitoring activities to be undertaken to ensure grant program success?
- 10) Is the project(s) located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone designated pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 1400Z-1?
- 11) Does the applicant describe how proposed activities would address the unique challenges facing rural transportation regardless of the geographic location of those activities?
- 12) Did applicant provide a completed SF-424 form?
- 13) Is the SF-424A budget form completed and properly filled out?
- 14) Did applicant submit a completed ED-80-0013 combined assurance and Title VI form?
- 15) Does the budget (SF-424A) and budget narrative align?
- 16) Does the budget narrative provide detail as to how the costs under Personnel correspond to the staff included in the narrative, and how they were calculated?
- 17) Does the budget narrative provide an explanation or breakout of the staff Fringe Benefits?
- 18) If there are funds entered under Travel, does the budget narrative provide a clear and reasonable explanation that relates to the costs?
- 19) Does the budget narrative identify supply cost, are the costs adequately explained?
- 20) If there are funds under Contractual, does the budget narrative clearly describe how contractual costs were derived for each agreement or subaward?
- 21) If there are costs under "Other" have the costs been reasonably explained?
- 22) If indirect costs are requested, does the application/budget narrative include an approved, current Indirect Cost Rate agreement or statement claiming the 10% de minimis rate?

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 on 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(s) are 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. PHMSA will use the technical review criteria in Section E.1.

Programmatic Review: PHMSA will conduct a programmatic review to assess programmatic factors outlined in section E.1. Programmatic factors are those factors which 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. Other programmatic factors may include history of performance, program priorities, and other modal needs (i.e. rural areas and Qualified Opportunity Zones). For applicants with existing awards, PHMSA may consider award balances when making final funding decisions.

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

Rating Guideline
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 the 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 the 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 the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is moderate.
Not Acceptable - 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 the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is high.

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

E.3 FAPIIS Review

Prior to making an award, 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. 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 2 C.F.R. § 200.205.

E.4 Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Applicants chosen for funding will receive electronic notification of the Federal Award. Upon notification, an applicant's authorized official must electronically sign the award within the timeframe prescribed by PHMSA. Subject to the availability of funding, PHMSA plans to make awards no later than September 30, 2021, with a proposed period of performance start date of October 1 2021.

SECTION F - FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

PHMSA's grant awarding official will award grants to eligible applicants, whose applications are deemed most meritorious 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. Federal grant funds may not be used for lobbying or litigation.

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 award document 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, specifying the duration of the project;

- 6) Total amount PHMSA approved for the project;
- 7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- 8) Assistance Listing Program Number (formerly CFDA);
- 9) Applicable award terms and conditions;
- 10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and,
- 11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by PHMSA.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The administration of this award by PHMSA and the Recipient will be based on the following Federal statutory and regulatory requirements:

- 1) The authorizing language of 49 U.S.C. § 5107(i).
- 2) 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
- 3) The Recipient must comply with 49 CFR Part 20, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." 49 CFR part 20 will be incorporated by reference into any award under this program and is available at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/ by clicking on Title 49 CFR Part 20.
- 4) The Recipient must comply with Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964, which provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
- 5) The Recipient must comply with 49 CFR Part 21, "Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964." 49 CFR Part 21 will be incorporated by reference into any award under this program and is available at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/ by clicking on Title 49 CFR Part 21.
- 6) The Recipient must comply with 49 CFR Part 32, "Government wide Requirements for Drug- Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)," which implements the requirements of Public Law 100-690, Title Subtitle D, "Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988." 49 CFR Part 32 will be incorporated by reference into any award under this program and is available at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/ by clicking on Title 49 CFR Part 32.

F.3 Reporting Requirements

Bi-Annual Report(s) - Each grant recipient is required to submit a bi-annual Federal financial report (SF-425) and a bi-annual performance report. Bi-annual financial and progress reports are to be submitted via email at HMIT.grants@dot.gov. The reports are due not later than 30 days after the project period end date. Progress reports must follow the instructions outlined in the terms and conditions of the grant award and must include:

- 1) A summary of the activities and outputs that have taken place during the reporting period. This should include, at a minimum, the number of courses delivered during the period of performance, along with the number of students trained, and the employer of the students trained.
- 2) Challenges the grantee has faced and strategies implemented to mitigate those challenges.

- 3) An updated timeline of grant activities projected to take place for the remainder of the grant period of performance.
- 4) As available, impact statements or analysis, from instructors, public sector responders or other stakeholders regarding the impact current period of performance grant activities have had on protecting people and the environment from the risks of hazardous materials transportation.

Final Report(s) - Each recipient is required to submit a final Federal financial report (Final SF-425) and final progress report. Final financial and progress reports are to be submitted no later than 90 days after the performance period end date. Final progress reports must follow the instructions outlined in the terms and conditions of the grant award.

Final performance reports are to be submitted via email as directed by the terms and conditions of the grant award, and will include:

- 1) A summary of the activities and outputs that took place during the period of performance. This should include the total number and type of courses delivered during the period of performance, along with the number of students trained. Final reports should also include a list of employers who represent the students trained. If the projected outputs listed in the approved project narrative were not met, an explanation should be provided.
- 2) Challenges the grantee faced, and strategies taken to mitigate such challenges.
- 3) A completed timeline of the activities that took place during the completed period of performance.
- 4) As available, impact statements or analysis, from training instructors, public sector responders or other stakeholders regarding the impact current period of performance grant activities have had on protecting people and the environment from the risks of hazardous materials transportation.

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

SECTION G - FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions related to the content of this funding opportunity should be submitted via the Message Center in FedConnect. For technical issues or questions related to FedConnect, please email fcsupport@unisonglobal.com; applicant can submit questions through the portal on their website, or call 1-800-899-6665 option 2.

Agreement Administrator

Dwayne Cross
Phone: (202) 366-4429
Dwayne.Cross@dot.gov

Program Contact

Carla Sheppard
Phone: (202) 366-1109
Email: Carla.Sheppard@dot.gov

SECTION H – OTHER INFORMATION

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