

2023 Rural Surface Project Discretionary Grant

This is only a summary; applicants should not rely on it to meet application requirements. Study the full grant opportunity announcement before applying for any federal grant.

Program Description – The Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (Rural) supports projects to improve & expand the surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas to increase connectivity, improve safety & reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generate regional economic growth and improve quality of life. Eligible projects for Rural grants include highway, bridge, and tunnel projects that help improve freight, safety, & provide or increase access to an agricultural, commercial, energy, or transportation facilities supporting rural areas.

Opportunity Numbers – RSTGP-23-24-RURAL	Agency – USDOT	
Obligation Deadline: Must obligate & begin construction by September 30, 2026 & complete before expiring	Closing – August 21, 2023 11:59 EST	BCA Required? Yes
Available Funding: Up to \$650-675M for FFY 2023 and FFY 2024 funds	Eligible Project Cost Restrictions: None. Clearly identify all components with independent utility and funding sources.	
Eligibility: Pgs 21-22 – ALL components of independent utility must meet ALL requirements: 1. Will generate regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits. 2. Cost-effective (BCA \geq 1) 3. Contributes to accomplishing one or more goals in 23 U.S.C. § 150 (see below). 4. Based on the results of Preliminary Eng. 5. Reasonably expected to begin construction no later than 18 mos after obligation date.	Minimum Award: At least 90% of awards must be at least \$25M, and up to 10% may be for less than \$25M.	
	Required Cost Share: Grant funding will not exceed 80%; Other federal assistance may satisfy the non-Rural share requirement up to 100% of project costs. *Higher than statutory maximum than Mega or INFRA.	
	Statutorily Required Available Funding: BIL specifies 15% of program funds are reserved for States with above average rural roadway departure fatalities, and ND is one of 24 states eligible.	
	NOFO & Related: https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-06/MPDG%20NOFO%202023-2024%20Final_0.pdf	

National goals under 23 U.S.C. § 150 – (1) Safety; (2) Infrastructure Condition; (3) Congestion Reduction; (4) System Reliability; (5) Freight Movement and Economic Vitality; (6) Environmental Sustainability; (7) Reduced Project Delivery Delays.

Project Outcome Criteria: Applications must describe, in detail with supporting documentation, how the project addresses each of these criteria, or else to expressly state that the project does not address the criterion. Insufficient information to assess any criterion will negatively impact the project rating.

Safety	State of Good Repair	Economic Impacts, Freight Movement, & Job Creation (*See required outcomes below)	Climate Change, Resiliency, & the Environment	Equity, Multimodal Options, & Quality of Life	Innovation Areas: Technology, Project Delivery, & Financing
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***Project must support at least one of these listed outcomes** – (1) increase travel time reliability & manage travel demand for goods movement, especially for bottlenecks; (2) improve multimodal systems that incorporate affordable options; (3) decrease transportation costs and provide access to employment centers; (4) significantly improve the economic strength of regions and cities by increasing the economic productivity of land, capital, or labor, and linkages between areas; (5) enhance recreational and tourism opportunities by providing access to Federal lands (6) result in high-quality job creation; (7) result in workforce opportunities for historically underrepresented groups; (8) foster economic growth & development while creating long-term high-quality jobs; (9) support integrated land use, economic development & planning to improve the movement of people and goods and local fiscal health; or (10) help the US compete in a global economy by encouraging the location of important industries & future innovations & tech in the U.S., & facilitating efficient/reliable freight movement.

Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities (Justice40 Initiative defined) and whether project is in an Opportunity, Empowerment, or Promise Zones, or a Choice Neighborhood, etc. must be noted. Provide how project has or will meaningfully engage communities affected by the project.

*Lines in red text will limit application to ONE program, if intention is to apply for all.

Eligible Applicants – Eligible applicants for Rural grants are: (1) a State; (2) a regional transportation planning organization; (3) a unit of local government; (4) a tribal government or a consortium of tribal governments; or (5) a multijurisdictional group of entities above.

Eligible Projects –

1. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under National Highway Performance Program
2. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under Surface Transportation Block Grant
3. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under Tribal Transportation Program
4. A highway freight project eligible under National Highway Freight Program
5. A highway safety improvement project, including a project to improve a high-risk rural road as defined by the Highway Safety Improvement Program
6. A project on a publicly owned highway or bridge that provides or increases access to an agricultural, commercial, energy, or intermodal facility that supports the economy of a rural area
7. A project to develop, establish, or maintain an integrated mobility management system, a transportation demand management system, or on-demand mobility services

Eligible Project Costs –

Development phase activities, including planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, preliminary engineering and design work, and other preconstruction activities; and,

Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of real property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, acquisition of equipment, and operational improvements.

Application & Narrative Requirements –

Required components include: **SF-424**, **SF-424C**, **standardized Project Information Form with project details**, and **Project Description** (5 pages), **Project Location File** (zipped Shapefile, KML/KMZ, or GEOJSON), **Project Budget**, **Sources and Uses of Funding** (5 pages), **Funding Commitment Documentation**, **Outcome Criteria Narrative** (15 pages), **Project Readiness** (5 pages), **Project Requirements** (5 pages), **Benefit-Cost Analysis Narrative**, **Benefit-Cost Analysis Calculations** (Excel recommended), **Mega Data Plan** (for Mega applications only), **Letters of Support** (optional), **Community Benefits Plan** (optional), and **Title VI Plan** (optional). Clearly identify within narrative the relevant criteria you are supporting, use the instructions starting on page 27 in the NOFO to build each document. Standard formatting: i.e. single-spaced, standard 12-point such as Times New Roman, 1-inch margins and submitted in PDF, unless otherwise specified on page 27. Cross-reference to avoid information redundancies.