

U. S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Transportation Administration (FHWA)

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant Program

May 2, 2023

Jennifer Arienti
Manager, Grants & Socioeconomics Unit, CTDOT
Jennifer.Arienti@ct.gov



PROTECT – Overview

Purpose: To make transportation infrastructure and services more resilient to climate change and extreme weather events.

Overview and Eligible Uses: The PROTECT discretionary grant funds climate-resilient surface transportation projects and the use of natural infrastructure to reduce risks. Projects should support crucial facilities and use innovative approaches, like conservation or restoration, to reduce damage and provide benefits.

Eligible Applicants: States, MPOs, local governments, special purpose districts with transportation functions (such as ports), and Indian Tribes. Federal land management agencies are eligible if they partner with state(s) government.

Funding: For FY22 and FY23, up to \$848 million is available.

Deadline: August 18, 2023 at 11:59 pm.



PROTECT – Grant Categories

The PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program has four categories of funding:

1. **Planning Grants:** for developing Resilience Improvement Plans, conducting vulnerability assessments, or evacuation planning.
2. **Resilience Improvement Grants:** for improving the ability of existing infrastructure to withstand natural disasters and extreme weather events.
3. **Community Resilience and Evacuation Route Grants:** for strengthening evacuation routes and access to critical destinations during emergency events.
4. **At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants:** enhancing the resilience of coastal infrastructure to future risks of natural disasters and changing conditions.



Planning Grants – Eligible Uses

- Developing a Resilience Improvement Plan (MPOs only).
- Resilience planning, predesign, design, or the development of data tools to simulate transportation disruption scenarios, including vulnerability assessments.
- Technical capacity building to facilitate the assessment of vulnerabilities of surface transportation assets and community response strategies under current and a range of potential future conditions.
- Evacuation planning and preparation.



Resilience Improvement Grants – Eligible Uses

- Improve existing roadways to withstand one or more elements of weather events, natural disasters, sea level rise, flooding and wildfires.



Community Resilience & Evacuation Route Grants – Eligible Uses

- Used to strengthen and protect evacuation routes that are essential during an emergency event.
- Projects can include resilience improvements, safety features for a safe evacuation, acquisition or evacuation routes, traffic management equipment or signage, and projects that provide access to critical destinations such as hospitals or major employment areas.
- If an existing evacuation route is not adequate, applicants can use this grant category to correct this.



At Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants – Eligible Uses

- Strengthen stabilize, harden, elevate, relocate or enhance the resilience of highway and non-rail infrastructure that faces long-term risk of coastal flooding, coastal erosion, wave action, storm surges, or sea level rise.
- Non-rail infrastructure includes bridges, roads, pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and associated infrastructure such as culverts and tide gates.
- Projects should reduce long-term infrastructure cost by avoiding larger future maintenance or rebuilding cost.
- Applicants should also consider how the project will allow first responders to access populated coastal areas and how people will evacuate those coastal areas.



PROTECT – Grant Funding, Award Size & Cost Share

1. Planning:

- Up to \$45 million
- Minimum: \$100,000, Maximum: None
- Cost Share: 100% Federal

2. Resilience Improvement:

- Up to \$638 million
- Minimum: \$500,000 / Maximum: None
- Cost Share: 80% Federal / 20%

3. Community Resilience and Evacuation Routes:

- Up to \$45 million
- Minimum: \$500,000 / Maximum: None
- 80% Federal / 20% Match

4. At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure:

- Up to \$120 million
- Minimum: \$500,000 / Maximum: None
- 80% Federal / 20% Match



Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)

- For Planning Grant applications, a BCA is not required.
- For Resilience Improvement, a BCA is required unless the project is in a qualifying Resilience Improvement Plan.
- Community Resilience and Evacuation Routes, a BCA is required.
- At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure, a BCA is not required; however, the applicant must demonstrate that the project would reduce long-term infrastructure costs by avoiding larger future maintenance or rebuilding costs.



Important Notes

PROTECT Discretionary grant funds can only be used towards the incremental cost of making transportation assets more resilient. Other project components that are not inherently resilience-focused should be generally funded from other sources, including other Title 23 programs.

Obligation: Awards funded with FY 2022 funds must be obligated by September 30, 2025. Awards funded with FY 2023 funds must be obligated by September 30, 2026. Obligation for construction will be set with FHWA after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements.

Construction Readiness: Priority may be given to a project that is post-design and ready to proceed to construction within 10 months of selection to receive a discretionary PROTECT grant.



Upcoming Webinars

Webinars

- Program Overview and How to Apply
- Benefit-Cost Analysis

Monday, May 8, 2023 from 1-2 PM

Registration Link:

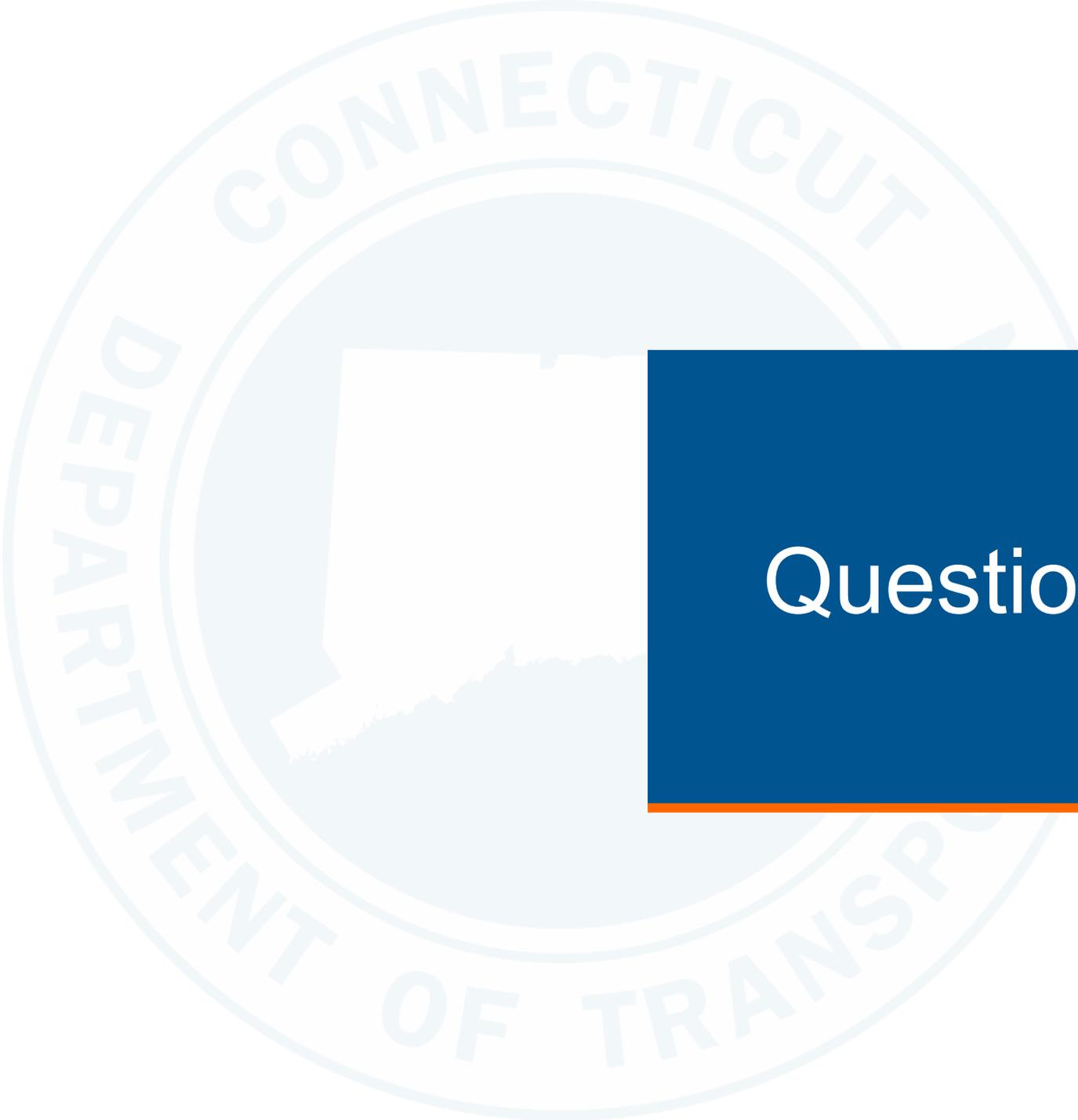
https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_wpq8qcrVQz67DqdjPCar1A

Thursday, May 11, 2023 from 1-2 PM

Registration Link:

https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_nvoQgZCFTwCWdS_FYTH5kg





Questions?