U.S. Department of Transportation

RAISE 2022 Applications FAQs

NEW Questions about NOFO Amendment No.1 and the FY 2022 Appropriations Act

1. Please summarize the changes in Amendment No.1 to the NOFO.

- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act added $775 million in funding to the RAISE 2022 competition.
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act allows for maximum grant awards of $45 million. *Please note, this maximum applies only to the additional $775 million, and does not change the maximum grant award of $25 million for the $1.5 billion in BIL funding*.
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act has its own $38.75 million minimum set aside for planning grants. *This means the Department will award at least $113.75 million in planning grants in the RAISE 2022 competition.*
- Planning grants funded under the FY 2022 Appropriations Act do not have minimum award amounts. *Please note, this applies only to the additional $775 million, and does not change the planning grant minimums of $1 million in rural areas and $5 million in urban areas competing for the $1.5 billion in BIL funding.*
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act has its own $20 million set aside for Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities. *This means at least $35 million will be awarded to these areas in the RAISE 2022 competition.*
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act has its own requirement to award no more than 50% of the funds to urban areas and no more than 50% of the funds to rural areas. *This means that in total, the Department may award no more than $1,137,500,000 to urban areas and no more than $1,137,500,000 to rural areas.*
- The FY 2022 Appropriations Act does not have statutory obligation or liquidation dates; however, the Department intends to hold all RAISE 2022 applicants to the BIL obligation deadline of September 30, 2026 and BIL liquidation deadline of September 30, 2031 to ensure efficient delivery of awarded projects.

2. How does NOFO Amendment No.1 affect applicants and evaluations?

Applicants should carefully consider the differing funding restrictions for the BIL funding and the FY 2022 Appropriations Act funding, which could affect competitiveness and are further described in NOFO Section B. Please note the following:

- If a grant request is greater than $25 million, the application will be competing for **only** the FY 2022 Appropriations Act funding (totaling $775 million). It **will not** be considered for the BIL funding (totaling $1.5 billion) because the BIL funding has a maximum request amount of $25 million.

- If a planning grant request is below the BIL minimums for urban and rural areas ($5 million and $1 million respectively), the planning grant will be competing for **only** the FY 2022 Appropriations Act funding (totaling $775 million with a $38.75 million set-aside for planning grants). It **will not** be considered for the BIL funding (totaling $1.5 billion with a total $75 million set aside for planning grants) because the BIL funding has statutory minimums for planning grants.

3. Has the application deadline changed?

No, applications are due on April 14th at 5:00pm Eastern on grants.gov.

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1. What is the RAISE Grant Program?

RAISE Grants are awarded on a competitive basis 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/raise/raise-2021-capital-fact-sheets and https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/raise/raise-2021-planning-fact-sheets.

2. When is the application deadline?

The deadline for all application materials is April 14, 2022 at 5:00 pm Eastern.

3. Where can I submit the application?

Final applications must be submitted through Grants.gov.

4. 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

5. 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.

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.

6. 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.

7. What are the major changes from the FY 2021 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.3 describes changes from the 2021 round. Some notable changes are as follows, but this list is not exhaustive:

- The eligible project list was expanded to include the surface transportation components of an airport project eligible for assistance under part B of subtitle VII Title 49, and 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.
- The merit criteria review will now include ratings for each merit criterion that will inform one overall merit rating that will be used to determine which projects are advanced in the competition. The safety, environmental sustainability, mobility and community connectivity, and quality of life merit criteria have greater priority in the selection process. (See FAQ #30 and NOFO Section E for details)
- At least $113.75 million will be awarded to planning projects.

- At least $35 million will be awarded to projects in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, which are introduced in the RAISE 2022 NOFO. (See FAQ#20 and NOFO Section C.3.iii for details.)

8. 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.

9. 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 (see FAQ # 10 for details);
    - intermodal projects;
    - a project 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 and
    - 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, feasibility studies, and other pre-construction activities) of eligible surface transportation capital projects.

10. 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/?Chapter=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" https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip/aip_handbook/?Chapter=Appendix#PC00 are also ineligible.

11. What are the definitions for urban and rural under RAISE?

FY 2022 RAISE grants use the same definition for urban and rural as the FY 2021 RAISE round. (The 2020 Census-designated urbanized area boundaries have not been published at the time of the NOFO publication; therefore, the Department is using the 2010 Census-designated urbanized areas for RAISE 2022.)

A project is designated as urban if it is located within or on the boundary of an Urbanized Area (UA), as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, *and* that UA had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2010 Census. If a project is not designated as urban, it is designated as rural.

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

- In an UA that had a population less than 200,000 in the 2010 Census, or
- In a Census designated Urban Cluster, or
- Outside an UA.

For example, a project located in an Urbanized Area with a population of 150,000 will be designated as rural under the FY 2022 RAISE program. In contrast, a project located in an Urbanized Area 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 areas and rural areas, the Department will designate the project as urban or rural based on where the majority of project funds will be spent.

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

To determine if a location is in a Census-Designated UA, please consult Census maps of Urbanized Areas:

- https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerweb2020/ (Be sure to select “Vintage” Census 2010, then select Urban Areas and zoom to your project location)

- https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2010/geo/2010-census-urban-areas.html (detailed PDF maps for every UA)

- A list of all UAs that had a population over 200,000 in the 2010 Census can be found here: https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/urbanized-areas

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

Not more than 50 percent ($1,137,500,000) will be awarded to projects located in urban and rural areas, respectively.

14. Are planning grants available for the FY2021 RAISE Grants?

Yes. The Department will award at least $113.75 million for the planning, preparation or design of eligible projects.

15. 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.

16. 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 applicant 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 2022 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, 2026 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.

17. 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.

18. 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 as long as the facility is owned and operated by a non-Federal, eligible applicant. For projects designated as urban, 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.

19. 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:

1. the county 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 2020 Small Area Income Poverty Estimates, **or**
2. 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**
3. the project is located in any territory or possession of the United States.

DOT lists all counties and census tracts that meet this definition for Areas of Persistent Poverty on the RAISE website:

https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc

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

Consistent with OMB’s Interim Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, Historically Disadvantaged Communities include (a) certain qualifying census tracts, (b) any Tribal land, or (c) any territory or possession of the United States. DOT is providing a list of census tracts that meet the definition of Historically Disadvantaged Communities, available at www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc.

Additionally, DOT is providing a mapping tool to assist applicants in identifying whether a project is located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community at https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a.

Use of this map tool is optional; applicants are welcome to provide an image of the map tool outputs, but the designation of project location and eligibility as a Historically Disadvantaged Community will be verified by the Department upon receipt of the application. Please note that for the RAISE program, the Historically Disadvantaged Community designation is based on where the majority of project costs will be expended (not necessarily where the majority of project is constructed). If the project crosses boundaries of Historically Disadvantaged Community and a non-Historically Disadvantaged Community, please provide sufficient details by component in the project budget for the Department to verify where the majority of project costs will be expended. For technical assistance using the mapping tool, please contact GMO@dot.gov.

21. 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. All counties or census tracts that meet this definition are listed on the RAISE website, at https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-app-hdc.

22. What are the minimum and maximum grant award sizes?

Capital Minimums:

- For capital projects located in urban areas, the minimum award is $5 million.
- For capital projects located in rural areas, the minimum award is $1 million.

Planning Minimums:

There are differing minimum award sizes for planning grants to be considered under the $1.5 billion in BIL funding and the $775 million in FY 2022 Appropriations funding:

- The planning grant minimums for BIL funding is $5 million in urban areas and $1 million in rural areas (the same requirements as capital projects).
- There are no planning grant minimums for FY 2022 Appropriations funding.

This means if a planning grant request is below the BIL minimums for urban and rural areas ($5 million and $1 million respectively), the planning grant will be competing for only the FY 2022 Appropriations Act funding (totaling $775 million with a $38.75 million set-aside for planning grants). It will not be considered for the BIL funding (totaling $1.5 billion with a total $75 million set aside for planning grants) because the BIL funding has statutory minimums for planning grants.

<u>Maximums:</u>

- The maximum award amount is $45 million (per the FY 2022 Appropriations Act);
- However please note, there is a maximum award amount of $25 million that applies to the BIL funding.

This means if a grant request is greater than $25 million, the application will be competing for **<u>only</u>** the FY 2022 Appropriations Act funding (totaling $775 million). It **<u>will not</u>** be considered for the BIL funding (totaling $1.5 billion) because the BIL funding has a maximum request amount of $25 million.

Not more than $341.25 million can be awarded to a single State.

23. How will the Department evaluate cost share and matching funds?

The Department will not use Federal share as a selection criterion in awarding projects.

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.

Non-Federal financial contributions can include State, local, and private sector funding; or other forms of cost share such as right of way contributions. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, non-Federal cost-share may not be counted as the non-Federal share for both the RAISE grant and another Federal grant program.

24. 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.

25. 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.

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

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

27. 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.

28. 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 F.2. 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.

29. 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 2021 applicants have been offered a debrief. The Department will not review 2022 applications in advance, but staff are available for technical questions and assistance. RAISE grant program staff will try address questions to RAISEgrants@dot.gov throughout the application period, but please note the high volume of requests as the application deadline approaches.

30. 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 Assessment, 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 significant, 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.1.i 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 on the Selection List, please see the NOFO section E.

Capital projects advanced for further analysis will undergo an (1) Economic Analysis (2) Environmental Risk assessment; and (3) Financial Completeness 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 availability of matching funds. Planning grants will not receive an Economic Analysis or Environmental Risk assessment. The Operating Administrations will also conduct a Technical Assessment of all eligible applications concurrent with the Merit Criteria Evaluation.

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.

31. When will awards be made?

Under the BIL, the Department must make awards by August 12, 2022. The Department will post awards to the RAISE Grants website (www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants). Selected awardees may not be formally notified, and should visit the RAISE Grants website for award information.

32. What is the difference between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?

The obligation deadline, September 30, 2026, 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, 2031, is the date by which all RAISE grant funding must be expended.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. What is allowed under local and economic hiring preferences? How will local hire be evaluated in the RAISE program?

The use of local and economic hiring preferences will be evaluated under the "Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity" merit criterion for the RAISE 2022 program. Local and economic hiring is one way that an applicant can demonstrate that the project is providing opportunities for workers, including workers underrepresented in construction jobs, to be trained and placed in good-paying jobs directly related to the project.

The BIL, enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58 (Nov. 15, 2021), authorizes a recipient or subrecipient of a grant provided by the DOT Secretary under Title 23 or 49, United States Code (U.S.C.), including a grant under the RAISE 2022 program, to implement a local or other geographical or economic hiring preference relating to the use of labor for construction of a project funded by the grant, including pre-hire agreements, subject to any applicable State and local laws, policies, and procedures. BIL, § 25019(a)(1).

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/11/2022-02974/enhancing-highway-workforce-development-opportunities-contracting-initiative

If applicants are interested in models of local and economic hiring, they can refer to pilots previously approved by the Federal Highway Administration. The list of those pilots can be found here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/cqit/sep14local_projects.cfm Many of the local and economic hiring preferences used in these pilots are now permissible under BIL, but this list is not meant to be exhaustive and excludes many models of local, geographical, or economic hiring preferences that are allowable.

Local and economic hiring preferences will be evaluated under the "Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity" criterion. Applicants may address how their local and economic hiring preferences provide opportunities for all workers, including workers underrepresented in construction jobs, to be trained and placed in good-paying jobs directly related to the project. While underrepresented groups vary based on local demographics and specific construction jobs, such groups may include: women, people of color, including Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color, and individuals with disabilities. Applicants may provide information on groups that have been underrepresented historically on their projects and how the local and economic hiring preferences they plan to use will expand the representation of those groups.

Incorporating workforce strategy and workforce development programs into project development will be evaluated under the “Partnership and Collaboration” merit criterion. Use of local and economic hire alone does not address that criterion. But if an applicant explains how a workforce development strategy or program supports a local or economic hiring strategy and focuses on using workforce development programs to expand participation in or prepare underrepresented candidates for jobs on the project, then the explanation may address both merit criteria.

36. How will registered apprenticeship be considered for the RAISE program?

The use of registered apprentices will be evaluated under the “Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity” merit criterion for the RAISE 2022 program. Applicants may demonstrate how the use of registered apprenticeship on the grant project creates good paying jobs. Applicants can describe a number of ways they use registered apprenticeship, including apprenticeship utilization rate goals for the project or other commitments to open up or create new registered apprenticeship slots on the project. The apprenticeship program must be registered and the application could identify the registered apprenticeship sponsor they are working with to demonstrate the program is registered. You can learn more about Registered apprenticeship at apprenticeship.gov. You can also use this resource to help find a sponsor and other partners in your area https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder. There are also may be active apprenticeship grantees in your areas as well: https://www.apprenticeship.gov/investments-tax-credits-and-tuition-support/awardee-search

Note that workforce development programs on the grant project will be evaluated under the “Partnership and Collaboration” merit criterion. Use of registered apprenticeship alone does not address that criterion. But if an applicant explains how a registered apprenticeship expands participation in the workforce for underrepresented candidates, then the explanation may address both merit criteria.

37. How will workforce development strategy be considered for the RAISE program?

Incorporating workforce strategy and workforce development programs into project development will be considered under the “Partnership and Collaboration” merit criterion for the RAISE 2022 program. Applicants may describe how they have or will identify upcoming workforce needs related to the grant scope. Applicants may describe training programs, partnerships, or workforce development initiatives that would meet the projected need for skilled workers. This could include partnerships with labor-management training programs, workforce boards, community colleges, or other relevant programs. If no training programs/initiatives exist to meet the specific labor needs of the grant project, the applicant could describe their plan to support the creation of new programs or initiatives with state, region or local workforce partners. One resource is: https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/WorkforceDevelopment/find-workforce-development-boards.aspx. DOT will evaluate how the grant project's workforce plan supports and engages diverse people and communities.

DOT may also consider how the applicant's workforce development strategies support the expansion of high-quality, good-paying jobs, including to people who are underrepresented in the construction workforce under the "Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity" criterion.

Registered apprenticeship is commonly viewed as a workforce development strategy. See FAQ #36.

38. 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 jobs 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.

39. 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.