



# Memorandum

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Subject: **ACTION:** Notice of Funding  
Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2024  
Competitive Highway Bridge Program  
(Tier 3)

Date:

From: Hari Kalla  
Associate Administrator, Office of  
Infrastructure

In Reply Refer To:  
HIF

To: Gloria Shepard  
Acting Deputy Administrator

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

I request that you approve this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcing the availability of funding for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP).

## **SUMMARY**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Pub. L. 118-42, Section 126, March 9, 2024, provides \$250 million to be awarded by Federal Highway Administration for the CHBP. The purpose of the CHBP is to provide grants to States that:

1. Have a population density of less than 115 individuals per square mile; and
2. Have less than 26 percent of total bridges classified as in good condition, or have greater than or equal to 5.2 percent of total bridges classified in poor condition; for
3. Highway bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects on public roads that demonstrate cost savings by bundling multiple highway bridge projects.

In addition, States meeting the population criteria and that have greater than 14 percent of total bridges classified as in poor condition are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000, pursuant to a determination that projects are eligible and sufficient to fund such amount.

## **BACKGROUND**

The CHBP is a one-time program that is not affiliated with an existing Bipartisan

Infrastructure Law grant program.

Eligible applicants are the **States of Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming**. The States that are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 include **Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia**.

Eligible project types are a bundled bridge replacement and/or rehabilitation project. Bridge bundling is defined in 23 United States Code 144(j).

**RECOMMENDATION**

I recommend that you approve this NOFO announcing the availability of funding for the FY 2024 CHBP.

Administrator

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Fiscal Year 2024 Competitive Highway Bridge Program NOFO
- Attachment 2: Fiscal Year 2024 Competitive Highway Bridge Program Guidelines for Evaluation of Applications

Attachment 1:  
Fiscal Year 2024 Competitive Highway Bridge Program NOFO

Federal Highway Administration  
US Department of Transportation (DOT)

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1. **Basic Information**

<p>The applicant should read this notice in its entirety so that they have the information they need to submit eligible and competitive applications.</p>	
<p><b>Federal Agency Name</b></p>	<p>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)</p>
<p><b>Funding Opportunity Title.</b></p>	<p>Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP)</p>
<p><b>Announcement Type.</b></p>	<p>This grant program is not associated the FY 2018 Competitive Highway Bridge Program or any other previous grant program. The requirements for eligibility, application, and award provided under this (Notice of Funding Opportunity) NOFO are unique to the FY 2024 CHBP.</p> <p>NOTE: An application that was previously submitted for the FHWA Bridge Investment Program (BIP) for an FY 2023 - 2026 Bridge Project grant* and was not selected for award <b>may be eligible</b> for resubmittal to the FY 2024 CHBP. The applicant and the project must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO, See Section 4.F for resubmittal procedures. The project must be a highway bridge replacement and/or rehabilitation project that includes the construction phase and must be a bridge bundle as defined in Section C. Reference Section A and Section B for information on eligible applicants and projects. Reference Section D which further describes when an application may be resubmitted and the process for resubmittal.</p> <p>*This does not apply to applications for a BIP Large Bridge Project or a BIP Planning grant,</p>
<p><b>Funding Opportunity Number</b></p>	
<p><b>Assistance Listing Number(s).</b></p>	<p>20.205 Highway Planning and Construction</p>
<p><b>Funding Details.</b></p>	<p>For FY 2024 up to \$250,000,000 is available for CHBP awards under</p>

	<p>this NOFO. \$200 million of this funding is provided through the Highway Trust Fund as Contract Authority, and \$50 million is provided through general fund appropriations.</p> <p>There is no minimum or maximum award size. The anticipated number of Federal awards is approximately 15.</p> <p>Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2027 and the general fund portion of the program expended no later than September 30, 2032.</p>
<b>Key Dates.</b>	<p>Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on <b>&lt;&lt;ENTER DATE AT LEAST 60 DAYS AFTER NOFO PUBLICATION&gt;&gt;</b> (the “application deadline”). Applicants are encouraged to submit applications in advance of the application deadline; however, applications will not be evaluated, and awards will not be made, until after the application deadline.</p>
<b>Executive Summary.</b>	<p>The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Pub. L. 118-42, Section 126, March 9, 2024, provides \$250 million to be awarded by FHWA for the CHBP. The purpose of the CHBP is to provide grants to States that have a population density of less than 115 individuals per square mile and less than 26 percent of total bridges classified as in good condition or greater than or equal to 5.2 percent of total bridges classified in poor condition for highway bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects on public roads that demonstrate cost savings by bundling multiple highway bridge projects. States meeting the population criteria and that have greater than 14 percent of total bridges classified as in poor condition are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000, pursuant to a determination that projects are eligible and sufficient to fund such amount.</p> <p>Population density is calculated based on the latest available data from the decennial census conducted under 13 United States Code (U.S.C.) 14(a) as of March 9, 2024, the date on which the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, became law. Resident population density is used. Percentages of bridge counts are based on the National Bridge Inventory as of June 2023. The percentages are based on number of bridges throughout the State regardless of ownership, e.g., total number of bridges classified as in poor condition compared to the total number of bridges in the National Bridge Inventory that meet the definition of a bridge on a public road.</p> <p>Based on these requirements, eligible applicants are the <b>States of Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota,</b></p>

	<p><b>Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.</b> States that are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 include <b>Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia.</b></p> <p>FHWA seeks to award projects that best satisfy the merit criteria, project readiness, and priority selection considerations described in <a href="#">Section 6</a>. These reflect the Program Goals and Objectives described in <a href="#">Section 3</a>.</p>
<p><b>Agency contact information.</b></p>	<p>Derek Constable Office of Bridges and Structures Federal Highway Administration U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, D.C. 20590 Email: <a href="mailto:chbpgrant@dot.gov">chbpgrant@dot.gov</a> (preferred) Phone: 202-366-4606</p> <p>Alternate: Douglas Blades Office of Bridges and Structures Federal Highway Administration U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, D.C. 20590 Email: <a href="mailto:chbpgrant@dot.gov">chbpgrant@dot.gov</a> (preferred) Phone: 202-366-4622</p> <p>Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.</p>
<p><b>The amount of funding per Federal award, on average, experienced in previous years.</b></p> <p><b>Whether this is a new program or a one-time initiative.</b></p>	<p>This grant program is not associated with any previous grant programs, eligibility and award criteria, or application requirements including the FY 2018 CHBP. The eligibility and award criteria and application requirements provided under this NOFO are unique to the FY 2024 CHBP.</p>
<p><b>Eligible</b></p>	<p>State departments of transportation (State DOT) for <b>Alaska, Arkansas,</b></p>



<p><b>Applicants.</b></p>	<p><b>Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.</b> States eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 include <b>Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia.</b></p> <p>An eligible State DOT may submit an application in partnership with a non-State DOT non-eligible applicant. If such application is selected to receive an award, the State DOT must be the recipient of grant funds.</p> <p>A State DOT may submit no more than three applications including applications submitted in partnership with a non-State DOT. If a State DOT submits multiple applications the State shall clearly identify their order of ranking in each application narrative and in the project title, i.e. State DOT rank #1 application and State DOT rank #2 application. The basis for the ranking shall be presented in the narrative.</p>
<p><b>Cost-Share.</b></p>	<p>The Federal share of the cost is in accordance with 23 U.S.C 120. See <a href="#">Section 2.iii</a> for more details.</p>
<p><b>Questions.</b></p>	<p>FHWA will not review applications in advance, but FHWA staff are available for general questions about the CHBP and NOFO. FHWA will not provide technical assistance to any applicant including providing guidance on how to address any information that should be included in an application. FHWA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications at Grants.gov under this NOFO's page, at the CHBP website at <a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/chbp.cfm">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/chbp.cfm</a>, and on FHWA's BIL Guidance Website at <a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/guidance.cfm">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/guidance.cfm</a>. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to email FHWA directly at <a href="mailto:chbpgrant@dot.gov">chbpgrant@dot.gov</a>, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions.</p> <p><b>Applicants are encouraged to submit questions to <a href="mailto:chbpgrant@dot.gov">chbpgrant@dot.gov</a> no later than 55 days after the NOFO Release Date to ensure FHWA has adequate time to respond prior to the application deadline.</b></p> <p>FHWA cannot guarantee that questions received after that date will be answered prior to the application deadline.</p>
<p><b>Webinar.</b></p>	<p>FHWA plans to post a recorded presentation on FHWA's Website at</p>

	<a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/chbp.cfm">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/chbp.cfm</a> . The presentation will give an overview of the CHBP and discuss the goals, eligibility requirements, merit criteria, and rating and selection process.
<b>How to Apply.</b>	<p>FHWA uses <a href="http://www.grants.gov">www.grants.gov</a> for receipt of all applications. Applicants must register and use the system to submit applications electronically. Applicants are encouraged to register in advance of the submission deadline and to register to receive notifications of updates/amendments to this Notice. Approval of user registrations for the site may take multiple weeks.</p> <p><b><u>It is the Applicant’s responsibility to monitor for any updates to this Notice.</u></b></p>

**2. ELIGIBILITY**

**i. Eligible Applicants**

See [Section 1](#).

**ii. Additional Restrictions on Eligibility**

Awards will be made only for highway bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects on public roads that demonstrate cost savings by bundling multiple highway bridge projects.

Awards will be made only to a State Department of Transportation (State DOT). Applications for projects that will be delivered by a non-State DOT entity must be submitted by the State DOT in which they are located. If a State DOT submits multiple applications, including a combination of State DOT and non-State DOT delivered projects, the State shall clearly identify their order of ranking in each application narrative and in the project title, i.e. State DOT rank #1 application and State DOT rank #2 application. The basis for the ranking shall be presented in the project narrative.

**iii. Cost Sharing**

The standard Federal share of the cost of the project is up to 80 percent. A bridge that is on the Interstate System is eligible for up to 90 percent. For States on the sliding scale, the Federal share of the cost of the project is up to 95 percent in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 120(b). States on the sliding scale can find the maximum Federal share for a project in FHWA Notice N 4540.12 (Sliding Scale Rates In Public Land States - Rates Effective March 17, 1992). The notice is located at: (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/notices/n4540-12.cfm>).

Non-Federal sources of income include State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue or local revenue funding programs, or private funds. FHWA will not consider

previously incurred costs or previously expended or encumbered funds toward the matching requirements for any project.

Additional information on non-Federal matching requirements can be found at [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/policy/memonfmr\\_tapered20190515.htm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/policy/memonfmr_tapered20190515.htm)

The 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act removes the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 144(j)(5), that projects bundled shall have the same financial characteristics, including— (A) the same funding category or subcategory; and (B) the same Federal share.

For each project that receives a grant under this NOFO, the FHWA expects the project to be completed using at least the level of non-Federal funding that was specified in the application.

#### **iv. Other Factors That May Disqualify An Applicant**

Applications that are determined to be late, duplicates of applications submitted for the same round of applications, or incomplete applications may be disqualified.

#### **v. Application Limit**

Each eligible applicant may submit no more than three applications.

### **3. Program Description**

The CHBP Grant Program is a discretionary grant program that provides funding towards highway bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects on public roads that demonstrate cost savings by bundling at multiple highway bridge projects. Eligible phases of work must include construction however an application may also include environmental clearance, preliminary engineering, and/or final design.

Construction is defined in Title 23 U.S.C. 101. Any funds provided under the CHBP Grant Program that are less than the requested funding amount shall first be applied to the estimated construction costs with any difference applied to other eligible project phases.

Bridge bundling is defined in 23 U.S.C. 144(j) as two or more similar bridge projects that are eligible projects under Sections 119 or 133; included as a bundled project in a transportation improvement program under Section 134(j) or a statewide transportation improvement program under Section 135, as applicable; and awarded to a single contractor (for construction in the case of the FY 2024 CHBP). The 2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act removes the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 144(j)(5), that projects bundled shall have the same financial characteristics, including — (A) the same funding category or subcategory; and (B) the same Federal share.

“Public road” is defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(22) as any road or street under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel. “Highway” is defined in 23

U.S.C. 101(a)(11) as a road, street, and parkway; a right-of-way, bridge, railroad-highway crossing, tunnel, drainage structure, including public roads on dams, sign, guardrail, and protective structure, in connection with a highway; and a portion of any interstate or international bridge or tunnel and the approaches thereto, the cost of which is assumed by a State transportation department, including such facilities as may be required by the United States Customs and Immigration Services in connection with the operation of an international bridge or tunnel.

“Bridge” is defined in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 650.305 as a structure including supports erected over a depression or an obstruction, such as water, highway, or railway, and having a track or passageway for carrying traffic or other moving loads, and having an opening measuring along the center of the roadway of more than 20 feet between under copings of abutments or spring lines of arches, or extreme ends of openings for multiple boxes; it includes multiple pipes, where the clear distance between openings is less than half of the smaller contiguous opening.

“Replacement” is defined in [Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory](#) as total replacement of a bridge with a new facility constructed in the same general traffic corridor. A nominal amount of approach work, sufficient to connect the new facility to the existing roadway or to return the gradeline to an attainable touchdown point in accordance with good design practice, is also eligible. Please refer to the Additional Guidance on approach work: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/0650dsup.cfm>. The replacement structure must meet the current geometric, construction and structural standards required for the types and volume of projected traffic on the facility over its design life.

“Rehabilitation” is defined in 23 CFR 650.305 as the major work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge as well as work necessary to correct major safety defects. Examples of bridge rehabilitation include but are not limited to partial or complete deck replacement, superstructure replacement, substructure/culvert strengthening or partial/full replacement, structure widening, or major modification to substantial portions of the bridge.

#### **i. Program Authorization**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Public Law 118-42, Section 126, March 9, 2024, provides \$250 million to be awarded by FHWA for a Competitive Highway Bridge Program. Eligible applicants are States that have a population density of less than 115 individuals per square mile and less than 26 percent of total bridges classified as in good condition or greater than or equal to 5.2 percent of total bridges classified in poor condition. States meeting the population criteria and that have greater than 14 percent of total bridges classified as in poor condition are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000. The funds shall be used for highway bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects on public roads that demonstrate cost savings by bundling multiple highway bridge projects. Population density is calculated based on the latest available data from the decennial census conducted under section 14(a) of title 13, United States Code. Percentages of bridge counts are based on the National Bridge Inventory as of June 2023.

(Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, Public Law 118-42, Section 126, March 9, 2024).

Population density is calculated based on the latest available data on March 9, 2024, the date which the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, became law. Resident population density is used. The percentages are based on number of bridges.

## **ii. Program Goals and Objectives**

The goals of the CHBP are:

1. **State of Good Repair:** To minimize public agency costs that are needed to keep the bridges in service over their lifecycle while maintaining the bridges in Good and Fair condition.
2. **Mobility:** To minimize highway user impacts, including pedestrian and bicyclist, over the lifecycle of the bridges, from substandard geometry, inadequate accommodation, or service interruptions from extreme weather, geologic events, or other hazards.
3. **Safety:** To maintain or improve highway user safety, including pedestrian and bicyclist.
4. **Innovation:** To reduce costs and achieve other efficiencies in project delivery, including construction, through bundling.
5. **Climate Change and Environment:** To mitigate environmental impacts, including climate change and environmental justice impacts, caused by the existing bridges and/or avoid and minimize environmental impacts associated with construction and the final constructed project over the lifecycle of the bridges.
6. **Equity and Workforce:** To support or address equity, barriers to opportunity, and job creation, during project delivery including construction, and from the final constructed project.

## **iii. Administration Goals**

The Department seeks to fund projects that advance the Departmental priorities of safety, equity, climate and sustainability, and workforce development, job quality, and wealth creation as described in the USDOT Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>, Research, Development and Technology Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup>, and in executive orders.

[Section 6](#) of this NOFO, which outlines the FY24 CHBP Grant Program awards selection criteria, describes the process for selecting projects that further these goals. [Section 8](#) describes progress and performance reporting requirements for selected projects, including the relationship between that reporting and the program's selection criteria, and the Administration's goals as appropriate.

## **iv. Availability of Funds**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/dot-strategic-plan>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-01/USDOT%20RDT%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY22-26\\_010523\\_508.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-01/USDOT%20RDT%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY22-26_010523_508.pdf)

Obligation of a CHBP grant occurs when a selected applicant enters a project agreement in FHWA’s Fiscal Management System (FMIS) and FHWA authorizes the project to proceed. For construction, this is generally after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements and compliance with 23 CFR 635 subpart C “Physical Construction Authorization” for State DOT sponsors or 2 CFR 200.318 – 327 for non-State DOT sponsors.

CHBP Grant Program awards are subject to the following obligation and expenditure deadlines:

<b>Fiscal Year Funding</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>
<b>Obligation deadline</b>	<b>September 30, 2027</b>
<b>Expenditure deadline for general funds</b>	<b>September 30, 2032</b>

**v. Funding Restrictions**

CHBP projects may only be administered by State Department of Transportation (State DOT). Accordingly, costs incurred prior to the FHWA’s obligation of funds for a project may be eligible for reimbursement under an Advance Construction authorization project agreement in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 115. Grant funds may not be used to support or oppose union organizing, whether directly or as an offset for other funds.

**vi. Award Size**

There is no minimum or maximum award size. The anticipated number of Federal awards is approximately 15.

**Note:** States with more than 14 percent of total bridges classified as in poor condition shall receive not less than \$32,500,000 in funding, pursuant to a determination that projects are eligible and sufficient to fund such amount. Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia qualify for this consideration.

**vii. Type of Award**

The anticipated award(s) will be cost-reimbursable grant agreements.

**viii. Period of Performance**

The U.S. DOT Payment System will be “Current Bill” in the “FMIS” and the start of the period of performance will begin on the date CHBP funds are obligated in FMIS and end on the project end date in FMIS, no later than September 30, 2032.

**ix. Performance Goals**

Each applicant selected for CHBP grant funding must collect and report to FHWA information on the project’s performance using performance indicators supplied by FHWA that relate to the program goals and objectives identified in this [Section 3](#). Reference [Section 8](#) for further explanation.

**x. Previous Awards**

This grant program is not associated with any previous grant programs, eligibility and award criteria, or application requirements including the FY 2018 CHBP. The eligibility and award criteria and application requirements provided under this NOFO are unique to the FY 2024 CHBP.

**4. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT**

All applications must be submitted electronically through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

**Note:** DOT may share application information within the DOT or with other Federal agencies if the DOT determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program’s objectives.

The application package must consist of the following in this order. For the CHBP, only the construction project forms apply.

<b>Required Forms for Construction Project Applications:</b>
<b>Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)</b>
<b>Grants.gov Lobbying Form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)</b>
<b>Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (SFLLL)</b>
<b>Standard Form 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs)</b>
<b>Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs)</b>

**Note:** All mandatory Standard Forms (SF) of the 424 family are available for download at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-mandatory-family.html>.

**i. Standard Form 424**

**Note:** Applicants may leave fields 5a, 5b, 6, 7, and 13 blank on the form.

**Note:** A number of separate PDF flat files must be attached in Item 15 to provide required project information that is not included in the body of the SF-424.

*Instructions for adding Item 15 Attachments:*

- Click on “Add Attachments” in Item 15 to open the first pop-up window. Click “Add Attachment” and a second pop-up File Explorer/Directory window will appear, from which you can choose files to attach. Attachments can be added one at a time or all at once by holding down the CTRL key and selecting multiple files. Select “Open” to add the selected files as attachments.
- Click “Done” to finalize the attachments.
- Click “View Attachments” to see a list of files that have been added as attachments.

**Required attachment(s) to the SF 424:** the Project Narrative (see Section D.2.e) must be added as Attachments to Item 15 of the SF-424:

- ii. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- iii. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (SF-LLL)
- iv. Required Forms for Construction Projects

Applicants proposing construction-related projects must submit the following forms:

- A. Standard Form 424C (Budget Information Construction Programs); and
- B. Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs).

**Note:** The Standard Form 424C should be supported by a budget narrative explaining each element of cost.

- v. Project Narrative

The project narrative should provide information, including a table of contents, maps, and graphics as appropriate, necessary for FHWA to determine that the project satisfies the eligibility criteria described in [Section 2](#) for the grant program and to evaluate the application using the criteria specified in [Section 6](#). FHWA recommends that the project narrative follow the outline below. Following the outline will also assist evaluators in locating relevant information.

i. Basic Project Information – Description, Location, and Parties	<a href="#">Section 4.v.A</a>
ii. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of all	<a href="#">Section 4.v.B</a>



Project Funding	
iii. Merit Criteria	<a href="#">Section 4.v.C</a>
iv. Project Readiness and Environmental Risk	<a href="#">Section 4.v.D</a>
v. FHWA Priority Selection Considerations	<a href="#">Section 4.v.E</a>

To the extent practicable, applicants should provide supporting data and documentation in a form that is directly verifiable by FHWA. FHWA may, but is not required to, request additional information, including additional data to clarify supporting documentation submitted in an application. To ensure a fair and unbiased evaluation of applications submitted under this notice, the FHWA will not request additional information to perfect incomplete applications.

FHWA recommends that the project narrative be prepared with standard formatting preferences (i.e., a single-spaced document, using a standard 12-point font such as Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins). The project narrative should not exceed 25 pages in length, appendices may include documents supporting assertions or conclusions made in the project narrative and do not count toward the 25-page limit. If possible, Website links to supporting documentation should be provided rather than copies of these supporting materials. If supporting documents are submitted, applicants should clearly identify within the project narrative the relevant portion of the project narrative that each supporting document supports. FHWA recommends using appropriately descriptive final names (e.g., “Project Narrative,” “Maps,” “Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Support,” etc.) for all attachments.

**A. Basic Project Information – Project Description, Location, and Parties**

**Project Description**

The application should provide a concise description of the project, the transportation challenges it is expected to address, and how it will address those challenges. The description should include a list of the bridges in the bundling project and the type of work planned for each bridge. This list should include relevant National Bridge Inventory data, including the structure number, condition data, load rating and posting information, functional classification, current average daily traffic, current average daily truck traffic, and other relevant data to support the need for the type of work planned.

**Project Location**

The application should provide a concise description of the project including a detailed geographical description of the proposed project, a map of the project’s location and connections

to existing transportation infrastructure, and geospatial data describing the project location (shapefiles will be accepted under 200MB file size).

The application should identify whether the project is located in an urban or rural community. For the purpose of this NOFO, the FHWA will consider communities that are within Urbanized Areas (i.e., areas with a population of 50,000 or more) to be urban communities and all other communities to be rural. FHWA will rely on the digital maps and geographic shapefiles for the 2020 Census urban areas depicted on the FHWA HEPGIS maps of [MPO and 2020 Census Urban Areas - FHWA HEPGIS Maps \(dot.gov\)](#) (refer to the “MPO and Air Quality Tab” and then scroll to “MPO and 2020 Census Urban Areas”) which correlates the definitions of “urban”<sup>3</sup> and “rural areas”<sup>4</sup> under Title 23 U.S.C. and Bureau of the Census data. A list of 2020 census designated urban areas is available in the Census Bureau’s [December 29, 2022 Federal Register Notice](#) (87 FR 80114).”

### **Lead Applicant**

This section of the application should provide details about the lead applicant. Eligible applicants are identified in Section 1. The details should include the lead applicant’s demonstrated experience with receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway program funds under Title 23 U.S.C. FHWA will consider the degree of experience as part of the project readiness evaluation. If an application is rated highly under other criteria, but the applicant has no or limited experience with the receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway program funds, FHWA may contact the applicant prior to final selection of FY 2024 applications selected to receive Program awards to discuss technical resources that may be available to assist the applicant in obtaining the capacity and expertise to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal requirements and timely delivery of the project.

### **Other Public and Private Parties**

The applicant should describe in detail all the other public and private parties who are involved in delivering the project, including a specific description of the role of each entity in delivering the project.

The applicant should state whether a private or non-private entity will receive a direct and predictable financial benefit if the project is selected for award. This includes, but is not limited to, private and non-private entities directly benefitting from completion of the proposed project.

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<sup>3</sup> The term “urban area” means an urbanized area or, in the case of an urbanized area encompassing more than one State, that part of the urbanized area in each such State, or urban place as designated by the Bureau of the Census having a population of 5,000 or more and not within any urbanized area in each State, or urban place as designated by the Bureau of the Census having a population of 5,000 or more and not within any urbanized area. (23 U.S.C. 101(35)). The term “urbanized area” means an area with a population of 50,000 or more designated by the Bureau of the Census, within boundaries to be fixed by responsible State and local officials in cooperation with each other, subject to approval by the Secretary. Such boundaries shall encompass, at a minimum, the entire urbanized area within a State as designated by the Bureau of the Census. (23 U.S.C. 101(36)).

<sup>4</sup> The term “rural areas” means all areas of a State not included in urban areas. (23 U.S.C. 101(25))

If this project directly involves or benefits a specific private corporation, a non-public entity, or a public entity, please identify the full name of each entity, separated by a comma.

## **B. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds**

The applicant should describe the project's budget in detail and the plans for covering the full cost of the project from all sources. The project budget should show how different funding sources will share in each major project activity and present those data in dollars and percentages. The budget should identify other Federal funds the applicant is applying for or has been awarded, if any, that the applicant intends to use. When the application is for a project that will be delivered by a non-State DOT, the budget should identify other Federal funds the non-State DOT is applying for or has been awarded, if any, that the non-State DOT intends to use. Funding sources should be grouped into three categories: (1) Non-Federal; (2) CHBP; and (3) Other Federal funds with specific amounts from each funding source.

The applicant should provide an estimate of the budget required for each bridge in the project bundle and denote if the funding sources vary by bridge.

The project budget should identify all Federal funds to be used for future eligible costs of the project, including the requested CHBP grant amount, other Federal grants that have been awarded to the project or for which the project intends to apply in the future, and any Federal formula funds that have already been programmed for the project or are planned to be programmed for the project. For each category of Federal funds to be used for future eligible project costs, identify the amount, nature, and source of any required non-Federal match for those funds.

FHWA recognizes that applicants may be seeking funding from multiple discretionary grant programs and opportunities. An applicant may seek the same award amounts from multiple DOT discretionary opportunities or seek a combination of funding from multiple DOT opportunities. The applicant should identify any other DOT programs and opportunities they intend to apply for (or utilize if the Federal funding is already available to the applicant), and what award amounts they will be seeking.

If the project includes phases of work that precede construction, the budget should separate the costs of each project delivery phase. The budget should be detailed enough to demonstrate that the project satisfies the CHBP statutory cost-sharing requirements described in [Section 2](#) and those associated with each category of Federal funding.

The application should include information showing sufficient contingency amounts have been budgeted to cover unanticipated cost increases. In addition to the information enumerated above, this section should provide complete information on how all project funds may be used, availability and funding commitments. For example, if a source of funds is available only after a

condition is satisfied, the application should identify that condition and describe the applicant's control over whether it is satisfied. Similarly, if a source of funds is available for expenditure only during a fixed period, the application should describe that restriction. Complete information about project funds will ensure that the FHWA's expectations for award execution align with any funding restrictions unrelated to the FHWA, even if an award differs from the applicant's request.

### **C. Merit Criteria**

The applicant should describe how the proposal meets the merit criteria listed in [Section 6](#).

FHWA encourages applicants to address each criterion. Insufficient information to assess any criterion will negatively impact the project rating. Applicants should note that merit reviewers will focus on the project narrative section of the application and will not be required to reference the other sections in the application package; therefore, all relevant information to demonstrate alignment with the merit criteria as described in [Section 6](#) should be included in this section of the application. Applicants should describe the merit criteria in the order in which they are described in the NOFO and address each criterion separately. Guidance describing how FHWA will evaluate projects against the merit criteria is in [Section 6](#) of this notice. Applicants should review that section before considering how to organize their application.

### **D. Project Readiness and Environmental Risk**

The application should include information that, when considered with the project budget information, is sufficient for the FHWA to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin construction in a timely manner. To assist the FHWA's project readiness assessment, the applicant should provide the information requested on technical feasibility, project schedule, project approvals, and project risks, each of which is described in greater detail in the following sections. Applicants should address how an award that is less than requested may impact project readiness while still delivering a completed construction project that satisfies the definition of a project bundle, i.e. includes at least two bridge projects. Applicants are not required to follow the specific format described here, but this organization, which addresses each relevant aspect of project readiness, promotes a clear discussion that assists project evaluators.

#### **a) Technical Feasibility**

Applicants should include a detailed statement of work that focuses on the technical and engineering aspects of the project and describes in detail the project to be constructed. The applicant should demonstrate the technical feasibility of the project with engineering and design studies and activities; the development of design criteria and/or a basis of design; the basis for the cost estimate presented in the application, including the identification of contingency levels appropriate to its level of design; and any scope, schedule, and budget risk-mitigation measures.

The applicant should also demonstrate the applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements including, but not limited to, compliance with Title VI/Civil Rights requirements, to ensure that no person is excluded from participation, denied benefits, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

## **b) Project Schedule**

The applicant should include a detailed project schedule that identifies all major project milestones. Examples of such milestones include State and local planning approvals (programming on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program); start and completion of NEPA and other Federal environmental reviews and approvals, including permitting, design completion, right-of-way acquisition, approval of plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E); procurement; State and local approvals; project partnership and implementation agreements including agreements with railroads; and construction. The project schedule should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate that:

- all necessary activities will be complete to allow CHBP funds to be obligated timely and that any unexpected delays will not put the funds at risk of expiring before they are obligated;
- all real property and right-of-way acquisition necessary for the project will be completed in a timely manner in accordance with 49 CFR part 24, 23 CFR part 710, and other applicable legal requirements or a statement that no acquisition is necessary. A plan for securing any required right-of-way agreements should be included. If applicable, this section should describe a right-of-way acquisition plan that minimally disrupts communities and maintains community cohesion.

## **c) Required Approvals**

### **Environmental Permits and Reviews**

The application should provide documentation of receipt (or the schedule for anticipated receipt) of all environmental approvals and permits necessary for the project to meet the project delivery timeline specified in the project schedule, and necessary to meet the statutory obligation deadline if applicable, including satisfaction of all Federal, State, and local requirements and completion of the NEPA process. Specifically, in this section the applicant may elaborate on the NEPA evaluation process. If the final agency action with respect to NEPA occurred more than three years before the planned construction date, the applicant should describe a proposed approach for updating this material in accordance with applicable NEPA reconsideration requirements. This section should also provide:

- Any information on reviews, approvals, and permits by other Federal and State agencies. An application should indicate whether the proposed project requires reviews or approval actions by other agencies, indicate the status of such actions, and provide detailed information about the status of those reviews or approvals and should demonstrate

compliance with any other applicable Federal, State, or local requirements, and when such approvals are expected. Applicants should provide a website link or other reference to copies of any reviews, approvals, and permits prepared.

- Environmental studies or other documents—preferably through a website link—that describe in detail known project impacts, and possible mitigation for those impacts.
- A description of discussions with FHWA regarding the project’s compliance with NEPA and other applicable Federal environmental reviews and approvals.
- A description of public engagement about the project that has occurred, including details on the degree to which public comments and commitments have been integrated into project development and design.

### **State and Local Approvals**

The applicant should demonstrate receipt (or the schedule for anticipated receipt) of State and local approvals on which the project depends, such as State and local environmental and planning approvals, and statewide transportation improvement program (STIP) or transportation improvement program (TIP) funding. Additional support from relevant State and local officials is not required; however, an applicant should demonstrate that the project has broad public support, including support from impacted communities.

### **Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning**

The planning requirements applicable to the Federal-aid highway program apply to all CHBP projects.<sup>5</sup> Applicants should demonstrate that a project that is required to be included in the relevant State, metropolitan, and local planning documents has been or will be included in such documents. If the project is not included in a relevant planning document at the time the application is submitted, the applicant should submit a statement from the appropriate planning agency that actions are underway to include the project in the relevant planning document. Applicants should provide links or other documentation supporting this consideration.

Because projects have different schedules, the construction start date for each grant will be specified in the project-specific agreements signed by FHWA and the grant recipients, will be

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<sup>5</sup> In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135, all projects requiring an action by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must be in the applicable plan and programming documents (e.g., metropolitan transportation plan, transportation improvement program (TIP), and statewide transportation improvement program (STIP)). Further, in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, all regionally significant projects, regardless of the funding source, must be included in the conforming metropolitan transportation plan and TIP. Inclusion in the STIP is required under certain circumstances. To the extent a project is required to be on a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and/or STIP, it will not receive a grant until it is included in such plans. Projects not currently included in these plans can be amended by the State and metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Projects that are not required to be in long range transportation plans, STIPs, and TIPs will not need to be included in such plans to receive a grant.

based on critical path items that applicants identify in the application, and will be consistent with relevant State and local plans.

### **Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies**

Project risks, such as procurement delays, environmental uncertainties, increases in real estate acquisition costs, uncommitted local match, pushback from stakeholders or impacted communities, or lack of legislative approval, affect the likelihood of successful project start and completion. To ensure the project schedule is reasonable and that there are no risks of delays in satisfying the prerequisites for timely obligation of grant funding, the applicant should identify all material risks to the project and the strategies that the lead applicant and any project partners have undertaken or will undertake to mitigate those risks.<sup>6</sup> The applicant should assess the greatest risks to the project and identify how the project parties will mitigate those risks.

#### **E. FHWA Priority Selection Considerations**

The applicant should describe how the proposal meets the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations listed in [Section 6](#). The applicant should include a section to highlight any priority considerations the project will address. Detailed information demonstrating how the project supports the priority consideration(s) and references to earlier sections of the narrative along with supporting documentation should be included in the application.

#### **F. Process for Resubmittal of a Bridge Investment Program Application to CHBP**

An application that was previously submitted for the FHWA Bridge Investment Program (BIP) for an FY 2023 - 2026 Bridge Project grant, not for a BIP Large Bridge Project or a BIP Planning grant, and which was not selected for award may be eligible for resubmittal to the FY24 CHBP. The applicant and the project must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO. The project must be a highway bridge replacement and/or rehabilitation project that includes the construction phase and must be a bridge bundle as defined in Section C. Reference Section A and Section B for information on eligible applicants and projects.

Only BIP Bridge Project grant applications that received a merit criteria preliminary rating or final rating of Medium, Medium-High, or High may be resubmitted to the CHBP. Contact the individuals listed in Section A if the merit criteria preliminary rating that was given to a BIP application is not known. Applications that did not receive a merit criteria preliminary rating or final rating of Medium, Medium-High, or High, and that are eligible for the CHBP require submittal of a new application, including all forms, that addresses all requirements specific to this NOFO. Note: there are multiple differences between the FY 2024 CHBP NOFO and BIP NOFOs.

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<sup>6</sup> FHWA considers an applicant's lack of experience with receipt and expenditure of Federal-aid highway funds under Title 23 U.S.C. a material risk.

The process for resubmittal of a BIP Bridge Project application:

1. Resubmit the original BIP Bridge Project grant application materials exactly as originally submitted, including all required forms, exactly as originally submitted to grants.gov under this opportunity.
2. Submit a separate and new document that serves as an addendum to the original application. The document should be titled FY24 CHBP Addendum to BIP Application. The addendum should discuss the following in sequential order.
  - a. Previous Awards (see Section C): applicant should identify changes to the information provided on previous awards or acknowledge that there are no changes.
  - b. Project Narrative (See Section D): applicant should;
    - i. Identify changes to the project description and scope or acknowledge that there are no changes. Applicant should ensure the project scope meets the eligibility requirements of the FY24 CHBP including that the project work types are bridge replacement and/or rehabilitation (excludes preservation) and the project meets the definition of a bridge bundle as defined in [Section 3](#).
    - ii. Identify changes to the lead applicant and project parties or acknowledge that there are no changes.
    - iii. Provide a new and complete section that addresses the requirements of the CHBP NOFO section on Grant Funds, Sources, and use of Project Funds. The new section may borrow from the narrative provided in the BIP Bridge Project grant application but should be updated as appropriate.
    - iv. Describe how the project description or scope have changed or acknowledge that it has not changed. If the project description or scope have changed address how this either affects or does not affect the merit criteria discussion that is presented in the BIP Bridge Project grant application. Reducing the scope, e.g. reducing the number of bridges or downscaling the work types, will likely affect one or more BIP Bridge Project merit criteria. The effects on merit criteria should be addressed relative to the merit criteria presented in the BIP NOFO. Note: The BIP Bridge Project grant and CHBP merit criteria have multiple differences.
    - v. Provide a new and complete section that addresses the requirements of the CHBP NOFO section on Project Readiness and Environmental Risk. The new section may borrow from the narrative provided in the BIP Bridge Project grant application but should be updated as appropriate and with consideration of the FY 2024 CHBP fund obligation deadline of September 30, 2027.
  - c. Submission Requirements and Deadline (See Section E): Applicant should provide an update that addresses Scalable Project Options. Include options that (1) scale the project scope, while still meeting the eligible project requirements of this NOFO



(bundled replacement and/or rehabilitation) and which does not affect the merit criteria compared to the non-scaled project application, and (2) that scale the source of funds and/or fund amounts. Financially, the CHBP is a smaller program than BIP with lesser expected award amounts. Referencing Section A, there are four States that are eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 which amounts to \$130,000,000 million of the \$250,000,000 authorized for the FY24 CHBP.

- d. Identify if there are any other changes to the original BIP project application which are not addressed in the above or acknowledge that there are no changes.

Using the separate document that serves as an addendum, FHWA will determine if the BIP Bridge Project grant overall application rating, Highly Recommended or Recommended, still applies. The project readiness rating criteria for CHBP and BIP Bridge Project grant are consistent, therefore if project readiness remains the same, the project readiness rating will remain the same. Because there are differences in the CHBP and BIP Bridge Project grant merit criteria, if a resubmitted BIP Bridge Project has changes that will affect the merit criteria rating, FHWA will reevaluate the merit criteria rating using the BIP Bridge Project grant merit criteria in the NOFO that applied to the original application. If there are no changes that affect the merit criteria, the merit criteria rating will remain the same.

## 5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE

### i. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants may obtain application forms on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) under the NOFO Number cited herein.

Once at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), select the Search Grants tab. Then enter one of the following:

- Opportunity Number:
- Opportunity Name: Competitive Highway Bridge Program
- Assistance Listing Number: 20.205 Highway Planning and Construction

When at one of these pages, select the Opportunity, which will open to a page with several tabs. The first tab is a synopsis of the opportunity. Select the Application Package tab to download the forms needed to submit a FY 2024 CHBP Grant Program application. The applicant must complete and submit all forms included in the application package for this notice as contained at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

For a Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD), please call (202) 366-3993.

Should applicants have any difficulties in accessing any standard forms and require paper copies, please contact Charlie Sager by either of the means below:

Phone:

Email:

**ii. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant must:

- Be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) before submitting its application;
- Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- Continue to maintain an active registration in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal agency.

Please note that the SAM registration process takes **several weeks to complete, if not longer.**

**A. Submission Instructions**

All applications must be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov).

The Department does not accept applications via mail, fax machine, email, or other means.

Each applicant must:

- Create a [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) username and password
- The E-Business Point of Contact (POC) at the applicant's organization must respond to the registration email from [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) and login at [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) to authorize the applicant as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Please note that there can be more than one AOR for an organization.

Failure to register for SAM or comply with [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) applicant requirements in a timely manner will not be considered for exceptions to the submission requirements and deadline.

**B. Submission Issues**

The Department is not able to assist with technical issues related to [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) registration or application submission. For information and instructions, please see [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov). If applicants experience difficulties at any point during the registration or application submission process, please call the Customer Service Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726 or email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

**iii. Submission Deadline**

Applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) by 11:59 PM Eastern on *[INSERT DATE]*, 2025. [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) attaches a time stamp to each application at the time that submission is complete.

**A. Consideration of Applications**

Only applicants who comply with all submission deadlines described in this notice and electronically submit valid, on-time applications through [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) will be eligible for evaluation and possible selection for award.

## **B. Late Applications**

The Grants.gov registration process usually takes 2–4 weeks to complete. The DOT will not consider late applications that are the result of failure to register or comply with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) applicant requirements in a timely manner. For information and instruction on each of these processes, please see instructions at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs>. If applicants experience difficulties at any point during the registration or application process, please call the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) Customer Service Support Hotline at (800) 518–4726, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Applicants experiencing technical issues with Grants.gov that are beyond the applicant’s control must contact the Grants.gov help desk prior to the application deadline with the username of the registrant and details of the technical issue experienced. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered except in the case of unforeseen technical difficulties with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) that are beyond the applicant’s control. After the submission deadline, the applicant must email the FHWA contact listed in [Section A](#). In either scenario the applicant must provide:

- Details of the technical issue experienced;
- Screen capture(s) of the technical issues experienced along with corresponding Grants.gov “Grant tracking number;”
- The “Legal Business Name” for the applicant that was provided in the SF-424;
- The Authorized Representative’s name submitted in the SF-424 (this person may be referred to as the “Authorized Organization Representative” in grants.gov);
- The SAM UEI number associated with the application; and
- The [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) Help Desk Tracking Number.

To ensure a fair competition of limited discretionary funds, the following conditions are not valid reasons to permit late submissions: (1) failure to complete the registration process before the deadline; (2) failure to follow [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) instructions on how to register and apply as posted on its Website; (3) failure to follow all instructions in this NOFO; and (4) technical issues experienced with the applicant’s computer or information technology environment. After DOT reviews all information submitted and contacts the Grants.gov Help Desk to validate reported technical issues, DOT staff will contact late applicants to approve or deny a request to submit a late application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). The DOT will not accept appeals of DOT’s decision to approve or deny a request for a late application. If the reported technical issues cannot be validated, late applications will be rejected as untimely.

### **iv. Intergovernmental Review**

This program is not subject to EO 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

### **v. Compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The Department encourages applicants to submit documents that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (see [Section 508 guidelines](#)).

**vi. Scalable project options**

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case insufficient funding is available to fund a project at the full requested amount. If an applicant advises that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget would be affected by a reduced award. FHWA may award a lesser amount whether or not a scalable option is provided.

**6. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

FHWA will award CHBP grants based on an evaluation of the merit criteria, project readiness, and FHWA priority selection considerations described in this Section F.

**i. Merit Criteria**

FHWA will evaluate the FY24 CHBP grant application using the following merit criteria. FHWA will use the Merit Criteria to assess state of good repair, safety and mobility, innovation, and climate change, equity, and job creation.

**Criterion #1: State of Good Repair**

FHWA will assess how the project supports achieving and maintaining a bridge inventory that is in a state of good repair. The application should include the following information: (1) how the selected work types and scopes are the most cost effective over the long-term compared to alternative work types and scopes; (2) how the design, details, and material technologies will contribute to lower maintenance and preservation costs over the long-term; (3) how the completed project is expected to be low risk for damage and is functionally sustainable under naturally occurring and human related hazards and extreme events including from climate change; (4) how the project will be maintained after construction and included in preservation programs as appropriate. Examples of naturally occurring hazards are flood, seismic, hurricane, debris flow, etc. Examples of human related hazards are truck impact, vessel impact, fire, etc.

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Non-Responsive</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	<b>Highly Responsive</b>
State of Good Repair	The application did not address the State of Good Repair criterion; or the application contains insufficient	The application describes in detail how the project supports the State of Good Repair criterion for	The application describes in detail how the project supports the State of Good Repair criterion for each of the following, and the

	<p>information to assess each of the following:</p> <p>(1) how the selected work types and scopes are the most cost effective over the long-term compared to alternative work types and scopes;</p> <p>(2) how the design, details, and material technologies will contribute to lower maintenance and preservation costs over the long-term and a sustained improvement in condition;</p> <p>(3) how the completed project is expected to be low risk for damage and is functionally sustainable under naturally occurring and human related hazards and extreme events including from climate change;</p> <p>(4) how the project will be maintained after construction and included in preservation programs as appropriate.</p>	<p>each of the following:</p> <p>(1) how the selected work types and scopes are the most cost effective over the long-term compared to alternative work types and scopes;</p> <p>(2) how the design, details, and material technologies will contribute to lower maintenance and preservation costs over the long-term and a sustained improvement in condition;</p> <p>(3) how the completed project is expected to be low risk for damage and is functionally sustainable under naturally occurring and human related hazards and extreme events including from climate change;</p> <p>(4) how the project will be maintained after construction and included in preventive maintenance programs as appropriate.</p>	<p>application contains quantifiable data and/or analysis to assess how the project supports the State of Good Repair criterion for two or more of the following:</p> <p>(1) how the selected work types and scopes are the most cost effective over the long-term compared to alternative work types and scopes;</p> <p>(2) how the design, details, and material technologies will contribute to lower maintenance and preservation costs over the long-term and a sustained improvement in condition;</p> <p>(3) how the completed project is expected to be low risk for damage and is functionally sustainable under naturally occurring and human related hazards and extreme events including from climate change;</p> <p>(4) how the project will be maintained after construction and included in preventive maintenance programs as appropriate.</p>
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**Criterion #2: Safety and Mobility**

FHWA will assess how the project will improve safety on the bridges and associated approach and under roadway sections within the project limits and potentially beyond from secondary benefits, and how the project will improve mobility within the project limits and potentially beyond from secondary benefits. The application should include the following information: (1)

new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing accidents, injuries, or fatalities due to the project; (2) how the project will target known and documented, if any, safety problems with the bridges, approaches, and under roadways including for example geometry, grades, alignments, safety rail and other traffic safety features; (3) how the project will address safety while the project is under construction including for example innovative methods to provide accelerated construction, public notification about work zones, work zone speed enforcement, and signing and detours; (4) how the project will address deficiencies that affect mobility including for example clearances on or under the bridge, hydraulic openings that cause overtopping, load capacity, or other attributes that may cause detouring of certain vehicular classes, intermittent service disruptions, or other mobility effects; (5) how the project will address safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the disabled including the addition of, or continuation of safety and mobility features in the project area. Applicants are encouraged to support actions and activities identified in the NRSS ([National Roadway Safety Strategy | US Department of Transportation](#)).

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Non-Responsive</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	<b>Highly Responsive</b>
Safety and Mobility	<p>The application did not address the Safety and Mobility criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess whether each of the following is a project need, and how each is addressed by the project when it is a project need:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing accidents, injuries, or fatalities due to the project;</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known and documented, if any, safety problems with the bridges, approaches, and under roadways including for example geometry, grades, alignments, safety rail and other traffic safety features;</p>	<p>The application describes in detail whether each of the following is a project need, and how each is addressed by the project when it is a project need:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing accidents, injuries, or fatalities due to the project;</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known and documented, if any, safety problems with the bridges, approaches, and under roadways including for example geometry, grades, alignments, safety rail and other traffic safety features;</p> <p>(3) how the project will address safety while the</p>	<p>The application describes in detail whether each of the following is a project need, and how each is addressed by the project when it is a project need, and the application contains quantifiable data and/or analysis to assess how the project supports the Safety and Mobility criterion for two or more of the following:</p> <p>(1) new and continued safety benefits that will be achieved in reducing accidents, injuries, or fatalities due to the project, supported by data from the current/historic and projected number and type of crashes including serious injuries, and fatalities on or affected by the bridge;</p> <p>(2) how the project will target known and</p>

Selection Criteria	Non-Responsive	Responsive	Highly Responsive
	<p>(3) how the project will address safety while the project is under construction including for example innovative methods to provide accelerated construction, public notification about work zones, work zone speed enforcement, and signing and detours;</p> <p>(4) how the project will address deficiencies that affect mobility including for example clearances on or under the bridge, hydraulic openings that cause overtopping, load capacity, or other attributes that may cause detouring of certain vehicular classes, intermittent service disruptions, or other mobility effects;</p> <p>(5) how the project will address safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the disabled including the addition of, or continuation of safety and mobility features in the project area.</p>	<p>project is under construction including for example innovative methods to provide accelerated construction, public notification about work zones, work zone speed enforcement, and signing and detours;</p> <p>(4) how the project will address deficiencies that affect mobility including for example clearances on or under the bridge, hydraulic openings that cause overtopping, load capacity, or other attributes that may cause detouring of certain vehicular classes, intermittent service disruptions, or other mobility effects;</p> <p>(5) how the project will address safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the disabled including the addition of, or continuation of safety and mobility features in the project area.</p>	<p>documented, if any, safety problems with the bridges, approaches, and under roadways including for example geometry, grades, alignments, safety rail and other traffic safety features;</p> <p>(3) how the project will address safety while the project is under construction including for example innovative methods to provide accelerated construction, public notification about work zones, work zone speed enforcement, and signing and detours;</p> <p>(4) how the project will address deficiencies that affect mobility including for example clearances on or under the bridge, hydraulic openings that cause overtopping, load capacity, or other attributes that may cause detouring of certain vehicular classes, intermittent service disruptions, or other mobility effects;</p> <p>(5) how the project will address safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the disabled including the addition of, or continuation of safety and mobility features in the project area.</p>

**Criterion #3: Innovation**

FHWA will assess how the project uses innovation to reduce project delivery costs and/or time, including construction, or improve project delivery efficiency including during construction, from bundling. The application should include the information on one or more of the following: (1) estimated savings in contractor and agency construction costs from bundling and their basis; (2) bundling compatibility of the work performed on each bridge including for example the compatibility of work types, materials, technologies, labor, equipment, site locations, and/or construction schedules that will achieve bundling efficiencies; (3) estimated savings in cumulative construction time due to bundling and the basis; (4) other estimated project delivery efficiencies from innovation.

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Non-Responsive</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	<b>Highly Responsive</b>
Innovation	<p>The application did not address the Innovation criterion; or the application contains insufficient information to assess at least one of the following:</p> <p>(1) estimated savings in contractor and agency construction costs from innovation and their basis;</p> <p>(2) bundling compatibility of the work performed on each bridge including for example the compatibility of work types, materials, technologies, labor, equipment, site locations, and/or construction schedules that will achieve bundling efficiencies;</p> <p>(3) estimated savings in cumulative construction time due to bundling;</p> <p>(4) estimated project delivery efficiencies</p>	<p>The application describes in detail how the project supports the Innovation criterion for at least one of the following:</p> <p>(1) estimated savings in contractor and agency construction costs from innovation and their basis;</p> <p>(2) bundling compatibility of the work performed, on each bridge including for example the compatibility of work types, materials, technologies, labor, equipment, site locations, and/or construction schedules that will achieve bundling efficiencies;</p> <p>(3) estimated savings in cumulative construction time due to bundling;</p> <p>(4) other estimated project delivery efficiencies from</p>	<p>The application describes in detail how the project supports the Innovation criterion for at least one of the following, and the application contains quantifiable data and/or analysis to assess how the project supports the Innovation criterion for at least one of the following:</p> <p>(1) estimated savings in contractor and agency construction costs from innovation and their basis;</p> <p>(2) bundling compatibility of the work performed on each bridge including for example the compatibility of work types, materials, technologies, labor, equipment, site locations, and/or construction schedules that will achieve bundling efficiencies;</p> <p>(3) estimated savings in cumulative construction time due to bundling;</p> <p>(4) other estimated project</p>



	from innovation.	innovation.	delivery efficiencies from innovation.
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**Criterion #4: Climate Change, Equity, and Job Creation**

Merit Criteria 4 requires applicant to address each of the following: (A) Climate Change and Environmental Justice Impacts, **and** (B) Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity, **and** (C) Labor and Workforce. FHWA will assess the responsiveness of the application to A, B and C as described below and will assign an individual rating to each as follows:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Highly Responsive</b>	The application addresses the criterion and includes either qualitative or quantifiable data and/or analysis.
<b>Responsive</b>	The application addresses the criterion but does not include qualitative or quantifiable data and/or analysis.
<b>Not Responsive</b>	The application does not address the criterion.

The overall rating for Merit Criterion 4 will be Non Responsive if either A, B, or C are rated Non Responsive. For example, if A and B are each rated Highly Responsive and C is rated Non Responsive, the overall rating for Merit Criterion 4 will be Non Responsive. When A, B, and C are each rated Responsive or Highly Responsive, the overall rating for Merit Criterion 4 will be the highest rating assigned to A, B, or C. For example, if A is rated Highly Responsive and B and C are each rated Responsive, the overall rating for Merit Criterion 4 will be Highly Responsive.

**A. Climate Change and Environmental Impacts**

Applicants must demonstrate efforts to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts as part of their proposed CHBP project as described in and consistent with Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 FR 7619).

In the table below is a list of potential considerations to address climate change and environmental justice impacts. Select the applicable action(s) to the proposed project, copy and paste each action in the application and provide a supporting narrative. Competitive applications will include either qualitative or quantifiable data and/or analysis to support each action identified in the application.

If the proposed project does not support at least one action, address why the existing bridges do not have deficiencies or impacts, current and future, that are connected to climate change and environmental justice. Address why the project will not introduce new deficiencies or impacts. Applications that do not address why no actions are required will receive an overall rating of Non Responsive for Merit Criterion 4.

	The Project directly supports a State Carbon Reduction Strategy, State Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan, or other State, local, or tribal emissions reduction plan. <i>(Identify the plan in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions reductions relative to a no-action baseline through one of the following methods: modal shift, land-use planning to reduce trip length or frequency, traffic demand management, or incorporation of freight logistics technology. <i>(Identify the method in the supporting summary.)</i>
	The Project incorporates electrification infrastructure, zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, or both. <i>(Describe the incorporated infrastructure in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project promotes energy efficiency by serving the renewable energy supply chain or incorporating carbon-reducing uses of the rights-of-way. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project improves disaster preparedness and resiliency. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project avoids adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species, such as with improved stormwater management or improved habitat connectivity. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project repairs existing dilapidated or idle infrastructure that is currently causing environmental harm. <i>(Describe that infrastructure in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project includes recycling of materials, use of materials known to reduce or reverse carbon emissions, or both. <i>(Describe the materials in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The applicant has taken other actions to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts of the Project. <i>(Describe those actions in the supporting narrative.)</i>

## **B. Equity and Barriers to Opportunity**

Applicants must demonstrate efforts to consider equity and barriers to opportunity (improve racial equity and reduce barriers to opportunity) as part of their proposed CHBP project as described in and consistent with Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (86 FR 7009).

In the table below is a list of potential considerations to address equity and barriers to opportunity. Select the applicable action(s) to the proposed project, copy and paste each action in the application and provide a supporting narrative. Competitive applications will include either qualitative or quantifiable data and/or analysis to support each action identified in the application.

If the proposed project does not support at least one action, address why the project does not need to address equity and barriers to opportunity. Applications that do not address why no actions are required will receive an overall rating of Non Responsive for Merit Criterion 4.

	The Project increases affordable transportation choices or significantly reduces vehicle dependence. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project expands active transportation usage. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project reduces transportation and housing cost burdens by integrating mixed use development and a diversity of housing types (including affordable housing) with multimodal transportation infrastructure. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project coordinates and integrates land use, affordable housing, and transportation planning to create more livable communities and expand travel choices. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project reduces vehicle dependence and improves access to daily destinations, such as jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, or parks, such as by adding new facilities that promote walking or biking. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Project implements transit-oriented development that benefits residents and businesses. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative, including a specific description of the benefits to residents and businesses.)</i>
	The applicant has adopted an equity and inclusion program/plan or has otherwise instituted equity-focused policies related to project procurement, material sourcing, construction, inspection, hiring, or other activities designed to ensure equity in the overall project delivery and implementation. <i>(Describe how in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The applicant has taken other actions related to the Project to improve racial equity and reduce barriers to opportunity. <i>(Describe those actions in the supporting narrative.)</i>

### C. Labor and Workforce

Applicants must demonstrate efforts to include labor and workforce (efforts to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporation of strong labor standards) as part of their proposed CHBP project as described in and consistent with Executive Order consistent with Executive Order 14025, Worker Organizing and Empowerment (86 FR 22829), and Executive Order 14052, Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (86 FR 64335).

In the table below is a list of potential considerations to address labor and workforce. Select the applicable action(s) to the proposed project, copy and paste each action in the application and provide a supporting narrative. Competitive applications will include either qualitative or quantifiable data and/or analysis to support each action identified in the application.

If the proposed project does not support at least one action, address why the project does not need to address labor and workforce. Applications that do not address why no actions are required will receive an overall rating of Non Responsive for Merit Criterion 4.

	The Recipient or a project partner promotes robust job creation by supporting good-paying jobs directly related to the project with free and fair choice to join a union. <i>(Describe robust job creation and identify the good-paying jobs in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Recipient or a project partner will invest in high-quality workforce training programs such as registered apprenticeship programs to recruit, train, and retain skilled workers, and implement policies such as targeted hiring preferences. <i>(Describe the training programs in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Recipient or a project partner implements 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. <i>(Describe the use of targeted hiring preferences that will promote the entry and retention of underrepresented populations in jobs in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Recipient or a project partner will 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 including through the use of local and economic hiring preferences, linkage agreements with workforce programs that serve underrepresented groups, and proactive plans to prevent harassment. <i>(Describe the supportive services provided to trainees and employees, preferences, and policies in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Recipient or a project partner will partner and engage with local unions or other worker-based organizations in the development and lifecycle of the project, including through evidence of project labor agreements and/or community benefit agreements. <i>(Describe the partnership or engagement with unions and/or other worker-based organizations and agreements in the supporting narrative.)</i>

	The Recipient or a project partner will partner with communities or community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups to develop workforce strategies. <i>(Describe the partnership and workforce strategies in the supporting narrative.)</i>
	The Recipient or a project partner has taken other actions related to the Project to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporate strong labor standards. <i>(Describe those actions in the supporting narrative.)</i>

### Merit Criteria Ratings Definitions

DOT will assign a Merit Criteria rating of high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, or low according to the following table:

Rating	Description
High	All four (4) Criteria are rated Highly Responsive
Medium-High	Three (3) criteria are rated Highly Responsive, including State of Good Repair, and one (1) Criteria is rated Responsive
Medium	Two (2) criteria are rated Highly Responsive, including State of Good Repair, and two (2) Criteria are rated Responsive
Medium-Low	One (1) criteria is rated Highly Responsive and three (3) Criteria are rated Responsive
Low	One or more Criteria are rated Non-Responsive

Only those applications that receive a medium-low or higher rating for Merit Criteria will receive a Project Readiness evaluation.

### Project Readiness Rating

For applications that received a medium-low or higher rating for the Merit Criteria, FHWA will consider project readiness to assess the likelihood of a successful project. In that project readiness analysis, DOT will consider three evaluation ratings: Technical Assessment, Financial Completeness Assessment, and Environmental Risk Assessment. The application should contain a section that explicitly addresses Environmental Risk Assessment, while the Technical Assessment and Financial Completeness Assessment will be based on information contained throughout the application.

The Technical Assessment will assess the applicant’s capacity to successfully deliver the project in compliance with applicable Federal requirements based on factors including the recipient’s experience working with Federal Agencies, civil rights compliance (including compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and accompanying DOT regulations, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), previous experience with DOT discretionary grant awards and the technical experience and resources dedicated to the project.

This review is partially based on information submitted with the application and partially based on FHWA’s knowledge of the applicant’s performance. The Technical Assessment will also assess the technical feasibility of the project as described in [Section 4](#). Technical Assessment ratings will be one of the following: “Certain,” “Somewhat Certain or Unknown,” or “Uncertain.” DOT will assign the highest rating of “Certain,” if the application demonstrates that: the applicant has extensive experience with Federal funds; the applicant has extensive experience completing projects with similar scope; the applicant has the resources to deliver the project; the project has minimal or no incomplete right-of-way acquisition; the project will comply with all applicable Federal requirements; and the applicant demonstrates the technical feasibility of the project in detail.

The Financial Completeness Assessment reviews the availability of matching funds and whether the applicant presented a complete funding package, and will receive a rating of “Complete,” “Partially Complete,” or “Incomplete.” For projects that receive a rating of “Complete” and include funding estimates that are based on early stages of design (e.g. less than 30 percent design) or outdated cost estimates, without specified contingency, evaluators may add a comment to note the potential for uncertainty in the estimated project costs. All applicants should describe a plan to address potential cost overruns and future maintenance and preservation costs and how those costs will be funded.

The Environmental Risk assessment reviews the project’s environmental approvals and likelihood of the necessary approvals affecting project obligation, and results in a rating of “High Risk,” “Moderate Risk,” or “Low Risk.”

The Project Readiness Ratings described above will be translated to a High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low, or Low rating using the table below:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Technical Assessment	<p>Uncertain:</p> <p>The team is not confident in the applicant’s capacity to deliver this project in a manner that satisfies Federal requirements. Or, the team is not confident in the technical feasibility of the project or if the project will be successfully completed.</p>	<p>Somewhat Certain/Unknown:</p> <p>The team is moderately confident in the applicant’s capacity to deliver the project in a manner that satisfies Federal requirements. Or, the team is moderately confident in the technical feasibility and completion of the project.</p>	<p>Certain:</p> <p>The team is confident in the applicant’s capacity to deliver the project in a manner that satisfies Federal requirements. And, the team is confident in the technical feasibility and completion of the project.</p>

Financial Completeness Assessment	<p>Incomplete:</p> <p>The project lacks full funding, or one or more Federal or non-Federal match sources is still uncertain as to whether it will be secured in time to meet the project's construction schedule. Plan to address potential cost overruns is not provided.</p>	<p>Partially Complete:</p> <p>Project funding is not fully committed but appears stable and highly likely to be secured in time to meet the project's construction schedule. Plan to address potential cost overruns is not fully provided.</p>	<p>Complete:</p> <p>The project's Federal and non-Federal sources are stable and fully committed and there is demonstrated funding available to cover contingency/cost increases. Plan to address potential cost overruns is provided.</p>
Environmental Risk Assessment	<p>High Risk:</p> <p>The project has not completed or begun NEPA or secured necessary Federal permits and there are known environmental, or litigation concerns associated with the project.</p>	<p>Moderate Risk:</p> <p>The project has not completed NEPA or secured necessary Federal permits, and it is uncertain whether they will be able to complete NEPA or secure necessary Federal permits in the time necessary to meet their project schedule.</p>	<p>Low Risk:</p> <p>The Project has completed NEPA and secured necessary Federal permits, or it is highly likely that the applicant will be able to complete NEPA and secure necessary Federal permits and other environmental reviews in the time necessary to meet their project schedule.</p>

The Project Readiness Ratings described above will be translated to a High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low, or Low rating using the table below:

Rating	Description
High	All 3's
Medium-High	Two 3's, one 2
Medium	One 3, two 2's
Medium-Low	All 2's
Low	Any 1's

## Overall Application Rating

FHWA will assign each eligible application an overall rating of Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended. The rating will be assigned on the following basis:

A rating of **“Highly Recommended”** will be assigned to a project that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received no less than a Medium-High rating for Merit Criteria and Project Readiness Rating

A rating of **“Recommended”** will be assigned to a project that:

- Meets all of the eligibility requirements; and
- Received no less than a Medium-Low rating for Merit Criteria and Project Readiness Rating

A rating of **“Not Recommended”** will be assigned to a project that:

- Does not meet one or more of eligibility requirements; or
- Received a Low rating for Merit Criteria or Project Readiness Rating; or
- Is not otherwise assigned a “Highly Recommended” or “Recommended” rating.

## FHWA Priority Selection Considerations

After completing the merit review and project readiness review, among projects of similar overall application rating, FHWA will prioritize FY 2024 CHBP projects that meet one or more of the following:

- A. Plans to improve the condition of a bundle of bridges in poor condition as demonstrated by having one or more components in condition rating 4 or less, or in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition as demonstrated by having one or more components in condition rating 5, based on National Bridge Inventory data as of June 2023.
- B. The project will be ready to obligate funds for construction within 18 months of an CHBP grant award.
- C. Replacement bridges provide safety, mobility, and/or environmental benefits from the improvement of traffic safety features, geometry, hydraulics, and/or accommodation of multiple transportation modes such as pedestrian, bicyclist, and bus lanes.
- D. Rehabilitation bridges are demonstrated as being more cost effective over the long-term than replacement and do not have safety, mobility, and environmental needs that are not addressed by rehabilitation.



## **Other Information and Guidance**

For additional information and guidance about the Administration goals and application process, applicants may refer to the DOT Strategic Plan and DOT Navigator. DOT Navigator is a tool to assist applicants in applying for DOT funding. The Navigator includes checklists for the climate change and workforce priorities to assist applicants in responding to these criteria.

## **Review and Selection Process**

FHWA will conduct an application intake and eligibility review by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the criteria in [Section 2](#). Only eligible projects will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria and for Project Readiness described in this Section F. The CHBP application evaluation and selection process consists of (1) a Technical Review and (2) an FHWA Senior Review.

### **i. Technical Review**

The evaluation of eligible applications will be conducted by a Technical Review Team who may consist of individuals from FHWA Headquarters and Division offices. The Technical Review Team will evaluate each eligible application against the Merit Criteria and for Project Readiness and assign an Overall Application Rating as defined in this Section F.

All *Highly Recommended* and *Recommended* applications will be reviewed by the FHWA Division office in the State in which the project is located. The Division offices will review the respective applications and evaluate whether there are any aspects in the delivery of the proposed project that may prevent the project from moving forward.

The Technical Review Team will also evaluate each *Highly Recommended* and *Recommended* application against its responsiveness to the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations.

The Technical Review Team will send to the FHWA Senior Review Team (SRT) the Overall Application Rating for each *Highly Recommended* and *Recommended* application and the evaluation of responsiveness to the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations.

### **ii. Senior Review**

The FHWA SRT consists of senior FHWA officials who have been requested to serve by the FHWA Administrator. The FHWA SRT, which may include the FHWA Administrator's participation in the review process, advises which projects the FHWA Administrator should select for funding.

The FHWA SRT will determine which *Highly Recommended* projects to advance to the FHWA Administrator. FHWA SRT may also recommend for selection a project that is rated

*Recommended* over a *Highly Recommended* project. When recommending a project that is rated *Recommended* over a *Highly Recommended* project, the FHWA SRT will select *Recommended* projects by considering the responsiveness to the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations and number of Merit Criteria rated *Highly Responsive*.

The FHWA Administrator makes final project selections and will select among the projects advanced by the FHWA SRT. The review process gives the Administrator the discretion to determine which applications best address CHBP requirements, advance the Administration's Priorities and Departmental Plan Strategic Goals, and FHWA Priority Selection Considerations and should be selected. When selecting projects, the Administrator may also consider geographic diversity including the need for a balance of awards across the Nation and by selecting projects that ensure the effective use of Federal funding.

FHWA is not obligated to make any award as a result of this NOFO.

FHWA may, during the selection process, enter into discussions with an applicant that may include mutually agreeing upon a lesser amount of a potential award than originally requested in the application, if necessary, because of the quantity, size, and scope of the applications received in response to this notice and the results of the application review process. Discussions may include scalable project options as described under [Section 5](#) of this NOFO.

### **iii. Applicant Risk Assessment**

Prior to award, each selected applicant will be subject to a risk assessment as required by 2 CFR 200.206. DOT must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)). An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. FHWA will consider comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants.

## **7. AWARD NOTICES**

### **i. How Project Selections Are Announced**

Following the evaluation outlined in [Section 6](#), the Administrator will announce awarded projects by posting a list of selected projects at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/bripro.cfm>. Notice of selection is not authorization to begin performance or to incur costs for the proposed project. Following that announcement, FHWA will contact the point of contact listed in the SF-424 to initiate negotiation of the project agreement for authorization.

Recipients of CHBP Discretionary Grant Program grant awards will not receive lump-sum cash disbursements at the time of award announcement or obligation of funds. Instead, FHWA will primarily administer grants on a reimbursement basis. Recipients do have the option to request alternative funding arrangements. Under the reimbursement approach, Program funds will reimburse recipients only for costs incurred after execution of grants that DOT determines to be allowable, reasonable, and allocable, as defined under 2 CFR Part 200, and after the recipient submits valid requests for reimbursement. If the recipient requests alternative funding arrangements, FHWA will consider these arrangements and determine allowance at its sole discretion and in accordance with 2 CFR 200.305.

Unless authorized by DOT in writing after the announcement of the FY 2024 CHBP Discretionary Grant Program awards, any costs that a recipient incurs before FHWA executes a project agreement for that recipient's project are ineligible for reimbursement and are ineligible match for cost share requirements.

## **8. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **i. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

#### **A. Administrative Requirements**

All awards will be administered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found in 2 CFR Part 200, as adopted by DOT at 2 CFR Part 1201. Applicable Federal laws, rules, and regulations set forth in title 23, U.S.C., and title 23 and 49 of the CFR, shall apply to awards provided under this program.

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this notice, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; the conditions of performance, non-discrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of DOT and FHWA; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget. In complying with these requirements, recipients, in particular, must ensure that no concession agreements are denied, or other contracting decisions made on the basis of speech or other activities protected by the First Amendment. If DOT determines that a recipient has failed to comply with applicable Federal requirements, DOT may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

In particular, E.O. 14005 directs the Executive Branch Departments and agencies to maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States through the terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards. If selected for an

award, grant recipients must be prepared to demonstrate how they will maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing their project. Any grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations (FMCSR), or vehicles that are exempt from FMVSS or FMCSR in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

## **B. Program Requirements**

### **Critical Infrastructure Security, Cybersecurity and Resilience**

It is the policy of the United States to strengthen the security and resilience of its critical infrastructure against all threats and hazards, including physical and cyber risks, consistent with National Security Memorandum 22 (NSM 22) to Secure and Enhance the Resilience of U.S. Critical Infrastructure. Each applicant selected for Federal funding must demonstrate, prior to the signing of the grant agreement, effort to consider and address physical and cyber security risks relevant to the transportation mode and type and scale of the project. Projects that have not appropriately considered and addressed physical and cyber security and resilience in their planning, design, and project oversight, as determined by DOT and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, will be required to do so before receiving funds.

### **Domestic Preference Requirements**

As expressed in E.O. 14005, Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers (86 FR 7475), the executive branch should, consistent with law, maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States. Funds made available under this notice are subject to the domestic preference requirements at Pub. L. No 117-58, div. G §§ 70901–70927. DOT expects all applicants to comply with those requirements.

The applicability of Federal requirements to a project may be affected by the scope of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews for that project. For example, under 23 U.S.C. § 313(g), Buy America requirements apply to all contracts that are eligible for assistance under title 23, U.S.C., and are carried out within the scope of the NEPA finding, determination, or decision regardless of the funding source of such contracts if at least one contract is funded with Title 23 funds. As another example, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations apply to all projects funded under this Notice.

### **Civil Rights and Title VI**

As a condition of a grant award, grant recipients should demonstrate that the recipient has a plan for compliance with civil rights obligations and nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations (49 CFR § 21), the ADA of 1990, and

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all other civil rights requirements, and accompanying regulations. This should include a current Title VI Plan, completed Community Participation Plan, and a plan to address any legacy infrastructure or facilities that are not compliant with ADA standards. DOT's and FHWA's Office of Civil Rights may work with awarded grant recipients to ensure full compliance with Federal civil rights requirements.

### **Federal Contract Compliance**

As a condition of grant award and consistent with E.O. 11246, Equal Employment Opportunity (30 FR 12319, and as amended), all federally-assisted contractors are required to make good faith efforts to meet the goals of 6.9 percent of construction project hours being performed by women, in addition to goals that vary based on geography for construction work hours and for work being performed by people of color. Under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and its implementing regulations, affirmative action obligations for certain contractors include an aspirational employment goal of 7 percent workers with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is charged with enforcing E.O. 11246, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974. OFCCP has a Mega Construction Project Program through which it engages with project sponsors as early as the design phase to help promote compliance with non-discrimination and affirmative action obligations. Additional information on how OFCCP makes their selections for participation in the Mega Construction Project Program is outlined under "Scheduling" on DOL's Website.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Justice**

Each applicant selected for the Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant Program (RTEPF) grant funding must demonstrate effort to consider climate change and environmental justice impacts. Projects that have not sufficiently considered climate change and environmental justice in their planning, as determined by DOT, will be required to do so before receiving funds, consistent with E.O. 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 FR 7619).

### **Equity and Barriers to Opportunity**

Each applicant selected for RTEPF grant funding must demonstrate effort to improve equity and reduce barriers to opportunity. Projects that have not sufficiently considered equity and barriers to opportunity in their planning, as determined by DOT, will be required to do so before receiving funds, consistent with E.O. 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (86 FR 7009).

### **Labor and Workforce**

Each applicant selected for RTEPF grant funding must demonstrate, to the full extent possible consistent with the law, an effort to create good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union and incorporation of high labor standards. To the extent that applicants have not sufficiently considered job quality and labor rights in their planning, as determined by DOL, the applicants will be required to do so before receiving funds, consistent with E.O. 14025, Worker Organizing and Empowerment (86 FR 22829), and E.O. 14052, Implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (86 FR 64335).

### **Project Signage and Public Acknowledgements**

Recipients are encouraged for construction and non-construction projects to post project signage and to include public acknowledgments in published and other collateral materials (e.g., press releases, marketing materials, website, etc.) satisfactory in form and substance to DOT, that identifies the nature of the project and indicates that “the project is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law”. In addition, recipients employing project signage are required to use the official Investing in America emblem in accordance with the Official Investing in America Emblem Style Guide. Costs associated with signage and public acknowledgments must be reasonable and limited. Signs or public acknowledgments should not be produced, displayed, or published if doing so results in unreasonable cost, expense, or recipient burden. The Recipient is encouraged to use recycled or recovered materials when procuring signs.

## **ii. Reporting**

### **A. Progress Reporting on Grant Activities**

Each applicant selected for CHBP Grant Program grant funding must submit semi-annual progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) to monitor project progress and ensure accountability and financial transparency in the CHBP Grant Program.

### **B. Performance and Program Evaluation**

As a condition of grant award, grant recipients may be required to participate in an evaluation undertaken by FHWA or another agency or partner. The evaluation may take different forms such as an implementation assessment across grant recipients, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grant recipients, or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. FHWA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation and/or use information available through other reporting. As a part of the evaluation, as a condition of award, grant recipients must agree to: (1) make records available to the evaluation contractor or FHWA staff; (2) provide access to program records, and any other relevant documents to calculate costs and benefits; (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the access to relevant information as requested; (4) access to right-of-way to contractor or FHWA staff for long-term data and observation collection; and (5) follow evaluation procedures as specified by the evaluation contractor or FHWA staff.

Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged to incorporate program evaluation including associated data collection activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting an agency priority

goal(s). Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) urges Federal awarding agencies and Federal assistance recipients and subrecipients to use program evaluation as a critical tool to learn, to improve equitable delivery, and to elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Evaluation means “an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.” 5 U.S.C. § 311. Credible program evaluation activities are implemented with relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics (OMB Circular A-11, Part 6 Section 290).

For grant recipients receiving an award, evaluation costs are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), unless prohibited by statute or regulation, and such costs may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and evaluation. (2 CFR Part 200).

### **C. CHBP Project Specific Reporting Requirements**

Each applicant selected for CHBP grant funding must collect and report to FHWA information on the project’s performance using performance indicators supplied by FHWA that relate to program goals and objectives (reference [Section 3](#) for CHBP program goals and objectives) and report other information as requested by FHWA. Performance indicators will include measurable goals or targets that FHWA will use internally to determine whether the project meets program goals, and grant funds achieve the intended long-term outcomes of the CHBP. FHWA will work with the grant recipient to establish a recommended two to four performance measures that enable FHWA to measure and evaluate the outcomes of the individual grant. Performance reporting continues for several years after project construction is completed.

### **D. Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance**

If the total value of a selected applicant’s currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then the applicant during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently FAPIIS) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of this award term and condition. This is a statutory requirement under section 872 of Public Law 110-417, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 2313). As required by section 3010 of Public Law 111-212, all information posted in the designated integrity and performance system on or after April 15, 2011, except past performance reviews required for Federal procurement contracts, will be publicly available.

### **E. Other**

FHWA reserves the right to request additional information, if deemed needed, to better understand the status of the project. The successful applicant will provide additional financial reporting beyond the semi-annual reporting, if such statements are necessary to address FHWA’s

Stewardship and Oversight responsibility of the funds. The successful applicant also agrees to allow periodic project inspections and FHWA will provide notice for such inspections.

## **9. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

For questions concerning this NOFO and the CHBP program, please contact:

Derek Constable  
Office of Bridges and Structures  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
Email: [CHBPgrant@dot.gov](mailto:CHBPgrant@dot.gov) (preferred)  
Phone: 202-366-4606

Alternate:  
Douglas Blades  
Office of Bridges and Structures  
Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE.  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
Email: [CHBPgrant@dot.gov](mailto:CHBPgrant@dot.gov) (preferred)  
Phone: 202-366-4622

A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993.

Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

## **10. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **i. Protection of Confidential Business Information**

All information submitted as part of or in support of any application shall use publicly available data or data that can be made public and methodologies that are accepted by industry practice and standards, to the extent possible. If the applicant submits information that the applicant considers to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information, the applicant must provide that information in a separate document, which the applicant may cross-reference from the application narrative or other portions of the application. For the separate document containing confidential information, the applicant must do the following: (1) State on the cover of that document that it “Contains Confidential Business Information (CBI)”; (2) mark each page



that contains confidential information with “CBI”; (3) highlight or otherwise denote the confidential content on each page; and (4) at the end of the document, explain how disclosure of the confidential information would cause substantial competitive harm. The DOT will protect confidential information complying with these requirements to the extent required under applicable law. If DOT receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information that the applicant has marked in accordance with this section, DOT will follow the procedures described in its FOIA regulations at 49 CFR 7.29. Only information that is in the separate document, marked in accordance with this section, and ultimately determined to be confidential under § 7.29 will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

## **ii. Publication and Sharing of Application Information**

In order to expand public awareness of RTEPF Grant Program technologies, concepts, and ideas, DOT may post publicly or release publicly all Volume 1 Technical Applications after award. By submitting an application in response to this NOFO, the applicant provides DOT permission to:

- Release publicly the names of all applicants after selection of the RTEPF Grant Program awardees; and
- Release publicly Volume 1 Technical Application document (without the résumés of key personnel) after selection of the RTEPF Grant Program awardees.

Following the completion of the selection process and announcement of awards, DOT intends to publish a list of all applications received along with the names of the applicant organizations and funding amounts requested. Except for the information properly marked as described in this [Section 10](#), DOT may make application narratives publicly available. The DOT may share application information within DOT or with other Federal agencies if DOT determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program’s objectives.

**Fiscal Year 2024**  
**Competitive Highway Bridge Program**  
**Guidelines for Evaluation of Applications**

**Introduction/Background:**

This document provides guidelines when evaluating the applications for the grants under the Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) and the expected responsibilities of those reviewing the proposals.

As described in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the CHBP will accept applications for at least 60 days after the NOFO is published. As applications are received, the Program Manager will review applications for an initial eligibility and intake screening. The Technical Review Team (TRT) begin evaluating all eligible applications to make rating recommendations. After the application deadline, the Technical Review Management Team will review the ratings assigned by the TRT and make recommendations. Recommendations are reviewed by the Senior Level Review Team. The final selections will follow the Tier 3 process with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Administrator making the final funding selections.

**Application Review and Recommendation Overview:**

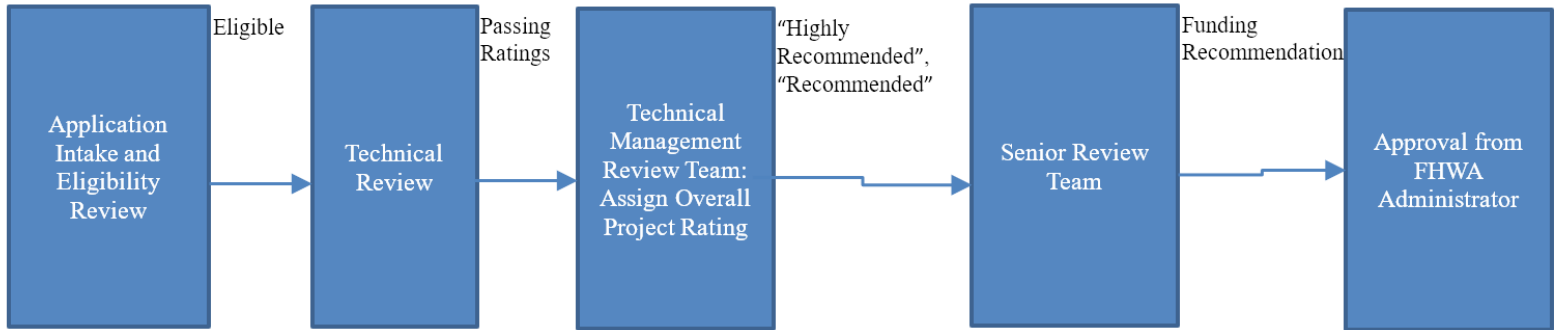
The review and recommendation process consists of the following phases:

- **Application Intake and Eligibility Review** – To begin the review process, the Program Manager conducts the Application Intake and Eligibility Review of applications by providing an initial eligibility screening based on the applicant and project eligibility criteria outlined in the NOFO. Eligible applications are sent to the TRT.
- **Review by the Technical Review Team** – The TRT reviews all eligible applications and provides one of the following ratings to both the Merit Criteria and Project Readiness: High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low and Low. For each application that does not have a Low rating for either the Merit Criteria or Project Readiness, the TRT will also evaluate the responsiveness of each application to the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations identified in the NOFO.
- **Review by the Technical Management Review Team** – The Technical Management Review Team reviews all applications that received a High, Medium-High, Medium, or Medium-Low Rating for both merit and project readiness, i.e. if either merit or project readiness received a low rating the application is not reviewed. The Technical Management Review Team reviews recommendations from the TRT, assigns an overall rating to each project using the Overall Application Rating procedure described in the NOFO, and sends only the projects found to be Highly Recommended or Recommended to the Senior Level Review Team.
- **Senior Review and Applications Recommended for Consideration by the FHWA Administrator** – The Senior Review Team (SRT) determines which projects to advance to the Administrator as recommended for funding. (Note that the Administrator may

participate in the SRT in which case the SRT recommendations and Administrator's determination will occur concurrently.) The Administrator will determine which Highly Recommended projects, and any Recommended projects to select while considering the statutorily required project selection requirements, and responsiveness to the FHWA Priority Considerations. There is one statutorily required project selection requirement; States eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 include Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia pursuant to a determination that projects are eligible and sufficient to fund such amount.

In making project selections, the FHWA Administrator may consult with any group or team involved in the evaluation of the projects. The final selections will be fully documented in accordance with FHWA Order 4410.4 *Discretionary Grant Program Development, Implementation, and Award Coordination and Notification*, available at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legsregs/directives/orders/44104.cfm>

**Application Review Process Flow – CHBP Grants:**



**Passing Rating means at least “high,” “medium-high,” “medium”, or “medium-low” rating both Merit Criteria and Project Readiness.**

**Failing Rating means “low” for at least one of Merit Criteria or Project Readiness.**

## **Application Intake and Eligibility Review**

The Program Manager is responsible for:

- **Evaluating Late Applications:** The Program Manager decides whether to accept late applications, if any, in accordance with the late application process outlined in the NOFO.
- **Conducting Eligibility Determinations:** The Program Manager then conducts an initial screening to determine whether applications meet eligibility requirements specified in law and the NOFO, including:
  - Eligible Applicant (2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act)
    - A State DOT or a group of State DOTs from the States of Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming
  - Eligible Bridges (2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act)
    - Verify bridges are in the National Bridge Inventory
  - Eligible Project Activities (2024 Consolidated Appropriations Act)
    - Bridge bundles that include replacement and/or rehabilitation.
    - Bridge bundling is defined in 23 U.S.C. 144(j) as two or more similar bridge projects that are eligible projects under Sections 119 or 133; included as a bundled project in a transportation improvement program under Section 134(j) or a statewide transportation improvement program under Section 135, as applicable; and awarded to a single contractor (for construction in the case of the FY 2024 CHBP).
  - Total Project Cost
    - No minimum or maximum. States eligible to receive no less than \$32,500,000 include Iowa, Maine, South Dakota, and West Virginia pursuant to a determination that projects are eligible and sufficient to fund such amount.
  - SF 424s, Project Narrative, Project Budget/Narrative, Project Schedule
- **Documentation:** The Program Manager is responsible for documenting the Application Intake and Eligibility Review section in the applicable Evaluation Template. If an application does not meet one of the eligibility requirements, the Program Manager will fully document the reasons and rate the application as Not Eligible. A project must meet all applicable statutory and NOFO eligibility criteria to be considered eligible. Only eligible applications will be advanced to the TRT.
- **Identify Private Parties for Conflicts Screening:** For each application, based on information contained in the Application Evaluation Review Form and application narrative, identify private entities that appear likely to receive a direct and predictable

financial benefit if the project is selected for award. This includes, but is not limited to, private owners of infrastructure facilities being improved and other private entities advocating for completion of the proposed project. This information is made available to individuals participating in the Technical Review process to facilitate their compliance with conflict-of-interest requirements.

## **Technical Review**

The evaluation team will consist of a TRT and a Technical Review Management Team. The TRT will consist of individuals from the Office of Bridges and Structures, the Office of Technical Services, and Federal-aid Division Offices. The Technical Review Management Team will consist of the Associate Administrator for the Office of Infrastructure and members from the Office of Infrastructure. The Program Manager will meet with the TRT members to go over the technical review process, including expected action dates and review of the guidance and rating forms that will be used.

The TRT will be responsible for:

- 1. Filling out Technical Review Section:** TRT members will document their individual assessment of eligible applications by completing the Technical Review Section of the Application Evaluation Template. Technical Review Section will include:
  - Application identification information;
  - Ratings for each merit criterion identified in the NOFO;
  - An overall Merit Criteria rating including narrative justification that addresses each of the merit criteria;
  - Ratings for each project readiness criterion identified in the NOFO
  - An overall rating of the Project Readiness;
  - Narrative of how the project and application address the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations.

For quality assurance, an additional review of evaluation ratings and summaries for each project will be completed by another TRT member. The Program Manager is responsible for coordinating and managing the TRT's review process, including the resolution of any conflicting reviews and reaching consensus.

Reviewers may use outside sources to better understand the project and to confirm, correct, or complete missing information in the project application that would be helpful for the review of the Merit Criteria or Project Readiness. If the reviewer relies on outside sources of information, those sources will be identified in the evaluation documentation including any corrections made to the applicant's application.

- 2. Evaluation of the Merit Criteria:** Rating guidance is included in the NOFO for each of the four criteria (1) State of Good Repair, (2) Safety and Mobility, (3) Innovation, and (4) Climate Change, Equity, and Job Creation. Each criteria has a single rating table excluding Climate Change, Equity, and Job Creation which has three separate tables. The Merit

Criteria will be used to evaluate and rate the responsiveness of the application to the Program Goals and Objectives identified in the NOFO.

**3. Evaluation of the Project Readiness Rating:** Rating guidance is included in the NOFO for three criteria (1) Technical Assessment, (2) Financial Completeness Assessment, and (3) Environmental Risk Assessment. The three criteria are included in a single table.

**4. Evaluation of FHWA Priority Selection Considerations:** In addition to rating the Merit Criteria and Project Readiness, the TRT will complete a brief narrative that identifies whether and how the project satisfies each of the four priority considerations identified in the NOFO. The narrative will assist the Senior Review Team in assessing the differences between projects that have the same overall rating.

The Technical Review Management Team will be responsible for:

- 1. Assign the recommended rating for the application:** One of the following overall ratings will be assigned to each project: Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended. The NOFO identifies the definitions for each.
- 2. Enter ratings into the table for review:** The Technical Review Management Team will enter the ratings into the prescribed table for review by the Senior Review Team and the Administrator. The table, organized alphabetically by State name, consists of the following columns:
  - **State Name**
  - **Project Name and Description:** Short narrative describing the project, including the types of activities to be funded with the Bridge Investment Program funds.
  - **Rating:** Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended.
  - **Basis for Rating:** The basis for rating must explain why the project received the assigned rating. Each basis for rating must be tailored to each project. It must explain how the application addressed each of the merit criteria, each project readiness criteria, and FHWA selection priorities.
  - **Requested Amount:** Amount of grant funding requested in application.
  - **Funding Amount:** Amount of grant funding being recommended for award.
  - **Funding Amount Rationale:** If funding amount is different from request amount, explain the reason for the difference.

### **Red Flag Review**

All Highly Recommended and Recommended projects will be assessed for any “red flags.” The appropriate FHWA Division Office will be contacted providing limited information about the project. The FHWA Division Office will provide feedback on the project related to known

concerns about a project's readiness, including environmental review status, inclusion in statewide transportation improvement program/transportation improvement program, permitting issues, legal issues, and any other concern that may result in the project being delayed or canceled.

### **Senior Review Team**

The SRT consists of senior FHWA officials who have been requested to serve by the Administrator that may include the Deputy Administrator, Executive Director, Associate Administrator for the Office of Infrastructure, Associate Administrator for Highway Policy and External Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Associate Administrator for Planning, Environment, and Realty. The FHWA Chief Counsel will serve as legal advisor to the SRT.

The SRT will review the Technical Review Management Team's tables to determine which projects to advance as recommended for funding. Although unusual, the SRT may change a rating recommended by the Technical Review Management Team. Any changes and the basis will be documented in a Senior Review Spreadsheet.

An SRT member may direct the use of the "reach back" provision and ask the TRT to seek clarifying information from that applicant in any of the Merit Criteria, or Project Readiness Rating areas, or if an SRT member provides additional information to demonstrate that the project has benefits that are aligned with a Highly Responsive rating (whether or not the TRT assigned a Highly Responsive rating). The SRT cannot direct a team to seek clarifying information from an applicant more than once per specific Merit Criteria or Project Readiness Rating per applicant. The applicant's response to the "reach back" directed by the SRT may be considered only for the specific Merit Criteria or Project Readiness issue for which the clarification is warranted under these guidelines. An SRT member may also provide the necessary clarifying information to support a determination. If the TRT or a member of the SRT finds that information sufficient to determine that the project meets the requirement, the project will be eligible for further evaluation based upon the receipt of the clarifying information. The TRT will document the basis for that determination. Only projects that have been determined to satisfy the Eligibility Requirements, Merit Criteria, and Project Readiness Rating considerations, and are rated Highly Recommended or Recommended may advance for consideration by the SRT.

The SRT will determine which Highly Recommended and Recommended projects to advance to the Administrator. The SRT may opt to recommend to partially fund independent components of some applications. When considering projects to be recommended for funding, consideration of geographic diversity, including a need to balance rural and urban communities should be considered. In addition, the SRT will consider an application's responsiveness to the FHWA Priority Selection Considerations. The SRT may select a Recommended application over a Highly Recommended project to recommend for funding by considering how well the project addressed the Merit Criteria (number of criteria rated Highly Recommended), as well as the project's High ratings under Project Readiness, and if the project addresses the FHWA priorities identified in the NOFO.



The Administrator makes final project selections under the Tier 3 process.

**Awards**

After the FHWA Administrator provides final approval of awards, the selected projects will be entered into the Grants Notification System to inform congressional delegations of the awards. After the congressional notification waiting period ends, the selected applicants will be notified, and the project selected to receive an award will be posted on the FHWA Website in a manner consistent with the NOFO. Non-selected applicants will be notified after selected applicants are notified.