



U.S. Department of Transportation

FY 2025 RAISE Frequently Asked Questions

DOT is committed to ensuring that information is available in appropriate alternative formats to meet the requirements of persons who have a disability. If you require an alternative version of files provided on this page, please contact raisegrants@dot.gov.

General

What is the RAISE Grant Program?

RAISE is a discretionary grant program for investments in surface transportation infrastructure that will have a significant local or regional impact. RAISE Grant Funds were authorized under the Local and Regional Assistance Program in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

For examples of projects previously awarded under the program, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/build/awards-2009-2024>.

What are the major changes from the FY 2024 RAISE Round?

Applicants should read the NOFO in its entirety so that they have the information they need to submit eligible and competitive applications. Section A describes changes from the 2024 round.

Submission

When is the application deadline?

Round 1: Reservation of Funds for FY 2024 RAISE Projects of Merit

- FY 2024 Projects of Merit must email RAISEgrants@dot.gov by 11:59 pm December 2, 2024 if they want their FY 2024 application considered for award under the reserved funding.

Round 2: Funding for FY 2025 Applications

- All interested applicants must submit applications in [Grants.gov](https://www.transportation.gov/Grants) no later than 11:59 pm eastern on January 30, 2025.

How many applications can an eligible applicant submit?

Applicants may submit a total of three (3) project applications (planning and/or capital) for RAISE grants. If a lead applicant submits more than three applications as the lead applicant, only the first three received will be considered.

Where can I submit the application?

Round 1: Reservation of Funds for FY 2024 RAISE Projects of Merit

- FY 2024 Projects of Merit must email RAISEgrants@dot.gov by 11:59 pm December 2, 2024 if they want their FY 2024 application considered for award under the reserved funding
- No amendments are being made to either the selection criteria or process. No application modifications will be needed or accepted.

Round 2: Funding for FY 2025 Applications

- All interested applicants must submit applications in Grants.gov no later than 11:59 pm eastern on January 30, 2025.
- Complete instructions on how to register and apply can be found at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). If applicants experience difficulties at any point during registration or application process, please use the help available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) such as the Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

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 Applicant FAQs](#)

You can also contact Grants.gov Support at 1-800-518-4726.

Eligibility

Who can receive RAISE Grants?

Eligible Applicants for RAISE grants are:

- States and the District of Columbia;
- any territory or possession of the United States;
- a unit of local government;
- a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States;
- a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority;
- a Federally recognized Indian Tribe or a consortium of such Indian Tribes;
- a transit agency; and
- a multi-State or multijurisdictional group of entities that are separately eligible.
- In addition to projects located in the United States, eligible projects for RAISE grants include projects that are necessary for reconstruction of the Alaska Highway from the Alaskan border at Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory, to Haines Junction in Canada and the Haines Cutoff Highway from Haines Junction in Canada to Haines, Alaska, as provided in 23 U.S.C. 218.
- 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. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant.

Are Tribes eligible to apply?

Yes, Tribal Governments are eligible applicants. Projects on facilities that are owned by an eligible applicant but located on Federally owned land for which the title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs-owned roads, are eligible.

What types of projects are eligible for RAISE Grants?

Eligible projects for RAISE grants are:

Capital projects including but not limited to:

- highway, bridge, or other road 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);
- the surface transportation components of an airport project eligible for assistance under part B of subtitle VII
- intermodal projects;
- projects to replace or rehabilitate a culvert or prevent stormwater runoff for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species while advancing the goals of the RAISE program;
- projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land and for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government; and
- any other surface transportation infrastructure project that the Secretary considers to be necessary to advance the goals of the program.
- Planning projects which include planning, preparation, or design (for example - environmental analysis, equity analysis, community engagement, feasibility studies, benefit cost analysis (BCA), and other pre-construction activities) of eligible surface transportation capital projects that will not result in construction with FY 2025 RAISE funding.

What are eligible airport projects under RAISE?

- Eligible surface transportation components of eligible airport projects are those projects listed in “Appendix P: Road and Surface Transportation Projects” of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) handbook, available at https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip_handbook/appendix#PP00.
- These generally include transit connections to airports and publicly accessible roads into, out of, and through airport properties. Intermodal projects at airports are also eligible.

- Ineligible projects are other aviation infrastructure such as runways, taxiways, towers, terminals, aprons, gates. Surface transportation projects that are specifically listed in “Appendix C: Prohibited Projects and Unallowable Costs” at https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip_handbook/appendix#PC00 are also ineligible.

Are projects improving Federally owned facilities eligible?

No, improvements to Federally owned facilities are not eligible for RAISE grant funds. Examples of Federally owned facilities include infrastructure owned by the National Park Service or General Services Administration. However, projects on facilities that are owned by an eligible applicant but located on Federally owned land for which the title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs-owned roads, are eligible.

Are projects that have received Federal funding eligible?

Yes, RAISE grants that use other sources of Federal funding, or have in the past, are eligible if the facility is owned and operated by a non-Federal, eligible applicant. For projects designated as urban and are not located in an Area of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Community, total Federal funding cannot exceed 80 percent of total future eligible project costs. For any project with other Federal funds, the applicant must independently satisfy matching requirements for those Federal funds.

Recipients of past RAISE/BUILD/TIGER grants may apply for funding to support additional phases of a project previously awarded funds in the RAISE/BUILD/TIGER program.

Is capital equipment or rolling stock eligible for RAISE grants?

Yes, equipment is eligible, but Federal requirements apply to the use of any grant funding. Please see section H of the RAISE grants NOFO for information on Federal requirements. However, RAISE grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR), or vehicles that are exempt from Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

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 RAISE grant funding for those components, as well as the overall RAISE grant funding request.

What are the minimum and maximum grant award sizes?

For capital 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 (and is not APP or HDC) must be \$6.25 million to meet match requirements.

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

Planning projects do NOT have a minimum award size.

The maximum grant award is \$25 million.

How do I calculate Federal share, for the purpose of meeting eligibility requirements?

The Federal cost share may not exceed 80% for urban projects that are NOT either located in an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP) or a Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC).

However, Federal cost share may exceed 80% for projects that are rural, or located in an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP), or located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC).

Applicants should use the following equation when determining the cost share for their project:

$$(\text{RAISE Grant Request} + \text{Other Federal Funds}) / \text{Total Project Cost} = \text{Federal Cost Share}$$

For the RAISE Program, Total Project Cost means the sum of future eligible Federal and Non-Federal costs that have not yet been incurred. This cannot include any previously incurred costs.

DOT does not use an applicant's cost share when evaluating applications on merit. The Department considers an applicant's cost share during the evaluation and selection process only to confirm eligibility for urban projects that are not located in an APP or HDC.

Planning Grants

Are planning grants available for the FY 2025 RAISE Grants?

Yes. Per the BIL, the Department will award at least five percent of available funds (\$75 million of the \$1.5 billion) for the planning, preparation or design of eligible projects.

Is a project with right-of-way acquisition designated as capital or planning?

Projects that include right-of-way acquisition are considered capital projects under the RAISE program. The Department will require projects that involve right-of-way acquisition without subsequent construction with RAISE grant funding to complete the anticipated improvements on that right-of-way within an agreed upon period. Projects that involve pre-construction activities without right-of-way acquisition and/or do not lead to construction as part of the RAISE award will be considered planning grants.

Can pre-construction activities (such as, NEPA and design expenses) be included in a capital project?

Yes. To the extent possible, the Department encourages applicants to submit applications for either planning or capital projects. However, an applicant can submit an application for a project that includes both preconstruction activities and construction. If funding is awarded to both phases of that project, it would be designated as a capital project. Projects that do not fund construction or right-of-way acquisition with FY 2025 RAISE grant funds are considered planning projects. Projects that include both preconstruction activities and construction should

demonstrate their ability to meet necessary requirements and obligate all funding by the September 30, 2029 obligation deadline.

RAISE grant funds and non-Federal match expended on preconstruction activities prior to grant agreement obligation must be pre-approved in writing by the Department of Transportation and are subject to the relevant Operating Administration's requirements.

Project Location

What are the definitions for urban and rural under RAISE?

A project is designated as "urban" if it is located in a 2020 Census-designated Urban Area (UA) and that UA had a population greater than 200,000.

A project will be designated as "rural" if it is located:

- In an UA that had a population less than 200,000 in the 2020 Census, or
- Outside an UA.

For example, a project located in an UA with a population of 150,000 will be designated as rural under the FY 2025 RAISE program. In contrast, a project located in an UA with a population of 250,000 will be designated as urban, even if the city or town in which the project is located has a population of 100,000.

For projects that include expenditures in both urban and rural areas, the Department will designate the project as urban or rural based on where the majority of project funds will be spent.

How do applicants determine if the project is urban or rural?

To determine if a location is in a Census-designated Urban Area (UA) with a population greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census, please see the:

- [RAISE Grant Project Location Verification](#) mapping tool.

How much will the Department award to rural and urban projects?

Not more than 50 percent of the \$1.5 billion in BIL funding (\$750 million) will be spent on projects located in urban and rural areas, respectively.

How do applicants determine if the project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty?

A project is located in an Areas of Persistent Poverty if:

- the county (or equivalent jurisdiction) in which the project is located consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty in all three of the following datasets: (a) the 1990 decennial census; (b) the 2000 decennial census; and (c) the 2022 Small Area Income Poverty Estimates, or

- the census tract in which the project is located has a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014-2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census; or
- the project is located in any territory or possession of the United States.

The [RAISE Grant Project Location Verification](#) mapping tool should be used to determine if your project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty.

How do applicants determine if the project is located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community?

A Historically Disadvantaged Community is defined by the Justice40 Interim Guidance Addendum, issued by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and Climate Policy Office (CPO):

- any census tract identified as disadvantaged in the [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), created by CEQ, which identifies such communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution; or
- any Federally Recognized Tribe or Tribal entity, whether or not they have land.

The [RAISE Grant Project Location Verification](#) mapping tool should be used to determine if your project is located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community.

If a project is in multiple counties or census tracts, but not all counties or census tracts are designated as an Area of Persistent Poverty or a Historically Disadvantaged Community, does it qualify as a project in those areas?

A project located in multiple counties or census tracts will be designated as an Area of Persistent Poverty or within a Historically Disadvantaged Community if the **majority of the project's costs** will be spent in county(ies) or census tract(s) that meet the definition of Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Community.

Benefit Cost Analysis

Are Planning Grant applications required to submit a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)?

No. Planning applications do not need to submit a BCA.

Is there a template for submitting a BCA?

Due to the variety of project types and project details, the Department does not provide a template. However, please review the most current [BCA guidance](#) published by DOT's Chief economist, as well as the [Benefit-Cost Analysis Spreadsheet Template](#) for Discretionary Grant Programs.

The Department also offers [BCA webinars](#).

If an application includes multiple project components with independent utility, 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.

Evaluation Process

How does the evaluation process work?

The Department will review Merit Criteria for all applications and will then review Project Readiness and Economic Analysis only for a subset of projects determined by the Merit Criteria ratings. Project Readiness consists of a Technical Capacity, Environmental Risk Assessment, and Financial Completeness Assessment.

The Merit Criteria are safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership and collaboration. For each merit criterion, the Department will consider whether the benefits are clear, direct, and data driven, which will result in a rating of “high,” “medium,” “low,” or “non-responsive.” Specific considerations for each merit criterion are described in the rating rubric in Section E of the NOFO.

Based on the merit criterion ratings, projects will be designated one overall rating: Highly Recommended, Recommended, Acceptable, or Unacceptable. Highly Recommended projects will automatically advance for further analysis. Recommended projects will be reviewed by the SRT, in consultation with Senior Operating Administration Staff, to identify projects with significant merits to advance for further analysis. For more details on how the Merit Criteria will be evaluated and which projects will be advanced for further analysis, please see the NOFO section F.

Capital projects advanced for further analysis will undergo an (1) Economic Analysis (2) Environmental Risk Assessment; (3) Financial Completeness Assessment; (4) Technical Capacity Assessment. The Economic Analysis assesses the proposed project’s estimated benefit-cost ratio and net quantifiable benefits. The Environmental Risk Assessment analyzes the project’s environmental approvals and likelihood of the necessary approval affecting project obligation. The Financial Completeness Assessment reviews the completeness of the funding package, ensuring non-RAISE funds are available and committed. The Technical Capacity Assessment

evaluates the likelihood of implementing the project in a manner that will satisfy applicable Federal Requirements.

Planning projects advanced for further analysis will only undergo a Financial Completeness Assessment and a Technical Capacity Assessment. Planning projects will not receive an Economic Analysis or Environmental Risk assessment.

The Senior Review Team considers the outcome of further analysis 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 RAISE Grants and the selection criteria in the NOFO.

How will the Department evaluate cost share and matching funds?

The Department does NOT consider cost share (the amount of non-Federal contribution) as a selection criterion or a competitiveness factor. However, general budget information (such as the nature of funding source or the availability of the funding) may be evaluated as part of the financial completeness in the readiness review, or under the Partnership and Collaboration or Innovation criteria in the merit review.

Per the BIL, the Federal share may be up to 80 percent of the costs of projects located in an urban area. The Federal share may be up to 100 percent of the costs of a project located in a rural area, a Historically Disadvantaged Community, or an Area of Persistent Poverty.

Where do we send letters of support?

Letters of support may be submitted with the application, sent electronically to RAISEgrants@dot.gov, or mailed via hard copy to Secretary Pete Buttigieg at the US Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC, 20590. To the extent possible, the Department will consider letters of support submitted after the application deadline.

When will awards be made?

Under the BIL, the Department must make awards no later than June 28, 2025. The Department will post awards to the RAISE Grants website (www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants). Selected awardees will be formally notified via an Award Letter. All unsuccessful applicants should visit the RAISE Grants website for awarded project details.

How does an applicant receive feedback on previous grant submissions to improve chances of success?

The Department strives to provide as much information as possible to assist applicants with the application process. Unsuccessful RAISE 2024 applicants have been offered a debrief. The Department will not review RAISE 2025 applications in advance, but staff are available for technical questions and assistance. RAISE grant program staff will address questions sent to RAISEgrants@dot.gov throughout the application period.

Labor/Workforce

Can applicants use RAISE grant funding to pay for what some would call a “jobs or workforce coordinator”?

To the extent an awarded project requires a jobs coordinator to complete the project, the costs of that coordinator may be allocable to the RAISE grant and allowable for reimbursement or use as cost share. See 2 CFR 200.405 for a complete description of allocable costs. Please note, costs incurred prior to award are not eligible.

Costs of the coordinator that are allocable to other Federal awards or other activities are not eligible under the RAISE award. The costs of a job’s coordinator dedicated to operational aspects of the project post-construction, or for positions otherwise not associated with the awarded project are not allocable to the RAISE grant and cannot be reimbursed.

Can applicants use RAISE grant funding to pay for short-term training that gets people into jobs on the project?

If completing an awarded project requires training the recipient’s employees, training costs may be allocable to the RAISE grant and allowable for reimbursement or use as cost share. See 2 CFR 200.405 for a complete description of allocable costs. Please note, costs incurred prior to award are not eligible.

If the recipient of a RAISE grant makes contract awards to carry out the project, the bidding specifications for those contracts may include necessary training and qualification requirements.

Where can applicants find more information about Labor/Workforce?

Please visit USDOT’s Grant Application Checklist for a Strong Transportation Workforce and Labor Plan linked below:

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/grant-application-checklist-for-strong-workforce-and-labor-plan>

Post-Award/Implementation

Are RAISE Grants a lump-sum cash disbursement at the time of award, or are they reimbursement grants? How do reimbursement grants work?

RAISE is a reimbursable program. RAISE grant recipients will not receive a lump-sum cash disbursement at the time of award announcement or obligation of funds. Instead, the recipient must pay project costs as they are incurred and submit to DOT requests for reimbursement. This means that the recipient must have access to sufficient non-RAISE funding sources to manage cash flow associated with the project.

If a recipient cannot complete a project on reimbursement basis, DOT will—on a case-by-case basis—consider recipient requests to use alternate payment methods as described in 2 CFR 200.305(b), including advance payments.

What is the difference between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?

The obligation deadline, September 30, 2029, is the date by which a RAISE grant award recipient must have a signed and executed grant agreement in place with the DOT, after receiving the necessary environmental approvals. The execution of the grant agreement obligates RAISE grant funding for the awarded project. The expenditure deadline of September 30, 2034, is the date by which all RAISE grant funding must be expended.

If a consulting firm is hired to help develop a RAISE grants application and that project is selected for a RAISE grants award, can that same firm be hired to perform the construction project design and engineering after award?

Under 2 CFR 200.317 and 1201.317, if the recipient of the RAISE grant is a state, then the recipient must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds, and the answer to this question is dependent on those policies and procedures.

If the recipient is not a state, the answer is yes, the same firm may be hired if necessary, competition requirements are satisfied. Per CFR 200.319, all procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner that provides full and open competition, eliminates unfair competitive advantage, and ensures objective contractor performance. Project sponsors must avoid creating situations that would unfairly favor the firm that helped develop the RAISE application or preclude other firms from competing. Additionally, the contractor that the project sponsor hires to draft its solicitation for proposals for the construction project design and engineering work must be excluded from competing for that procurement.

For the purpose of RAISE grants, “state” means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any state agency or instrumentality excluding local governments.