



RURAL OPPORTUNITIES TO
USE TRANSPORTATION FOR
ECONOMIC SUCCESS

ROUTES

Mike Close - USDOT
CTAA Expo
May 24, 2023

Contact Us!
Rural@dot.gov
www.transportation.gov/rural



About the ROUTES Initiative

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



The ROUTES Office seeks to:

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

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

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



One-Stop-Shop for Rural Resources

The ROUTES website consolidates DOT's rural resources in one place.

U.S. Department of Transportation ABOUT DOT ▾ PRIORITIES ▾ CONNECT ▾ 🔍

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ROUTES

- About
- Statistics
- Grants >
- Electric Vehicles >
- Modal Administrations >
- Contact ROUTES

Related Links

- [US DOT Grant Programs and Projects](#)
- [Grant Applicant Toolkit](#)
- [Rural EV Infrastructure Toolkit](#)
- [National Center for Rural Road Safety](#)
- [Access to Intercity Transportation in Rural Areas](#)
- [Subscribe to ROUTES updates](#)

Related Documents


- [ROUTES Fact Sheet](#)

Contact Us

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

Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES)



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

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

The ROUTES Initiative is established to...

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

The Rural Transportation Network is Critical for Our Economy

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

www.transportation.gov/rural

Webinars

- Benefit Cost Analyses for Rural Projects
- TIFIA Rural Projects Initiative
- Transit Resources
- National Roadway Safety Strategy

Tools and Toolkits

- Rural Eligibility Map
- Point of Contact Map
- Grant Applicant Toolkit
- Rural EV Infrastructure Toolkit

Funding Opportunities

- Active & Upcoming NOFOs
- Links to Past Awards

Modal Specific Landing Pages

Monthly Newsletters



Rural EV Infrastructure Toolkit

***Charging Forward: A Toolkit for Planning and Funding Rural Electric Mobility Infrastructure* helps rural stakeholders scope, plan, and fund electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

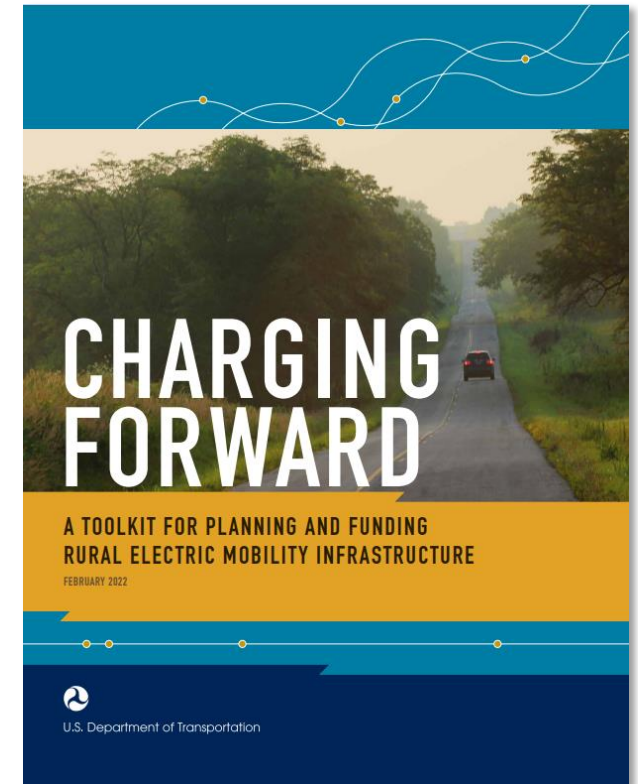
- Electric Vehicle Basics
- Benefits and Challenges of Rural Vehicle Electrification
- Partnership Opportunities
- EV Infrastructure Planning for Rural Areas
- EV Infrastructure Funding and Financing for Rural Areas

INCLUDES...

- Grant and loan opportunities
- Planning tools and resources
- Rural success stories

UPDATED (MAY 2023) [NEW]

- Stakeholder feedback
- Expanded content on
 - Transit vehicles
 - School buses
 - Micromobility
 - Accessible design
- New funding programs, including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
 - National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula Program (\$5 billion)
 - Discretionary Grant Program for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (\$2.5 billion)
 - Clean School Bus Program (\$5 billion)



www.transportation.gov/rural/ev/toolkit



Rural Grant Applicant Toolkit

OVERVIEW

- Illustrates key applicant activities when participating in the USDOT discretionary grants process
- Compiles helpful tools and resources for applicants to maximize the potential for award success

REVISED RURAL APPLICANT TOOLKIT

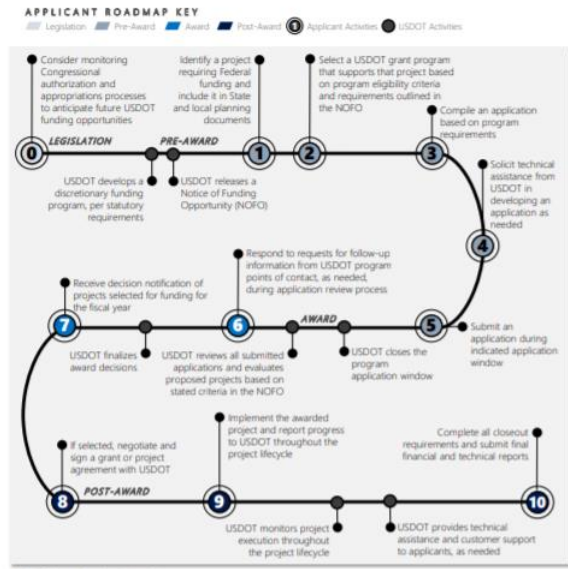
- Coming soon, a revised Rural Grant Applicant Toolkit will help project sponsors navigate the federal discretionary grant process.

DISCRETIONARY GRANT DASHBOARD

- Makes it easier to search for and find grant opportunities depending on the type of project you have, your organization type, and other considerations like match requirements.
- USDOT hosted a webinar on **May 22** to launch the dashboard, while also highlighting FHWA's new Wildlife Crossings and PROTECT Programs.

Applicant Roadmap

Use the numbered steps below to navigate general applicant activities during the USDOT discretionary grant funding process. USDOT activities are also included for reference. Note that specific steps may differ by program.



Searchable database of USDOT and non-USDOT transportation related discretionary grants.

 [Download CSV](#)

Keywords

Eligible Activities Eligible Applicants

Agency/Office Transportation Type

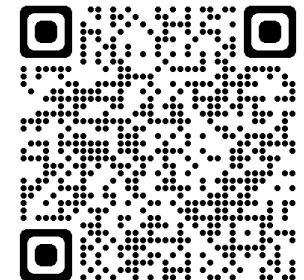
Match Waiver Rural Set-Aside Tribal Set-Aside Status

[Apply](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- 90+ grant programs
- Covers DOT and Non-DOT Agencies
 - *8 DOT Agencies*
 - *10+ Non-DOT Agencies*
- Multiple search filters
- Customized features for Rural and Tribal communities
- Save results as Excel csv file

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard>



BIL Rural Funding



- More than \$44 Billion over the next 5 years for rural transportation infrastructure
 - New rural-specific programs (including Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program and the Rural & Tribal Assistance Program)
 - Increased funding for programs with rural set-asides (including RAISE and INFRA)
- Codifies ROUTES Initiative and ROUTES Council
- BIL resources
 - White House [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Playbook](#)
 - White House [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Rural Playbook](#)
 - DOT [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Hub](#)
 - DOT [Fact Sheet for Rural Communities](#)



Key Active & Upcoming NOFOs



Program	FY23 NOFO	FY23 Funding	Rural Set-Aside	Rural Definition	Eligible Applicants					
					State	MPO	Local	Tribe	PA	Other
Charging & Fueling Infrastructure	OPEN TO 06/13/2023	\$700 Million	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safe Streets and Roads for All	OPEN TO 07/10/2023	\$1.178 Billion	n/a	Outside UA >200k		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Airport Improvement Program	OPEN TO 07/14/2023	\$1.5 Billion	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ferry Service for Rural Communities	OPEN TO 07/17/2023	\$170 Million	n/a	n/a	✓					
Wildlife Crossings Pilot	OPEN TO 08/01/2023	\$111.85 Million	60%	Outside UA > 50k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PROTECT	OPEN TO 08/18/2023	\$848 Million	25%	Outside UA >200k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MPDG (INFRA, Mega, & Rural)	Spring 2023	~\$2.8 Billion	30% (INFRA)	Outside UA >200k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grants	Spring 2023	\$200 Million	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Please note schedule is approximate and subject to change

<https://www.transportation.gov/rural/funding-opportunities>

Note: This table does not include all BIL programs or eligible entities, and there are additional nuances not represented in this table. "PA" means a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function.

Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program

The \$2.5 billion Discretionary Grant Program for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure supports EV charging and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure. It is divided into two distinct \$1.25 billion grant programs.



NOFO currently OPEN until June 13, 2023.

Both Community and Corridor Grants are included in the current NOFO for Fiscal Year FY22 and FY23 offering up to \$700M.

Key Requirements of the Corridor Charging Grant

- Located along a designated AFC;
 - EV charging within 1 mile and other alternative fuels within 5 miles of the AFC.
- Must be publicly accessible.
- Must use funds to contract with a private entity.
- Must address environmental justice.
- Must be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.



EV Alternative Fuel Corridor Designations, Rounds 1-6 (Source: FHWA)

Key Requirements of the Community Charging Grant



- Located on any public road or in other publicly accessible locations
 - i.e. parking facilities at public buildings, public schools, and public parks, or in publicly accessible parking facilities owned or managed by a private entity.
- Must be publicly accessible.
- May use funds to contract with a private entity.
- Must address environmental justice.
- Expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to expand or fill gaps in access to publicly accessible infrastructure.
- Must be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

Safe Streets and Roads for All

- \$5 billion discretionary grant program, with ~\$1 billion/year over 5 years
- Purpose: prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roadways
- Focus on comprehensive safety action planning, and implementing those plans
- Inclusive of all types of roadway safety interventions across the Safe System Approach



SS4A Overview: Eligibility

Eligible Recipients

- Metropolitan planning organization (MPOs)
- Political subdivision of a State
- Federally recognized Tribal government
- Multijurisdictional groups comprised of the above

Eligible Activities

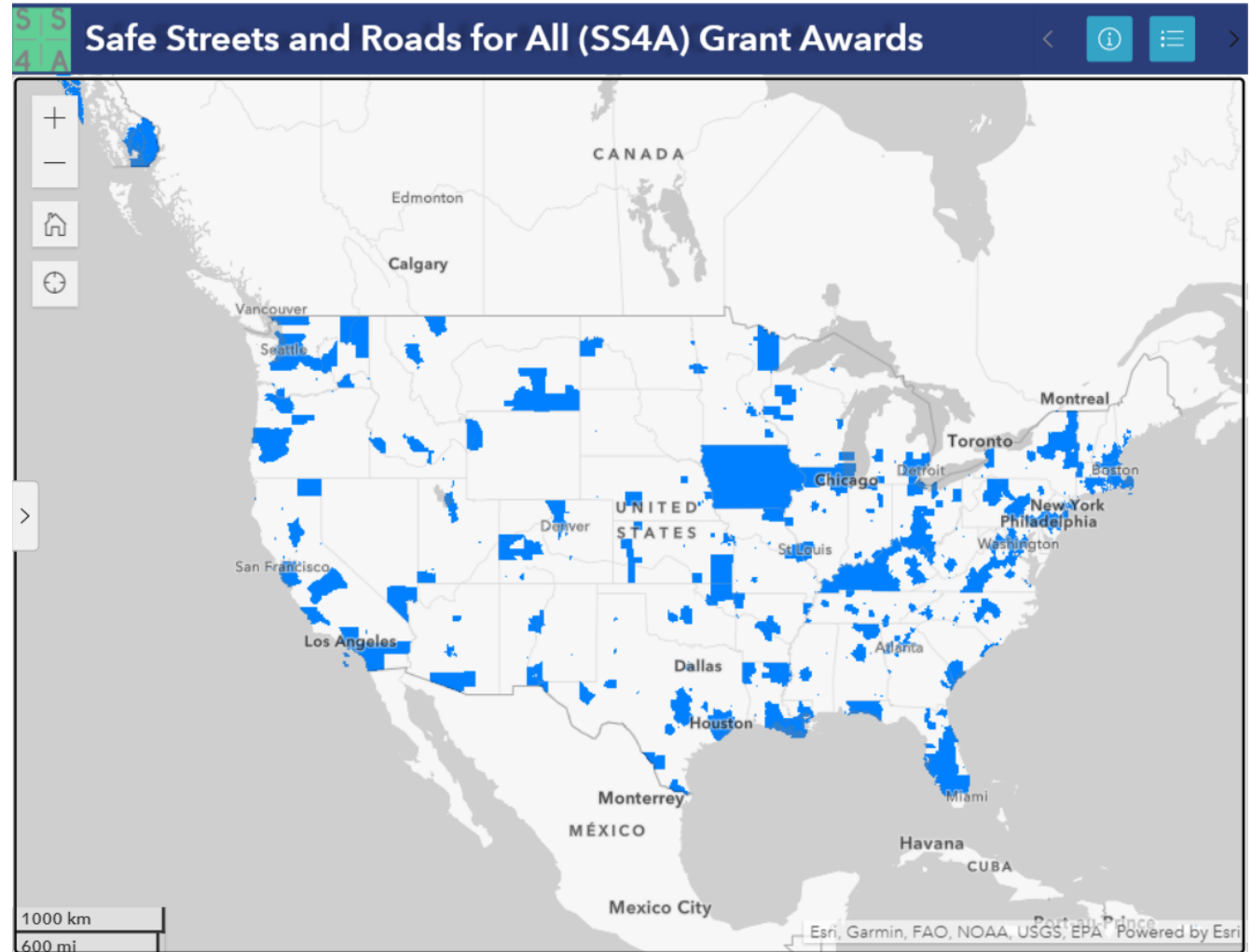
- Develop a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan
 - Develop or complete an Action Plan
 - Conduct supplemental planning
 - Carry out demonstration activities
- Planning, design, and development activities for **projects and strategies** identified in an Action Plan
- Implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan



Safe Streets and Roads for All

- 510 communities were selected for FY 2022 grants
 - 473 Action Plan Grants
 - 37 Implementation Grants
- More than \$800 million in funding in the first round
- Funds will improve roadway safety planning for over half the nation's population

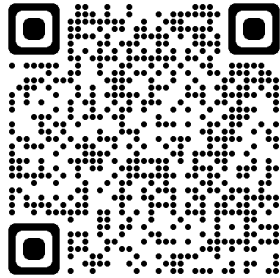
<http://www.transportation.gov/SS4A>



Technical Assistance

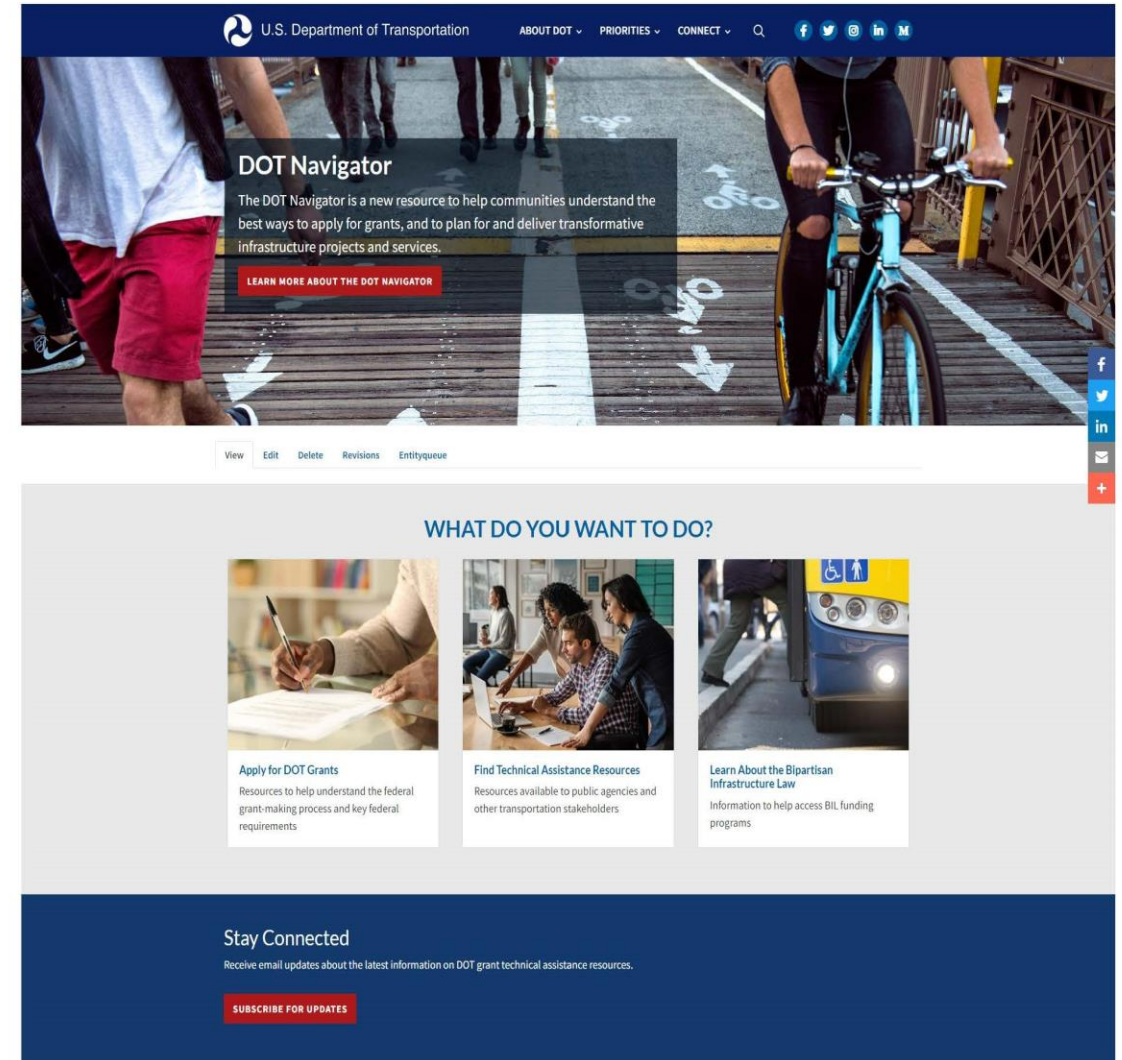
DOT Navigator

Coordinating and Improving Access to the range of DOT Technical Assistance Resources



<https://transportation.gov/dot-navigator>

- **Sample Grant Application Resources**
 - Overview of DOT Funding and Financing
 - USDOT Discretionary Grant Process
 - Understanding Federal Match Requirements
 - Checklist for a Strong Workforce and Labor Plan
 - What is a Benefit-Cost Analysis?
 - Is Federal Funding the Right Fit for My Organization?



The screenshot shows the DOT Navigator website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the U.S. Department of Transportation logo, the text "U.S. Department of Transportation", and menu items for "ABOUT DOT", "PRIORITIES", and "CONNECT". Below the navigation bar is a large hero image of a person walking and a person riding a bicycle on a wooden boardwalk. Overlaid on this image is the "DOT Navigator" title and a brief description: "The DOT Navigator is a new resource to help communities understand the best ways to apply for grants, and to plan for and deliver transformative infrastructure projects and services." A red button labeled "LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DOT NAVIGATOR" is positioned below the text. Below the hero image is a secondary navigation bar with options like "View", "Edit", "Delete", "Revisions", and "Entityqueue". The main content area is titled "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?" and features three cards: "Apply for DOT Grants" (Resources to help understand the federal grant-making process and key federal requirements), "Find Technical Assistance Resources" (Resources available to public agencies and other transportation stakeholders), and "Learn About the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" (Information to help access BIL funding programs). At the bottom, there is a "Stay Connected" section with a red button labeled "SUBSCRIBE FOR UPDATES".

Checklist for a Strong Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation, and Resilience Grant Application

- Provides an overview of considerations for applicants to develop a strong grant application that incorporates strategies related to climate change
- Includes considerations for:
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Addressing climate resilience and adaptation
- Provides a list of resources for additional information from USDOT and its Operating Administrations

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/checklist-strong-climate-change-mitigation-adaptation-and-resilience-grant->

Checklist for a Strong Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience Grant Application

Two Core Components of a Strong Project

Most U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) discretionary grants include selection criteria associated with climate change. Although criteria may differ among grant programs, a strong application in this area generally consists of two core components:

1. Reducing transportation greenhouse gas emissions (also called greenhouse gas mitigation, climate change mitigation, or decarbonization)
2. Incorporating climate adaptation and resilience features

This checklist is furnished to spark thoughts and ideas for applicants to consider in developing a strong application. Not everything listed here needs to be addressed to be competitive. Review the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the specific program you are considering to be responsive to its priorities or requirements.



Summary of transportation decarbonization strategies. Source: [U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#)

Snapshot of FY 2022 BIL Discretionary Grant Applications

See a list of all who have applied for FY2022 grant programs managed by the Office of the Secretary

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program**
- **INFRA, MEGA, Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs**
- **Reconnecting Communities Program (RCP)**
- **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)**
- **Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program**

DOT Navigator Home

Grant Application Resources >

- Overview
- Overview of DOT Funding and Financing
- USDOT Discretionary Grant Process
- Snapshot of BIL Discretionary Grant Applications
- Understanding Match Requirements
- How to Navigate Grants.gov to Submit Applications
- Tools to Determine Disadvantaged Community Status
- Maximizing Award Success:

Snapshot of BIL Discretionary Grant Applications

Interested in seeing who has applied to grants funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and managed by the USDOT Office of the Secretary? [View the list of eligible applicants for the 2022 rounds of RAISE, INFRA, Mega, Rural, RCP, SS4A, and SMART.](#) More information about each of these grant programs is provided below.

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program:** This program provides a unique opportunity for USDOT to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grants, Congress has dedicated nearly \$12.1 billion for fourteen rounds of National Infrastructure Investments to fund projects that have a significant local or regional impact.
- For FY 2022, INFRA, Mega, and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program were part of the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG) combined Notice of Funding Opportunity.
 - **INFRA** (known statutorily as Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects): This program awards competitive grants for multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas.



Of the 2,832 project applications included in this spreadsheet, USDOT funded 828 projects, representing 30% of the eligible applications and more than \$6 billion in Federal funding

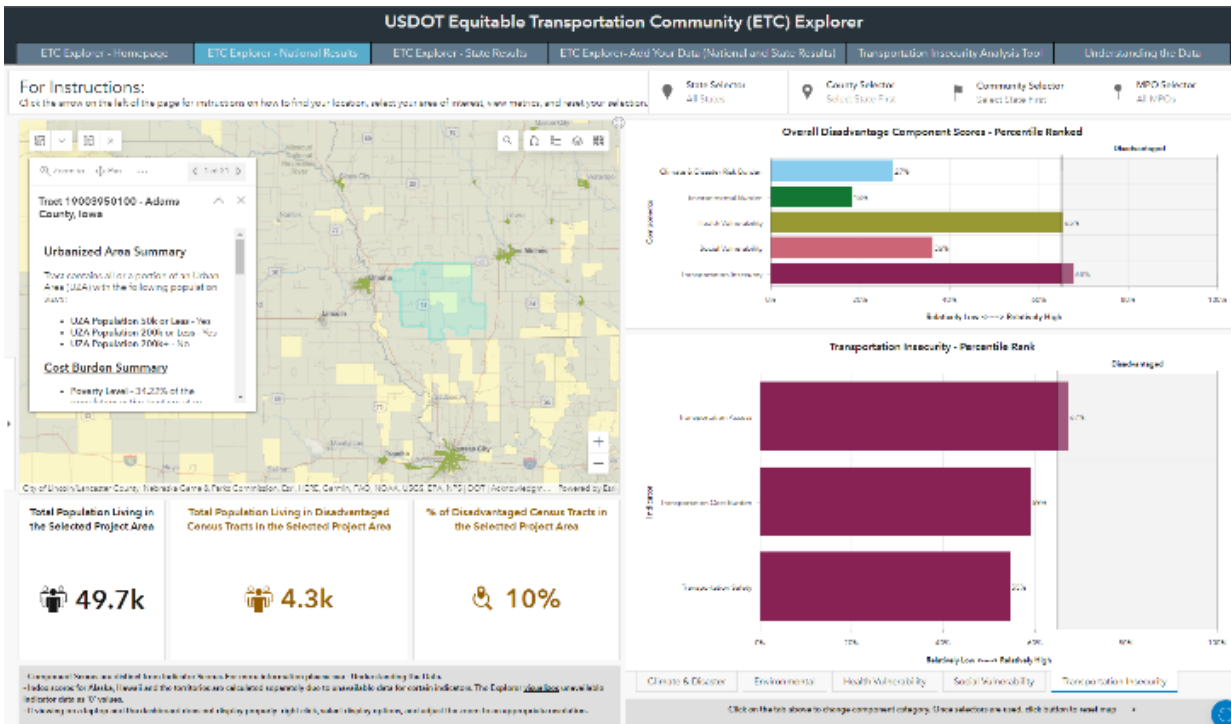
<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/snapshot-bil-discretionary-grant-applications->

Tools to Identify Justice 40 Areas in your Community

✓ Know Your Justice40 Designated Census Tracts

Know your [Justice40 designated Census Tracts](#), as many discretionary grant programs give additional consideration to projects that benefit J40 census tracts.

Find out [which areas in your community qualify as J40 census tracts](#) according to Federal disadvantaged community tools, and which of the [39 DOT J40-covered programs](#) may be especially beneficial to your community.



Explore the map

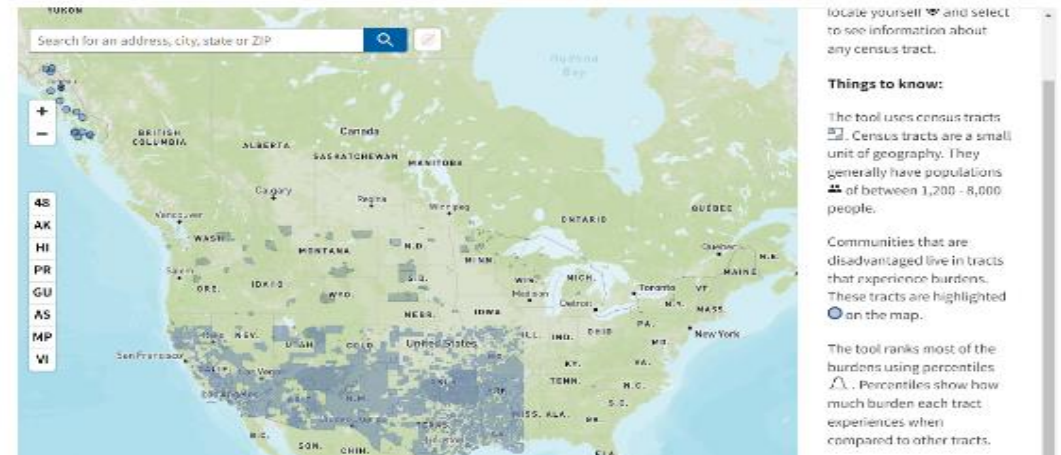
Share data sources with CEJIS

Census tracts that are overburdened and underserved are highlighted as being disadvantaged on the map. Federally Recognized Tribes, including Alaska Native Villages, are also considered disadvantaged communities.

Zooming in and selecting shows information about each census tract.

Get the data

Download the data with documentation and shapefile from the downloads page.

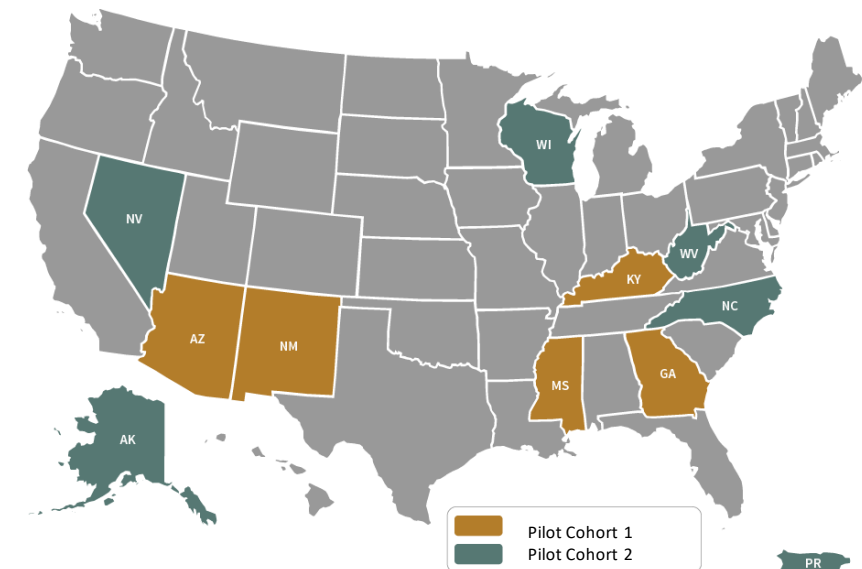
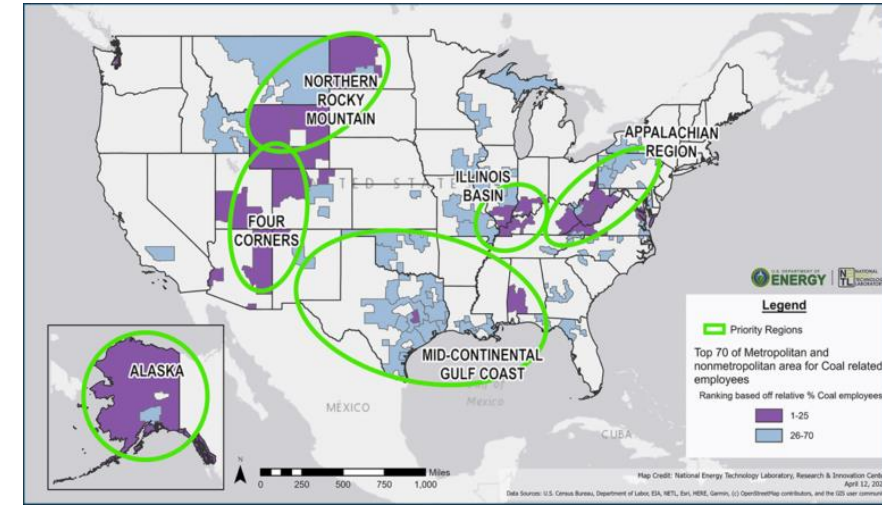


Beyond the USDOT



Place-Based Interagency Activities

- **Energy Communities (DOE)**
 - Interagency working group to help communities dependent on coal, oil, gas, and power plants revitalize their economies and support energy workers
 - More information here: energycommunities.gov/
- **Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (EPA)**
 - Planning assistance program to help communities identify strategies to grow their outdoor recreation economy and to revitalize their Main Street
 - More information here: <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/>
- **Rural Partners Networks (USDA)**
 - All-of-government program that helps rural communities find resources and funding to create jobs, build infrastructure, and support long-term economic stability on their own terms
 - More information here: <https://www.rural.gov/>
- **Thriving Communities Interagency Network (DOT/HUD)**
 - Interagency network to deploy Federal place-based technical assistance and capacity-building resources to urban, rural, Tribal, and disadvantaged communities
 - More information here: <https://www.transportation.gov/federal-interagency-thriving-communities-network>





THANK YOU

Contact Us!

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