

Order 2023-3-9
Served: March 15, 2023



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation
on the 15th day of March, 2023

In the Matter of Grant Applications

**SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

under 49 U.S.C. § 41743

Docket DOT-OST-2023-0037

**ORDER SOLICITING
SMALL COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

By this Order, the U.S. Department of Transportation (the Department or DOT) invites applications from communities and/or consortia of communities interested in obtaining a Federal grant under the Small Community Air Service Development Program (“Small Community Program” or “SCASDP”) to address air service and airfare issues in their communities. As discussed below, the Department will make up to \$15 million available for FY 2022 grant awards to carry out this program.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

To participate in this proceeding, interested communities, or consortia of communities, must submit applications of no more than 20 one-sided pages each (excluding the completed Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (SF424), Summary Information schedule, and any letters from the community or an air carrier showing support for the application). These applications, including all required information, must be submitted to www.grants.gov no later than 4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023.¹ Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications in advance of the deadline. Please be aware that applicants must complete the grants.gov registration process before submitting an application, and that this process usually

¹ Applicant communities are encouraged to include all support letters with their applications to ensure that the Department has a complete record upon which to act. To the extent practicable, each community should include all support letters in one .pdf file submitted with its application. Any support letter that a community submits after the deadline for applications has passed will be considered by the Department only to the extent practicable. Moreover, any support letter or comment received in connection with this proceeding will be posted in this Docket, along with any Department response to that submission.

takes two to four weeks to complete.² The Department will not accept late-filed applications except under limited circumstances related to technical difficulties. Additional information on applying through grants.gov is in Appendix A, including a notice regarding late-filed applications.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS ORDER SOLICITING APPLICATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, this Order is organized into the following sections:

- A. Program Description
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Appendix A – Additional Information on Applying Through www.grants.gov

Appendix B – Summary Information

² If an applicant experiences difficulties at any point during the registration or application process, it should contact the grants.gov support center by email (support@grants.gov) or by telephone (1-800-518-4726, available 24/7 except Federal holidays). See www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Small Community Program was established by the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (Pub. L. No. 106-181), reauthorized by the Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (Pub. L. No. 108-176), and subsequently reauthorized by the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Pub. L. No. 112-95) as amended, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Pub. L. No. 115-63), and the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115-254) (FAA 2018). The program is codified at 49 U.S.C. § 41743. The program is designed to provide financial assistance to small communities to help them enhance their air service. The Department provides this assistance in the form of grants that are disbursed on a reimbursable basis.

The Small Community Program is authorized to receive appropriations under 49 U.S.C. § 41743(e)(2). Appropriations are provided for this program for award selection in FY 2022 pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Pub. L. No. 117-103).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

No more than four communities or consortia of communities, or a combination thereof, from the same State may be selected to participate in the program in any fiscal year. No more than 40 communities or consortia of communities, or a combination thereof, may be selected to participate in the program in each year for which the funds are appropriated. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete.

Pursuant to the authorities described above, the Department will make up to \$15 million available for FY 2022 grant awards to carry out this program. There is no minimum or maximum individual award amount, and the amounts awarded will vary depending upon the features and merits of the selected applications. In past years, the Department's individual grant sizes have ranged from \$20,000 to nearly \$1.6 million. Funding amounts made available for reimbursement may be impacted by future limitations placed on the spending authority and appropriations enacted for the Department. The Department may, at its discretion, issue partial funding awards up to the level authorized and provided that the above conditions are met. Additional information on the budget process may be found in OMB A-11: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/circulars/>.

Finally, as more fully discussed in Section E.1.a below, the Department intends to award FY 2022 grants for durations of three years to complete studies, four years for marketing and promotion (including advertising and public relations) of the airport, community, carrier, or destination, and five years for projects that target a revenue guarantee, subsidy, or other financial incentives.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The Department determines application eligibility as part of the Eligibility Review stage. Applicants and applications deemed ineligible at this stage will be disqualified. The Department will apply the criteria under Section C.1 as part of the Eligibility Review stage.

Only public entities may apply for and serve as the legal sponsor of a grant under the Small Community Program. Private organizations cannot be the lead applicant. A community may file only one application for a grant, either individually or as part of a consortium.

Consortium Applications: Both individual communities and consortia of communities are eligible for SCASDP funds. An application from a consortium of communities must be one that seeks to facilitate the efforts of the communities working together toward one joint grant project, with one joint objective, including the establishment of one entity to ensure that the joint objective is accomplished.

Communities Without Existing Air Service: Communities that do not currently have commercial air service are eligible for SCASDP funds.

Eligible Projects: The Department is authorized to award grants under 49 U.S.C. § 41743(d) to communities that seek to provide assistance to:

- A U.S. air carrier³ to subsidize service to and from an underserved airport for a period not to exceed 3 years;
- An underserved airport to obtain service to and from the underserved airport; and/or
- An underserved airport to implement such other measures as the Secretary, in consultation with such airport, considers appropriate to improve air service both in terms of the cost of such service to consumers and the availability of such service, including improving air service through marketing and promotion of air service and enhanced utilization of airport facilities.

Eligibility Limitations:

Hub Size: In order to satisfy the hub size requirement set forth in 49 U.S.C. § 41743(c)(1)(A), the airport serving the community or consortium may not be larger than a small hub airport, as determined using the FAA's most recently published

³ Only U.S. air carriers are eligible to receive assistance from communities under SCASDP. See 49 U.S.C. § 40102(a)(2). A particular U.S. carrier may hold authority to conduct operations as a certificated air carrier, a commuter air carrier, or an air taxi operator. Communities are encouraged to verify, at an early stage of any air carrier discussions, that the air carrier holds appropriate Department authority to conduct the proposed services. Communities may verify this authority by contacting the Department's Air Carrier Fitness Division at (202) 366-9721.

classification effective on the Department's set application deadline (due date).⁴

Same Project Limitation: Under 49 U.S.C. § 41743(c)(4)(B), a community or consortium may not receive a new grant to support the same project more than once in a ten-year period.⁵ In assessing whether a previous recipient's current application represents a new project, the Department will compare the goals and objectives of the previous grant, including the key components of the means by which those goals and objectives were to be achieved, to the current application. For example, if a community received an earlier grant to support a revenue guarantee for service to a particular destination or direction, a new application by that community for another revenue guarantee for service to the same destination or in the same direction would be subject to the ten-year restriction, even if the revenue guarantee were structured differently or the type of carrier were different. However, a new application by such a previous recipient for service to a new destination or direction using a revenue guarantee, or for general marketing and promotion (including advertising and public relations) of the airport and the various services it offers, would be eligible.⁶ The Department recognizes that not all revenue guarantees, marketing agreements, studies, or other activities are of the same nature, and that if a subsequent application incorporates different goals or significantly different components, it may be sufficiently different to constitute a new project under 49 U.S.C. § 41743(c).

In FAA 2018, Congress authorized limited waivers of the Ten-Year Same Project Limitation. Under Section 41743(c)(4)(C), the Secretary may waive the limitation, and thus make additional grants to a community or consortium of communities to participate in support of the same project within a 10-year period, if the Secretary determines that communities "spent little or no money on [their] previous project or encountered industry or environmental challenges, due to circumstances that were reasonably beyond [their] control...." The Department will consider such waivers as part of complete and timely applications submitted in response to this Order. Communities seeking a waiver are asked to include in their application a discussion of the facts and circumstances that the Secretary should consider in applying the statutory test to their request, e.g., a full history of the previous grant and a documented and well-supported description of any industry or environmental challenges encountered in the communities.

Concurrent Grant Limitation: A community or consortium may have only one SCASDP grant at any time. If a community or consortium applies for a subsequent

⁴ "Small hub airport" is defined in 49 U.S.C. § 47102(23) as "a commercial service airport that has at least 0.05 percent but less than 0.25 percent of the passenger boardings." *See also* http://faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/categories/. For FAA passenger enplanement information to use to determine an airport's eligibility as a small hub airport, *see* http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/passenger_allcargo_stats/passenger/.

⁵ For the purpose of this provision, the ten-year period starts on the date that the initial grant agreement was executed. Further, this limitation applies for all project elements contained in a previous grant agreement's scope.

⁶ As noted in Section D.9 ("Market Analysis"), target markets proposed by communities may be destination specific (e.g., service to LAX), a geographic region (e.g., northwest mountain region) or directional (e.g., hub in the southeastern United States or a point north, south, east, or west of the applicant community).

SCASDP grant when its current grant has not yet expired, that community/consortium must notify the Department of its intent to terminate the current SCASDP grant, and if the community/consortium is selected for a new grant, such termination must take place prior to entering into the new grant agreement. Each beneficiary of a grant agreement under SCASDP is subject to this limitation; in other words, each airport or other government entity, including a State department of transportation, that receives a benefit from an active SCASDP grant, whether individually or part of a consortium, may not receive another SCASDP grant until the active grant is terminated. In addition, for consortium member applicants, permission must be granted from both the grant sponsor and the Department to withdraw from the current SCASDP grant before that consortium member will be deemed eligible to receive a subsequent SCASDP grant.

No Direct Benefits to Air Carriers: SCASDP provides financial assistance to eligible communities and is not intended to benefit any specific air carrier (other than through a revenue guarantee agreement or carrier-implemented marketing program). To that end, projects seeking funds to support the purchase of aircraft, the establishment of a new air carrier, or other similar direct benefits to an air carrier or a company seeking to become an air carrier are not eligible under the Small Community Program.⁷

Airport Capital Improvement Projects: Airport capital improvement projects, including, but not limited to, runway expansions and enhancements, the construction of additional aircraft gates, and other airport terminal expansions and reconfigurations are ineligible for funding under the Small Community Program. Airports seeking funding for airport capital improvement projects may want to consult with their local FAA Regional Office to discuss potential eligibility for grants under the Airport Improvement Program.

Essential Air Service Communities: Small communities that currently receive subsidized air service under the Essential Air Service (EAS) or Alternate Essential Air Service (AEAS) program will not be considered eligible for SCASDP funds. Specifically, the Department will not deem eligible for consideration a project that includes service to a subsidized EAS point (or a point receiving AEAS funding), whether it is a point of origin, an intermediate point (for example, on a one-stop service), or a destination point on the proposed service.

Finally, the EAS statute (49 U.S.C. § 41733(c)(1)(E)) requires that the Department consider whether an air carrier has included a marketing plan in its proposal to provide subsidized EAS as part of the carrier selection criteria. In light of this and the scarcity of SCASDP funds, the Department will not consider awarding additional Federal support under SCASDP for the marketing of subsidized EAS air service.

⁷ Such direct benefits would include, for example, funds to pay for the relocation of air carrier ground equipment, such as airport tugs, or other ancillary air carrier equipment, and relocation of personnel, including crews. Note that start-up costs to offset some expenses would be eligible for consideration.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required for applications. However, applications that provide multiple levels of contributions (State, local, cash, and in-kind contributions) will be viewed more favorably. *See* Section D.9 (“Local Contributions”).

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. General Information

As discussed in this section and in Appendix A, all applications for grants under this NOFO must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov. This NOFO lays out all application steps and includes all application forms or Internet addresses where such forms may be found.⁸

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Required Steps to Apply for a Grant in this Proceeding:

- Determine the eligibility of your community;
- New grants.gov users must register with www.grants.gov (*see* Registration with www.grants.gov, below). Existing grants.gov users must verify existing www.grants.gov account has not expired and the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) is current;
- A community with an active SCASDP grant must notify the Department (Office of Aviation Analysis, X-50) of its intent to terminate its existing grant in order to be eligible for selection;
- Submit an Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (SF424) via grants.gov;
- Submit a completed “Summary Information” schedule. This is your application cover sheet (*see* Appendix B);
- Submit a detailed application of up to 20 one-sided pages (excluding the completed SF424, Summary Information schedule, and any letters from the community or an air carrier showing support for the application), by the prescribed due date, that meets all required criteria (*see* Appendix C) and provides all other pertinent information, including:
 - A description of the community’s air service needs or deficiencies;
 - The driving distance, in miles, to the nearest large, medium, and small hub airports, and airport with jet service;
 - A strategic plan for meeting those needs under the Small Community Program, including a concise synopsis of the scope of the proposed grant project;
 - For service to or from a specific city or market, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Washington, D.C., for example, a list of the airports that the applicant considers part of the market;

⁸ In particular, a fillable .pdf of the Summary Information schedule, which must be filed with an application in this proceeding, is available at <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/SCASDP>.

- A detailed description of the funding necessary for implementation of the community's project;
 - An explanation of how the proposed project differs from any previous projects for which the community received SCASDP funds (if applicable);
 - Designation of a legal sponsor responsible for administering the program; and
 - A request for waiver of the Ten Year Same Project Limitation (if applicable) – see Appendix B.
- Attach any letters from the community or an air carrier showing support for the application, which should be addressed to Brooke Chapman, Associate Director, Small Community Air Service Development Program;⁹ and
 - Provide separate submission of confidential material, if applicable (*see* Appendix D).

An application consisting of more than 20 pages will be accepted by the Department, but the content in the additional pages past page 20 will not be evaluated or considered by the Department. The Department would prefer that applicants use one-inch margins and a font size not less than 12 point type and include page numbers.

Registration with www.grants.gov: Communities must be registered with www.grants.gov in order to submit an application for funds available under this program. For consortium applications, only the legal sponsor must be registered with www.grants.gov in order to submit its application for funds available under this program. *See* Appendix A for additional information on applying through www.grants.gov.

Contents of Application: There is no set format that must be used for applications. Each application should, to the maximum extent possible, address the selection criteria set forth in Section E.1 below, including a clear description of the air service needs/deficiencies and present plans/strategies that directly address those needs/deficiencies. At a minimum, however, each application must include the following information:

- A description of the community's air service needs or deficiencies, including information about: (1) major origin/destination markets that are not now served or are not served adequately; (2) fare levels that the community deems relevant to consideration of its application, including market analyses or studies demonstrating an understanding of local air service needs; (3) any air service developments within the past ten years that have adversely affected the community, including, but not limited to, termination of scheduled passenger service;¹⁰ and (4) any air service development efforts over the past three years and the results of those efforts (such as marketing and promotion, including advertising and public relations).

⁹ *See* footnote 1, above.

¹⁰ For example, if a community has lost scheduled passenger air service, or other air service, or been otherwise adversely affected as a result of an airline merger, the applicant should describe the situation in detail and quantify, to the extent possible, its effects on the community.

- A strategic plan for meeting those needs under the Small Community Program, including the community’s purpose for the project, and a detailed plan describing the specific means that are proposed for attaining the goals set out in that project purpose.¹¹ If the application is selected, the Department will work with the recipient to incorporate the relevant elements of the application’s strategic plan into the grant agreement’s project scope.¹² Applicants should note that, once a grant agreement is signed, amendments to project scope are limited to those that are consistent with the original purpose of the grant. Applicants also are advised to obtain firm assurances from air carriers proposing to offer new air services if a grant is awarded. Strategic plans should:
 - for applications involving new or improved service, explain how the service will become self-sufficient;
 - fully and clearly outline the goals and objectives of the project; and
 - fully and clearly summarize the actual, specific steps (in bullet form, with a proposed timeline) that the community intends to take to bring about these goals and objectives.
- If relevant, a detailed description of the funding necessary for implementation of the proposed project (including Federal and non-Federal contributions).
- An explanation of how the proposed project differs from any previous projects for which the community received SCASDP funds within a ten-year period; applicants for which the Same Project Limitation may apply should also explain why a waiver under Section 41743(c)(4)(C) should be granted by the Secretary. *See* Section C.1 (“Same Project Limitation”).
- Designation of a legal sponsor responsible for administering the proposed project. The legal sponsor of the proposed project must be a government entity, such as a State, county, or municipality. The legal sponsor must be legally, financially, and otherwise able to execute the grant agreement and administer the grant, including having the authority to sign the grant agreement and to assume and carry out the certifications, representations, warranties, assurances, covenants and other obligations required under the grant agreement with the Department and to ensure compliance by the grant recipient with the grant agreement and grant assurances. If the applicant is a public-private partnership, a public government member of the organization must be identified as the community’s sponsor to receive project cost reimbursements. A community may designate only one government entity as the legal sponsor, even if it is applying as a consortium that consists of two or more local government entities. Private organizations may not be designated as the legal sponsor of a grant under the Small Community

¹¹ *See* Appendix B, p. 3-4.

¹² If new service is proposed to or from a specific city or market served by multiple airports (such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Washington, D.C., for example), the applicant is encouraged to identify the airport(s) in that city or market the community would be targeting under its application in order to facilitate the drafting of the grant agreement’s project scope. Communities should carefully select, within a specific city or market, those airports for which it proposes service, as proposing multiple airports in a city or market could impact the ability of a community to seek future grants involving those airports (*see* Section C.1’s description of the Same Project Limitation).

Program. The community must ensure that the legal sponsor and grant recipient of any funding has the legal authority under State and local laws to carry out all aspects of the grant, and the Department may require an opinion of the legal sponsor's attorney as to its legal authority to act as a sponsor and to carry out its responsibilities under the grant agreement. The applicant should also provide the name of the signatory party for the legal sponsor.

3. System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by the Department. The Department will not make any award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Department is ready to make an award, the Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. For more information on SAM requirements for this award, and the UEI, *see* Appendix A.

4. Submission Dates and Times

An application will not be complete and will be deemed ineligible for a grant award until and unless all required materials, including SF424, have been submitted through www.grants.gov and time-stamped by 4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023 (the "Application Deadline"). *See* Appendix A, "Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission" and "Experiencing Unforeseen www.grants.gov Technical Issues" for more details.

Late Application Notice: Applicants that are unable to successfully submit their application package through grants.gov prior to the Application Deadline due to technical difficulties outside their control must submit an email to SCASDPgrants@dot.gov with the information described in Appendix A.

5. Funding Restrictions

Expenditures made prior to the execution of a grant agreement, including costs associated with preparation of the grant application, will not be reimbursed. For more information, *see* Section F.1 below.

6. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

Project budgets should show how different funding sources will share in each activity and present those data in dollars and percentages. The budget should identify other Federal funds the applicant is applying for or has been awarded, if any, that the applicant intends to use. Funding

sources should be grouped into three categories: non-Federal, SCASDP (funds being requested in this proceeding), and other Federal with specific amounts from each funding source.¹³

7. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must follow the steps outlined above and in Appendix A to submit applications electronically via www.grants.gov. Additional information about submission requirements and www.grants.gov requirements is detailed in Appendix A.

8. Sharing of Applicant Information

The Department may share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.¹⁴

9. Additional Guidance

Market Analysis: Applicants requesting funds for a revenue guarantee/subsidy/financial incentive are encouraged to conduct and reference in their applications an in-depth analysis of their target markets. Target markets can be destination specific (e.g., service to LAX), a geographic region (e.g., northwest mountain region) or directional (e.g., hub in the southeastern United States or a point north, south, east, or west of the applicant community).

Complementary Marketing Commitment: Applicants requesting funds for a revenue guarantee/subsidy/financial incentive are encouraged to designate in their applications a portion of the project funds (Federal, local or in-kind) for the development and implementation of a marketing plan in support of the service sought.

Subsidies for a Carrier to Compete Against an Incumbent: The Department is reluctant to subsidize one carrier, but not others, in a competitive market. For this reason, a community that proposes to use the grant funds for service in a city-pair market that is already served by another air carrier must explain in detail why the existing service is insufficient or unsatisfactory, or provide other compelling information to support such an application proposal.

Local Contributions: Applications must clearly identify the level of Federal funding sought for the proposed project. Applications must also identify the community's cash contributions to the proposed project, in-kind contributions from the airport, and in-kind contributions from the community. Non-Federal funds will be applied proportionately to the entire scope of the project. Communities cannot use non-Federal funds selectively to fund certain components of a project (*see* Section F.2 below on Payments for more information). Cash contributions from airport

¹³ This information is collected from applicants in the Summary Information schedule. *See* Appendix B, section J to this Order.

¹⁴ Note that applicants may provide certain confidential business information relevant to their application proposals on a confidential basis (*i.e.*, not subject to public disclosure, under the provisions of 14 CFR § 302.12). *See* Section H.2 and Appendices C and D to this Order for information on confidential handling by the Department of such information, in accordance with the Department's Freedom of Information regulations (49 CFR § 7.17).

revenues must be identified separately from cash contributions from other community sources. Cash contributions from the State and/or local government should be separately identified and described as well.

Types of contributions: Contributions should represent a new financial commitment or new financial resources devoted to attracting new or improved service, or addressing specific high-fare or other service issues, such as improving patronage of existing service at the airport. For communities that propose to contribute to the grant project, that contribution can be in the following forms:

Cash from non-airport revenues: A cash contribution can include funds from the State, the county or local government, and/or from local businesses, or other private organizations in the community. Because private cash contributions are to be from local community sources, the Department will not consider as a part of these non-airport revenues any funds that a community might receive from an air carrier interested in providing service under that community's application. Moreover, contributions that are comprised of intangible non-cash items, such as the value of donated advertising, are considered in-kind contributions (*see* further discussion below).

Cash from airport revenues: This includes contributions from funds generated by airport operations. Airport revenues may not be used for subsidies (including revenue guarantees) to airlines, per 49 U.S.C. §§ 47107 and 47133. Applications that include local contributions based on airport revenues alone will be viewed less favorably than those with cash from non-airport sources.

In-kind contributions from the airport: This can include such items as waivers of landing fees, ground handling fees, terminal rents, fuel fees, and/or vehicle parking fees.

In-kind contributions from the community: This can include such items as donated advertising from media outlets, catering services for inaugural events, or in-kind trading, such as advertising in exchange for free air travel. Travel banks and travel commitments/pledges are considered to be in-kind contributions.

Cash vs. in-kind contributions: Communities that include local contributions made in cash will be viewed more favorably.

Commencement of Proposed Air Service Prior to Award Selection: The Department will take into consideration whether air service proposed by a community is announced or begins prior to our announcement of grant awards. Air services that commence prior to grant awards would call into question the extent to which Federal funding is necessary to support the targeted service. Moreover, no reimbursement will be provided by the Department for expenses, including revenue guarantees to air carriers, incurred by a selected community prior to the effective date of that selectee's grant agreement.

Aviation Security: Communities proposing new or expanded air service under a SCASDP grant application are encouraged to contact the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) early in

the process to ascertain what the security implications of such service would be with respect to the airport involved, and what measures that airport would need to take with the TSA to assure that the service would meet all applicable TSA requirements.

Airport Readiness and FAA Certification: Communities should describe how their projects can be accomplished within the grant durations set forth in Section B above, including whether the airport and proposed air service provider have the requisite authorities and certifications necessary to carry out the proposed projects. In addition, because of this emphasis placed on timely use of funds, applicants proposing new service should describe the airport and whether it can support the proposed service, including whether the airport holds, or intends to apply for, an airport operating certificate issued under 14 CFR Part 139. Air service providers proposed for the new service must have met or be able to meet, in a reasonable period of time, all Department requirements for air service certification, including safety and economic authorities.

Department Priorities Relating to Safety, Climate Change and Sustainability, and Equity

The Department is committed to administering this program consistently with its priorities related to safety, climate change and sustainability, and equity. With respect to safety, any air carrier conducting operations under this program must be in compliance with all applicable DOT statutes and regulations, including all applicable safety regulations and requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration as set forth in the Federal Aviation Regulations and other relevant documents.¹⁵

In addition, SCASDP inherently addresses issues related to equity. The program is designed, consistent with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 41743, to provide financial assistance to small communities to help them enhance their air service by addressing insufficient air service or unreasonably high airfares. To that end, the program seeks to assist small communities, often in rural (and occasionally Tribal) areas, in gaining access to affordable, convenient air transportation options that they otherwise would not have, helping to remove transportation-related disparities such as isolation and transportation cost burden both within affected communities and between and among communities in the United States.¹⁶

Finally, with respect to climate change and sustainability, the Department encourages applicants to address how their project will consider climate change and environmental justice in the planning stage and in project delivery. Examples include but are not limited to showing that a particular project or aspect of a project could have the potential to (1) reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency, incorporate electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase climate resilience, reduce pollution; or (2) address environmental justice concerns; or could encourage air carriers serving the community to take reasonable efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including by encouraging the use of sustainable aviation fuels

¹⁵ In addition, *see* ‘Airport Readiness and FAA Certification’ above.

¹⁶ To help ensure meaningful public notice of and involvement in every program cycle, the Department notifies, by formal service of each NOFO, the following civic parties that have connections to potential stakeholders/applicants: the United States Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Governors Association, the National Association of State Aviation Officials, County Executives of America, the American Association of Airport Executives, and the Airports Council International-North America (*see* Ordering paragraph 2 below).

or electric and zero emission ground equipment and infrastructure. Applicants could also meet this standard by proposing a study to identify the air service needs of a small community or rural region, taking into account climate change and sustainability, or in some other suitable manner.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION¹⁷

1. Merit Criteria and Selection Considerations¹⁸

Applications meeting the Eligibility Review stage criteria as set forth in Section C.1 (“Eligible Applicants”) are advanced to the Technical Review stage. SCASDP grants will be awarded based on the selection criteria outlined below. In the Technical Review stage, the Department considers the extent to which each eligible application aligns with Merit Criteria and Selection Considerations that support (1) the Merit Criteria and (2) Administration and Department priorities. This review relies on an applicant’s use of data-driven and evidence-based methods to demonstrate how well the proposed project aligns with the criteria and selection considerations. Applications that align well with one or more of the Merit Criteria will be viewed more favorably than those that do not align with any Merit Criteria. In conducting its Technical Review, the Department will first consider the application’s alignment with the Merit Criteria and those Selection Considerations directly supporting the Merit Criteria. The Department will then consider Selection Considerations supporting Administration and Department priorities.

The Technical Review determines an application’s alignment with the following factors in 49 U.S.C. § 41743(c)(1) & (2):

- The applicant community or consortium has insufficient air carrier service or unreasonably high air fares; and
- The airport serving the community presents characteristics, such as geographic diversity or unique circumstances that demonstrate the need for, and feasibility of, grant assistance from the Small Community Program.

a. Merit Criteria

49 U.S.C. § 41743(c)(5) directs the Department to give priority consideration to those communities or consortia whose applications align with the following criteria:

Air fares are higher than the national average air fares for all communities. The Department will compare the local community’s air fares to the national average air fares for all similar markets. Communities with market air fares significantly higher than the national average air fares in similar markets will receive priority consideration and be considered as

¹⁷ As a part of our review of any application, the Department may reach out to an applicant, if necessary, to resolve a factual discrepancy or similar technical issue with that application.

¹⁸ In prior SCASDP selection proceedings, ‘Merit Criteria’ were referred to as ‘Priority Selection Criteria’ and ‘Selection Considerations’ were referred to as ‘Secondary Selection Criteria.’ (See, for example, Order 2022-1-8, Docket DOT-2022-0003, p.11.) While the names of these criteria have changed, their underlying meanings have not, and the Department will consider Merit Criteria and Selection Considerations in the same way it did Priority Selection Criteria and Secondary Selection Criteria in past years.

meeting a Merit Criterion. The Department calculates these fares using data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) Airline Origin and Destination Survey data. The Department evaluates all fares in all relevant markets that serve a SCASDP community and compares the SCASDP community fares to all fares in similar markets across the country. Each SCASDP applicant's air fares are computed as a percentage above or below the national averages. The report compares a community's air fares to the average for all other similar markets in the country that have similar density (passenger volume) and similar distance characteristics (market groupings). All calculations are based on 12-month ended periods to control for seasonal variation of fares.

The community or consortium will provide a portion of the cost of the activity from local sources other than airport revenue sources. The Department will consider whether a community or consortium proposes local funding for the proposed project. Applications providing proportionately higher levels of cash contributions from sources other than airport revenues will be viewed more favorably. Applications that provide multiple levels of contributions (State, local, cash and in-kind contributions) will also be viewed more favorably. See Section D.9 ("Local Contributions"), for more information on the application of this selection criterion.

The community or consortium has established or will establish a public-private partnership to facilitate air carrier service to the public. The Department will consider a community's or consortium's commitment to facilitate air carrier service in the form of a public-private partnership. Applications that describe in detail how the partnership will actively participate in the implementation of the proposed project will be viewed more favorably.¹⁹

The assistance will be used to help restore scheduled passenger air service that has been terminated.²⁰ The Department will consider factors including the circumstances surrounding the cessation of service, the extent to which market circumstances have now changed, warranting the restoration of service, and the reasonableness of the applicant's plan to restore service (and, where appropriate, the length of time since the service was last operated). Applications where changed circumstances would support the viability of replacement service, and for which the community has put forth a robust plan to obtain that service, will be viewed more favorably.

¹⁹ An air carrier may not be a participant in any public-private partnership that a community or consortium has established, or is working with, to seek a grant in this proceeding.

²⁰ In determining whether a proposed service qualifies as a restoration of air service in the context of this proceeding, the Department will look closely at the current situation affecting the community involved. For example, in the case of a community that has lost all of its air service, the Department would consider a proposal to initiate new service to any city to qualify as a restoration of air service. Where a community currently has any existing air service, the Department would normally expect a qualifying proposal to consist of new service to the same city or air service market as that previously operated. To the extent that a proposed service was not to the same city/hub airport as that which was previously operated, we would expect the applicant to explain in detail why its proposal, while not exactly matching the former service, would meet the air transportation needs of the segment of the community affected by the loss of that former service, and should therefore be accepted by the Department as a qualifying restored service. (For example, if an applicant community that lost service to a hub airport such as Phoenix were to propose service to Denver, we would expect the applicant to show the percentage of routings over the lost Phoenix hub that would again have service over the proposed Denver hub.)

The assistance will provide material benefits to a broad segment of the traveling public, including businesses, educational institutions, and other enterprises, whose access to the national air transportation system is limited. The Department will consider whether the proposed project would provide, to a broad segment of the community's traveling public, important benefits relevant to the community. Examples include service that would offer new or additional access to a connecting hub airport, service that would provide convenient travel times for both business and leisure travelers that would help obviate the need to drive long distances, and service that would offer lower fares.

The assistance will be used in a timely fashion. The Department will consider whether a proposed project provides a well-defined strategic plan and reasonable timetable for use of the grant funds. Apart from the three-year period of time that a community may subsidize air service to and from an underserved airport, the statute does not place limits on the duration for which the Department may authorize various forms of assistance under SCASDP. Beginning with the FY 2017 SCASDP Order Awarding Grants,²¹ the Department increased the duration of grant awards under the program by one year over the durations it previously awarded, resulting in durations of two years for grants only seeking to perform studies, three years for those involving marketing, and four years for those involving revenue guarantees.²² The Department found that these longer terms were warranted, as communities often requested extensions of their grant durations to achieve the goals they set in their grant applications.

In the FY 2019 Order Awarding Grants, the Department found that, due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, then-current industry realities warranted a further one-year extension in durations for FY 2019 grants, to three years for studies, four years for marketing, and five years for revenue guarantees.²³ For FY 2021 grants, the Department found that the state of the aviation industry warranted continuation of the extended terms we authorized for FY 2019 grants.²⁴

For FY 2022 grants, the Department has again determined that the present state of the industry warrants the extended grant durations authorized for FY 2019 and FY 2021 grants. The Department therefore intends, in the final order selecting grantees in this proceeding, to award FY 2022 grants for three years to complete studies, four years for marketing and promotion (including advertising and public relations) of the airport, community, carrier, or destination, and five years for projects that target a revenue guarantee, subsidy, or other financial incentives.

Multiple communities cooperate to submit a regional or multistate application to consolidate air service into one regional airport. The Department will consider whether a proposed project involves a consortium effort to consolidate air service into one regional airport. This statutory priority criterion was added pursuant to Section 429 of the FAA Modernization

²¹ See Order 2018-7-10 in Docket DOT-OST-2017-0155, at p. 5–6.

²² As noted above, the three-year limitation set forth in 49 U.S.C. § 41743(d)(1) applies only to revenue guarantees, and the three-year limitation clock begins only when subsidized service commences.

²³ See Order 2021-7-13 in Docket DOT-OST-2020-0231, at p. 6.

²⁴ See Order 2022-1-8 in Docket DOT-OST-2022-0003, at p. 13.

and Reform Act of 2012 (Pub. L. No. 112-95) and will be considered as a Merit Criterion in this proceeding.

b. Selection Considerations

While applications aligning with one or more Merit Criteria will be viewed more favorably than those that do not, the Department's analysis of an application's alignment with all the stated selection criteria and considerations, taken together, will inform its Technical Review.

Innovation and Resiliency, and Climate Change and Sustainability: The Department will consider the extent to which an application proposes new and creative solutions to air transportation issues facing the community or incorporates considerations of climate change and sustainability, and whether the proposed project, if successfully implemented, could serve as a working model for other communities. As noted in Section D.9 above, examples could include, but are not limited to:

1. Proposing to utilize or encourage intermodal or regional solutions (a) to connect passengers to the community's air service, (b) if the community cannot implement or sustain its own air services, to connect to a neighboring community's air service (e.g., cost-effective inter/intra city passenger bus service), or (c) to market intermodal surface transportation options available to air travelers, including where such initiatives could have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency, incorporate electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase climate resilience, reduce pollution, or address environmental justice concerns; or
2. Proposing a project that could encourage air carriers serving the community to take reasonable efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including by encouraging the use of sustainable aviation fuels or electric and zero emission ground equipment and infrastructure; or
3. Proposing a study to identify the air service needs of a small community or rural region, taking into account climate change and sustainability.

Community Participation: The Department will consider:

- whether the proposed project has broad community support; and
- the community's demonstrated commitment to and participation in the proposed project.

Location: The Department will consider the location and characteristics of a community:

- the geographic location of each applicant, including the community's proximity to larger centers of air service and low-fare service alternatives;
- the population and business activity, as well as the relative size of each community; and
- whether the community's proximity to an existing or prior grant recipient could adversely affect either its application proposal or the project undertaken by the other recipient.

Other Factors: The Department will also consider:

- whether the proposed project clearly addresses the applicant's stated problems;

- the community's existing level of air service and whether that service has been increasing or decreasing;
- whether the applicant has a plan to provide any necessary continued financial support for the proposed project after the requested grant award expires;
- the grant amount requested compared with the total funds available for all communities;
- the proposed Federal grant amount requested compared with the local share offered;
- any letters of intent from airline planning departments or intermodal surface transportation providers on behalf of applications that specifically indicate intent to enlist new or expanded air service or surface transportation service in support of the air service in the community;
- whether the applicant has plans to continue with the proposed project if it is not self-sustaining after the grant award expires; and
- equitable and geographic distribution of available funds.

2. Review and Selection Process

Each application received in response to this solicitation will undergo an Eligibility Review based on the criteria outlined in Section C to determine whether that application conforms to basic eligibility standards. An application that does not satisfy all the Eligibility Review criteria will be disqualified. The Department will then conduct a Technical Review of all eligible applications based on the selection criteria outlined above in Section E.1. The Department will not assign specific numerical scores to projects based on the selection criteria. Rather, ratings of "highly recommended," "recommended," "acceptable," or "not recommended" will be assigned to applications.

The Department reserves the right to award funds for a part of the project included in an application, if a part of the project is eligible and aligns well with the selection criteria specified in this Order. In addition, as part of its review of the Selection Consideration "Other Factors," the Department will consider the geographical distribution of the applications to ensure consistency with the statutory requirement limiting awards to no more than four communities or consortia of communities, or a combination thereof, from the same State. The final selections will be limited to no more than 40 communities or consortia of communities, or a combination thereof.

3. Integrity and Performance Review

Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, the Department is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. The Department will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business

ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.206.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Grant awards will be made as promptly as possible so that selected communities can complete the grant agreement process and implement their plans. Given the competitive nature of the grant process, the Department will not meet with applicants regarding their applications before awards have been announced.²⁵ All non-confidential portions of each application, all correspondence and ex-parte communications, and all orders will be posted in the above-captioned docket on www.regulations.gov.

The Department will announce its grant selections in a Selection Order that will be posted in the above-captioned docket, served on all applicants and all parties served with this Solicitation Order, and posted on the Department's SCASDP website <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/SCASDP>.

Grant Agreements: Communities selected to receive grants are required to execute a grant agreement with the Department before they begin to expend funds under the grant award. Applicants should not assume they have received a grant, nor should they obligate or expend local funds prior to receiving and fully executing a grant agreement with the Department. As noted above, expenditures made prior to the execution of a grant agreement, including costs associated with preparation of the grant application, will not be reimbursed.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Assurances: There are numerous assurances that grant recipients must sign and honor when Federal funds are awarded. All communities receiving a grant will be required to accept and meet the obligations created by these assurances when they execute their grant agreements. Copies of assurances are available online at <http://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/SCASDP>, (click on "SCASDP Grant Assurances").

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this notice, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; statutory, regulatory, and public policy requirements, including without limitation, those protecting free speech, religious liberty, public welfare, the environment, and prohibiting discrimination; the conditions of performance, non-discrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of the Department of Transportation; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by the Office of

²⁵ Once the Department has completed the selection process and has issued a final order in this Docket, however, Department staff is available to provide any applicant, at its request, with feedback on its application.

Management and Budget. In complying with these requirements, recipients, in particular, must ensure that no concession agreements are denied or other contracting decisions made on the basis of speech or other activities protected by the First Amendment. If the Department determines that a recipient has failed to comply with applicable Federal requirements, the Department may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

Payments: The Small Community Program is a reimbursable program; therefore, communities are required to make expenditures for project implementation under the program prior to seeking reimbursement from the Department. Eligible project implementation costs are reimbursable from grant funds only for services or property delivered during the grant term.²⁶

Expenditures incurred by third parties are not directly reimbursable to such third parties under this program. The legal sponsor must have paid all costs associated with eligible invoices, including costs incurred by third parties, prior to seeking reimbursement from the Department. The sponsor may NOT seek reimbursement from the Department in any case where a third party has paid for such services instead of the sponsor.

Reimbursement rates are calculated as a percentage of the total Federal funds requested divided by the Federal funds plus the local cash contribution (which is not refundable). The percentage is determined by: $(\text{SCASDP Grant Amount}) \div (\text{SCASDP Grant Amount} + \text{Local Cash Contribution} + \text{State Cash Contribution, if applicable})$. For example, if a community requests \$500,000 in Federal funding and provides \$100,000 in local contributions, the reimbursement rate would be 83.33 percent: $((500,000) / (500,000 + 100,000)) = 83.33$. Payments/expenditures in forms other than cash (e.g., in-kind) are not reimbursable.

3. Reporting

Unless otherwise noted, each grant recipient must submit semi-annual reports on the progress made during the previous period in implementing its grant project. Annually, each grant recipient must submit the Federal Financial Report, standard form 425 (SF-425). In addition, each community will be required to submit a final report on its project to the Department, and 10 percent of the grant funds will not be reimbursed to the community until such a final report is received. Additional information on award administration for selected communities will be provided in the grant agreement. If an applicant is selected for an award of greater than \$500,000 over the period of performance, the post-award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR Part

²⁶ In addition, communities should be aware that the Department will not reimburse a community for any advance, up-front payments or financial guarantees made to an air carrier or other party (for example, reimbursement will not be made for a lump-sum payment made to an air carrier on the date of an inaugural flight, when the payment exceeds the cost basis of that flight). The Department will only reimburse for services actually provided; for an air carrier, that would be under a per-flight or per-operating hour post-flight accounting. Under no circumstances will the Department reimburse a community for payments it has made to an air carrier, in the form of a subsidy or other compensation for the provision of an air service, where that subsidy or compensation is not based on an actual revenue shortfall the carrier has experienced in providing that air service.

200 Appendix XII - Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters will apply.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For further information concerning the technical requirements set out in this Order, please contact Brooke Chapman at Brooke.Chapman@dot.gov or (202) 366-0577. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at (202) 366-3993. The Department may post answers to questions and other important clarifications in the above-captioned docket on www.regulations.gov and on the program website at <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/SCASDP>.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Air Service Development Zone Designation

The statute authorizing the Small Community Program provides that the Department may designate one of the grant recipients in the program as an Air Service Development Zone (ASDZ).²⁷ Only one SCASDP grant recipient may hold an ASDZ designation at any one time. An FY 2018 SCASDP grant recipient, Grand Junction Regional Airport, in Grand Junction, CO, is a current ASDZ designee and the Department is therefore not soliciting a new ASDZ designee in this proceeding.

2. Submission of Confidential Commercial Information

Applicants may provide certain proprietary business information relevant to their applicants on a confidential basis. For additional information, *see* Appendix D.

This Order is issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR § 1.25a(b).

ACCORDINGLY,

1. Applications for funding under the Small Community Air Service Development Program shall be submitted via www.grants.gov as an attachment to the SF424 by 4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023; and

²⁷ See 49 U.S.C. § 41743(h).

2. This Order will be posted on www.grants.gov and on www.regulations.gov, and served on the United States Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Governors Association, the National Association of State Aviation Officials, County Executives of America, the American Association of Airport Executives, and the Airports Council International-North America.

By:

CAROL A. (ANNIE) PETSONK
Assistant Secretary
For Aviation and International Affairs

(SEAL)

*An electronic version of this document is available
online at www.regulations.gov.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON APPLYING THROUGH WWW.GRANTS.GOV

Applications must be submitted electronically through <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. **To apply for funding through www.grants.gov, applicants must be properly registered.** The Grants.gov/Apply feature includes a simple, unified application process that makes it possible for applicants to apply for grants online. There are five “Get Registered” steps for an organization to complete at Grants.gov. Complete instructions on how to register and apply can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. If applicants experience difficulties at any point during registration or application process, please contact the www.grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726, or via email to support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Support Hotline hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except Federal holidays.

Registering with www.grants.gov is a one-time process; however, processing delays may occur and it can take up to several weeks for first-time registrants to receive confirmation and a user password. It is highly recommended that applicants start the registration process as early as possible to prevent delays that may preclude submitting an application by the deadlines specified. Applications must be submitted and time-stamped not later than 4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023 (the Application Deadline), and, as set forth below, failure to complete the registration process before the Application Deadline is not a valid reason to permit late submissions.

In order to apply for SCASDP funding through <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>, all applicants are required to complete the following:

1. **System for Award Management.** Applicants applying electronically through Grants.gov must register with the Federal System for Award Management (SAM). Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here: <https://grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. All applicants must register with SAM in order to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will result in your application being rejected by Grant.gov during the submission process. When you register with SAM you will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID. The UEI is a new, non-proprietary identifier assigned by SAM that, effective April 4, 2022, replaced the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number for identification of entities receiving federal funds.²⁸¹ This identifier is used for tracking purposes and to validate address and point of contact information for Federal assistance applicants, recipients, and sub-recipients. The UEI will be used throughout the grant life cycle. Include your UEI number in form SF424 (item 8.c on the first page). Applications will not be reviewed without a UEI number.

²⁸ See <https://sam.gov/content/home> and <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-systems-information-kit/unique-entity-identifier-update>.

2. **Username and Password.** Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a www.grants.gov username and password. Complete your AOR profile on www.grants.gov and create your username and password. For more information about creating a profile on Grants.gov visit: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>.
3. After creating a profile on Grants.gov, the E-Biz Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) – a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM – will receive an email to grant the AOR permission to submit applications on behalf of their organization. The E-Biz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and approve an applicant as the AOR, thereby giving him or her permission to submit applications. To learn more about AOR Authorization visit: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/s2s/applicant/web-services/authenticate-aor.html?inheritRedirect=true>. To track an AOR status visit: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html?inheritRedirect=true>.

Applicants are, therefore, encouraged to register early. The registration process can take up to four weeks to be completed. Thus, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have approved as an AOR.

4. **Electronic Signature.** Applications submitted through Grants.gov constitute a submission as electronically signed applications. The registration and account creation with Grants.gov with E-Biz POC approval establishes an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). When you submit the application through Grants.gov, the name of your AOR on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application. Applicants must register the individual who is able to make legally binding commitments for the applicant organization as the AOR.
5. Search for the Funding Opportunity on www.grants.gov. Please use the following identifying information when searching for the SCASDP funding opportunity on www.grants.gov. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this solicitation is 20.930, titled Payments for Small Community Air Service Development.
6. Submit an application addressing all of the requirements outlined in this funding availability announcement. Within 24–48 hours after submitting your electronic application, you should receive an email validation message from www.grants.gov. The validation message will tell you whether the application has been received and validated or rejected, with an explanation. *You are urged to submit your application at least 72 hours prior to the due date of the application to allow time to receive the validation message and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification.*
7. **Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission.** Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic timestamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov.

The applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov with successful transmission of the application. Applicants should print this receipt and save it, as a proof of timely submission.

8. Grants.gov allows applicants to download the application package, instructions and forms that are incorporated in the instructions, and work offline. In addition to forms that are part of the application instructions, there will be a series of electronic forms that are provided utilizing Adobe Reader.
 - a. **Adobe Reader.** Adobe Reader is available for free to download from the Adobe Software Compatibility page:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.
Adobe Reader allows applicants to read the electronic files in a form format so that they will look like any other Standard form. The Adobe Reader forms have content sensitive help. This engages the content sensitive help for each field you will need to complete on the form. The Adobe Reader forms can be downloaded and saved on your hard drive, network drive(s), or CDs.
 - b. NOTE: For the Adobe Reader, Grants.gov is compatible with versions 10 through 11, and with certain versions of Adobe Reader DC.²⁹ Always refer to the Adobe Software Compatibility page for compatible versions for the operating system you are using. Please do not use lower versions of the Adobe Reader.
 - c. **Mandatory Fields in Adobe Forms.** In the Adobe Reader forms, you will note fields that will appear with a background color on the data fields to be completed. These fields are mandatory fields and they **must** be completed to successfully submit your application.

NOTE: When uploading attachments please use generally accepted formats such as .pdf, .doc, and .xls. While you may imbed picture files such as .jpg, .gif, .bmp, in your files, please do not save and submit the attachment in these formats. Additionally, the following formats will not be accepted: .com, .bat, .exe, .vbs, .cfg, .dat, .db, .dbf, .dll, .ini, .log, .ora, .sys, and .zip.

Experiencing Unforeseen www.grants.gov Technical Issues

Late Application Notice: Applicants who are unable to successfully submit their application package through grants.gov prior to the Application Deadline due to technical difficulties outside their control must submit an email to SCASDPgrants@dot.gov with the following information:

- The nature of the technical difficulties experienced in attempting to submit an application;
- A screenshot of the error;
- The Legal Sponsor's name; and
- The Grants.gov tracking number (e.g. GRANT12345678).

²⁹ Additional information on Adobe Reader compatibility with Grants.gov is available at:
<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

The Department will consider late applications on a case-by-case basis and reserves the right to reject late applications that do not meet the conditions outlined in the Order Soliciting Small Community Grant Applications. Late applications from applicants that do not provide the Department an email with the items specified above will not be considered.

If you experience unforeseen www.grants.gov technical issues beyond your control that prevent you from submitting your application by the Application Deadline, you must contact us at SCASDPgrants@dot.gov or Vince.Corsaro@dot.gov or (202) 366-1842 by **4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023** (the first business day following the deadline) and request approval to submit your application after the deadline has passed. At that time, the Department's staff will require you to provide your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and your www.grants.gov Help Desk tracking number(s). After the Department's staff review all of the information submitted and contact the www.grants.gov Help Desk to validate the technical issues you reported, the Department's staff will contact you to either approve or deny your request to submit a late application through www.grants.gov. If the technical issues you reported cannot be validated, your application will be rejected as untimely.

To ensure a fair competition for limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to complete the registration process before the deadline date; (2) failure to follow www.grants.gov instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its website; (3) failure to follow all of the instructions in the funding availability notice; and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant's computer or information technology (IT) environment.

**APPLICATION UNDER
SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
DOCKET DOT-OST-2023-0037
SUMMARY INFORMATION¹**

All applicants must submit this Summary Information schedule, as the application coversheet, a completed standard form SF424 and the full application proposal on www.grants.gov.

For your preparation convenience, this Summary Information schedule is located at <https://www.transportation.gov/policy/aviation-policy/small-community-rural-air-service/SCASDP>

A. PROVIDE THE LEGAL SPONSOR AND ITS UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI)

Legal Sponsor Name:

Name of Signatory Party for Legal

Sponsor:

UEI:

B. LIST THE NAME OF THE COMMUNITY OR CONSORTIUM OF COMMUNITIES APPLYING:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

C. PROVIDE THE FULL AIRPORT NAME AND 3-LETTER IATA AIRPORT CODE FOR THE APPLICANT(S) AIRPORT(S) (ONLY PROVIDE CODES FOR THE AIRPORT(S) THAT ARE ACTUALLY SEEKING SERVICE).

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |

¹ Note that the Summary Information does not count against the 20-page limit of the SCASDP application.

IS THE AIRPORT SEEKING SERVICE NOT LARGER THAN A SMALL HUB AIRPORT UNDER FAA HUB CLASSIFICATIONS EFFECTIVE ON THE NOFO'S SET APPLICATION DUE DATE?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Does the airport seeking service hold an airport operating certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration under 14 CFR Part 139? (If "No", Please explain whether the airport intends to apply for a certificate or whether an application under Part 139 is pending.)

☐ YES ☐ NO

D. SHOW THE DRIVING DISTANCE FROM THE APPLICANT COMMUNITY TO THE NEAREST:

1. Large hub airport: _____

2. Medium hub airport: _____

3. Small hub airport: _____

4. Airport with jet service: _____

Note: Provide the airport name and distance, in miles, for each category.

E. LIST THE 2-DIGIT CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CODE APPLICABLE TO THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION, AND IF A CONSORTIUM, TO EACH PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY.

1.	2.
3.	4.

F. APPLICANT INFORMATION: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ Not a Consortium ☐ Interstate Consortium ☐ Intrastate Consortium
☐ Community (or Consortium member) previously received a Small Community Air Service Development Program Grant

NOTE: A community that currently receives subsidized Essential Air Service funding, receives assistance under the Alternate Essential Air Service Pilot Program, or is a participant in, and has received a grant under, the Community Flexibility Pilot Program, is not eligible for SCASDP grant funds. See Section C.1. (“Essential Air Service Communities”)

If previous recipient: Provide year of grant(s): _____; and, the text of the grant agreement section(s) setting forth the scope of the grant project:

G. PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: (LIST ORGANIZATION NAMES)

PUBLIC	PRIVATE
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

H. PROJECT PROPOSAL:**1a. BROAD GRANT GOAL(S): (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- ☐ Launch New Carrier ☐ Secure Additional Service ☐ Upgrade Aircraft
☐ First Service ☐ New Route ☐ Service Restoration
☐ Regional Service ☐ Surface Transportation ☐ Professional Services²

² “Professional Services” involve a community contracting with a firm to produce a product such as a marketing plan, study, air carrier proposal, etc.

☐ **Other** (explain below)

1b. GRANT PURPOSE:

CONCISELY DESCRIBE THE BROAD PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED GRANT PROJECT THAT WILL ADDRESS THE COMMUNITY’S AIR SERVICE NEEDS OR DEFICIENCIES (FOR EXAMPLE, ‘GAIN ACCESS TO A MAJOR HUB’, OR ‘NEW SERVICE TO THE EASTERN UNITED STATES’).

1c. GRANT SCOPE:

CONCISELY DESCRIBE THE SPECIFIC SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED GRANT PROJECT (THAT WILL SERVE TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE GRANT PURPOSE STATED ABOVE), AS YOU WOULD ENVISION THE SCOPE LANGUAGE WOULD APPEAR IN A FORMAL GRANT AGREEMENT, USING THE FORMAT/STRUCTURE USED IN THESE EXAMPLES: “REVENUE GUARANTEE TO RECRUIT, INITIATE, AND SUPPORT NEW DAILY SERVICE BETWEEN _____ AND _____;” OR “MARKETING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT EXISTING (OR NEW) SERVICE BETWEEN _____ AND _____ BY _____ AIRLINES.”)

1d. GRANT HISTORY:

DOES THIS APPLICATION SEEK TO REPEAT A PAST GRANT PROJECT OF THE COMMUNITY OR CONSORTIUM (FOR EXAMPLE, A SPECIFIC DESTINATION AIRPORT)?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

IF THE ANSWER TO THE ABOVE QUESTION IS ‘YES’:

A: WHAT YEAR WAS THE FORMER GRANT AGREEMENT SIGNED? _____

B: HAVE 10 YEARS PASSED SINCE THE PREVIOUS GRANT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED?

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

IF THE ANSWER TO ‘B’ ABOVE IS ‘NO,’ THE APPLICANT SHOULD APPLY FOR A FORMAL WAIVER OF THE TEN-YEAR SAME PROJECT LIMITATION (SEE SECTION C.1. “SAME PROJECT LIMITATION”). THE REQUEST FOR WAIVER SHOULD INCLUDE A) A STATEMENT THAT THE COMMUNITY OR CONSORTIUM IS REQUESTING A WAIVER OF THE LIMITATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF 49 U.S.C. § 41743(C)(4)(C); AND B) INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT A FINDING THAT THE APPLICANT SPENT LITTLE OR NO MONEY ON ITS PREVIOUS PROJECT OR ENCOUNTERED INDUSTRY OR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES, DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WERE REASONABLY BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE COMMUNITY OR CONSORTIUM. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY’S PAST GRANTS, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT.

2. FINANCIAL TOOLS TO BE USED: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ **Marketing (including Advertising):** promotion of the air service to the public
- ☐ **Start-up Cost Offset:** offsetting expenses to assist an air service provider in setting up a new station and starting new service (for example, ticket counter reconfiguration). **NOTE:** While the Department will consider the eligibility of start-up costs to offset some expenses of a service/origin (such as ticket counter reconfiguration), the use of SCASDP grant funding is not eligible for inclusion in a grant proposal to support the following types of direct benefits to an air carrier:
- the establishment of a new air carrier, or other direct benefits to an air carrier or a company seeking to become an air carrier;
 - the purchase of aircraft;
 - relocation of personnel, including crews; or
 - relocation of ground equipment such as airport tugs or other ancillary aircraft equipment.

Also note that this is not an exhaustive list, and the Department reserves the right to review, and consider the eligibility of, any start-up cost proposals made by an applicant.

- ☐ **Revenue Guarantee:** an agreement with an air service provider setting forth a minimum guaranteed profit margin, a portion of which is eligible for reimbursement by the community
 - ☐ **Recruitment of U.S. Air Carrier:** air service development activities to recruit new air service, including expenses for airport marketers to meet with air service providers to make the case for new air service
 - ☐ **Fee Waivers:** waiver of airport fees, such as landing fees, to encourage new air service; counted as in-kind contributions only
 - ☐ **Ground Handling Fee:** reimbursement of expenses for passenger, cabin, and ramp (below wing) services provided by third party ground handlers
 - ☐ **Travel Bank:** travel pledges, or deposited monetary funds, from participating parties for the purchase of air travel on a U.S. air carrier, with defined procedures for the subsequent use of the pledges or the deposited funds; counted as in-kind contributions only
 - ☐ **Other** (explain below)
-
-

I. EXISTING LANDING AIDS AT LOCAL AIRPORT:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full ILS | <input type="checkbox"/> Outer/Middle Marker | <input type="checkbox"/> Published Instrument Approach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Localizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) | |

J. PROJECT COST: DO NOT ENTER TEXT IN SHADED AREA

REMINDER: LOCAL CASH CONTRIBUTIONS MAY NOT BE PROVIDED BY AN AIR CARRIER (SEE "TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS" FOR REFERENCE).

LINE	DESCRIPTION	SUB TOTAL	TOTAL AMOUNT
1	Federal amount requested		
2	State <u>cash</u> financial contribution		
	<i>Local cash financial contribution</i>		
	3a Airport <u>cash</u> funds		
	3b Non-airport <u>cash</u> funds		
3	Total local <u>cash</u> funds (3a + 3b)		
4	TOTAL CASH FUNDING (1+2+3)		
	<i>In-Kind contribution</i>		
	5a Airport <u>In-Kind</u> contribution**		
	5b Other <u>In-Kind</u> contribution**		
5	TOTAL IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION (5a + 5b)		
6	TOTAL PROJECT COST (4+5)		

Is this project supported by any other Federal Funds?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If "Yes" please describe the source(s) and the value (\$) of such funding:

K. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS**

For funds in lines 5a (Airport In-Kind contribution) and 5b (Other In-Kind contribution), please describe the source(s) of fund(s) and the value (\$) of each.

L. Is This Application Subject To Review By an Affected State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?

- ☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on (date) _____.
- ☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372, but has not been selected by the State for review.
- ☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

M. Is The Lead Applicant or Any Co-Applicants Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If “Yes”, Provide Explanation)

- ☐ No ☐ Yes (explain)
-
-

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

INCLUDED?	ITEM
<i>For Immediate Action</i>	
	Determine Eligibility
	New Grants.gov users must register with www.grants.gov . Existing Grants.gov users must verify existing www.grants.gov account has not expired and the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) is current.
<i>For Submission by 4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023</i>	
	Communities with active SCASDP grants: notify DOT/X50 of intent to terminate existing grant in order to be eligible for selection.
	Complete Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (SF424) via www.grants.gov
	Summary Information schedule complete and used as cover sheet (<i>see Appendix B</i>)
	Application of up to 20 one-sided pages (excluding any letters from the community or an air carrier showing support for the application), to include:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the community's air service needs or deficiencies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The driving distance, in miles, to the nearest large, medium, and small hub airports, and airport with jet service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic plan for meeting those needs under the Small Community Program, including a concise synopsis of the scope of the proposed grant project.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For service to or from a specific city or market, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Washington, D.C., for example), a list of the airports that the applicant considers part of the market.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of the funding necessary for implementation of the community's project.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An explanation of how the proposed project differs from any previous projects for which the community received SCASDP funds (if applicable).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of a legal sponsor responsible for administering the program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A request for waiver of the Ten Year Same Project Limitation (if applicable) – <i>see Appendix B</i> above.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motion for confidential treatment (if applicable) – <i>see Appendix D</i> below.

Confidential Commercial Information

Applicants will be able to provide certain confidential business information relevant to their application proposals on a confidential basis. Under the Department's Freedom of Information Act regulations (49 CFR § 7.17), such information is limited to commercial or financial information that, if disclosed, would either likely cause substantial harm to the competitive position of a business or enterprise or make it more difficult for the Federal Government to obtain similar information in the future.

Applicants seeking confidential treatment of a portion of their applications must segregate the confidential material in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential Submission of X (the applicant) in Docket DOT-OST-2023-0037" and include with that material a request in the form of a motion seeking confidential treatment of the material under 14 CFR § 302.12 ("Rule 12") of the Department's regulations. The applicant should submit an original and two copies of its motion and an original and two copies of the confidential material in the sealed envelope.

The confidential material should not be included with the original application that is submitted via www.grants.gov. The applicant's original submission, however, should indicate clearly where the confidential material would have been inserted. If an applicant invokes Rule 12, the confidential portion of its filing will be treated as confidential pending a final determination. All confidential material must be received by **4:00 PM EDT on May 17, 2023**, and delivered to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Analysis, 8th Floor, Room W86-307, 1200 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20590.