

Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions pertain to the FY2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program.

What is the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant Program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 appropriated \$1.5 billion, available for obligation through September 30, 2020, for National Infrastructure Investments previously known as TIGER grants, and now renamed BUILD Transportation grants. As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY2018 BUILD Transportation program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact.

Funding provided under National Infrastructure Investments 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. DOT intends to award a greater share of FY2018 BUILD Transportation grants to projects located in rural areas that align well with the selection criteria than to such projects in urban areas.

Who can receive BUILD Transportation Grants?

Eligible Applicants for BUILD Transportation 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 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant funding?

Eligible projects for BUILD Transportation 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 2018 BUILD Transportation competition?

This program was previously known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or “TIGER Discretionary Grants,” program and is now known as the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or “BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants,” program. Many of the merit criteria of the BUILD program overlap with previous rounds of TIGER discretionary grants, though the program is refocused on infrastructure investment that will make a positive impact throughout the country. The FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program will give special consideration to projects located in rural areas. For this round of BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$150 million can be awarded to a single State, as specified in the FY 2018 Appropriations Act. As mandated by that Act, the Department will not use the Federal share as a selection criterion in awarding projects.

Do I need to submit a pre-application to be eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

No. A pre-application is not required to be submitted prior to submitting a final application for the FY2018 round of the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program. In lieu of the pre-application, we will be capturing much of the information previously collected there through the “BUILD 2018 Project Information” form available at www.transportation.gov/BUILD.

Where can I submit the Final Application?

Final applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. Access to the “Apply” function will be made available in Grants.Gov by June 4, 2018.

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 Training](#)
[Grants.gov Online 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, 2018, BUILD Transportation 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 BUILD grant may not exceed 80 percent.

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 anticipate INFRA grant funding or other future DOT discretionary grant funding to complete a funding package will be less competitive than those projects that rely on other sources to complete a package.

The Department will evaluate the applicant's ability to generate new non-Federal revenue for transportation infrastructure investment; it will not use Federal share as a merit criterion in awarding projects.

What does new revenue for transportation infrastructure investment mean?

New revenue means revenue that is not included in current and projected funding levels and results from specific actions taken to increase transportation infrastructure investment. For example, an applicant may generate new revenue through asset recycling, tolling, tax-increment financing, or sales or gas tax increases. New revenue does not include the proceeds of a new bond issuance unless an applicant raises or commits to raising new revenue to repay the bonds.

The Department will consider actions to create new revenue only if those actions occurred after January 1, 2015 or will occur in the future; it will not consider actions that occurred before January 1, 2015. For applications that propose to generate revenue over multiple years, the maximum time period that should be used is 10 years, beginning on January 1, 2018.

The Department recognizes that applicants have varying abilities and resources to generate non-Federal revenue. If an applicant describes broader legal or fiscal constraints that affect its ability to generate non-Federal revenue, the Department will consider those constraints. As mandated by the FY 2018 Appropriations Act, the Department will not use the Federal share as a selection criterion in awarding projects.

Are planning grants available for the FY2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 allows for the award of funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects. Planning grant applications will be evaluated against the same criteria as capital grant applications. While the FY 2018 Appropriations Act allows

funding solely for pre-construction activities, the Department will prioritize FY 2018 BUILD Transportation funding for projects that demonstrate the ability to move into the construction phase within the period of obligation.

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

The BUILD Transportation 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 the majority 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). Costs incurred on an Urbanized Area border, including an intersection with an Urbanized Area, will be considered urban for the purposes of the FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Program. Unlike the FY 2017 TIGER program under which the Department made rural project determinations on a component-by-component basis, for the FY 2018 BUILD program, the Department will make a single rural or urban determination for each project.

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/ (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 BUILD Transportation Grants address the needs of rural areas?

The FY 2018 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program is to award at least 30 percent (\$450 million) of funding for rural projects. The Department must also consider an equitable balance in funding for geographic diversity among recipients.

Underinvestment in rural transportation systems has allowed a slow and steady decline in the transportation routes that connect rural American communities to each other and to the rest of the country. New investment is necessary to grow rural economies, facilitate freight movement, improve access to reliable and affordable transportation options and enhance health access and safety for residents. To address these rural transportation infrastructure needs, DOT intends to award a greater share of BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant funding to projects located in rural areas that align well with the selection criteria than to such projects in urban areas.

What criteria will be used to evaluate applications for BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants?

The BUILD Transportation 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 BUILD Transportation 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 \$150 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 BUILD 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 BUILD funding for those components, as well as the overall BUILD funding request.

Can I submit a program of projects?

Yes, if an applicant demonstrates the ability to generate additional non-Federal revenue for transportation infrastructure investment, as described above and in Section C.3.v of the NOFO

may apply, exceeding the three-application limit, for multiple projects that collectively constitute a “program of projects.” A program of projects consists of independent projects that address the same transportation challenge and whose combined benefits, including funding efficiency, are greater than if the projects are completed individually.

For a program of projects, applicants must submit an application for each project within the program and describe how each project constitutes part of a program. Each project application within a program of projects must meet eligibility criteria described in Section C of the NOFO, demonstrate independent utility, and individually address the merit criteria within the NOFO. DOT will evaluate each application within a program of projects in the same manner in which it evaluates individual project applications. Each project within a program of projects is subject to the \$25 million award maximum and total awards cannot exceed \$150 million per State. Only one program of projects may be submitted by each eligible applicant.

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 BUILD Transportation?

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

Are eligible projects allowed to apply to both the BUILD Transportation 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.

Is capital equipment or rolling stock eligible for BUILD Transportation funds?

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

What broadband activities are eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

If construction of the transportation project will allow concurrent installation of fiber or other broadband deployment as an essential service, the applicant should describe those activities and how they support quality of life. The Department will consider that information when evaluating the project's alignment with the quality of life merit criterion. Unless the concurrent activities support transportation, they will not be eligible for reimbursement.

What border or port security activities are eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

If the construction of the transportation project will contribute to a state of good repair of transportation infrastructure that supports border or port security the applicant should describe how. The Department will consider that information when evaluating the project's alignment with the state of good repair selection criterion. Unless border security activities support surface transportation and are otherwise eligible under BUILD, they will not be eligible for reimbursement

Are transportation projects that are located at a port or near the border but *without* any security elements still eligible?

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C.3.i. of the NOFO.

Are maritime port projects eligible for BUILD grants?

Yes, similar to prior rounds of the competition, maritime projects are still eligible for BUILD grants so long as they meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C.3.i. of the NOFO.

How do we get feedback on previous BUILD [or TIGER] Transportation grant submissions to improve chances of success?

DOT will debrief previous grant submissions with previous applicants. Please email BUILDgrants@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 merit criteria outlined in the NOFO. A 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 BUILD Transportation Grants and the selection criteria in the NOFO.

When will awards be made?

Under the FY 2018 Appropriations Act, the Department must make awards by December 18, 2018.

What is the difference between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?

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