



FHWA Discretionary Grant Opportunity

Congestion Relief Program

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the Congestion Relief Program, administered by the Federal Highway Administration to provide discretionary grants to eligible entities. The funding is intended to advance innovative, integrated and multimodal solutions to relieve congestion in the most congested metropolitan areas of the United States.

The goals of the program are to reduce highway congestion, reduce economic and environmental costs associated with congestion (including transportation emissions), and optimize existing highway capacity and usage of highway and transit systems. These goals will be accomplished by:

- Improving intermodal integration with highways, highway operations and highway performance
- Reducing or shifting highway users to off-peak travel times or to non-highway travel modes during peak travel times
- Pricing of parking, roadway usage (including designated geographic zones), and/or congestion

This grant summary describes this grant opportunity. More information, including the complete NOFO, is available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and from [FHWA grant program webpage](#).

Project Cost and Award Size

For this opportunity, up to \$150 million in Program and Planning funding is available. The minimum grant award is \$10 million with a maximum award of \$150 million. There is a minimum non-federal funding match requirement of 20%. Therefore, the minimum total project cost is \$12,500,000.

Expenditure Timeframes

The obligation deadline for FY 2024 funds is September 30, 2027. There is no statutory expenditure deadline.

March 18, 2024



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Applications Due:

April 22, 2024
11:59 p.m. EDT

Must be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

Scan to see our current Grant Program Summaries:



Eligible Recipients

Entities eligible to apply for a Program grant are a:

- State
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- City, county or municipality

All projects must be located in an urbanized area with a population of more than 1,000,000.

Merit Criteria

The program will consider the following merit criteria in evaluating applications:

- Character of congestion and associated Impacts
- Congestion management and alignment with program goals and the administrative priority for considering climate change
- Safety
- Public engagement, collaboration and partnerships
- Equity and Justice40

FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

PROGRAM PROJECTS

After completing the merit review, FHWA will prioritize program projects that meet one or more of the following:

- But for the award of a Program grant, the applicant would not be able to begin or complete the proposed project.
- The project can begin (Program grant funds can be obligated) within six months of the date of the Program grant award is announced.
- The project includes innovative, integrated, multimodal solutions to congestion relief with the required congestion management process.
- The project includes local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms.
- The project demonstrates clear utilization of local and economics hiring preferences that ensure works on the project come from economically disadvantaged communities.

PLANNING PROJECTS

For Planning-only projects, the application should address FHWA Priorities in the following manner:

- But for the award of a Program grant, the applicant would not be able to begin or complete the proposed project.
- The project can begin (Program grant funds can be obligated) within six months of the date of the Program grant award is announced.
- The project will include consideration of innovative, integrated, multimodal solutions to congestion relief consistent with the required congestion management process.
- The project includes local inclusive economic development and entrepreneurship such as the utilization of DBE, Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms.
- The project demonstrates clear utilization of local and economic hiring preferences that ensure workers on the project come from economically disadvantaged communities.

ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES AND USDOT STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Projects should support the Administration's priorities and USDOT strategic plan goals which include:

- Safety
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Equity and Justice40
- Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation

DEGREE OF RECURRENT CONGESTION

Applicants should address the degree of recurrent congestion in the urbanized area in which the proposed project is located. This information will be used to assess the responsiveness of an application to the statutorily required project selection priority.





Review and Selection Process

FHWA will conduct an application intake and eligibility review by providing an initial screening based on the statutory eligibility criteria. Only eligible projects will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria and Project Readiness, and responsiveness to the statutorily required project selection priority (degree of recurrent congestion) and FHWA Priority Selection Considerations.

Grant Administration

If the successful applicant is a state department of transportation or if a state DOT will serve as a pass-through entity to a non-state DOT entity, program funds will be awarded upon the execution of a project agreement, which is a type of grant agreement for administration of funds to a state DOT in the Fiscal Management Information System.

If the successful applicant is a non-state DOT, funds will be awarded upon the execution of a grant agreement with FHWA. A determination will be made if the successful applicant will administer the project or, at the request of the successful applicant, an applicable state DOT will administer the project.

Interstate Tolling Authority

The program allows tolling under the following circumstances:

- For eligible projects awarded under this Program
- For up to 10 of the urbanized areas
- Provided that the project meets the requirements for interstate tolling under this Program, including:
 - Provided that the project meets the requirements for interstate tolling under the Program, including:
 - The purpose for tolling is aligned with Program goals
 - State and local authority to toll, as applicable, is verified
 - Tolling rates comply with limits that the Program sets
 - Use of toll revenues comply with limits that the Program sets and;
 - Such tolling would not cause a significant impact on safety and mobility within the urbanized area (an FHWA determination).The program allows tolling under the following circumstances:
- Applicants must request Federal authority under this Program for projects with tolling on the Interstate System
- The Application must include the following information:
 - Verifiable evidence that the applicant has State and local tolling authority, as applicable;
 - Project status on compliance with Federal Planning Requirements and the NEPA review
 - A mobility and safety analysis for FHWA to determine that the proposed tolling would not cause a significant impact on mobility and safety in the urbanized area and;
 - A signed declaration to comply with the Program's tolling requirements

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

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

Nathan Macek | nathan.macek@hdrinc.com | **Andrew Cadmus** | andrew.cadmus@hdrinc.com | **David Ungemah** | david.ungemah@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com

We practice increased use of sustainable materials and reduction of material use.

© HDR, all rights reserved.

