RAISE Grants

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity

How to Compete for FY 2021 RAISE Transportation Discretionary 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
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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*	Highway, bridge, or other road project
	Public transportation projects
	Passenger and freight rail projects
	Port infrastructure investments
	Intermodal projects
	Transportation facilities on tribal land
	Planning and pre-construction activities for any of the above

*Include but not limited to

RAISE Grant Basics Cont'd

Eligible Cost Share/Match

Federal cost share up to 80% in urban areas

Federal cost share up to 100% in
- a) rural areas and
- b) planning grants in Areas of Persistent Poverty

Minimum Awards

$5 million for projects in urban areas

$1 million for projects in rural areas

No minimum for planning grants
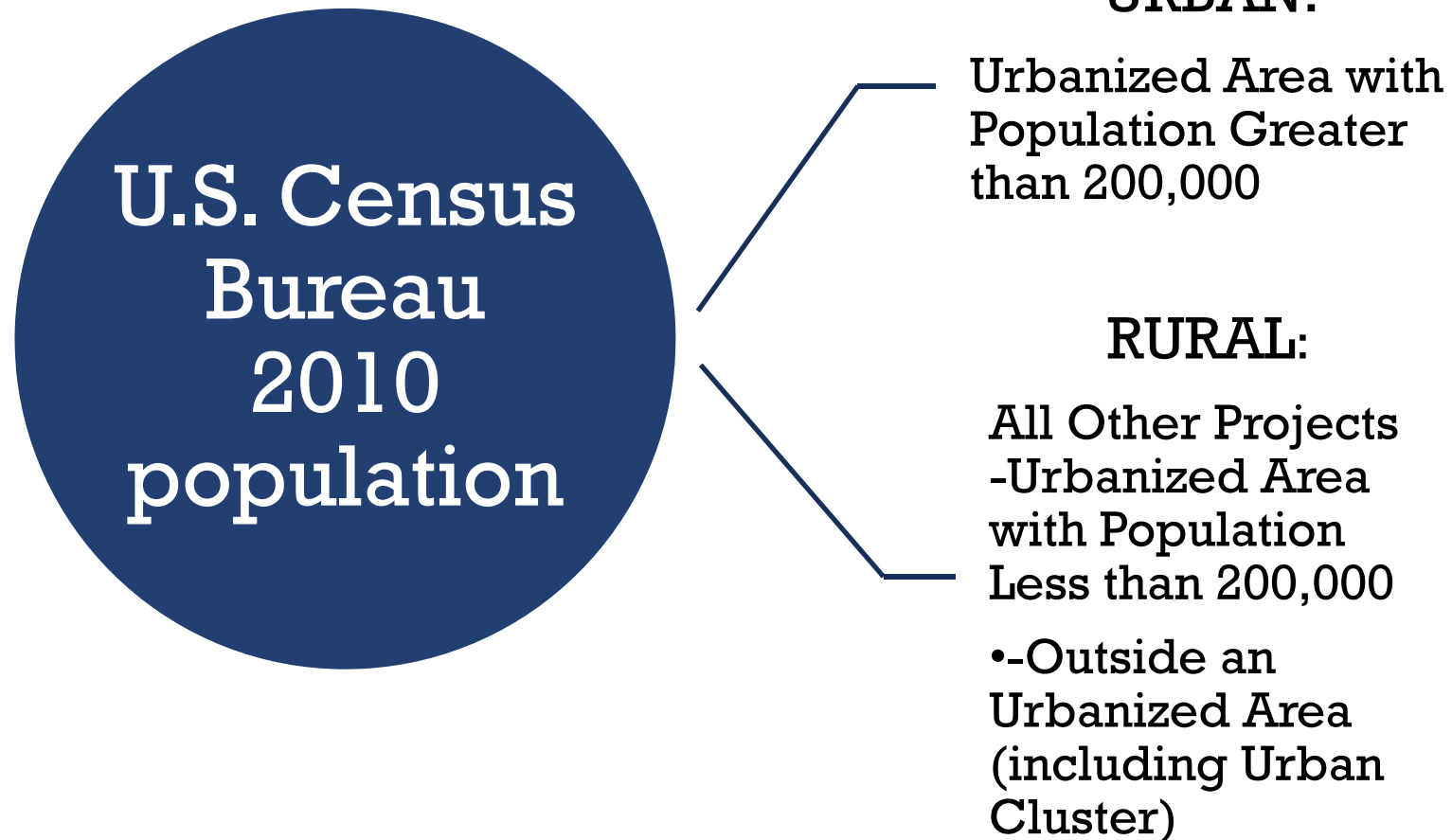
Maximum Award

$25 million per project

$100 million per State

Not more than 50% of funding 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)

Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP) Definition

- This definition affects **PLANNING GRANTS ONLY:**
  - 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)

- DOT lists all counties and census tracts that meet a definition:
  https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-areas-persistent-poverty

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 locate in an Area of Persistent Poverty.

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

- Alternatively, a County could that meet the definition, while a Census tract does not.

What Projects Compete Well?

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

The 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

What Projects Compete Well?

Results in good-paying jobs, improves safety, applies 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.

*Review the NOFO for the selection criteria. These bullets highlights some new content in the FY2021 NOFO, but these are not the selection criteria.

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. Environmental Risk Review
  VI. Benefit-Cost Analysis with attached supporting documents (capital projects only)

RAISE Evaluation Considerations

Does the project align well with the merit criteria?

- Is the information clear and credible?
- Does it have significant local and regional impact?

How do the project's benefits compare to its costs?

Does the project demonstrate readiness in terms of:

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

RAISE 2021 Evaluation Teams

Considerations for DOT Evaluation Teams:

Merit Criteria Review

Project Readiness (Technical, Financial, Environmental)

Economic Analysis

Senior Review

Final funding awards are decided by the Secretary.

+ Planning Grants

- **What are they and what activities can they fund?**
    - Pre-construction activities that do not directly lead to construction
    - Design, engineering, local or regional plans, statewide studies, etc.

- **How will they be evaluated?**
    - Against the Merit Criteria
    - No BCA needed
    - No Environmental Risk analysis

- **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

RAISE Merit Criteria

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

Partnership → Safety → Environmental Sustainability → Quality of Life → Economic Competitiveness → State of Good Repair → Innovation → Partnership

Primary selection criteria

Secondary selection criteria

+ 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 disproportionally 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.
	(1)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- Environmental Risk Review

- The applicant should include a detailed project schedule that identifies all major project milestones.

- Applicant should provide information on required approvals and permits such as NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) and other State or local environmental and planning approvals.

- Applicants are encouraged to provide environmental studies or other documents (preferably through web link) that describe the known project impacts.

- Applicants should describe environmental risk mitigation strategies.

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.**

Benefit-Cost Analysis

- In the Project Narrative, the applicant should identify, quantify, and compare expected benefits and costs relative to a "no-build" baseline.

- Documentation for a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) must be included as an appendix to the Project Narrative. (Planning grant applications are exempt from providing a BCA)

- Further guidance on BCA for DOT Discretionary Grant Programs- www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/additional-guidance

- Recorded BCA Webinars: May 6, May 13.

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

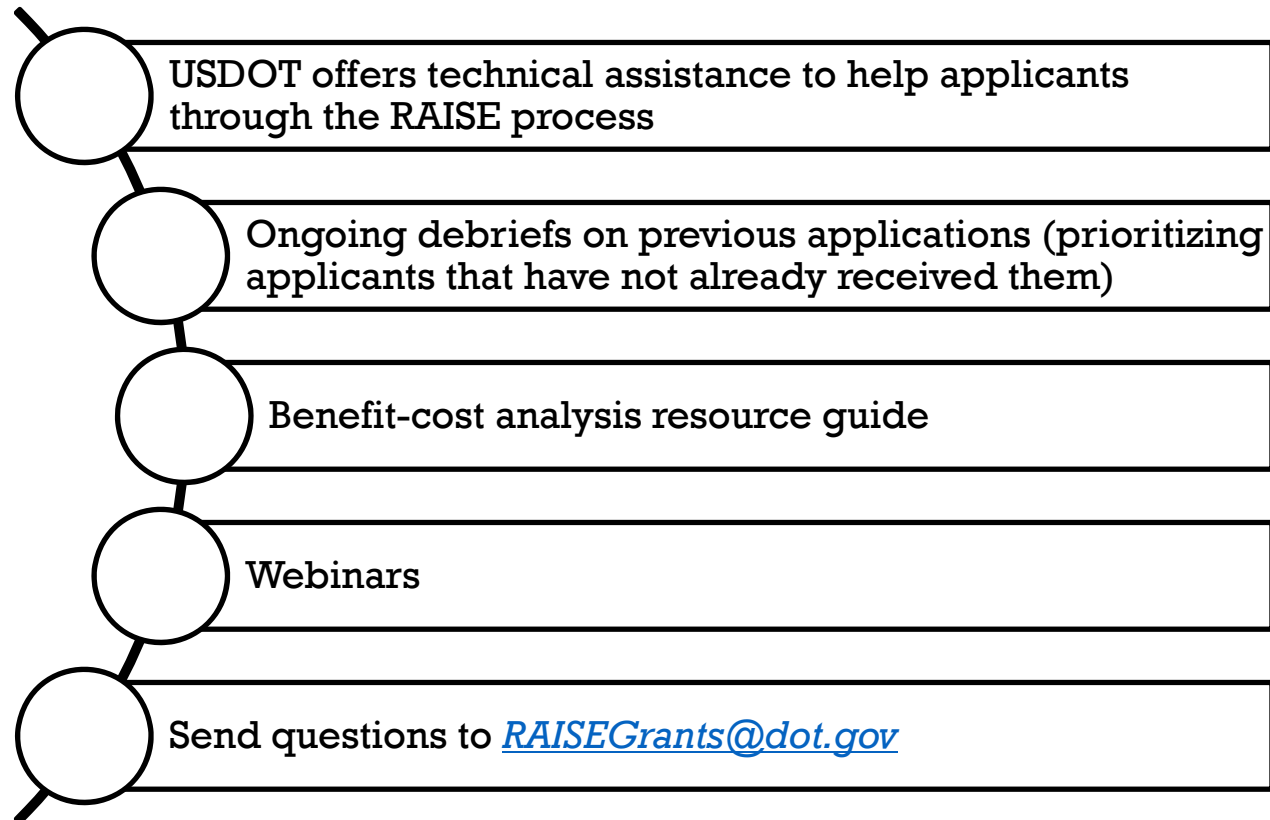Performance Monitoring

Technical Assistance

USDOT offers technical assistance to help applicants through the RAISE process

Ongoing debriefs on previous applications (prioritizing applicants that have not already received them)

Benefit-cost analysis resource guide

Webinars

Send questions to *RAISEGrants@dot.gov*

Additional Application Help

- RAISE Website:
  www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants

- Preparing a Benefit-Cost Analysis for a RAISE Grant:
  www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/additional-guidance

- Webinars and Frequently Asked Questions:

  - www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/outreach

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

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