

# Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions pertain to the FY2017 TIGER program.

## **What is the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program?**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 appropriated \$500 million, available through September 30, 2020, for National Infrastructure Investments otherwise known as TIGER grants. As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY2017 TIGER program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area, or a region.

TIGER Discretionary Grants have supported capital projects which repair bridges or improve infrastructure to a state of good repair; projects that implement safety improvements to reduce fatalities and serious injuries, including improving grade crossings or providing shorter or more direct access to critical health services; projects that connect communities and people to jobs, services, and education; and, projects that anchor economic revitalization and job growth in communities. The FY2017 TIGER grant program will give special consideration to projects which emphasize improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities in rural areas.

## **Who can receive TIGER Grants?**

Eligible Applicants for TIGER Discretionary Grants are State, local and tribal governments, including U.S. territories, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other political subdivisions of State or local governments.

Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact, and identify the primary recipient of the award. Each applicant in a joint application must be an Eligible Applicant. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and must be signed by each applicant.

## **What types of projects are eligible for TIGER Discretionary Grant funding?**

Eligible projects for TIGER Discretionary Grants are capital projects that include, but are not limited to:

- road or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code;
- public transportation projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code;
- passenger and freight rail transportation projects;
- port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure and land ports of entry); and

- intermodal projects.

Please note that research, demonstration, or pilot projects are eligible only if they result in long-term, permanent surface transportation infrastructure that has independent utility as defined in Section C.3.iii of the NOFO. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications only for eligible award amounts.

### **What has changed in the FY 2017 TIGER competition?**

This notice is substantially similar to the final notice published for the TIGER Discretionary Grants program in the *Federal Register* on February 26, 2016 (81 FR 9935) for FY 2016 funds. The selection criteria remain fundamentally the same as previous rounds of TIGER Discretionary Grants, but the description of each criterion was updated. The FY 2017 TIGER program will additionally give special consideration to projects which emphasize improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities in rural areas, such as projects that improve infrastructure conditions, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity, or facilitate economic growth or competitiveness. For this round of TIGER Discretionary Grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$50 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the FY 2017 Appropriations Act.

### **Do I need to submit a pre-application to be eligible for a TIGER Grant?**

No. A pre-application is not required to be submitted prior to submitting a final application for the FY2017 round of the TIGER grant program. In lieu of the pre-application, we will be capturing much of the information previously collected there through the “TIGER 2017 Project Information” form available at [www.transportation.gov/TIGER](http://www.transportation.gov/TIGER).

### **Where can I access the Final Application?**

Final applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. Access to the “Apply” function will be made available in Grants.Gov on September 7, 2017.

### **What if I am having technical issues with grants.gov?**

Please refer to the following links for technical issues with grants.gov:

[Grants.gov Applicant User Guide](#)  
[Grants.gov Organization Registration User Guide](#)

You can also contact Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. E.D.T.

### **How will the Department evaluate cost share and matching funds?**

Per the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, TIGER Discretionary Grants may be used for up to 80 percent of the costs of projects located in an urban area and up to 100 percent of the costs of a project located in a rural area. For a project located in an urban area, total Federal assistance for a project receiving a TIGER grant may not exceed 80 percent.

A project application that demonstrates significant non-Federal financial contributions will increase its competitiveness for the purposes of the TIGER grant program. Non-Federal financial contributions can include State, local, and private sector funding; or other forms of cost share such right of way contributions, toll credits, or recycled revenue from the competitive sale or lease of publicly owned or operated assets. Projects that use INFRA grant funding to complete a funding package will be less competitive than those projects that rely on other sources to complete a package.

DOT recognizes that applicants have varying abilities and resources to contribute non-Federal contributions, especially those communities with fewer financial resources, and may struggle to provide cost-share that exceeds the minimum requirements. Therefore, DOT will consider an applicant's broader fiscal constraints when evaluating non-Federal contributions.

### **Are planning grants available for the FY2017 TIGER Discretionary Grant program?**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 does not provide dedicated funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects; these activities may be eligible to the extent that they are part of an overall surface transportation construction project.

### **How do I determine if my project qualifies as being rural?**

The TIGER Grant Program defines "rural area" as any area outside an Urbanized Area (UA) as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Per the Census Bureau, a UA is an area that consists of densely settled territory with a population of 50,000 or more people.

The Department will consider a project to be in a rural area if most or all of the project (determined by geographic location(s) where the majority of money is to be spent) is located in a rural area (outside a UA). If a project consists of multiple components, as described under section C.3.f or C.3.g. of the NOFO, then for each separate component the Department will determine whether that component is rural or urban, and will determine if the majority of funds are being spent in an urban or rural area. In some circumstances, including networks of projects under section C.3.g of the NOFO that cover wide geographic regions, this component-by-component determination may result in TIGER awards that include urban and rural funds.

To determine if a project is in an urban or rural area, please consult Census maps of Urbanized Areas:

[http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC\\_RefMap/ua/](http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/) (detailed PDF maps for every UA)

<http://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/TIGERweb2010/> (click the layer for urban areas and zoom in to see)

### **How will TIGER Grants address the needs of rural areas?**

The FY 2017 TIGER program preserves the requirement to award at least 20 percent (\$100 million) of funding for rural projects. The Department must also consider an equitable balance in funding for geographic diversity among recipients.

The FY 2017 TIGER program will give special consideration to projects which emphasize improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities in rural areas, such as projects that improve infrastructure condition, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity, or facilitate economic growth or competitiveness. This means accounting for the impact of transportation investment on economic revitalization of rural and disadvantaged communities.

### **What criteria will be used to evaluate applications for TIGER Discretionary Grants?**

The TIGER Discretionary Grants Final Notice of Funding Opportunity outlines the selection criteria in detail. For more information, please view the NOFO.

### **What is the minimum and maximum grant award for TIGER Discretionary Grants?**

For projects located in urban areas, the minimum award is \$5 million. Please note that the minimum total project cost for a project located in an urban area must be \$6.25 million to meet match requirements.

For projects located in rural areas, the minimum award is \$1 million.

The maximum award for all projects is \$25 million. Not more than \$50 million can be awarded to a single State.

### **What is the difference between a joint applicant and a partner?**

A joint applicant refers to one or more Eligible Applicants, as described in the NOFO, who submit a single application. Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and must be signed by each applicant. Only an eligible entity may receive and administer TIGER funds upon award, and lead applicants who wish to administer their grants through eligible co-applicants (such as State

DOTs) should create those relationships (such as through MOUs) to the extent possible prior to award.

A project partner refers to one or more stakeholders or collaborators that support the project. Project support can include, but is not limited to, help with public engagement or outreach, monetary contributions, planning, or public alignment with project priorities. A project partner need not be an Eligible Applicant.

### **Can an application contain more than one project component?**

Yes, if the components demonstrate a strong relationship or connection between them. DOT strongly encourages each applicant to identify in their application the project components that have independent utility, independently align with the selection criteria, and meet NEPA requirements; and DOT encourages each applicant to separately detail the costs and requested TIGER funding for those components, as well as the overall TIGER funding request.

### **If you intend to demonstrate independent utility on project components, is a BCA needed for each component or only for the entire project?**

While USDOT allows for packages of projects to be included in a single grant application, each component of such package with independent utility should be evaluated separately, with its own BCA. The costs and benefits of each individual component may also be aggregated to provide a summary estimate of net benefits for the entire package. Where projects within a package may be expected to also have collective benefits that are larger than the sum of the benefits of the individual project components, applicants should clearly explain why this would be the case and provide any supporting analyses to that effect. DOT recognizes the technical challenges in preparing a BCA and encourages applicants to do their best in demonstrating the anticipated benefits and estimated costs of the entire project as well as appropriate components.

### **Are freight and transit projects competitive in TIGER?**

The Department anticipates that in addition to meeting statutory requirements, the TIGER program's focus on safety, state of good repair, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and quality of life, means that freight and transit projects will be competitive.

### **Are eligible projects allowed to apply to both the TIGER and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) programs?**

Yes, projects that meet the minimum eligibility requirements for both programs may submit applications to both programs, but must timely submit separate applications that independently address how the project satisfies applicable selection criteria for the relevant grant program.

### **How will an application to both INFRA and TIGER be evaluated?**

If an application for the same project is submitted to both programs and contains few or no changes to its benefit-cost analysis or project readiness information, DOT may review and consider the previously completed TIGER analysis during the evaluation of an application for a FY2017-2018 INFRA award. The rest of the selection criteria will be evaluated independently.

**How do we get feedback on previous TIGER grant submissions to improve chances of success?**

DOT will debrief previous grant submissions with previous applicants. Please email [TIGERgrants@dot.gov](mailto:TIGERgrants@dot.gov) to schedule a debrief.

**How does the evaluation process work?**

First, technical evaluation teams made up of Departmental staff will determine whether projects satisfy statutory requirements and rate how well they address the selection criteria outlined in the NOFO. The Senior Review Team, comprising Departmental leadership, will then consider the applications and the technical evaluations to determine which projects to advance to the Secretary for consideration. The Secretary will ultimately make the final selection for awards, consistent with the statutory requirements for TIGER Grants and the selection criteria in the NOFO.

**Is capital equipment or rolling stock eligible for TIGER funds?**

Yes, equipment is eligible, but federal requirements apply to the use of any grant funding. Please see section F.2. of the TIGER NOFO for information on federal requirements.

**What is the difference between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?**

The obligation deadline, September 30, 2020, is the date by which a TIGER award recipient must have a signed and executed grant agreement in place with the DOT. The execution of the grant agreement obligates TIGER funding for the awarded project. The expenditure deadline of September 30, 2025, is the date by which all TIGER funding must be expended, invoiced, and reimbursed.