



Grant Screening and Prioritization – Strategizing for Success

September 2023





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Today we'll cover...

- 01 Grant Opportunities
- 02 Grants Strategy
- 03 Specific Tips for Successful Narratives
- 04 Contacts

01

Grant Opportunities

Federal Grants

Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Provides additional funding
- Can fill project funding gap
- Frees money for other projects

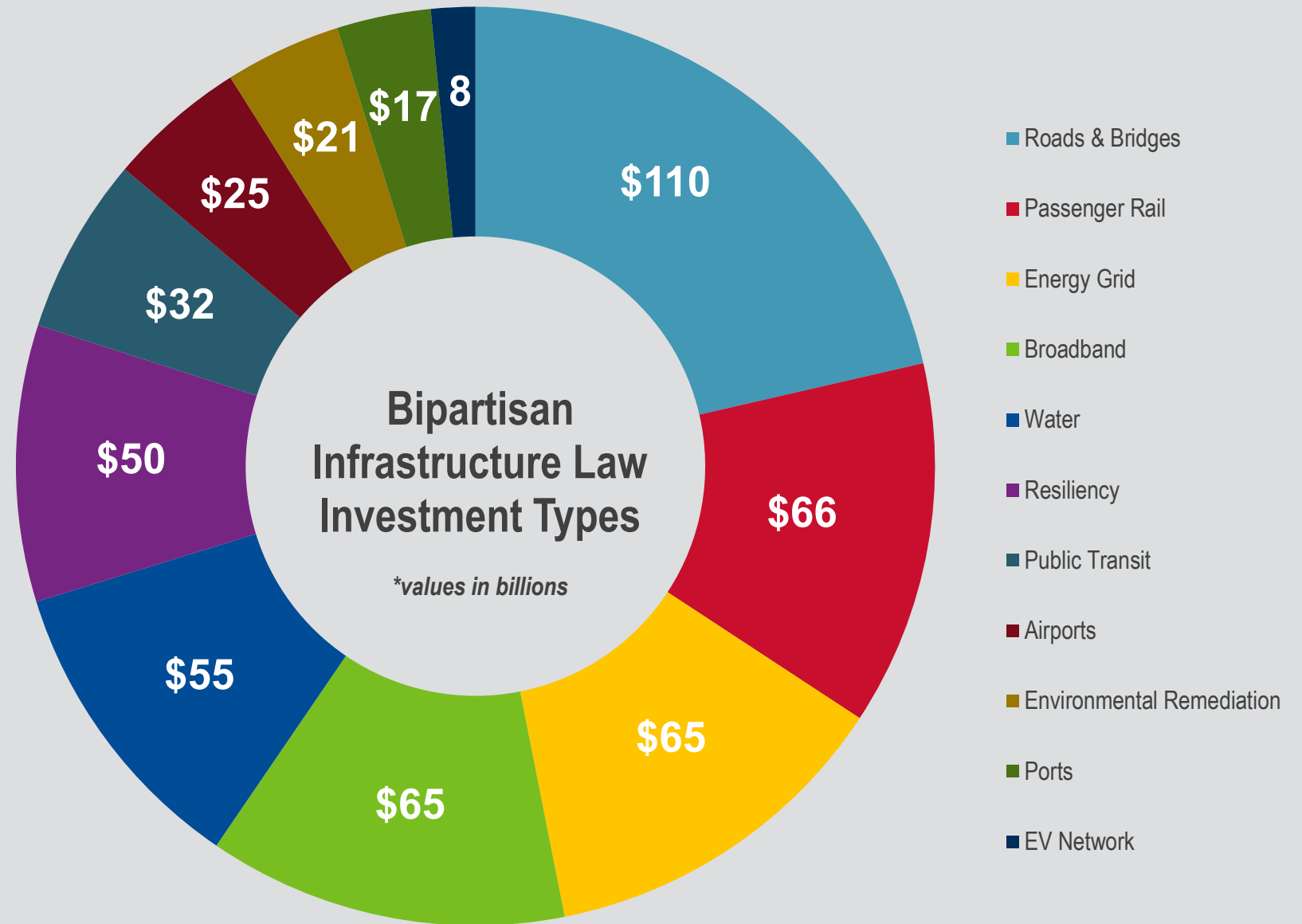
Challenges

- Federalizes project (federal regulations, etc.)
- May require NEPA, Davis-Bacon, Single Audit
- Additional reporting requirements
- Sets a delivery deadline



Generational Investment

- \$1.2 trillion
- \$18B discretionary funding
- \$550B for “new” investments and programs
- Inflation Reduction Act adds \$375B for climate and energy programs



Coming Soon

Notice of Funding Opportunities Expected in Next 6 Months

Open NOFOs

- USDOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant
- FTA Transit Oriented Development Pilot Program
- USDOT SMART

Forthcoming NOFOs

- FHWA Bridge Investment Program
- FRA Railroad Crossing Elimination
- USDOT RAISE



Grant Education and Information Services

- Monitoring of Grant Programs
- Grant Information Brochures
- Grant Education Presentations
- Program Changes
- NOFO Summaries



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Grant Program Summaries



FHWA Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program



USDOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program



Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems Program



Climate Pollution Reduction Program: Planning Grant Program Summary

The Inflation Reduction Act made substantial investments in supporting efforts to combat climate change through tax credits, incentives, and direct investment, including a \$5 billion program for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies.

The [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants \(CPRG\) Program](#) provides grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement plans for reducing GHG emissions and other harmful air pollution. The program is implemented through two distinct phases — Phase I: Planning Grants and Phase II: Implementation Grants. Phase I: Planning Grants are 4-year cooperative agreements running through 2027 that will deliver three mandated deliverables — a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) and a Status Report at the end of the grant period.

The Planning Grant Program is described in more detail below, but this brief does not summarize Phase II: Implementation Grants.

Planning Grants

EPA will provide \$250 million to “eligible entities” through a formula distribution of \$3 million to each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. An additional \$1 million is allocated to each of the US’s 67 most [populous metropolitan areas](#).

In addition to these formula distributions, \$25 million is reserved for federally recognized tribes, and an additional \$2 million is available to territories.¹

¹ EPA is treating the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico as states under this program and allocating each \$3 million in planning grants. Territories eligible to receive a portion of \$2 million available include the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

About HDR’s Advisory Services

The Advisory Services team has more than 250 management consultants with premium, strategic advice that is rooted in the practical, solid-state service that our infrastructure clients around the world have come to expect. We have expertise in funding and finance, economics and decision analysis, strategic planning and policy, sustainability and resiliency, strategic communications and business improvement.

Advisory Services professionals review infrastructure policy developments and prepare summaries of key provisions to help keep our clients informed of the changing landscape in Washington, D.C.

To review past Advisory Services Policy Briefs and sign up for future updates on federal policy and funding programs, please visit our [website](#).



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

**July 10, 2023
5:00 p.m. EDT**



Inflation Reduction Act

energy security, combat the effects of climate change, and invest in clean energy. HDR works across all of the federal agencies to help clients in leveraging these funds to

Distribution

of the funds for energy production and distribution technologies and biofuels. In total, the program will provide \$68 billion for energy production and distribution, including:

- \$68 billion for renewable energy generation
- \$500 million to reduce methane emissions from oil and gas facilities
- \$500 million for biofuels

Buildings and Structures

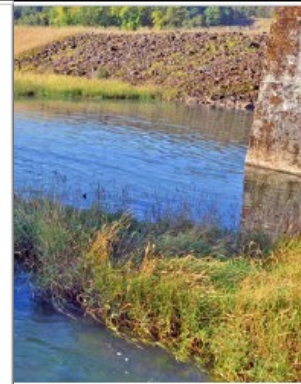
The program focuses on increasing energy efficiency, including using climate-friendly technologies to support these efforts through:

- High-efficiency homes (Energy Star) to acquire and install climate-friendly technologies and convert existing buildings codes that support net-zero energy buildings.

Investment in drought affected areas in the West Basin as well as providing \$550M to disadvantaged communities.

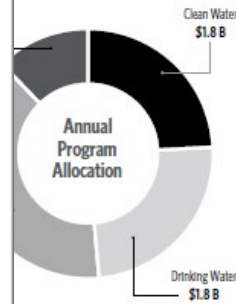
As we manage the challenges of infrastructure development, our advisory services professionals work every day with clients in these sectors:

- Transportation
- Water



Opportunities

Approximately \$72 billion in water infrastructure funding from federal agencies for research, development, and loan and revolving programs that will be used



(through loans or grants).

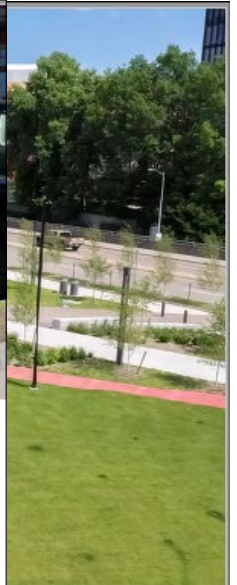
The program would provide \$60 million per year (currently \$60 million) to disadvantaged communities.



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

**May 30, 2023
11:59 p.m. EDT**



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

**Feb. 28, 2023
11:59 p.m. EST**



02

Grants Strategy

Preparation is Key to Grant Success

- Preposition for Program Success
 - Evaluate projects for match to grants
 - Prioritize projects for application: ***Readiness, Eligibility, Merit***
 - Develop 5-year application strategy
 - Position individual projects to pursue grants

➔ ***Data analysis is the centerpiece***



Grant Screening and Prioritization Approach



Project Identification

Identify projects to evaluate for grant eligibility and competitiveness

Readiness Screening

Consider project development and committed funding status of each project

Eligibility Screening

Evaluate alignment of each project with eligibility criteria for each grant program

Merit Criteria Prioritization

Compare project goals and characteristics with each grant program's merit evaluation criteria

Project Selection

Prioritize projects to pursue selected grant programs

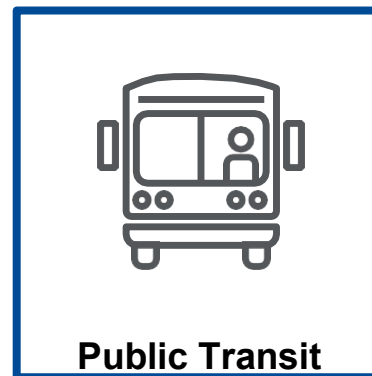
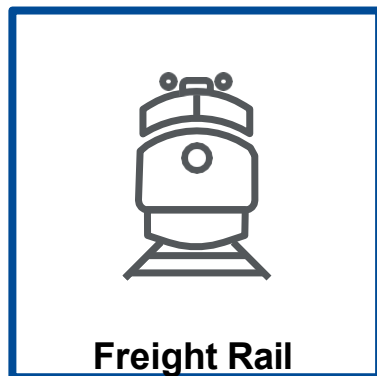
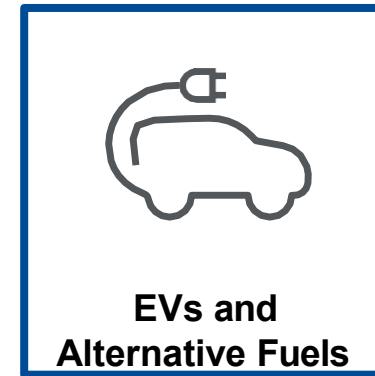
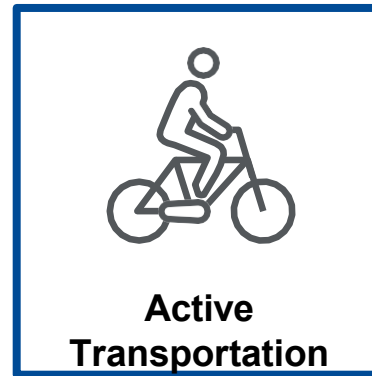
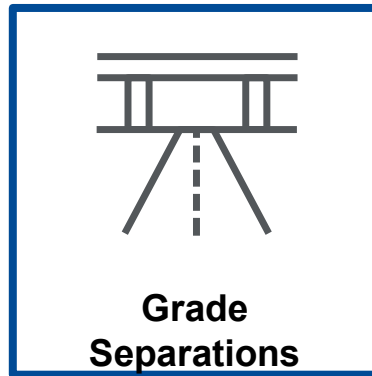
Readiness Factors

- Scope, definition, purpose/need
- NEPA/environmental status
- Project schedule developed
- Project budget estimated
- Funding identified and committed
- In regional transportation plan
- In sponsor's capital improvement program
- Public engagement conducted
- Design percentage completed
- Status of procurement/contracting



Eligibility Screening

- Identify which programs the project is eligible for
- Evaluate alignment with each grant program's eligibility requirements



Merit Criteria Prioritization

- Compare project goals/characteristics with grant program merit criteria
- Analyze project competitiveness with federal grant evaluation criteria
- Consider project alignment with state/regional/local priorities and goals

Grant Program Merit Criteria



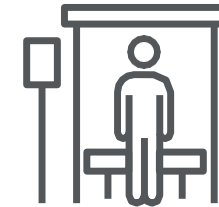
Safety



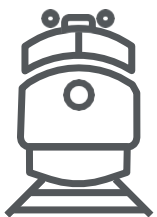
Equity



Climate



Mobility



Freight



**Geographic
Extent of Benefits**



**Funding
Alignment**



**Opportunities for
Partnering**



**Household and
Jobs Impact**

Benefit-Cost Analysis Supports Prioritization

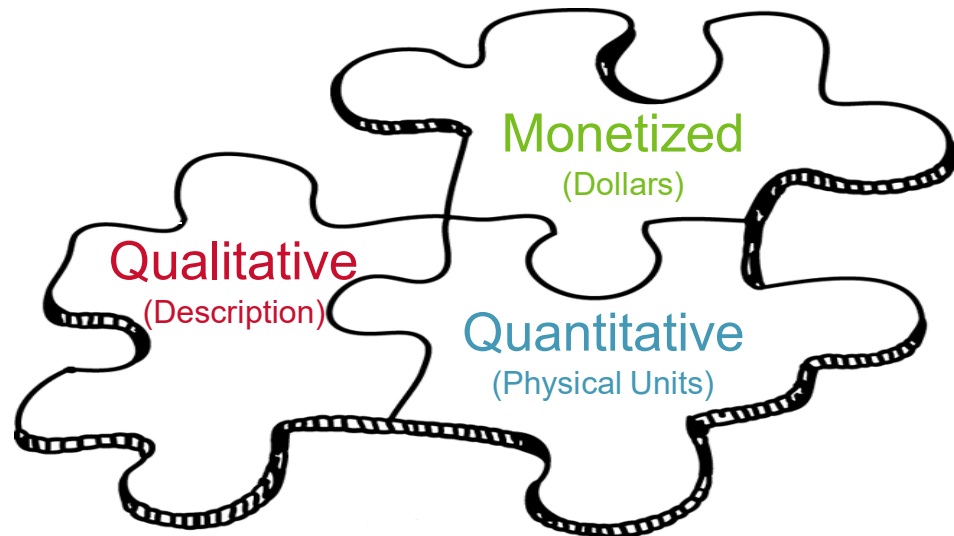
- Many grants require demonstrating project benefits exceed capital cost
- BCA may be a factor in project competitiveness
- **Preliminary** benefit evaluation requires data for each project:
 - Traffic/Users
 - Crashes
 - Expected Project Impacts
- Approach options:
 - Break-even
 - Benefit potential



Sketch vs. Full BCA

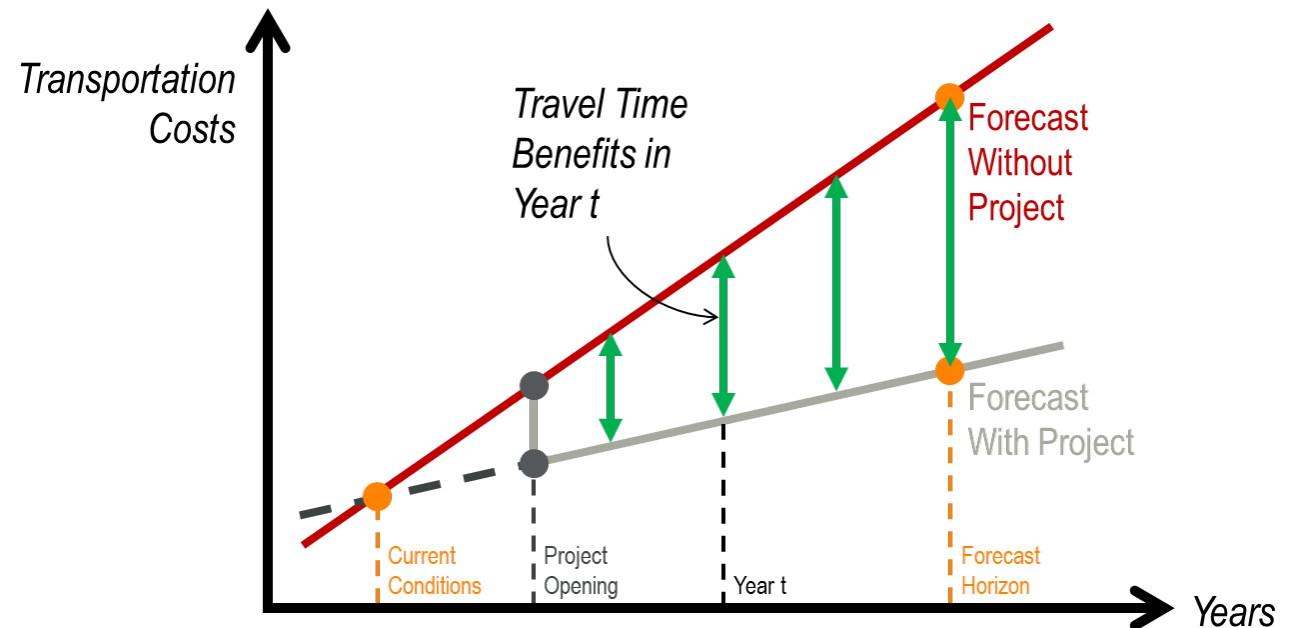
Sketch BCA for Preliminary Evaluation

- Data: Readily available info
- Focus: 1 or 2 benefit categories
- Intent: Preliminary estimate of cost-effectiveness to prioritize projects




Full BCA for Grant Application

- Data: Comprehensive data collection
- Focus: All benefit categories of project
- Intent: Fulfill NOFO, support application with comprehensive data-driven BCA



REM Tool

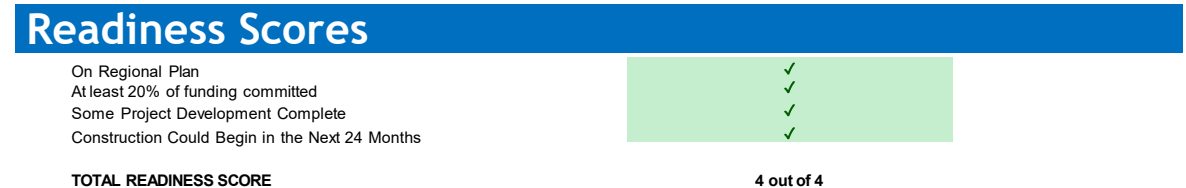
- Data-based approach for screening and prioritizing projects
- Scores/ranks projects based on
 - **Readiness**
 - **Eligibility**
 - **Merit**
- Apples-to-apples comparison of competitive grant opportunities across portfolio of projects
- Guides multiyear grant application strategy



Readiness, Eligibility and Merit Tool

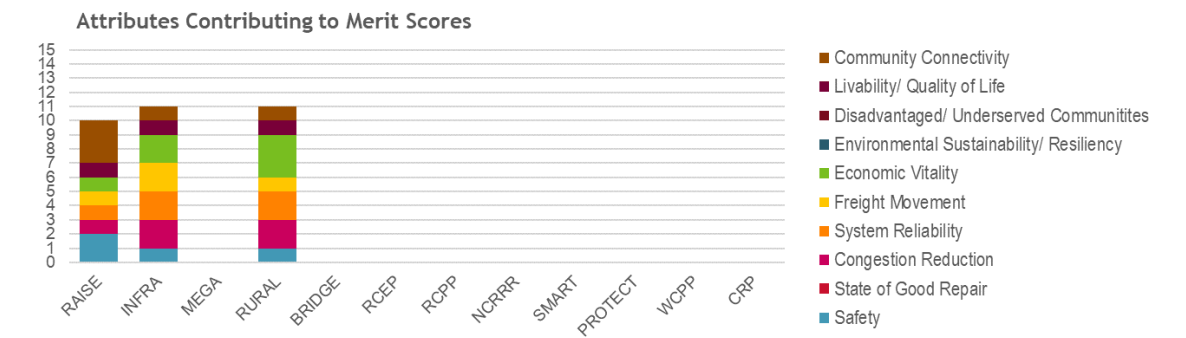
Project Snapshot

Project Name: Cityville BRT (EXAMPLE)	
Location: Cityville, State (EXAMPLE)	Expected Construction Start (Fiscal Year): 2026
Project Attributes: Safety, Congestion Reduction, System Reliability, Freight Movement, Economic Vitality, Livability/ Quality of Life, Community Connectivity	Total Project Cost: \$235,000,000
	Non-Federal Funds Committed: TBD
	Other Federal Funds Committed: \$0
	Committed Non-Federal Match: TBD
Project Description: The project includes 5-miles of dedicated, center-running BRT lanes and a 2.5-mile curbside running alignment operating in mixed traffic. The project does not include vehicles.	Committed Federal Match: 0%
	Funding Gap: TBD0
	Funding Gap Percentage: 71%



Merit Scores

PROGRAM ID	GRANT PROGRAM NAME	MERIT SCORE (out of 15)
RAISE	Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) - Local and Regional Proj	10
INFRA	Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) - Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects	11
RURAL	Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program	11



OVERALL RANKING

PROGRAM ID	PROJECT RANK	APPROXIMATE TOTAL FUNDS		FY 2022 APPLICATION	
		AWARDED PER YEAR	FY 2022 NOFO RELEASE	DEADLINE	
RAISE	10 out of 150	\$1,500,000,000	January	April	
INFRA	9 out of 150	\$1,550,000,000	March	May	
RURAL	1 out of 40	\$300,000,000	March	May	

Preposition Project for Grant Availability

Not Enough Time After NOFO to Do Everything

Prior to NOFO

- Evaluate and select projects
- Engineering, environmental, & fiscal analyses including BCA
- Political support
- Develop grant application team & workflow
- Update SAM.gov registration

During NOFO Response Time

- Gather letters of support
- Write grant narrative
- Adjust BCA
- Graphic design



03

Specific Tips for Successful Narratives

Critical Roles in Grant Preparedness and Application

- **Local Champion** – client-side project manager to coordinate sponsor activities supported by:
 - **Project Definition** – Program development, planners, engineers (cost estimates, schedules, plans), environmental analyst, financial analysts
 - **Benefit Cost Analysis** – economists*
 - **Application** – Grant manager / administrator, grant writer*, graphic designer, technical editor, political liaison

** Previous federal grants experience important for aligning project with grant standards*



Tips & Tricks for Grants Success



Clear statement of needs/impacts



Engage Congressional delegation



Good presentation, themes



Strong political and stakeholder support



Easy to read text, maps & graphics



Do not let NEPA delay schedule



BCA in alignment with latest guidance



Scope the project to fit the grant criteria



Executing a Grant Application

- Opportunity to engage and enable Junior staff.
- Agency-wide exercise. Not limited to one individual.
- Break down the application requirements within the NOFO.
- Develop schedule including reasonable review period.
- Unsuccessful applications are opportunity to debrief with federal/state agencies on optimizing application.
- Explore definition of Justice40 Initiative and community's socio-economic burdens.



Pitfalls to Avoid

From USDOT Feedback

- Trying to create something that isn't really there
- Leaving all the supporting data in the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA), instead of putting it up front
- Burying key points in text



Breaking down NOFO and writing to program requirements

- What's the goal of the program?
 - USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All is focused on pedestrian and motor safety
- Confirm the Eligible Project Costs.
 - Does the program allow for development phases, like planning, environmental or construction?
 - What's the minimum or maximum award?
- Write to specific criteria noted in the NOFO on topics such as safety, state of good repair, economic impacts.



Safe Streets and Roads for All Program Summary

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program Summary

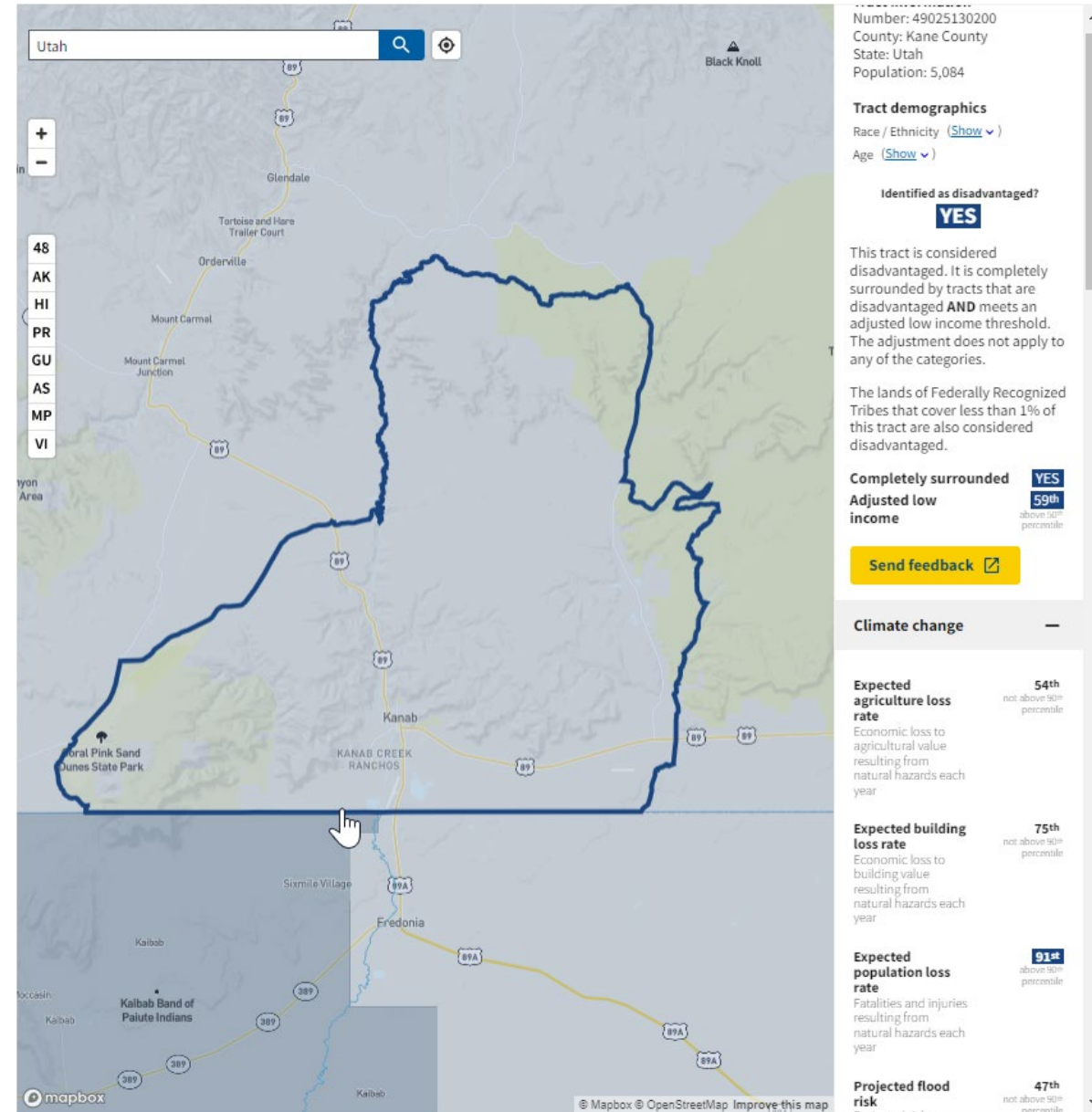
Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

- Justice 40 Initiative
 - Goal for 40% of Federal Investments to disadvantaged communities
- CEJST
 - Map used to identify disadvantaged communities
 - Updated annually
 - Separate from EPA EJScreen used for environmental justice
- Tips
 - Include screenshots from the tool in grant applications
 - Discuss percentiles that are close to or near the 90th percentile requirement
 - E.g. Projected Wildfire Risk being in the 80th Percentile

CEJST – Example 1

Identified as Disadvantaged

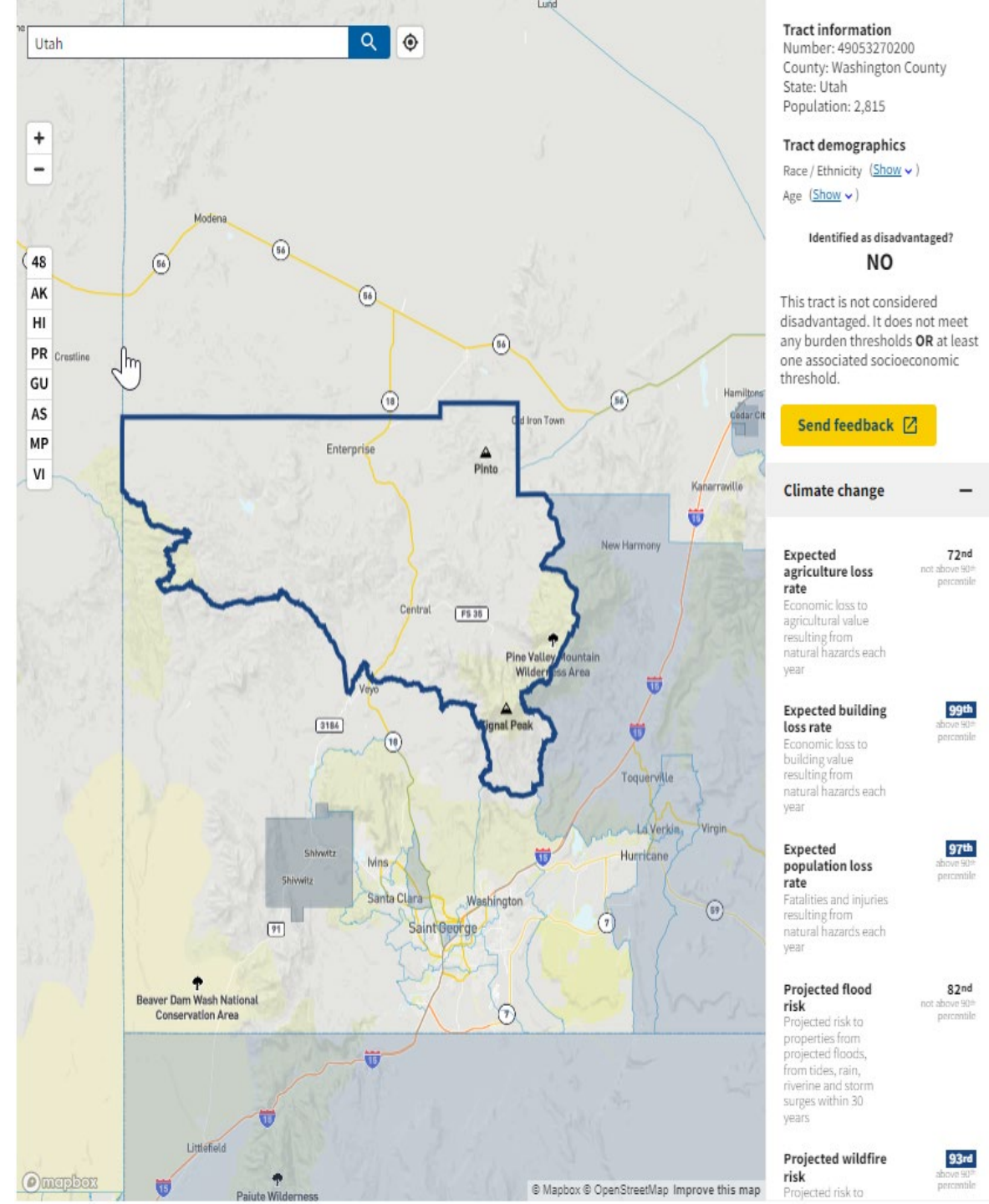
- Completely surrounded by tracts that are disadvantaged
- Meets an adjusted low income threshold.
- Federally Recognized Tribal land cover less than 1%
- Other factors include Projected Wildfire Risk



CEJST – Example 2

Not Identified as Disadvantaged

- Although the Census Tract is not identified as disadvantaged, several factors are noted above the 90th percentile:
 - Expected Building Loss Rate
 - Expected Population Loss Rate
 - Projected Wildfire Risk



Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer

- ETC

- Can use to compare transportation disadvantage compared nationally or within a state
- Focuses on economic burdens related to transportation including:
 - Transportation Insecurity
 - Climate and Disaster Risk Burden
 - Environmental Burden
 - Health Vulnerability
 - Social Vulnerability

- Tips

- Use both tools to complement one another
- Include screenshots from the tool in grant applications
- Discuss percentiles that are close to or near the 90th percentile requirement
 - E.g. Transportation Access being in the 61st Percentile

ETC Explorer – Example 1

USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer

ETC Explorer - Homepage

ETC Explorer - National Results

ETC Explorer - State Results

ETC Explorer- Add Your Data (National and State Results)

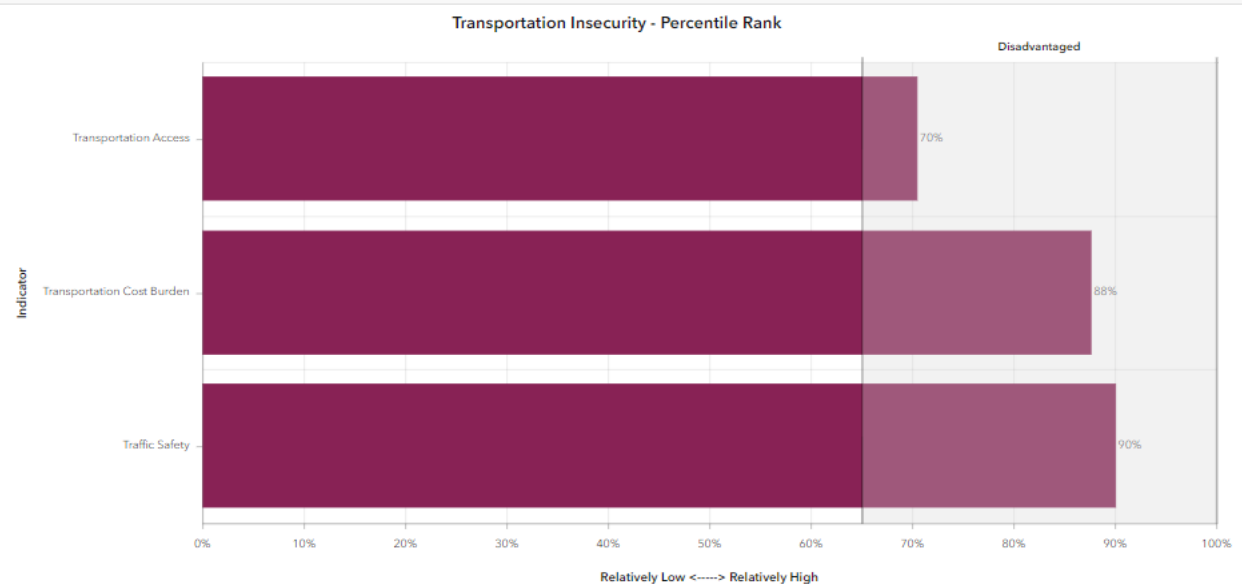
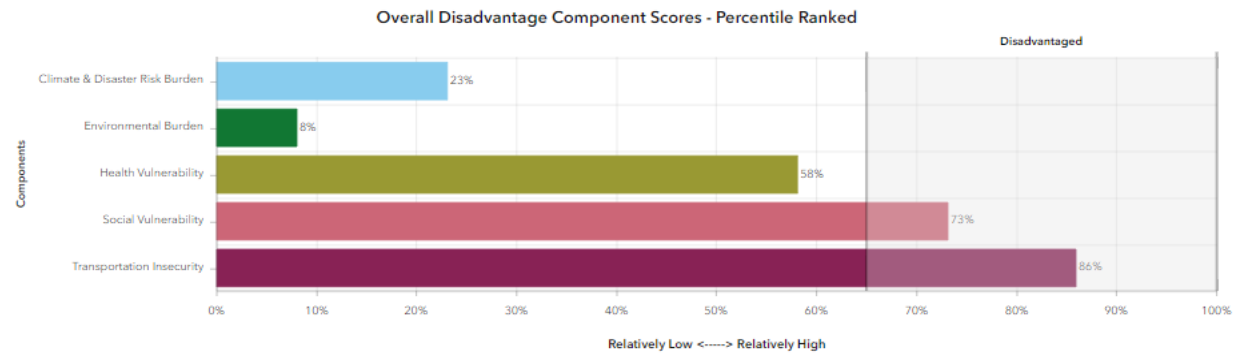
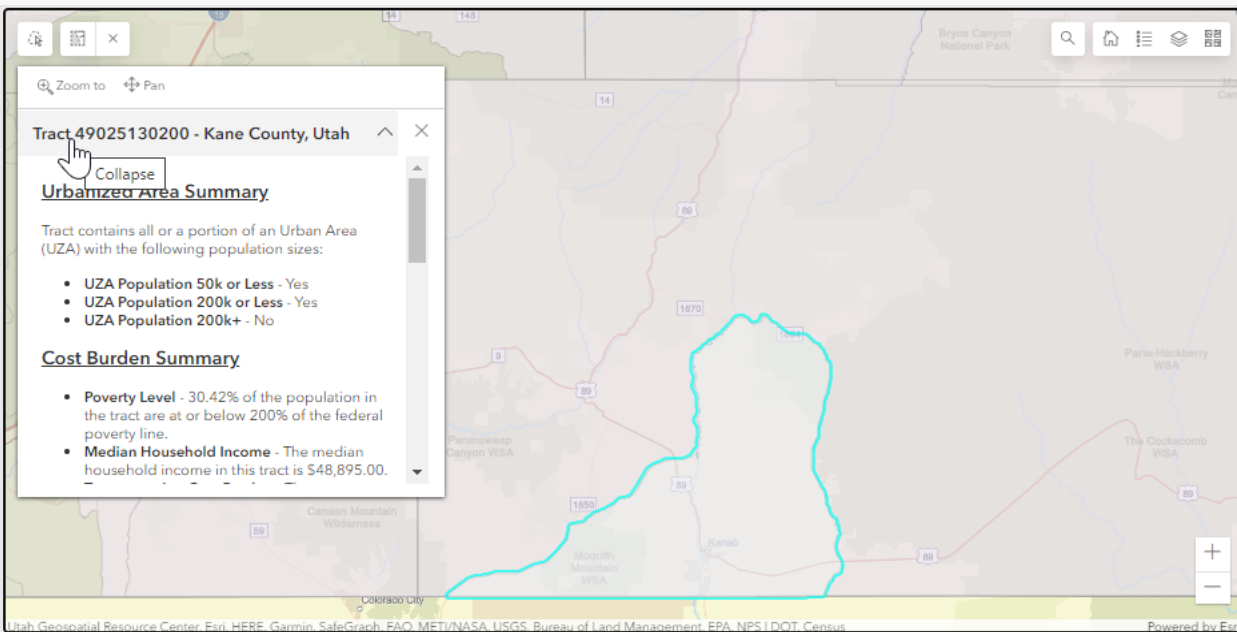
Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool

Understanding the Data

For Instructions:

Click on the arrow on the left side of the page for instructions on using the features in the tool.

State Selector: Utah | County Selector: All Counties | Community Selector: Select State First | MPO Selector: All MPOs



Total Population Living in the Selected Project Area

5.2k

Total Population Living in Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area

5.2k

% of Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area

100%

ETC Explorer – Example 2

USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer

ETC Explorer - Homepage

ETC Explorer - National Results

ETC Explorer - State Results

ETC Explorer- Add Your Data (National and State Results)

Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool

Understanding the Data

For Instructions:

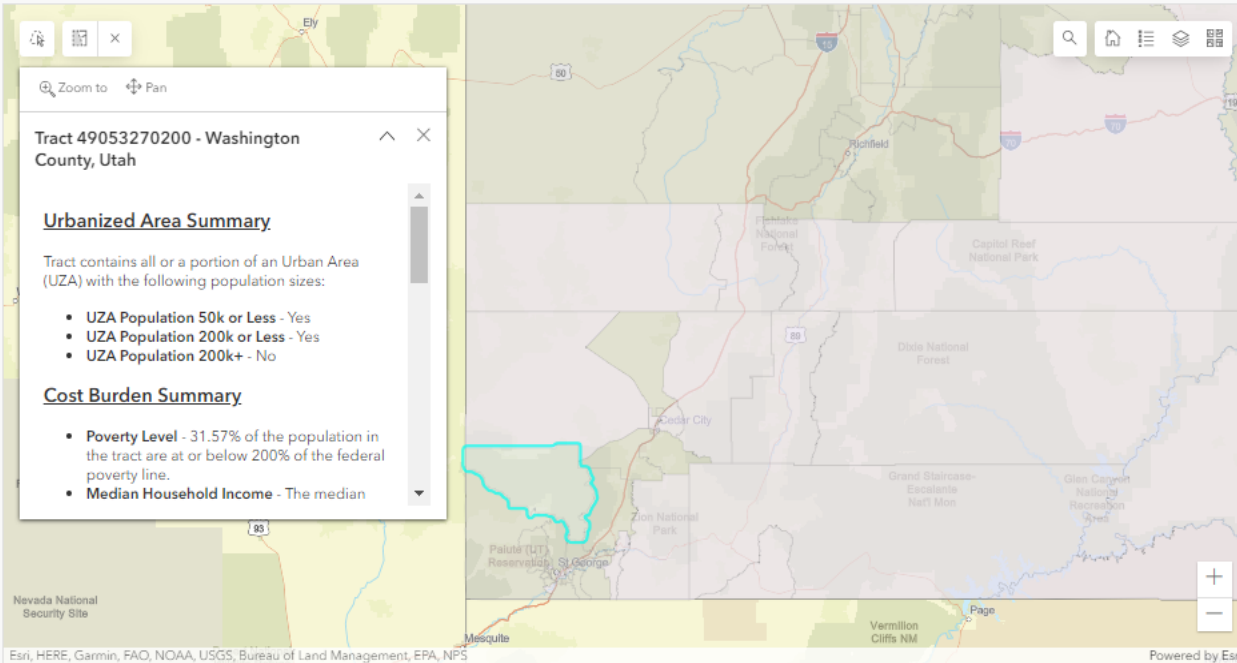
Click on the arrow on the left side of the page for instructions on using the features in the tool.

State Selector
Utah

County Selector
All Counties

Community Selector
Select State First

MPO Selector
All MPOs



Total Population Living in the Selected Project Area

2.9k

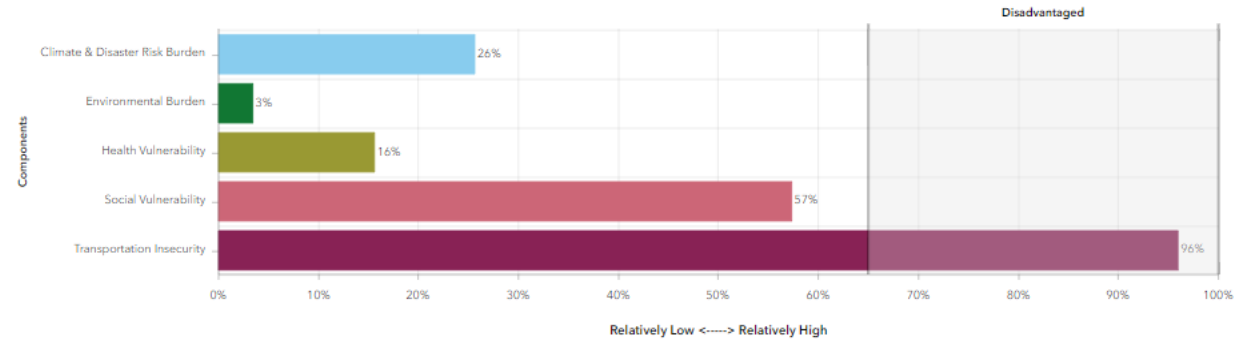
Total Population Living in Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area

No Disadvantaged Tract Selected

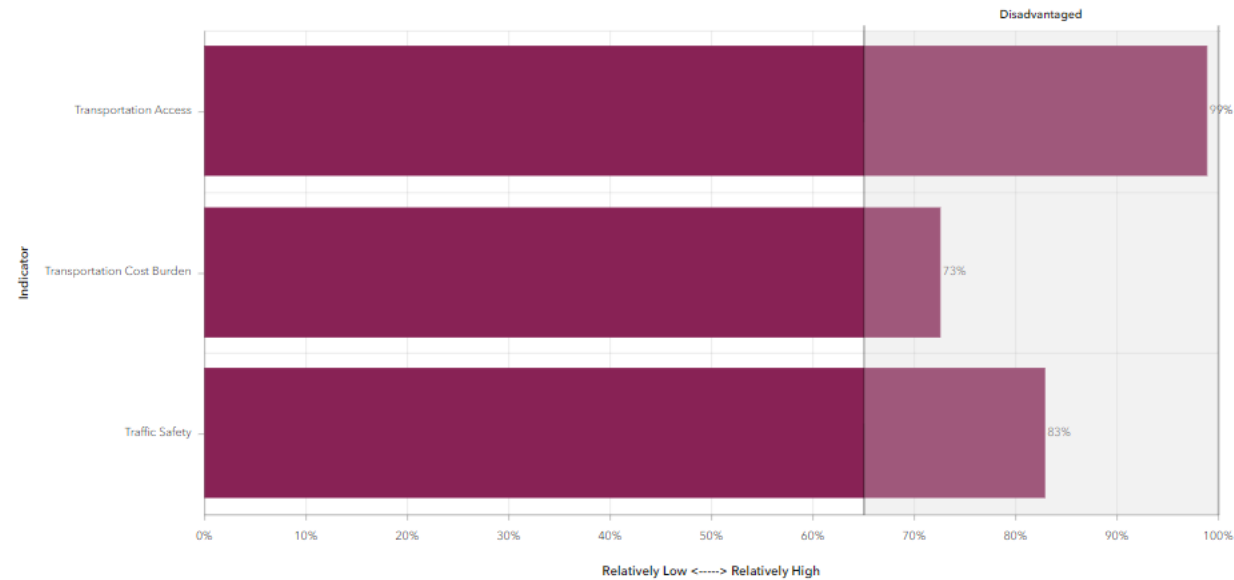
% of Disadvantaged Census Tracts in the Selected Project Area

0%

Overall Disadvantage Component Scores - Percentile Ranked



Transportation Insecurity - Percentile Rank



Climate & Disaster

Environmental

Health Vulnerability

Social Vulnerability

Transportation Insecurity

- Component Scores are distinct from Indicator Scores. For more information please see - Understanding the Data.
 - Index scores for Alaska, Hawaii and the territories are calculated separately due to unavailable data for certain indicators. The Explorer visualizes unavailable indicator data as '0' values.
 - If viewing on a laptop and the dashboard does not display properly- right click on your desktop, select display options, and adjust the zoom to an appropriate resolution (usually 100%).

Infrastructure Finance Advisory

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*Infrastructure Finance Lead for
Southwest*

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Questions?

HDR



USDOT Discretionary Grants Update

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Transportation has released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program (SS4A). The deadline for the SS4A grant application is July 10, 2023 at 5:00 pm EDT.

The program aims to improve roadway safety by significantly **reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries** through safety action plan development, and refinement and implementation focused on all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators.

This program was authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and will provide \$1 billion in funding for selected planning and projects this year. This update summarizes the grant opportunity. The NOFO is posted on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Safe Streets and Roads for All Program Objectives

The grant program seeks to prioritize project proposals that do the following:

- Promote safety
- Employ low-cost, high-impact strategies that can improve safety over a wider geographic area
- Ensure equitable investment in the safety needs of underserved communities, which includes both underserved urban and rural communities
- Incorporate evidence-based project solutions and strategies
- Align with USDOT mission and strategic goals such as safety; climate change and sustainability; equity and Justice40; and workforce development, job quality and wealth creation

- Demonstrate engagement with a variety of public and private stakeholders

Eligible projects must be able to complete the full scope of funded projects within the timeframes specified in the grant agreement.

Eligible recipients include:

- Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)
- Political subdivision of a state or territory
- Federally recognized Tribal government
- Regional joint multijurisdictional application

States are not eligible applicants, but eligible applicants are encouraged to coordinate with state entities.



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

**July 10, 2023
5:00 p.m. EDT**

April 11, 2023



Available Grants

The SS4A FY 2023 NOFO provides funding for two types of grant programs:

I. Planning and Demonstration Grant: Focused on developing a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribe or region.

II. Implementation grants: Focused on implementing strategies that are consistent with an existing Action Plan. An eligible applicant must have a qualifying Action Plan.

Eligible applicants may only submit one application for funding for either a Planning and Demonstration or Implementation grant.

I. PLANNING AND DEMONSTRATION GRANT

Planning and Demonstration Grant must include the following eight components:

1. Leadership commitment and goal setting
2. Planning structure
3. Safety analysis
4. Engagement and collaboration
5. Equity consideration
6. Policy and process changes
7. Strategy and project selection
8. Progress and transparency.

Selection criteria for Planning and Demonstration Grants includes 1) safety impact, 2) equity and 3) additional safety considerations. In addition, USDOT will also evaluate project cost.

Award Range: Minimum amounts for Planning and Demonstration Grants are \$100,000, with a maximum grant of up to \$10 million for a political subdivision of a state or territory, a federally recognized Tribal government, and a multijurisdictional group of entities.

Planning and Demonstration Grant application narratives may not exceed two pages and will need to be submitted via the [Valid Eval website](#), a new government platform for submitting grant applications. A benefit-cost analysis is not required.

II. IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Implementation Grants fund projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan that address roadway safety problems. Funding also supports supplemental planning and demonstration activities as well as planning, design and development activities identified in an Action Plan.

Applicants must identify the problems to be addressed, the relevant geographic locations, and the project solutions and strategies they plan to implement, based on their Action Plan or other established plan.

There are four main selection criteria for Implementation Grants:

1. Safety Impact
2. Equity, engagement and collaboration
3. Effective practices and strategies
4. Other USDOT strategic goals
5. Additional safety context **(only if applying for supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities)**

Award Range: Implementation Grants will have a minimum award of \$2.5 million and a maximum award of \$25 million. The USDOT reserves the right to make Implementation Grant awards less than the total amount requested by the applicant.

The Implementation Grant narrative may not exceed 12 pages in length. Cover pages, table of contents, Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheets, and budget sections do not count towards the 12-page limit. A benefit-cost analysis is not required. Implementation Grants will need to be submitted via the [Valid Eval website](#).

HDR's Infrastructure Finance and grant writing professionals stand by ready to support project sponsors applying for funding from the SS4A program.

If you need any assistance or have questions, please contact:

Nathan Macek | nathan.macek@hdrinc.com | **Matthew Volz** | matthew.volz@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com

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USDOT Discretionary Grants Opportunity

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program

RAISE is a competitive discretionary grant program authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to close the funding gap for surface transportation infrastructure projects with a significant regional or local impact.

RAISE Grant Program details in this summary have been adjusted to reflect the FY23 Consolidated Appropriations Act changes to the RAISE Program per the USDOT NOFO amendment dated January 5, 2023.

The program will award approximately \$2.3 billion in Fiscal Year 2023 for projects that address the following objectives:

- Improve safety
- Environmental sustainability
- Quality of life
- Mobility and community connectivity
- State of good repair
- Partnership and collaboration
- Innovation
- Economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism

A December 14, 2022, update to the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for this program addresses funds available, qualifications and application requirements. An amendment to the NOFO was published January 5, 2023 to reflect updated funding and program requirements enacted in the FY23 appropriations bill.

January 10, 2023



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

Feb. 28, 2023

11:59 p.m. EST



Changes from the FY 2022 NOFO

The program incorporates a number of changes from FY 2022:

- The FY 2023 NOFO refines the merit criteria rating rubric to clarify differences and establish clear definitions.
- The Project Readiness area of the Technical Capacity Assessment will not be evaluated for all applicants. Instead, it will only be evaluated for applicants that advance to additional analysis after merit reviews.
- A new Reconnecting Communities Extra element is added. Its project scope will be identical to that of the FY 2022 Reconnecting Communities Program. “Reconnecting Extra” is a partially funded capital grant that may provide supplemental USDOT discretionary program funding through the RAISE program.
- Application requirements have been revised, including specific instructions for uploading 11 attachments in support of each application.



Eligible capital projects include projects or groups of related projects such as:

- Highway, bridge or other road projects
- Public transportation projects
- Passenger and freight rail transportation projects
- Port infrastructure investments (*port infrastructure and land ports of entry*)
- Surface transportation components of an airport project
- Intermodal projects
- Projects to replace or rehabilitate a culvert or prevent stormwater runoff
- Projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land
- Other surface transportation infrastructure projects that are necessary to advance the goals of the program

Eligible planning projects include projects or groups of related projects such as:

- Planning, preparation or design of eligible surface transportation capital projects
- Development of master plans, comprehensive plans, transportation corridor plans and plans that integrate economic development, land use, housing and transportation
- Zero emission plans for transit fleets
- Planning activities related to the development of a multimodal freight corridor
- Planning activities related to zero emissions goods movement
- Development of port and regional port planning
- Risk assessments and planning to identify vulnerabilities (address the transportation system’s ability to withstand an emergency or major disaster).

Eligible Applicants

- States and the District of Columbia
- Any territory or possession of the United States
- Unit of local government
- A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more states
- Special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe or consortium of such Indian Tribes
- Transit agency
- Multi-state or multijurisdictional group of separately eligible entities



Federal Award Information

The minimum RAISE capital grant award is \$5 million in urban areas and \$1 million in rural areas; grants may not be greater than \$25 million, unless the grant is funded exclusively through monies from the FY23 Consolidated Appropriations Act, in which case the maximum grant award is \$45 million. There is no minimum award size for planning grants. FY 2023 RAISE grant funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2027, and funds must be expended by September 30, 2032.

Grant Fund Awards Distribution and Restrictions

Half of the funds awarded (*not more than \$750 million*) will be awarded to rural projects and half to urban projects. Additionally, USDOT will award at least \$115 million for the planning, preparation or design of eligible projects. No more than 15 percent of the funds made available for RAISE grants may be awarded to projects in a single State.

Cost Sharing or Matching

The federal share of project costs may not exceed 80 percent unless the project is in a rural area, a Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC), or an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP). The NOFO includes a cost sharing or matching equation recommended by USDOT to determine the cost share. USDOT does not use an applicant's cost share when evaluating applications on merit.

Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Community

Federal cost share may be increased above 80 percent for projects located in APP or HDCs. USDOT must award at least \$35 million for projects located in APP or HDCs. APP is defined as any county that has consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty during the 30 years preceding November 15, 2021. HDC will be part of the implementation of the Justice40 Initiative and will use that definition for the NOFO notice. HDCs include a certain qualifying census tract, any Tribal land, or any territory or possession of the United States.

Merit Criteria

USDOT will consider whether the anticipated benefits are clear, direct, data-driven, and significant (rating either "high", "medium", "low" or "non-responsive"):

- **Safety:** seeks to protect motorized or non-motorized travelers and communities from safety risks
- **Environmental Sustainability:** incorporates considerations of climate change and environmental justice in the project planning or delivery stage
- **Quality of Life:** increases affordable transportation choices and expands active transportation usage or significantly reduces vehicle dependence
- **Mobility and Community Connectivity:** addresses system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility and mobility-on-demand
- **Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity:** improves intermodal or multimodal freight mobility, facilitates tourism and promotes robust job creation
- **State of Good Repair:** mitigates current or projected system vulnerabilities and restores and modernizes existing core infrastructure assets
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** collaborates with public and/or private entities and engages residents and community-based organizations to ensure equity
- **Innovation:** uses innovative technologies, innovative project delivery; or innovative financing

To receive a "high" criterion rating, the criterion must be addressed as a primary project purpose, include clear, direct, data-driven (*capital projects only*), significant benefits, and must align with at least one of the benefits described in the high column of the merit criteria rubric listed in the NOFO. A project is recommended if six or more of the eight merit criteria ratings are "high" and none of the merit criteria ratings are "non-responsive."

Application Instructions

As in previous years, applications must be submitted via Grants.gov, but other aspects of the application process have changed. USDOT directs applicants to submit the requested information in eleven different application files and in the following order, using the following file names (*documents should be submitted in PDF unless otherwise specified*):

1. SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
2. FY 2023 RAISE Project Information Form (*in Excel*)
3. Project Description (5-page limit)
4. Project Location File
5. Project Budget (*5-page limit*)
6. Funding Commitments
7. Merit Criteria Narrative (15-page limit)
8. Project Readiness (5-page limit)
9. Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) Narrative
10. BCA Calculations (unlocked spreadsheet file)
11. Letters of Support (*Optional*)

Review and Selection Process

The RAISE grant program review and selection process consist of merit criteria review; project readiness review (technical capacity assessment, environmental risk assessment, and financial completeness assessment); economic analysis; and senior review. Applications selected for RAISE funding must demonstrate efforts to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts; entities are required to do so before receiving funding. USDOT will first evaluate all projects against the RAISE merit criteria. Competitive capital (construction) applications will undergo a second-tier analysis of project readiness (environmental risk assessment, financial completeness assessment, and technical capacity assessment) and their economic (benefit-cost) analysis. Second-tier analysis for planning projects consists of a financial completeness assessment and a technical capacity assessment.

Applications are due February 28, 2023, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on Grants.gov, and selections will be announced no later than June 28, 2023.



Your Infrastructure Finance and grant writing professionals stand by ready to support project sponsors applying for funding from the RAISE Grant Program.

If you need any assistance or have questions, please contact:

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