



USDOT Discretionary Grants Opportunity

National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program (Culvert AOP Program)

The **Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage Program** (authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Program) will meaningfully improve or restore passage for anadromous fish and make needed weir improvements.

Anadromous fish migrate from freshwater rivers to the ocean and back to spawn in their natal streams. The program will be administered by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in line with the Administration and USDOT policies and orders, including the America the Beautiful Initiative, Climate Action Plan, and Equity Action Plan. Projects will be prioritized if the project opens more than 200 meters of upstream (anadromous) habitat, facilitates the passage of fish around or over a weir, includes weir improvements, or has a transportation aspect.

Eligible entities should consider the following to align with goals of USDOT's Strategic Plan:

- Safety
- Economic Strength
- Equity
- Conservation
- Climate and Sustainability
- Transformation
- Organizational Excellence

USDOT Seeks to Prioritize Funding For:

- Projects to replace, remove, or repair culverts that would improve or restore fish passages for anadromous fish
- Projects to replace, remove, or repair weirs that would improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish (infrastructure to facilitate fish passage around or over the weir and weir improvements)
- Projects that would improve fish passage for anadromous fish listed on the endangered and threatened species list, fish identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that could potentially become endangered or threatened, fish identified by the NMFS and USFWS as prey for endangered species, fish identified by NMFS and USFWS as climate resilient stocks and projects that would open up more than 200 meters of upstream (anadromous) habitat
- Projects that have a transportation aspect such as being near a road or railway



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are to be received no later than:

**February 6, 2023,
at 11:59 pm ET.**

Grant Award Size and Non-Federal Match

Up to \$196 million is available for eligible entities and projects to be funded. USDOT states that hundreds of projects will be awarded under the Culvert AOP Program and award amounts will range from \$100,000 to \$2 million.

For a state or local government, there is a maximum federal share of 80% while applicants are required to provide a minimum share of 20%. Previously incurred costs or encumbered funds will not be allowed to be included in the matching requirement.

Tribes are not required to provide a cost share or matching funds.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for funding through this program:

- State
- Unit of local government
- Tribe

Statutory Evaluation Requirements

USDOT will evaluate all applications determined to be eligible and complete based on the criteria outlined below:

- Conservation benefits to anadromous fish
- Regional and watershed context
- Ecosystem benefits
- Project design and delivery methods
- Project monitoring and evaluation
- Climate change, sustainability, and resilience
- Equity and barriers to opportunity
- Other factors:
 - Project readiness
 - Environmental review and permitting risk
 - Applicant qualifications
 - Financial completeness



Application Requirements

The following sections must be included in the application submission:

- **Basic Project Information:** project description, location, and parties
- **Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of all Project Funding:** federal funds, detailed budget, grant funds, and sources/ use of project funds
- **Project Selection Criteria**
- **Project Readiness and Environmental Review and Permitting Risk:** technical feasibility, project schedule, required approvals (*environmental permits and reviews*), state and local approvals, assessment of project risks, and mitigation strategies
- **Scalable Project Options**
Applicants are encouraged to provide a description of back-up funding options in case grant funding from this program is not available (*for example, DOT gives funding for a portion of the submitted project. DOT wants to know how entities will fund the remaining parts of the project*)

Applications are due on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 11:59 pm ET.

HDR's experts — including fisheries biologists, engineers, economists, infrastructure finance, grant writers, and advisory services professionals — stand ready to support project sponsors applying for funding from the Culvert AOP Program.

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

Nathan Macek | nathan.macek@hdrinc.com

Aurah Landau | aurah.landau@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com

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

© HDR, all rights reserved.

