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Feds Open Application Process for \$1.5B in Transportation Grants.

State and local governments will have a shot at securing a piece of \$1.5 billion in transportation grant funding under an application process that the U.S. Department of Transportation kicked off on Friday.

The department issued a [notice of funding opportunity](#) for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE, program. RAISE is the latest incarnation of the popular competitive grant program once known as TIGER. Funding for the grants was included in the bipartisan infrastructure package President Biden signed into law last year.

“The RAISE program helps communities large and small fix and modernize their infrastructure,” Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg [said in a statement](#).

He added that, this year, with boosted funding for the program approved in the public works law, the Transportation Department will be able to “support more projects than ever.”

RAISE is the first discretionary funding program included in the infrastructure package to accept applications, according to DOT. A variety of road, transit, rail and trail projects are eligible for funding.

The \$1.5 billion for the program marks a 50% increase over the nearly \$1 billion in grants that DOT awarded in November of last year under the previous round of the program. The department noted that demand for the money typically far outstrips how much is available, with about \$10 in requests last year for every \$1 available.

This year, based on provisions in the infrastructure law, DOT will factor in new criteria as it evaluates proposed projects.

This includes “mobility and community connectivity,” which the department explains as looking at “how the project will increase mobility and expand connectivity for all users of a project, particularly non-motorized travelers,” like pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders.

Meanwhile, at least \$15 million is designated for projects in areas with persistent poverty, or that qualify as historically disadvantaged communities. Compared to past rounds of the program, the infrastructure law also expands the number of places eligible to receive a 100% federal share of funding for their projects, DOT noted.

The department is urging applicants to consider how their projects can address challenges around climate change, racial inequity and workforce development.

DOT also stressed that applicants “can be more competitive” if their projects create jobs that offer a “free and fair choice to join a union,” adhere to strong workplace standards, boost employment in underserved communities and support worker training opportunities.

Republican governors have bristled over the Biden administration's attempts to pursue its climate and social agenda through infrastructure programs, with 16 of the GOP state leaders [outlining their concerns](#) in a letter to Biden last week.

Applications for the grants are due by April 14 and the department plans to announce grantees by Aug. 12.

The notice of funding opportunity can be found [here](#).

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