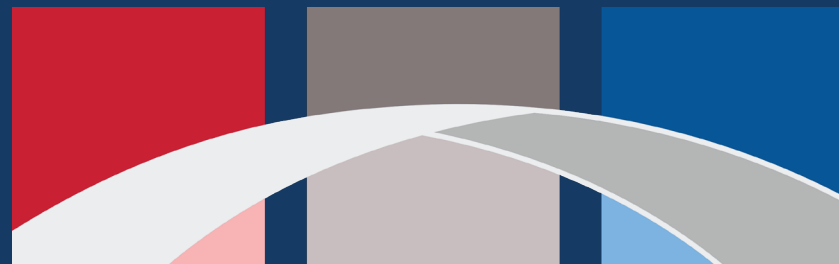




**U.S. Department  
of Transportation**



**BUILD AMERICA BUREAU**

Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot  
Program – Notice of Funding  
Opportunity Webinar

August 26, 2025

# Housekeeping

## Session Details

Today's session is being recorded

All participants automatically join on mute, with cameras off

## Questions for Presenters

Type questions in the Q&A box

## Technical Support

Email: [Webconferencing@dot.gov](mailto:Webconferencing@dot.gov)

## More Information

This presentation and recording will be posted to RTA's webpage within a week

<https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/RuralandTribalGrants>



Submit questions for panelists using the Q&A tool. Questions will be answered in Q&A tool or during Q&A time after the presentation

# Agenda

- Welcome and Remarks
- Speaker Remarks & Presentations
- Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program
- Q&A

# Today's Speakers



**James Crawford**  
Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs  
Office of Tribal Government Affairs



**Morteza Farajian**  
Executive Director  
Build America Bureau



**Lily Ballengee**  
Transportation Specialist  
Office of Infrastructure Deployment

# U.S. Department of Transportation

## Office of Tribal Government Affairs



# U.S. Department of Transportation

## Build America Bureau







RURAL OPPORTUNITIES TO  
USE TRANSPORTATION FOR  
ECONOMIC SUCCESS

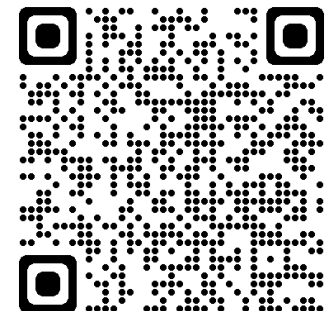
# ROUTES

**Contact Us!**

[Rural@dot.gov](mailto:Rural@dot.gov)

[www.transportation.gov/rural](http://www.transportation.gov/rural)

**Subscribe to ROUTES newsletter →**





# About the ROUTES Initiative

*The Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) Initiative aims to address disparities in rural transportation infrastructure and improve safety, mobility, and economic competitiveness nationwide.*

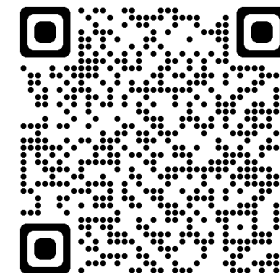


The ROUTES Office seeks to:

**Engage Rural Communities** through a series of events to better understand the needs and priorities of rural communities and collect essential data from stakeholders representing different communities, groups, workers, and industries to identify solutions.


**Harmonize DOT Programs** to implement rural policy by establishing the ROUTES Council to lead and coordinate Departmental activities and better align new and existing funding, financing, and technical assistance programs with the needs of rural and Tribal communities.

**Utilize a Whole-of-Government Approach** by partnering with other rural-focused federal agencies to expand DOT's presence in rural America, better promote Departmental resources to their customers, and capitalize on synergies between federal funding programs.





# One-Stop-Shop for Rural Resources



U.S. Department of Transportation

ABOUT DOT ▾ PRIORITIES ▾ CONNECT ▾

[Home](#) \ [Mission](#) \ [Office of Secretary](#) \ [Office of the Under Secretary for Policy](#) \ [ROUTES](#)

ROUTES

About

Statistics


Grants ▸

Electric Vehicles ▸

Modal Administrations ▸

Contact ROUTES

**Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES)**



Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) is an initiative to address disparities in rural transportation infrastructure by developing user-friendly tools and information, aggregating DOT resources, and providing technical assistance. The ROUTES Initiative aims to ensure rural transportation infrastructure's unique challenges are considered in order to meet priority transportation goals of safety, mobility, and economic competitiveness.

Read our newly released [Rural EV Infrastructure Toolkit](#), which was developed as part of the ROUTES Initiative to help rural communities plan and fund electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

**The ROUTES Initiative is established to...**

- **Engage Rural Communities** through a series of events to better understand their transportation needs and priorities, and to collect essential data from stakeholders representing different communities, groups, workers, and industries to identify necessary transportation solutions.
- **Harmonize DOT Programs** to implement rural policy by re-constituting the ROUTES Council to lead and coordinate Departmental activities to implement the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) and better align new and existing funding, financing, and technical assistance programs with the needs of rural and Tribal communities.
- **Utilize a Whole-of-Government Approach** by partnering with other rural-focused federal agencies and regional commissions to expand DOT's presence in rural America, better promote DOT's resources to their customers, and capitalize on synergies between federal funding programs.

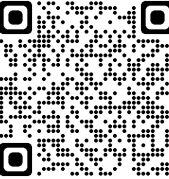
**The Rural Transportation Network is Critical for Our Economy**

- Rural transportation networks are critically important for domestic production and export of agriculture,

**Contact Us**

ROUTES Initiative  
Office of the Under Secretary for Policy  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590  
United States  
Email: [rural@dot.gov](mailto:rural@dot.gov)  
Phone: 202-366-4544  
Business Hours:  
8:30am-5:00pm ET, M-F

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access



## Webinars

- Benefit Cost Analyses for Rural Projects
- TIFIA Rural Projects Initiative
- Transit Resources

## Tools and Toolkits

- Rural Eligibility Map
- Point of Contact Map
- Grant Applicant Toolkit
- Competitive Grants Dashboard

## Funding Opportunities

- Active & Upcoming NOFOs
- Links to Past Awards

## Modal Specific Landing Pages

## Newsletters

# Build America Bureau

## Helping Communities Accelerate Infrastructure

Partnering to help America efficiently and cost-effectively deploy transformative infrastructure through innovative funding, financing, and delivery solutions

### Financial Solutions

Loans and tax-exempt bonds for a wide range of project types and borrowers, including public-private partnerships

### Technical Assistance

Workshops, education, and capacity building for innovative project planning, development, and delivery solutions

# Organization and Roles

## U.S. Department of Transportation

### Office of the Under Secretary of Transportation

#### **Build America Bureau**

- |                        |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Outreach             | • Risk and Financial Management |
| • Technical Assistance | • Underwriting                  |
| • Project Development  | • Portfolio Management          |

#### Operating Administrations

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Federal Highway Administration  | • Federal Aviation Administration |
| • Federal Transit Administration  | • Maritime Administration         |
| • Federal Railroad Administration |                                   |

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| • Regional staff, liaisons | • Planning, environment,<br>construction experts |
| • Grant money              |  |

# Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

## Innovative Finance and Asset Concessions

- Helping project sponsors identify publicly owned, underutilized assets with potential to generate revenue or economic development
- Increasing local capacity to use innovative financing and project delivery tools, and form strong partnerships with the private sector

## Regional Infrastructure Accelerators

- Building capacity at local level to incubate good projects and accelerate delivery through innovative approaches
- Assistance for project planning, studies and analysis, revenue forecasting, preliminary engineering and design, and statutory and regulatory compliance analyses

## Rural and Tribal Assistance

- Helping communities with early-stage development of transportation solutions and tools to access federal funding and financing and accelerate infrastructure projects that provide transportation, economic, climate, equity, and other benefits

## Thriving Communities

- Supporting project planning, scoping, development, design, and delivery
- Capacity Builders work with TCP recipients to develop work plans for targeted technical assistance and direct sub-granting to communities

# Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program (RTA)

Five-year pilot program that funds financial, technical, and legal assistance to states and rural and tribal communities.

## **Now Available: \$54.2 million**

- \$20 million for Tribal applicants
- No local match required



**Grants are first-come, first-served, with a simplified application beginning September 8 at 2:00p.m. ET until October 8 at 11:59p.m. ET.**



# RTA Grant Eligibility - Applicants

## Eligible Applicant

- Local government or State government on behalf of a project—
  - Not in a Census Bureau 2020 designated urban area.
  - OR--
  - In a Census Bureau 2020 designated urban area with a population of 150,000 or less.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

## Eligible Project

- Reasonably expected to be eligible for one or more of the following programs:
  - TIFIA
  - RRIF
  - INFRA
  - Mega
  - BUILD
  - National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration

# RTA Grant Eligibility – Local Governments

## Eligible Applicant

- **Local government** or State government on behalf of a project—
  - Not in a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area.
  - OR--
  - In a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area with a population of 150,000 or less.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
- **Town, township, parish, city, borough, county**
- **Local public authority (including transit agency)**
- **Special district**
- **School district**
- **Council of governments, planning district commission, metropolitan planning organization, rural planning organization**

# RTA Grant Eligibility – State Governments

## Eligible Applicant

- Local government or State government on behalf of a project—
  - Not in a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area.
  - OR--
  - In a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area with a population of 150,000 or less.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

In addition to the 50 states, includes:

- Puerto Rico
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Guam
- American Samoa
- Northern Mariana Islands

# RTA Grant Eligibility – Federally Recognized Indian Tribes

## Eligible Applicant

- Local government or State government on behalf of a project—
  - Not in a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area.
  - OR--
  - In a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area with a population of 150,000 or less.
- **Federally Recognized Indian Tribes**
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

Check eligibility at  
[www.usa.gov/tribes](http://www.usa.gov/tribes)

# RTA Grant Eligibility - Projects

## Eligible Applicant

- Local government or State government on behalf of a project—
  - Not in a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area.
  - OR--
  - In a Census Bureau 2020-designated urban area with a population of 150,000 or less.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

## Eligible Project

- Reasonably expected to be eligible for one or more of the following programs:
  - TIFIA
  - RRIF
  - INFRA
  - Mega
  - BUILD
  - National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration



# RTA Grant Eligible Activities

Technical	Financial	Legal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feasibility studies</li><li>• Project planning</li><li>• Preliminary design and engineering</li><li>• Environmental review</li><li>• Property development and land use feasibility analysis</li><li>• Public outreach</li><li>• Cost estimation</li><li>• Public benefit studies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revenue forecasting</li><li>• Economic assessments and cost-benefit analyses</li><li>• Value for money analysis and procurement options</li><li>• Evaluating opportunities for private financing and project bundling</li><li>• Financial feasibility analysis; funding and financing options analysis</li><li>• Evaluation of costs to sustain project (such as operations and maintenance costs)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statutory and regulatory analysis</li><li>• Drafting and negotiation of concession agreements</li><li>• Drafting and negotiation of interagency agreements</li><li>• Procurement support</li></ul>

# Sample Categories of Projects

- Highway projects, bridges, and tunnels
- Public transportation projects
- Freight rail projects
- Airport projects
- Wildlife crossing projects
- Highway-railway grade crossing or grade separation
- Surface transportation project within the boundaries or functionally connected to an international border crossing that improves a facility owned by Federal, State, or local government

*Projects should be reasonably expected to be eligible under the eligible projects listed above.*

# Round 1 Awards - Project Types

- Roadway
  - New road alignment (2)
  - Roadway safety improvements
  - Traffic impact analysis
  - Secondary evacuation route
- Bridge
  - New bridge
- Pedestrian
  - Separated pedestrian pathway and lighting
  - Trail connection
- Transit
  - Transit feasibility study
- Maritime
  - Port development (3)



# Notice of Funding Opportunity Amendments

Changes made to this NOFO from the previously amended NOFO include:

- Increasing program funding from \$27 million to \$54.2 million
- Increasing funding minimum of individual awards from \$200,000 to \$250,000
- Increasing funding maximum of individual awards from \$750,000 to \$2,500,000
- Increasing tribal set aside from \$10 million to \$20 million
- Eliminating the “Multi-Community” grant type

# Application

- Preview the application questions now on [RTA's webpage](#) or [grants.gov](#)
  - Best Practice: draft answers in advance to copy and paste into the application when the portal opens
- Web-based application form
  - No graphics
  - No attachments
  - No links
  - Word limits for most narrative questions
- 13 questions total
- Make sure UEI is correct and valid
- Be sure to refresh your browser while waiting for the portal to open



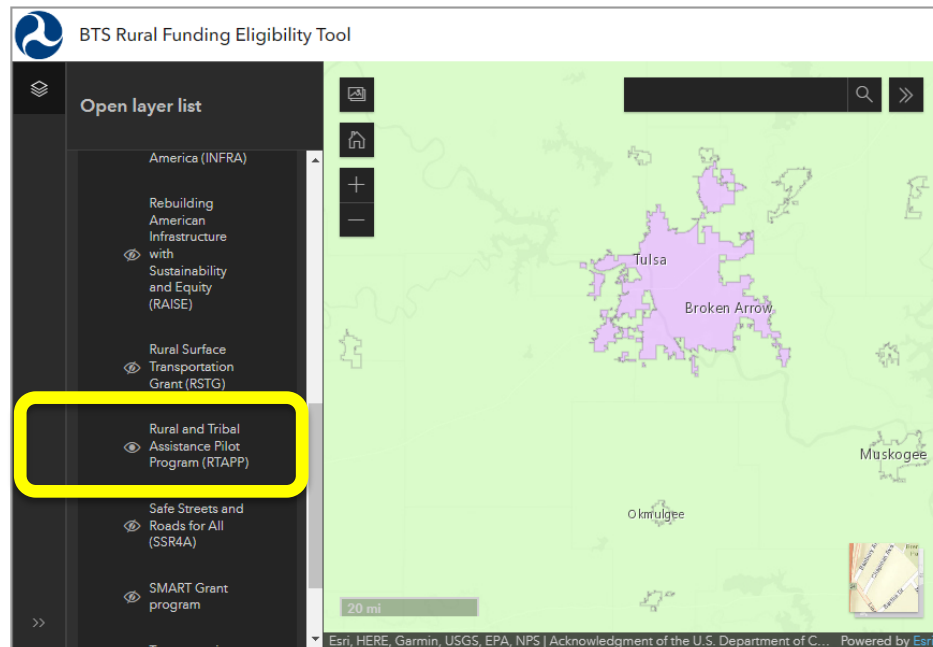
# How to Apply

- The application portal will **go live on September 8 at 2:00 p.m. ET**. Access the portal via RTA's webpage:  
[www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/RuralandTribalGrants](http://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/RuralandTribalGrants)
- **The portal will close on October 8 at 11:59 p.m. ET.**
- For any technical difficulties, contact [RuralandTribalTA@dot.gov](mailto:RuralandTribalTA@dot.gov)

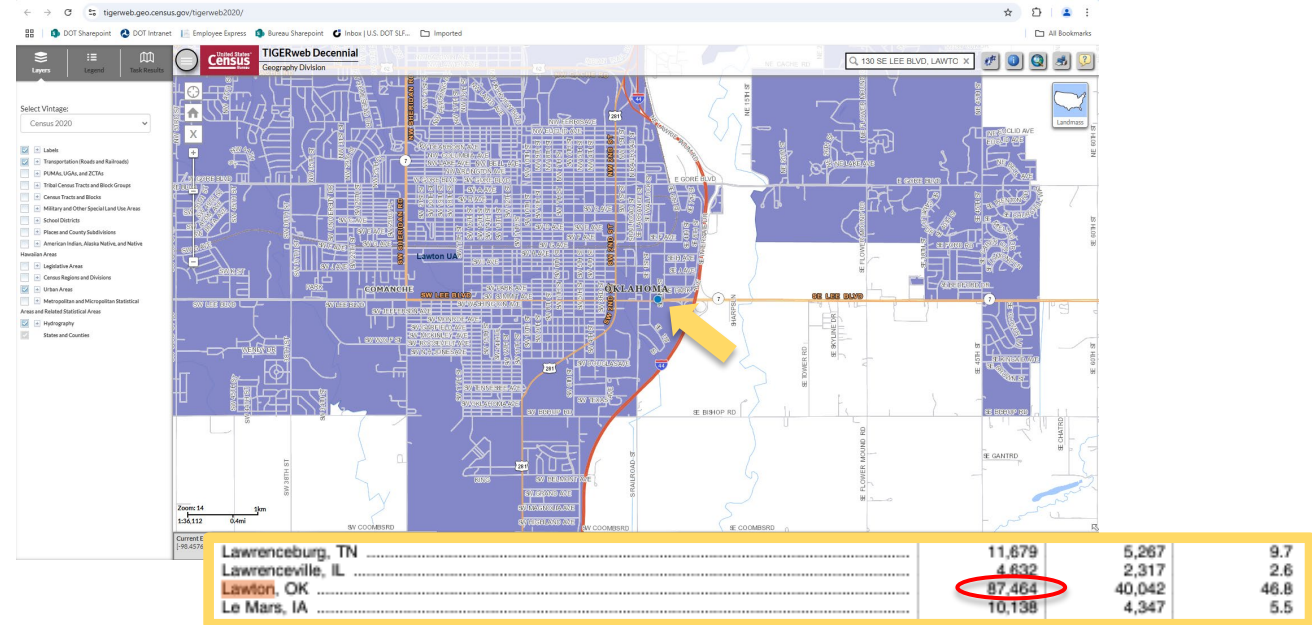
# Verifying Rural Eligibility

Not sure if your project is in a rural location?

For tools and resources, visit [RTA's webpage](https://www.transportation.gov/rural/eligibility) and [www.transportation.gov/rural/eligibility](https://www.transportation.gov/rural/eligibility)

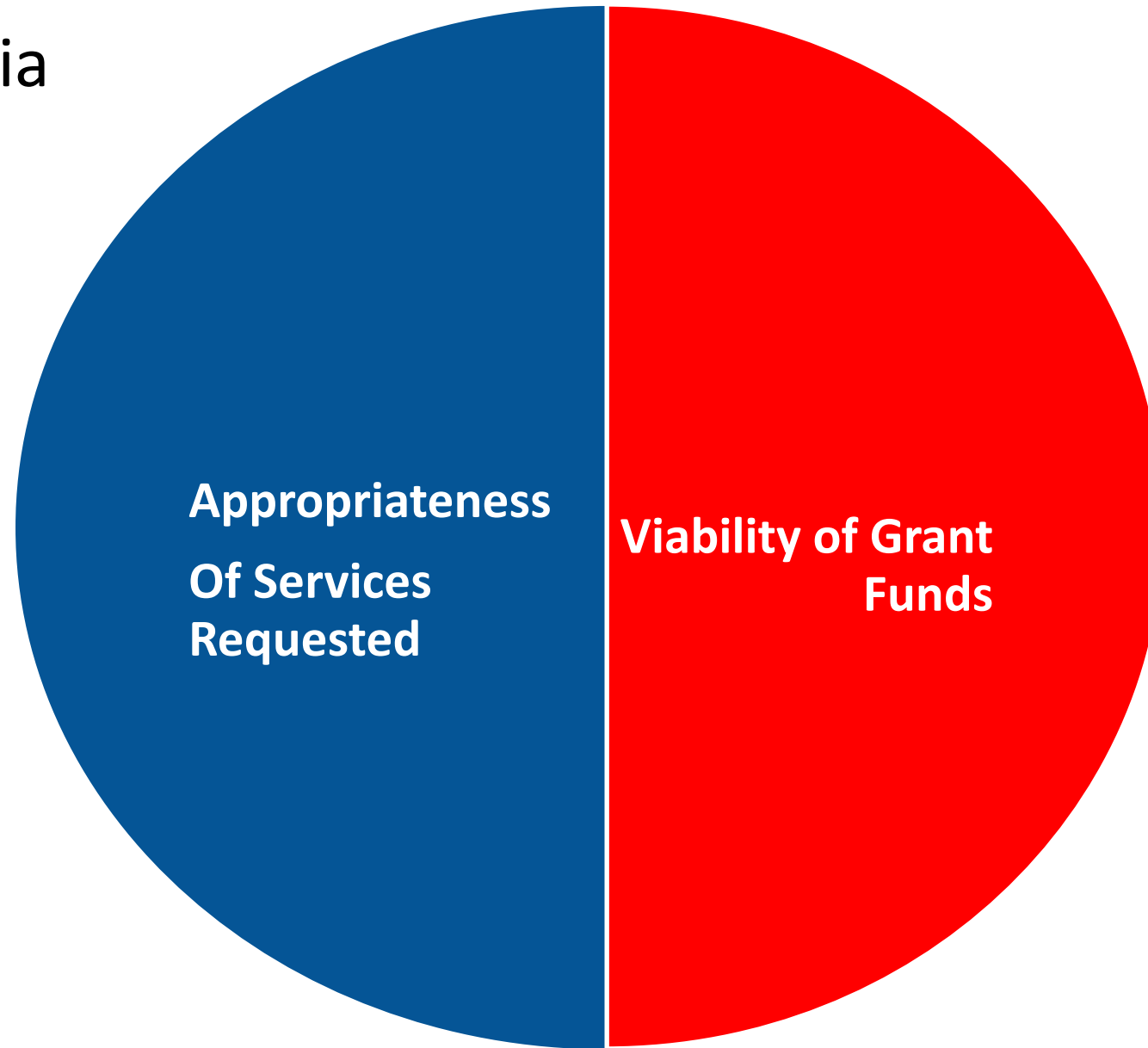


[Rural Eligibility Map Tool](#)

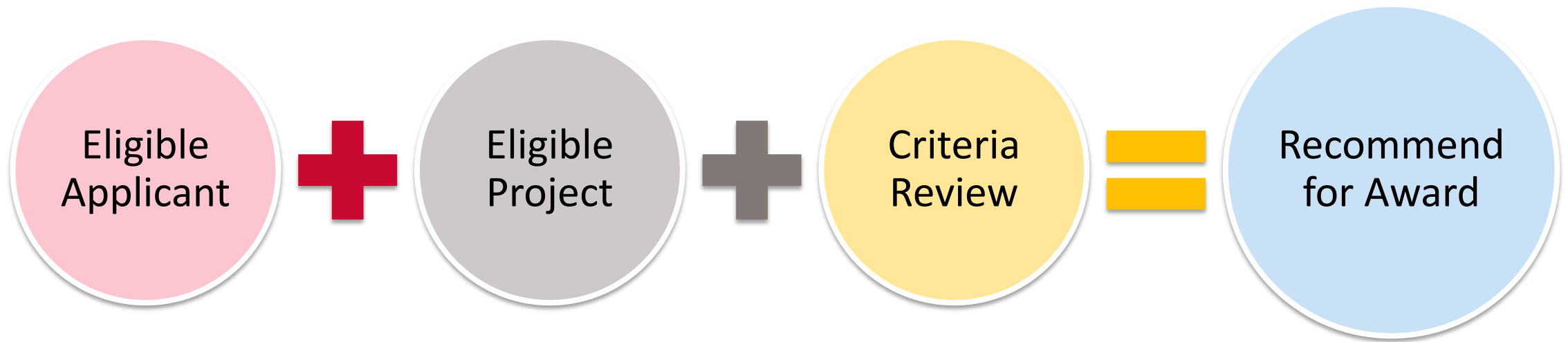


[TIGERweb Tool](#)

# Merit Criteria

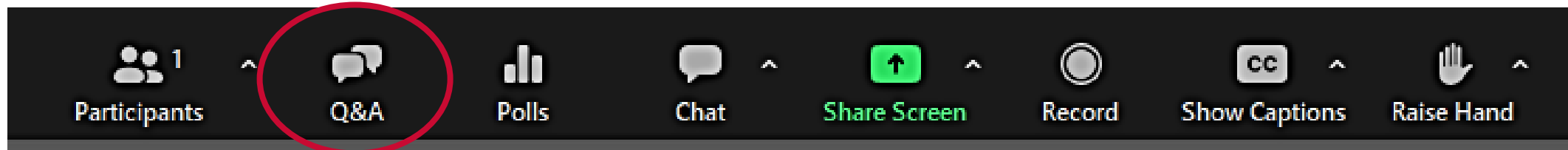


# Application Reviews and Awards



- Applications reviewed in order received
- State limit of 20 percent of available funding

# Questions and Answers



Submit questions for panelists using the Q&A tool. Questions will be answered in Q&A tool or during Q&A time after the presentation

- Please do not submit questions anonymously so we can follow up if needed.
- If we do not get to your question, we will try to answer via email next week.
- You may also submit questions by email to [RuralandTribalTA@dot.gov](mailto:RuralandTribalTA@dot.gov).



# Contact Us!



**Julian Watkins**

*Grants Management Specialist*

Email: [Julian.Watkins@dot.gov](mailto:Julian.Watkins@dot.gov)

Build America Bureau

[BuildAmerica@dot.gov](mailto:BuildAmerica@dot.gov)

<https://www.transportation.gov/BuildAmerica>

