



RAISE Grants

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity

How to Compete for FY 2021 RAISE Transportation Discretionary Grants: Planning Grants

Presented by:
Office of the Under Secretary
for Policy
United States Department of
Transportation



Welcome: FY 2021 RAISE How to Compete Webinar

Audio

Via Computer – No Action Needed

Via Telephone - Call 1-888-808-6929

Passcode: 1203007

Presenters

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+ 2021 RAISE Grant Applications

- Notice of Funding Opportunity-
<https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-nofo>
- Apply – www.Grants.gov
- Due Date – **July 12, 2021** at 5:00 PM Eastern



RAISE Grants

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity

\$1 billion multimodal, merit-based, competitive discretionary grant program for surface transportation infrastructure

Previously known as TIGER and BUILD

Modal and geographic diversity requirement



+ What are the Characteristics of the RAISE Grant Program?

- Significant Local or Regional Impact
- Public Entity Eligibility
- Encourages Partnership
- Merit-Based Awards
- Not more than 50 percent of funds will be awarded to projects located in urban and rural areas, respectively
- **Up to \$30 million for eligible planning and preconstruction activities**, including at least \$10 million to Areas of Persistent Poverty



+ RAISE Grant Basics

Eligible Applicants

- State governments
- Local and Tribal governments
- U.S. territories
- Transit agencies
- Port authorities
- MPOs
- Other public subdivisions of State or local governments

Eligible Projects*

- Planning and pre-construction activities for any of these:**
- Highway, bridge, or other road project
 - Public transportation projects
 - Passenger and freight rail projects
 - Port infrastructure investments
 - Intermodal projects
 - Transportation facilities on tribal land

*Include but not limited to



+ Examples of Eligible Planning Projects

- Pre-construction activities that do not use for RAISE FY 2021 funding for construction
- Design and engineering
- Environmental studies and permitting
- Traffic forecasting, studies, alternatives analysis, economic analysis
- Local or regional plans, statewide studies, etc.



+ RAISE Planning Grant Basics

Cont'd

Eligible Cost Share/Match

Federal cost share
up to 80% in
urban areas

Federal cost share
up to 100% in

- Rural areas and
- Areas of Persistent Poverty

Minimum Awards

No minimum
award for
planning grants

Maximum Award

\$25 million per
project

\$100 million per
State

Not more than 50% of total funding (for capital and planning grants combined) will be awarded to projects located in urban and rural areas, respectively





Urban & Rural Definitions



U.S. Census
Bureau
2010
population

URBAN:

Urbanized Area with
Population Greater
than 200,000

RURAL:

All Other Projects -
Urbanized Area with
Population Less than
200,000

-Outside an
Urbanized Area
(including Urban
Cluster)

- If a planning project covers some urban area and some rural area- the project will be classified based on where the *majority* of the future capital project funds would be expended. Please describe your assessment in the application.



+ Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP) Definition

- This definition affects **two aspects of the program:**
 - At least \$10 million in planning grant funds will be for projects that are located in, or are to directly benefit, an APP
 - The Secretary may increase the Federal share above 80 percent to pay for the costs of a planning project that is located in, or is to directly benefit, an APP.
- A project is located in an Areas of Persistent Poverty if:
 - the **county** in which the project is located consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty in all three of the following datasets: (a) the 1990 decennial census; (b) the 2000 decennial census; and (c) the 2019 Small Area Income Poverty Dataset), **OR**
 - the **census tract** in which the project is located has a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014-2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census; **OR**
 - the project is located in **any territory or possession** of the United States.
- DOT lists all counties and census tracts that meet this definition:
<https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-areas-persistent-poverty>





Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP)

Once you have determined your State, County, and Census Tract, click the Filters tab in the top right of the Tool. Input your State, County, and Census Tract. This will populate columns A, B, and C. Columns E("COUNTY Meets Definition?") and F ("CENSUS TRACT Meets Definition?") will provide a Yes/No answer to if your County OR Census Tract meets the definition of an Area of Persistent Poverty. If either the County or Census Tract meets the definition, the project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty.

					▼ Filters
A. State	B. County	C. Census Tract Name	E. COUNTY Meets Definition?	F. CENSUS TRACT Meets Definition?	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 201	No	No	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 202	No	No	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 203	No	No	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 204	No	No	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 205	No	No	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 206	No	Yes	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 207	No	Yes	
Alabama	Autauga County	Census Tract 208.01	No	No	

- A Census tract could meet the definition even if the County does not.
- A project that is only partially within an APP will be designated based on where a majority of the future capital project funds will be expended.
- Also please note that projects may qualify if they are not located fully within, but directly benefit, an APP. This must be demonstrated in the application.



+ What Projects Compete Well?

Project demonstrates clear, direct, significant, and positive local or regional impact relative to the merit criteria

The expected benefits appear reasonable and justifiable

Project has specific timeline for completion

Presents a clear story walking through the challenges addressed by the project and details the project impact

DOT considers the merits of the eventual project(s) to be planned



+ What Projects Compete Well?

Project is expected to result in good-paying jobs, improve safety, apply transformative technology.

Explicitly considered climate change and racial equity in the planning and design stage.

Emphasizes improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation, particularly for underserved and overburdened communities.



+ Application Content

- SF-424
- Project Information Form
- The Department recommends that the project narrative follow the basic outline:
 - I. Project Description
 - II. Project Location
 - III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Use of Project Funding
 - IV. Merit Criteria
 - V. Project Readiness Information



+ RAISE Evaluation Considerations

Does the project to be planned align well with the merit criteria?

- Is the information clear and credible?
- Does it have significant local and regional impact?
- *The Dept. is considering the merits of the project to be planned.*

Does the project demonstrate readiness in terms of:

- Technical feasibility and capacity
- Funding and financial readiness (obligating funds by September 30, 2024)



+ RAISE 2021 Evaluation Teams

DOT Evaluation Teams
for Planning Grants:

**Merit Criteria
Review**

**Project
Readiness**

Senior Review

Final funding awards are decided by the Secretary.



+ Planning Grants FAQs

- What activities can planning grants fund?
 - Pre-construction activities that do not directly lead to construction with FY 2021 RAISE grant funding.
 - Design, engineering, local or regional plans, statewide studies, etc.
 - Right-of-way acquisition. (This is considered a capital grant.)
 - May not fund construction activities. (Projects with combined planning and capital activities are classified as capital grants.)

- How will they be evaluated?
 - Against the Merit Criteria and Project Readiness (technical, financial) Criteria
 - NO Benefit-Cost Analysis
 - NO Environmental Risk

- How many planning awards will be made?
 - Department will award up to \$30 million in planning grants, including at least \$10 million to Areas of Persistent Poverty
 - The 50% award limit for urban/rural areas applies to the total pool of planning and capital grants, so there is not a specific urban/rural breakdown for planning projects.



+ Planning Grants FAQs cont'd

- What timelines apply for planning grants?
 - Award Announcements: Late November 2021
 - Obligation:
 - Defined as execution of a grant agreement after some administrative steps, SOW is agreed upon, and funding is in place.
 - *Must* occur prior to September 30, 2024
 - *Could* occur much earlier- from Early 2022 to September 2024
 - Expenditure:
 - Funds *must not be* expended prior to obligation unless approved in writing by the DOT after award announcement.
 - *Must* be completed/expended prior to September 30, 2029. They could be completed much earlier.

- Are Planning Grant applications required to submit a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)?
 - No. Planning applications do not need to submit a BCA.



+ RAISE Merit Criteria

Applications should address each criterion or expressly state that the project does not address the criterion.



+ Merit Criterion: Safety

The application should demonstrate the extent to which the project impacts:

Safe movement of goods and people

Occurrence of crashes, injuries, and fatalities

Safe highway/rail grade crossings

Preventing releases of hazardous materials



+ Merit Criterion:

Environmental Sustainability

The application should demonstrate the extent to which the project:

Improves energy efficiency, reduces emissions, avoids or mitigates environmental impacts

Explicitly considered climate change and environmental justice in the planning and design stage, particularly in communities that disproportionately experience climate change consequences

Incorporates electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure

Reduces air or water pollution, recycles or redevelops brownfield sites

Results in a modal shift that reduces emissions

Directly supports the renewable energy supply chain

Increases resiliency and disaster preparedness



+ Merit Criterion: Quality of Life

The application should demonstrate the extent to which the project:

Increases transportation choices and equity for individuals, such as by providing new or improved walking, biking, and rolling access for the disabled

Expands access to essential services for communities across the United States, particularly for underserved or disadvantaged communities

Improves connectivity to essential services such as jobs and healthcare

Proactively addresses racial equity and barriers to opportunity, through the planning process or design elements.

Includes physical-barrier-mitigating land bridges, caps, lids, linear parks, and multimodal mobility investments create new connections and opportunities communities that are underserved by transportation;



+ Merit Criterion: Economic Competitiveness

The application should demonstrate the extent to which the project will:

Improve long-term efficiency, reliability or affordability in the movement of workers or goods

Offer significant regional and national improvements in economic strength by increasing the economic productivity of land, capital, or labor, and improving the economic strength of regions and cities;

Result in long-term job creation and/or directly results in good-paying jobs through implementation (e.g. project utilizes union labor or local hiring provisions);

Help the United States compete in a global economy by facilitating efficient and reliable freight movement



+ Merit Criterion: State of Good Repair

The application should discuss the extent to which the project addresses some or all of the following:

Plans for maintenance of facilities and system that address current and projected vulnerabilities

Threats/consequences if infrastructure is left unimproved

Asset management that optimizes long-term cost structure

Sustainable revenue for overall life-cycle costs



+ Merit Criterion: Partnership

The application should discuss:

Strong collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders in project development and funding, including among neighboring or regional jurisdictions, and with the private sector.

Equity-focused community outreach and public engagement in the project's planning in underserved communities

Coordination with economic development, affordable housing projects, water and waste infrastructure, power and electric infrastructure, broadband and land use plans and policies or other public service efforts



+ Merit Criterion:

Innovation: Technology, Delivery, Financing

The application should demonstrate the use of innovative strategies related to:

Safety, particularly in relation to automated vehicles or ITS; includes work zone data exchanges

Technology, including operational performance of transportation systems and broadband deployment,

Innovative project delivery, including public-private partnerships (P3s), local hiring provisions, etc.

Environmental permitting and review to accelerate project delivery and achieve improved outcomes for communities and the environment

Funding and finance, including by use of private sector financing or congestion pricing



+ Project Readiness- Financial Capacity Review

- The applicant should include a detailed project budget that identifies all sources of funding, including RAISE funds, non-Federal funds, and other/private funds.
- Applicant should demonstrate through letters of support, STIP/TIP documents, or other means, that the funding arrangement is certain and the project will be able to meet the deadline for obligation, **September 30, 2024**.



+ Application Pitfalls

Ineligibility: applicants
and projects

Priorities/outcomes not
aligned with merit
criteria

Lack of evidence
substantiating project
outcomes claims in
narrative

Insufficient evidence of
project readiness

Not providing
statutorily-mandated
match (for urban
projects)

Uncertain urban/rural
designation



+ Project Delivery: What Should Successful Applicants Expect

RAISE 2021 Announcements by November 22, 2021

RAISE 2021 Modal Project Assignments

Negotiations Initiated

This is not a lump sum award; this is a reimbursement program

Sign/Execute Grant Agreement (obligation)

Any costs incurred prior to DOT's obligation of funds are ineligible for reimbursement unless authorized by DOT in writing after DOT's announcement of FY 2021 RAISE awards

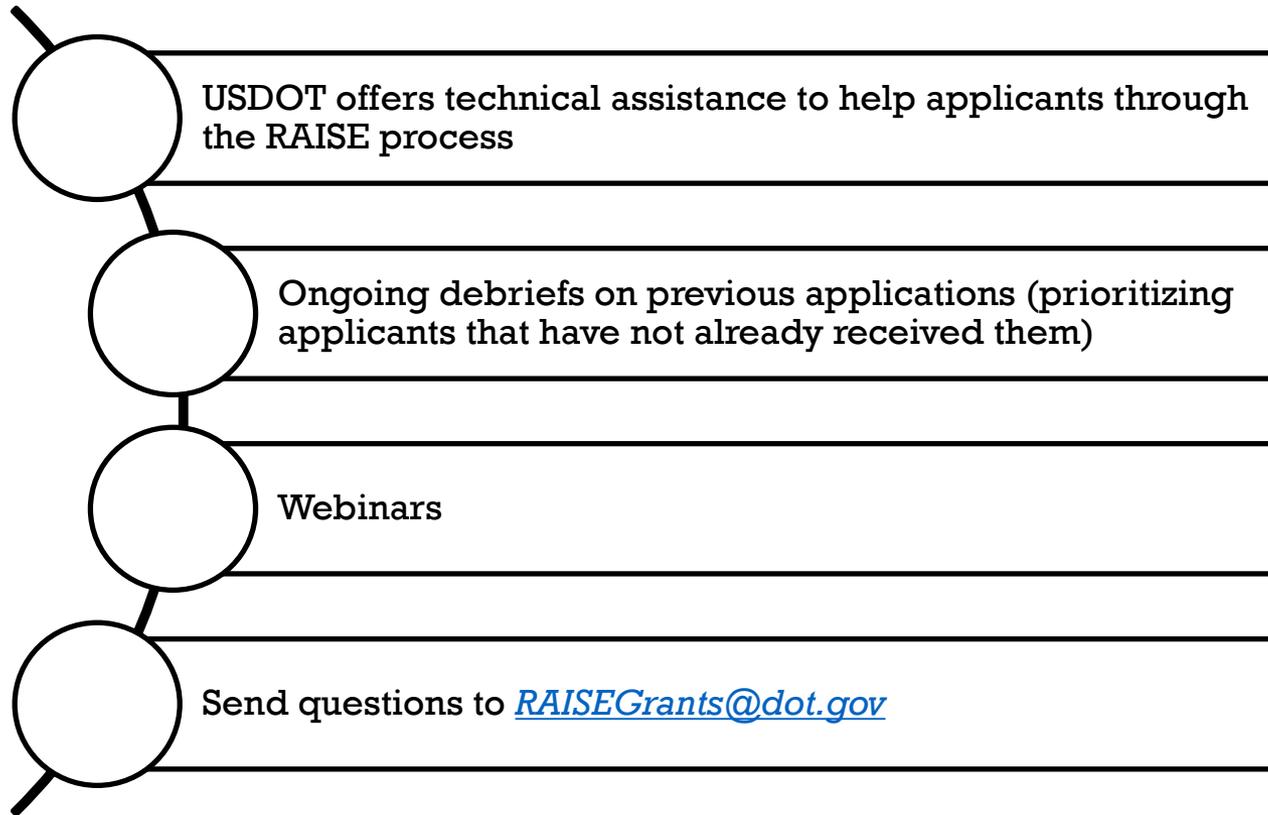
Reporting Requirements/Project Modifications

Project Completion/Close-Out

Performance Monitoring



+ Technical Assistance



+ Additional Application Help

- RAISE Website:

- www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants

- Webinars and Frequently Asked Questions:

- www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach

- www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/2021-raise-application-faqs





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