



U.S. Department of Transportation

# Getting Ready for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program



# Getting Ready for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program Webinar

## Audio

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## Technical Support

- Email [Webconference@dot.gov](mailto:Webconference@dot.gov)

## Questions for Presenters

- Please type your questions in the Q&A box
- Chat will not be monitored

## More Information

- <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>





# Disclaimer

Content in this presentation is pre-decisional and subject to change.

# Informal Poll Questions

What type of organization do you represent?

- State
- Local government
- Federally Recognized Tribal government
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nonprofit organization
- Transportation Facility Owner
- Federal government
- Consultant
- Other (insert in chat)

How did you hear about today's webinar?

- USDOT Email
- [Transportation.gov/grants](https://www.transportation.gov/grants) website
- Social media
- Other (insert in chat)



# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductory Remarks
- Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program Grants Overview
- Getting Ready to Apply
- Solicitation of Questions



# Presenters



Christopher Coes  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation



Charlene Wang  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation

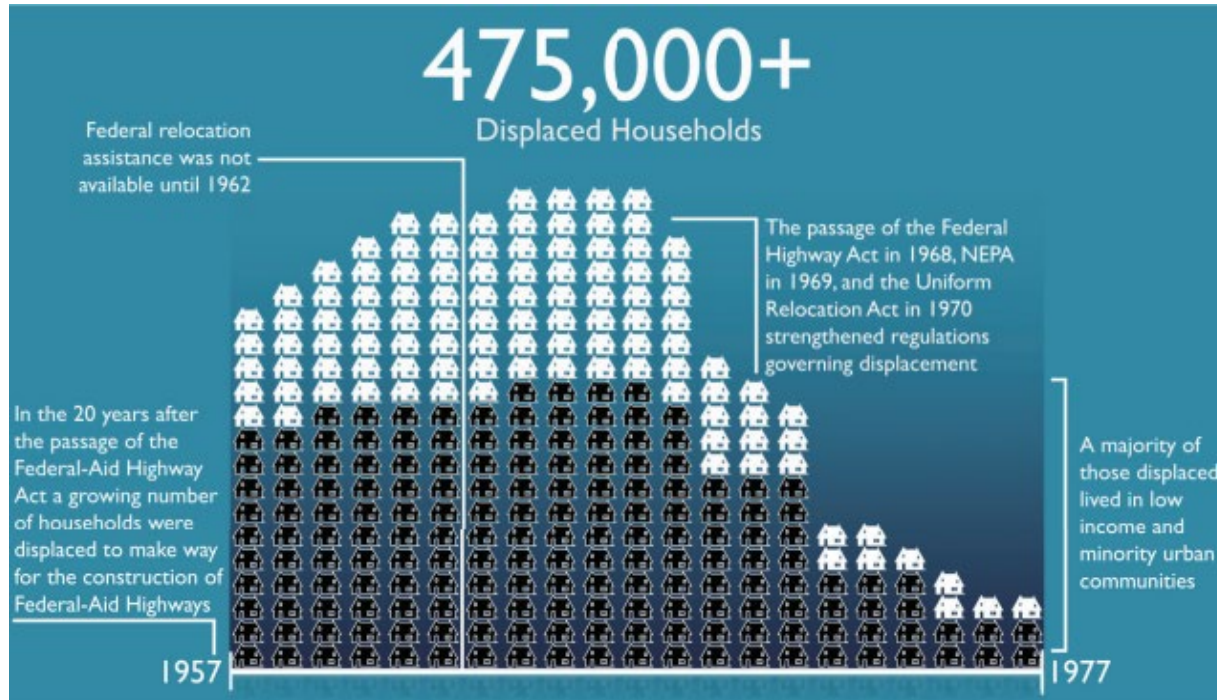


Faith Hall  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation





# Introductory Remarks



[US DOT: Beyond Traffic 2045](#)



Source: AP/Michael Dwyer



# Departmental Priorities – 2022-2026 DOT Strategic Plan





# Reconnecting Communities = Thriving Communities



Jason Cameron/Getty Images

Hands On Atlanta



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# Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program



# Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program Grants



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Funding supports planning and capital construction grants, and technical assistance to reconnect communities divided by transportation infrastructure.

[Subscribe for email updates about the Reconnecting Communities Program](#)

Questions? Please submit to USDOT via the Q&A box. We will be developing a future FAQ to post on the website.

Chat will not be officially monitored to provide real-time responses to questions.



# Funding Available

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>5-Year Total</b>
<b>Planning</b>	\$50M	\$50M	\$50M	\$50M	\$50M	\$250M
<b>Capital Construction</b>	\$145M	\$148M	\$150M	\$152M	\$155M	\$750M
<b>Total Authorized Amount</b>	<b>\$195M</b>	<b>\$198M</b>	<b>\$200M</b>	<b>\$202M</b>	<b>\$205M</b>	<b>\$1,000M</b>



# Eligible Transportation Facilities

According to statute, eligible facilities are highways or other transportation facilities that create a barrier to community connectivity. This includes barriers to mobility, access, or economic development, due to high speeds, grade separations, or other design factors.

While highways are the classic example, DOT is taking a broad view of "other transportation facilities", that might include:

## Railroads



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DOT may even receive applications to address infrastructure that is less commonly identified as "dividing" in current national narratives, such as:



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## Airports



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# Informal Poll Questions

- Is there a particular facility that presents barriers for your community?
  - Interstate highway
  - Arterial road
  - Other street or road
  - Rail
  - Airport
  - Port
  - Gas pipeline
  - Other infrastructure
- Is the facility or corridor in an economically disadvantaged community?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know

See [Highway Functional Classifications](#)







# RCP Planning Grants Overview

# RCP Planning Grants

Study the feasibility and impacts of removing, retrofitting, or mitigating an existing eligible facility or to conduct planning activities necessary to design a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility.

## Eligible Applicants

- States
- Units of local government
- Federally Recognized Tribal governments
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Nonprofit organizations



Laura Sandt - PBIC



# RCP Planning Grants – Eligible Activities

- Planning studies, including evaluations of--
  - Current traffic patterns and the surrounding street network
  - The capacity of existing transportation networks to maintain mobility needs
  - An analysis of alternative roadway designs or other uses for the right-of-way
  - The effect of the removal, retrofit, or mitigation on the mobility of freight and people
  - The effect of the removal, retrofit, or mitigation on the safety of the traveling public
  - The cost to restore community connectivity and to convert the facility to a different roadway design or use, compared to any expected maintenance or reconstruction costs
  - The anticipated economic impact and any economic development opportunities that would be created
  - The environmental impacts of retaining or reconstructing the facility and the anticipated effect of the proposed alternative use or roadway design



# RCP Planning Grants – Eligible Activities

- Public engagement activities to provide opportunities for public input into a plan to remove and convert an eligible facility.
- Other transportation planning activities required in advance of a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility to restore community connectivity.



# Discussion Question – Respond in the Chat Pod

- What other types of planning studies has your organization undertaken?





# RCP Planning Grants – Funding and Award Information

- FY22 Funding: \$50M
- Match: Federal share not to exceed 80%
- Award Amounts: not to exceed \$2M per recipient

Questions? Please submit to USDOT via the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.



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# RCP Capital Construction Grants Overview

# RCP Capital Construction Grants

- Capital construction grants may be used for projects for which all necessary studies and other planning activities have been completed to remove, retrofit, mitigate, or to replace an existing eligible facility.

## Eligible Applicants

### Facility Owner

- Likely to be a State or local government agency with jurisdiction for transportation.
- May also be private operators.
- Partnerships between the Facility Owner and the other entities listed as eligible planning grant applicants.



# RCP Capital Construction Grants – Eligible Activities

- Removal, retrofit, or mitigation of an existing eligible facility.
- Replacement of an eligible facility with a new facility that restores community connectivity and is sensitive to the context of the surrounding community.



John Alphonse - stock.adobe.com



# RCP Capital Construction Grants: Pre-Requisites

## **Pre-Requisites:**

- All necessary feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed.

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.



# Informal Poll Questions

- Is your potential construction project primed for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
  - What is a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program?



# Community Advisory Board

To help achieve inclusive economic development benefits, a grant recipient may form a community advisory board that:

- Will facilitate community engagement and track progress on commitments of the grant recipient to inclusive employment, contracting, and economic development.
- Be composed of community representatives, business owners, labor organizations, and State and local government.





# RCP Capital Construction Grants – Funding and Award Information

- FY22 Funding: \$145M
- Match: no more than 50% of total project cost
- Award Amounts: No less than \$5M per project



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# Informal Poll Questions

What type of grant are you interested in applying for?

- Planning Grant
  - Capital Construction Grant
  - Technical Assistance
  - All the above
  - Unsure
- What is the approximate population of your community?
    - <10,000
    - 10,000-199,999
    - 200,000-500,000
    - >500,000

• Geographic area

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Midwest
- West
- Southwest

• Community type

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural



# Technical Assistance

- Technical assistance is for building organizational or community capacity to engage in transportation planning and to identify innovative solutions to infrastructure challenges, including reconnecting communities that are bifurcated by eligible facilities or lack safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options.
- The Department must prioritize technical assistance to economically disadvantaged communities.

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.





# Getting Ready to Apply

# Getting Ready to Apply: Partnerships

A Lead Applicant can create a partnership involving multiple entities and taking multiple forms. Examples:

- A State DOT, city government, and local community foundation are proposing construction to remove a section of aging Interstate Highway and redesign the space for a new boulevard.
- A Federally recognized Tribal government, several community-based organizations, and County DOT are seeking funds to address limited transportation options.
- An MPO, local government, and public transportation provider are applying for funds to construct accessible pedestrian bridges over a major thoroughfare to enable safe access to transit stops and stations.
- A County DOT, town, and several non-profits apply for planning funds to reconfigure a State Highway that bifurcates the town.

Benefits of partnerships:

- Better support multi-jurisdictional collaboration.
- Help lower-capacity applicants meet federal funding requirements and lower administrative costs and delays.



# Getting Ready to Apply: Unique Entity Identifiers

- All applicants will need to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through SAM.gov to apply for grant opportunities in grants.gov.
- On April 4, the federal government stopped using Dun & Bradstreet's proprietary Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) to identify contractors and grantees and began exclusively using the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- **The process of obtaining a UEI can take up to a month, so applicants are encouraged to apply for the UEI now. If you previously had a DUNS number, your UEI has already been created and is available to view in SAM.gov.**
- For more information, see <https://sam.gov>.





# Getting Ready to Apply: Grants.gov

- Grants.gov also provides resources for applicants, including:
  - Grants 101 related materials on the overall discretionary funding process.
  - Applicant training for using the Grants.gov application process.

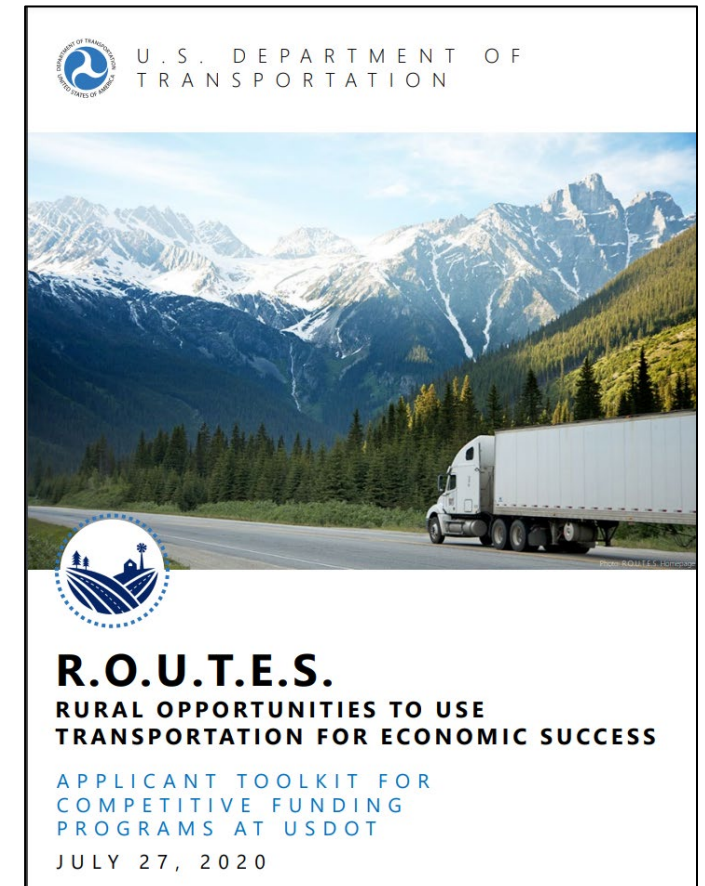


Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.



# Getting Ready to Apply: Federal Grants

- The R.O.U.T.E.S. grant applicant toolkit provides applicants with a roadmap and an overview of USDOT funding programs and opportunities.
- The toolkit includes specific tips on applying as a smaller applicant entity.
- The R.O.U.T.E.S. website hosts videos describing the toolkit and a PDF of the toolkit.
- [www.transportation.gov/rural/grants/toolkit](http://www.transportation.gov/rural/grants/toolkit)



# Informal Poll Questions

How experienced is your organization in administering Federal Grant Awards?

- a. No experience.
- b. Limited experience. Have applied, did not receive a Federal grant.
- c. Moderate experience. Receive minimal Federal grant assistance.
- d. Extensive experience. Regularly administer Federal grants.
- e. C and D



# Tips for Getting Ready

- Begin to identify your community's challenges related to connectivity and barriers, safety and mobility.
- Consider the history of the neighborhood or facility. Is there a legacy of harm?
- Consider whether eligible facilities are located in underserved, overburdened, or disadvantaged communities. Is your community experiencing systemic disadvantage per, [DOT Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts?](#)



# Tips for Getting Ready

- Determine if there is motivation across the community to collaboratively address barriers and explore solutions.
- Start identifying who should be involved.
- Consider how to engage a broad range of community members, specifically those who live, work, and recreate in and around the project area.
- Consider if you could partner with a non-traditional applicant.





# Tips for Getting Ready: Capital Construction

- Ensure that prerequisite feasibility studies and other planning activities have been completed.
- Review existing planned projects in your Metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plan or Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, and in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Consider how to engage a broad range of community members.
- Consult with those who may partner in developing community outreach, communications, construction mitigation, and anti-displacement plans.



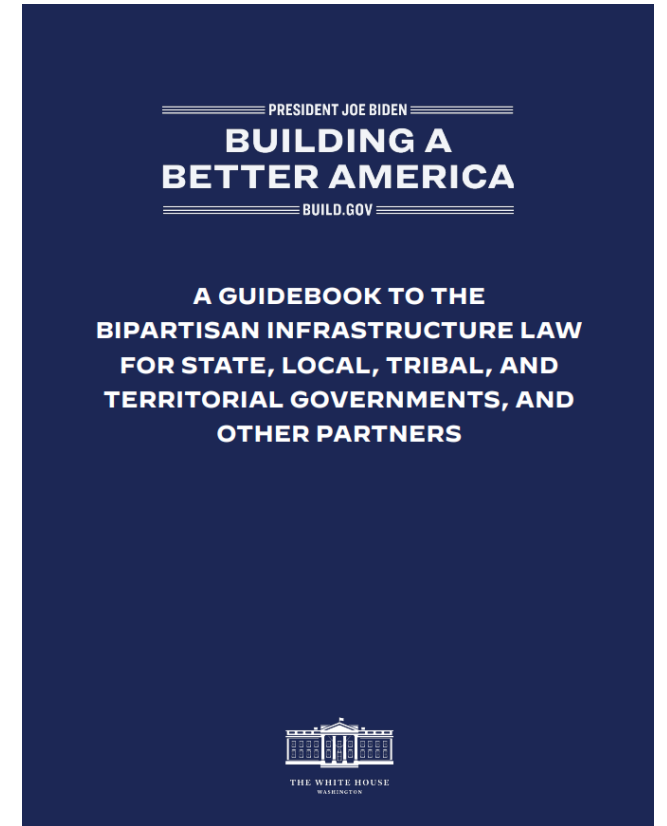
# Questions to Think About

- What are the biggest challenges you see for mobility, connectivity, and safety in your community?
- Are you aware of existing work to study or document those challenges, or to develop solutions for them?
- What parts of the program will be the most challenging to implement?
- What kind of "reconnecting" technical assistance would be helpful to you?
- How will you/have you engage(d) community members on any potential project?
- What non-traditional or new partners might you seek out to collaborate?



# Resources

- [White House Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments and Other Partners](#)
- [USDOT funding and financing opportunities](#)
- [List of Upcoming USDOT NOFOs](#)
- [FHWA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Technical Assistance / Local Support](#)



Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.



# Resources

- [FHWA and FTA's Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program](#)
- [FHWA Community Impact Assessment](#)
- [FHWA Context Sensitive Solutions and Design](#)
- [MPO Database](#)

Questions? Use the Q&A box. Chat will not be monitored for questions.



# Q&A

- Please type your questions in the **Q&A box**
- Technical support: [Webconference@dot.gov](mailto:Webconference@dot.gov)
- Answers to frequently asked questions will be posted on <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>



Aleksandr Matveev - stock.adobe.com





# Next Steps

- Expected release of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in **Summer 2022** for Round One of funding.
- When the NOFO is available, **you can apply** at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
- **Visit our website** at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>
- [Subscribe](#) to receive program updates.



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# RCP Program Grants Overview Summary

# Funding and Award Information

	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Capital Construction</b>	<b>Overall RCP</b>
FY22 Annual Funding	\$50M	\$145M	~\$195M
Cost Share	No more than 80% Federal	No more than 50% of total project cost	
Award Amounts	Not to exceed \$2M per recipient	No less than \$5M	



# Eligible Recipients

## Planning Grants

- State
- Unit of local government
- Federally recognized Tribal government
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nonprofit organization

## Capital Construction Grants

- Owner(s) of an eligible facility to carry out an eligible project
- Owners may partner with any of the organizations eligible to apply for planning grants



# Eligible Activities

## Planning Grants

- Planning studies; public engagement; other transportation planning activities required in advance of a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing facility
- Technical assistance prioritized to economically disadvantaged communities.

## Capital Construction Grants

- To conduct construction activities necessary to carry out a project to remove, retrofit, mitigate, or replace an existing eligible facility.





# Thank you for participating

- For more information, visit the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program website at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/reconnecting-communities>
- [Subscribe](#) to receive program updates.
- Presentation slides and recording, will be posted on the RCP site.

