

2023 Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program 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 – A pilot program to provide grants to fund financial, technical, and legal assistance to states and rural and tribal communities. The grants are intended to increase organizational capacity in communities that may not have resources available to evaluate and develop projects that qualify for federal funding and financing programs.

Opportunity Numbers – DOT-OST-2023-0097	Agency – USDOT	
Eligible expenses are reimbursed from the Government monthly. Expenses incurred prior to the grant agreement are not eligible.	Application Opening – August 14 to September 27. First-come, first-served until funding is expended.	BCA Required? No
Available Funding: \$3.4 million of funding for the first two years (Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023)	NOFO & Related - https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=344381	
Minimum Award: \$10,000 Maximum Award: FY2022- \$320,000 FY23 - \$360,000	Eligible Project Cost Restrictions: First-come, first-served basis. The BIL limits awards to any individual state to 20% of available funds for a single fiscal year.	
Eligibility: Projects receiving assistance under this Program must be reasonably expected to be eligible for any one or more of the Department’s lending or grant program. These applicable programs are TIFIA, RRIF, INFRA, RAISE, Mega, and the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program.		

Criteria (NOFO Pgs. 17-20)

- 1:** Appropriateness of services requested: To what extent the proposed tasks will materially advance the overall project identified in the application. The Team will consider:
- the current state of the project’s development,
 - whether the proposed tasks are appropriate for the current state of the project’s development, and
 - the likelihood that the requested services will materially advance the project’s development.
- 2:** Viability of grant funds requested: To what extent the funding package is likely to result in fully funding and completing the specified task(s) while also providing the deliverable(s) necessary to materially advance the project(s). The Team will consider:
- for applicants seeking to procure advisory services: whether the applicant has obtained bids or quotes for the requested services, and the applicant’s experience procuring advisory services in the past,
 - for applicants seeking to hire staff for this task: their organization’s hiring process (i.e. do they have a defined job description for this task, process for recruitment), and
 - the source and amount of funding the applicant intends to commit (if any) as a contribution to the overall cost of the services being proposed.

Eligible Applicants (NOFO Pg. 6)

- a unit of local government or political subdivision that is located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents;
- a state seeking to advance a project in an area located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000;
- a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or
- the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

Half of program funds are reserved for tribal governments that apply in the first month of the program. There is no local match required to participate in this program.

Eligible Projects (NOFO Pgs. 7-8) –

The Department intends to issue grants to enable recipients to: 1) acquire the services of independent financial, technical, and legal advisors, or 2) hire staff, in each case to provide development-phase assistance.

Eligible project sponsors may receive grant funds to select advisors to assist with pre-development-phase activities, including:

- feasibility studies
- project planning
- revenue forecasting and funding and financing options analyses
- preliminary engineering and design work
- environmental review
- economic assessments and cost-benefit analyses
- public benefits studies
- statutory and regulatory framework analyses
- value-for-money (VFM) studies
- evaluations of costs to sustain the project
- evaluation opportunities for private financing and project bundling

Application & Narrative Requirements (NOFO Pgs. 11-14) –

The Bureau will provide an [on-line form](#) that can be filled out and submitted beginning 2 p.m. ET on August 14, 2023. Preparing your application in advance will allow for review and will save time when filling out the online form. Applicants will not be able to submit attachments to the form, the Bureau can only accept the on-line application form. Applications are reviewed in the order in which they are received and will conclude once the full \$3.4 million has been awarded as a first come first served basis.