

**To:** CRCOG Transportation Committee

**From:** Kyle Shiel, Principal Planner

**Date:** December 21, 2022

**Subject:** RAISE Discretionary Grants, FY 23

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**About:** The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, [\(RAISE\) Discretionary Grant program](#), provides funding to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects. A total of \$1.5 billion is available for FY 2023. The Bipartisan Infrastructure law (BIL) specifies that the minimum award is \$5 million; except for projects located in rural areas where the minimum award size is \$1 million. Grants may not be greater than \$25 million.

**Deadline and Award:** Submittal deadline is **February 28, 2023**, at 11:50pm. Awards will be announced by late June 2023.

**Eligible Projects:** The funds are evaluated and awarded on a competitive basis, for surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve: “safety; environmental sustainability; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation.” Demonstrated project readiness and cost effectiveness are additional considerations.

Planning grants are also available. 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.

**Review & Selection Process:** US DOT will consider whether anticipated project benefits are clear, data-driven and significant. The review and selection process consists of Merit Criteria Review; Project Readiness Review (consisting of Technical Capacity Assessment, Environmental Risk Assessment, Financial Completeness Assessment); Economic Analysis; and Senior Review. The summary rubric in Table 1 describes the metrics considered; for a comprehensive overview, please consult the NOFO. The combination of individual criteria ratings will inform one overall Merit Rating: Highly Recommended, Acceptable or Unacceptable.

Senior US DOT management will review all “Recommended” projects to determine if the benefits of a particular criterion are so significant that the project merits advancing for second-tier analysis. Such projects can only be advanced if it scores high in one or more of the priority criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, mobility and community connectivity, or quality of life, and the benefits in that criterion are exceptional. Second-tier analysis for capital projects consists of (1) an Economic Analysis; (2) an Environmental Risk Assessment; (3) a Financial Completeness Assessment and (4) Technical Capacity Assessment. Second-tier analysis for planning projects consists of (1) a Financial Completeness Assessment and (2) a Technical Capacity Assessment.

**Eligible Applicants:** States, local municipalities, public authorities with a transportation function, and a multi-State or multijurisdictional group of eligible entities may apply. Multiple jurisdictions may

submit a joint application and should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and also identify the primary recipient of the award. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant.

**Cost-Sharing:** 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).

Federal cost share may exceed 80% for projects in rural areas, Area of Persistent Poverty (APP), or Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC). CRCOG has a mapping application outlining the specific regional location of these areas [here](#). DOT does not use an applicant's cost share when evaluating applications on merit.

RAISE is a reimbursable program. Recipients must pay project costs as incurred and for reimbursement. Recipients must have access to sufficient non-RAISE funding sources to manage cash flow associated with the project.

**Project Readiness Guidelines:** RAISE funds must be obligated within two years of the end of the fiscal year for which they are authorized. Due to this requirement, it is critical that applications include evidence of project milestones achieved and remaining (including planning, NEPA, and permitting milestones), as well as financial capacity and commitment in order to demonstrate project readiness.

**Pre-Construction Requirements:** Applicants should demonstrate that they can reasonably expect to complete all of the following activities and pre-construction requirements so that all Grant funds are obligated in advance of the statutory deadline. The applicant should be able to demonstrate that any unexpected delays will not put RAISE Grant funds at risk of expiring before they can be fully obligated.

- *State & Local Planning* - Projects may require approval by the Metropolitan Planning Organization or State as part of the Long-Range Plans and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Applicants should coordinate with CRCOG and CT DOT to ensure that the project will be included in the appropriate plan if required.
- *Environmental Approvals* - Projects should have received or have substantially completed all Federal, State and local permits and approvals, including National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") analysis, at the time the application is submitted.
- *Right-of-Way and Design* - Applicants should demonstrate, through their project schedule that they reasonably expect to have right-of-way acquisition and design completed, as well as any other needed approvals or pre-construction steps. Applicants may expect that DOT may obligate funds for right-of-way acquisition and design completion only after planning and environmental approvals are obtained.

**Additional Requirements:** Each applicant to the RAISE grants program should provide a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) for their proposed project. Applicants should consult the "[Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs](#)" when preparing a BCA for a RAISE Grant application.

**CRCOG Staff Comments:** Please contact [Kyle Shiel](#) with questions or comments related to this opportunity. CRCOG staff are available to provide letters of support for individual municipal applications. If your community is interested in submitting a multijurisdictional application, please reach out no later than January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023, as there may be potential opportunities for CRCOG to assist in assembling a more competitive application.

| Selection Criteria  | Project Elements Likely to Score High  |
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| <p style="text-align: center;">Safety</p>                       | <p>Safety is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only), and significant benefits that targets a known, documented safety problem, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect non-motorized travelers and communities from safety risks; or</li> <li>• Reduce fatalities and/or serious injuries to bring them below the state-wide average for underserved communities; or</li> <li>• Incorporate and cite specific actions and activities identified in the Department’s National Roadway Safety Strategy plan</li> </ul>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Sustainability</p> | <p>Environmental sustainability is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only), and significant benefits that explicitly considers climate change and environmental justice, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in underserved communities; or</li> <li>• Address the disproportionately negative environmental impacts of transportation on underserved communities such as by reducing exposure to elevated levels of air, water, and noise pollution; or</li> <li>• Align with the applicant’s State, regional, county, or city decarbonization plan; or</li> <li>• Implement transportation-efficient land use and design, such as drawing on the features of historic towns and villages that had a mix of land uses, compact and walkable development patterns, accessible green space, and neighborhood centers; or</li> <li>• Reduce vehicle miles traveled specifically through modal shift to transit or active transportation; or</li> <li>• Reduce emissions specifically by shifting freight to lower-carbon travel modes; or</li> <li>• Incorporate energy efficient investments, such as electrification or zero emission vehicle infrastructure; or</li> <li>• Improve the resilience of at-risk infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events and natural disasters caused by climate change, such as by using best-available climate data sets, information resources, and decision-support tools, and incorporating best practices identified by the Department (for example in the Department’s Nature- Based Solutions for Coastal Highway Resilience Implementation Guide) and other Federal resources; or</li> <li>• Remove, replace, or restore culverts for the purpose of improving passage of aquatic species; or</li> <li>• Avoid adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Quality of Life</p>              | <p>Quality of life is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase affordable transportation choices by improving and expanding active transportation usage or significantly reducing</li> </ul>  |

| Selection Criteria   | Project Elements Likely to Score High   |
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|  | <p>vehicle dependence, particularly in underserved communities; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed-use development and a diversity of housing types, including affordable housing, with multimodal transportation infrastructure; or</li> <li>• Coordinate and integrate land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning in order to create more livable communities and expand travel choices; or</li> <li>• Improve access to daily destinations like jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks through transit and active transportation; or</li> <li>• Implement transit-oriented development that benefits existing residents and businesses, low-income and disadvantaged communities, and minimizes displacement;</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve public health by adding new facilities that promote walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation; or</li> <li>• Mitigate urban heat islands to protect the health of at-risk residents, outdoor workers, and others; or</li> <li>• Proactively addresses equity.</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mobility &amp; Community Connectivity</b></p>      | <p>Mobility and community connectivity is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve system-wide connectivity with access to transit, micro-mobility, and mobility on-demand; or</li> <li>• Implement plans, based on community participation and data, that identifies and addresses gaps in the existing network; or</li> <li>• Remove physical barriers for individuals by reconnecting communities to direct, affordable transportation options;</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include transportation features that increase the accessibility for non-motorized travelers for underserved communities, such as through a Complete Streets approach; or</li> <li>• Incorporate Universal Design including details of how the improvements go beyond ADA requirements; or</li> <li>• Directly increasing intermodal and multimodal freight movement; or</li> <li>• Consider last-mile freight plans in a Complete Streets and multimodal approach</li> </ul>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Economic Competitiveness &amp; Opportunity</b></p> | <p>Economic competitiveness is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only), and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve intermodal and/or multimodal freight mobility, especially for supply chain bottlenecks; or</li> <li>• Facilitate tourism opportunities; or</li> <li>• Inclusive economic development such as the utilization of Minority Business Enterprises, Minority Owned Businesses, Woman Owned Businesses, and Veteran Owned Businesses; or</li> <li>• Promote wealth building; or</li> <li>• Promote long-term economic growth and other broader economic and fiscal benefits; or</li> <li>• Promote robust job creation by supporting good-paying jobs directly related to the project with free and fair choice to join a</li> </ul>   |

| Selection Criteria          | Project Elements Likely to Score High  |
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|                             | <p>union, expand training programs, and implement policies such as targeted hiring preferences that will promote the entry and retention of underrepresented populations into those jobs including women, people of color, and people with convictions; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including rural main street revitalization or locally driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development</li> </ul>  |
| State of Good Repair        | <p>State of good repair is a primary project purpose AND the project has clear, direct, data-driven (for capital projects only) and significant benefits, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore and modernize (such as through road diets and complete streets approaches) the existing core infrastructure assets that have met their useful life; or</li> <li>Reduce construction and maintenance burdens through efficient and well-integrated design; or</li> <li>Create new infrastructure in remote communities that will be maintained in a state of good repair; or</li> <li>Address current or projected system vulnerabilities for underserved communities; or</li> <li>Prioritize improvement of the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure within the existing footprint</li> </ul>  |
| Partnership & Collaboration | <p>Project has, or demonstrates plans to, support and engage diverse people and communities that go above and beyond, by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage residents and community-based organizations to ensure equity considerations for underserved communities are meaningfully integrated throughout the lifecycle of the project, for example, by citing and describing how the project aligns with the Department’s Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making Guide; or</li> <li>Coordinate with other types of projects such as economic development, commercial or residential development near public transportation, power/electric infrastructure projects, or broadband deployment; or</li> <li>Partner with Minority Business Enterprises, Minority Owned Businesses, Woman Owned Businesses, and Veteran Owned Businesses; or</li> <li>Partner with high-quality workforce development programs with supportive services to help train, place, and retain underrepresented communities in good-paying jobs or registered apprenticeships; or</li> <li>Partner and engage with unions and/or worker organizations in the development of the project and the lifecycle of the project, including the maintenance or operation of the completed project; or Partner with communities or community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups to develop workforce strategies; or</li> <li>Establish formal public-private partnerships or joint ventures to expand or create new infrastructure or economic development capacity; or</li> </ul> |

| Selection Criteria                                   | Project Elements Likely to Score High  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a non-DOT Federal capacity-building program, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Thriving Communities Technical Assistance or the Environmental Protection Agency’s Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers Program.</li> </ul>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Innovation</b></p> | <p>Project has, or demonstrates plans for, one or more of the following innovative benefits.</p> <p><i>Innovative Technologies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the environment for electric, connected, and automated vehicles to improve the detection, mitigation, and documentation of safety risks; or</li> <li>Use low-carbon materials; or</li> <li>Use caps, land bridges, or underdecks</li> </ul> <p><i>Innovative Project Delivery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use practices that facilitate accelerated project delivery such as single contractor design-build arrangements, congestion management, asset management, or long-term operations and maintenance</li> </ul> <p><i>Innovative Financing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure TIFIA, RRIF, or private activity bond financing; or</li> <li>Use congestion pricing or other demand management strategies</li> </ul> |

Table 1: Summary of RAISE program merit criteria; For the complete rubric, please consult the [NOFO](#). The combination of individual criterion ratings will inform one overall Merit Rating: Highly Recommended, Recommended, Acceptable, or Unacceptable. Highly Recommended projects require six or more of the eight merit criteria ratings as “high” and none of the merit criteria ratings as “non-responsive.” Recommended projects will consist of at least one, but no more than five, of the merit criteria ratings as “high”, no more than three of the merit criteria ratings as “low”, and none as “non-responsive.”