

GRANT ALERT

June 27, 2023

Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program

APPLICATION WINDOW	PROGRAM NAME & LINK
<p>Monday, August 14, 2023 - Wednesday, September 27, 2023</p> <p><i>(Applicant must have completed the registration process on https://sam.gov/content/home to establish its registration and obtain a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) prior to submitting their application.)</i></p>	<p>Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program US Department of Transportation</p>
DESCRIPTION	
<p>This discretionary grant pilot program provides grants to fund financial, technical, and legal assistance to states and rural and tribal communities. The grants are intended to increase organizational capacity in communities that may not have resources available to evaluate and develop projects that qualify for federal funding and financing programs. The grant program will award grants for either the hiring of staff or the procurement of expert firms to provide financial, technical, and legal assistance. Grant-funded staff or firms may also provide assistance with development phase activities for project development of USDOT grant eligible projects (see below) and information regarding innovative financing best practices and case studies.</p>	
ELIGIBILITY	
<p style="text-align: center;">Applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unit of local government or political subdivision that is located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents as determined by the Bureau of the Census • A state seeking to advance a project in an area located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents as determined by the Bureau of the Census • A federally recognized Indian Tribe • The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands 	<p style="text-align: center;">Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance for development phase activities for projects which will be eligible for the following US DOT grant programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program ○ The Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program ○ The Nationally Significant Freight & Highway Projects Program (INFRA) ○ The National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program (MEGA) ○ The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program ○ The National Culvert Removal, Replacement and Restoration Grant Program

FUNDING

General

- Up to a combined total of \$3.4 million available for FY 2022nd FY 2023
- Individual awards expected to range from \$150,000 up to the program limit of \$320,000 for FY 2022 and \$360,000 for FY 2023
- No more than 20% of available funding per fiscal year will be awarded for projects in a single state (for this round of funding)
- \$1.6 million of Program funds (\$800,000 per fiscal year) set aside for grants to tribal entities

Cost-Sharing

- There is no requirement for cost sharing or matching the grant funds in this program

APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

Application

- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling, first come, first-served, basis until available funding is expended or notice is superseded
 - Application window – August 14th – September 27th, 2023
 - Funding may be fully committed before the application open period concludes
- Applicants must use the web-based application form to submit their applications

Criteria

- Appropriateness of services requested
 - the current state of the project's development.
 - whether the proposed tasks are appropriate for the current state of the project's development.
 - the likelihood that the requested services will materially advance the project's development.
- Viability of grant funds requested
 - for applicants seeking to procure advisory services: whether the applicant has obtained bids or quotes for the requested services, and the applicant's experience procuring advisory services in the past
 - for applicants seeking to hire staff for this task: their organization's hiring process (i.e. do they have a defined job description for this task, process for recruitment)
 - the source and amount of funding the applicant intends to commit (if any) as a contribution to the overall cost of the services being proposed. (The addition of local funding will not influence the rating of this criterion.)

PROJECT AGREEMENT

A grant agreement between the grantee and the Bureau will be completed for grant awardees. Grants are reimbursable, meaning that the recipient will be reimbursed after-the-fact for agreed-upon eligible expenses as set forth in the grant agreement. The recipient may request reimbursement from the Government on a monthly basis for eligible expenses incurred. Expenses incurred prior to signature of the grant agreement are

not eligible for reimbursement under this Program unless prior authorization is obtained from the Bureau in writing.

SAMPLE TASKS

Sample list of tasks that are eligible to be funded through the grant program (example list and not all inclusive)

Financial Services	Technical Services	Legal Services
Revenue forecasting	Project planning	Statutory and regulatory framework analysis
Economic assessments and cost-benefit analyses	Feasibility studies	Drafting and negotiation of concession agreements
Value for money analysis and procurement options	Environmental review and permitting	Drafting and negotiation of interagency agreements
Evaluating opportunities for private financing and project bundling	Preliminary engineering and design	Procurement support
Financial feasibility analysis; funding and financing options analysis	Funding application assistance	
Evaluation of costs to sustain the project (such as operations and maintenance costs)	Public engagement	
	Property development and land use feasibility analysis	
	Public benefit studies	
	Cost estimation	

PENNDOT ROLE

PennDOT Emphasis

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is a generational investment in the nation’s transportation system and should be within reach for all eligible applicants. PennDOT, seeks to work with rural and tribal organizations to ensure that they have the necessary assistance to apply for the various discretionary grant programs. The Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program provides these partners the opportunity to grow their capacity, either internally or through a third-party, to prepare and develop projects which are/will be eligible for US DOT discretionary grant funding. Rural and Tribal communities in Pennsylvania have the opportunity to build their capacity to apply for US DOT grant funding.

PennDOT Support

Transportation Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Account:

RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov.

PennDOT will consider providing support for grant applications on a case-by-case basis.

The deadline for requesting PennDOT support through the above email address is two weeks prior to the application deadline (may vary due to the nearly 8-week application window) – begin July 31, 2023; end September 13, 2023.