U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Office of Administration (HAD)
Office of Competitive Grants and Workforce Programs

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Congestion Relief Program
Grant Application and Program Management
OMB Control No. 2125-0676

Introduction:

This collection of information is for applicants submitting a proposal for discretionary grant funding under the "Congestion Relief Program" established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021, November 15, 2021. The Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have coordinated on the development of public information to solicit responses to a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Congestion Relief Program for the FY2025 and FY2026 funding opportunity. Funds made available under this program are to be awarded on a competitive basis to States, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), cities, and municipalities to advance innovative, integrated, and multimodal solutions to congestion relief in the most congested metropolitan areas of the United States. Under the Program, projects must be located in urbanized areas with a population greater than 1,000,000. (23 U.S.C. 129(d)(1)). This notice describes the application requirements, selection and evaluation criteria, applicable program and Federal requirements, and available assistance during the grant solicitation period.

Part A. Justification.

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary:

The collection of information is necessary to receive applications for grant funds, evaluate the effectiveness of projects prioritized for grant awards, review annual project reporting, and monitor fiscal management pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 129(d). The Congestion Relief Program seeks to fund operational improvement projects that increase the effectiveness of existing transportation system capacity; improve and integrate travel modes other than single-occupant vehicles; and give travelers sufficient motivation to use those modes or to avoid peak-period travel; and to do so in a manner that:

- is reasonable to the traveling public and affected communities;
- considers and mitigates any safety impacts;
- considers and mitigates any potential adverse financial impacts to all roadway travelers.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used:

The information collected will be used by FHWA.

FHWA will use the information collected in the application phase to evaluate proposals and make decisions to award grants to applicants for any future similar appropriations. FHWA will use the information to monitor the progress of projects that have been awarded Congestion Relief Program funds and to monitor the proper expenditure of Federal funds.

The project management information will be collected by grant recipients.

SIRC Program Collection of Information Stages
DOT requests information from applicants in the form of an electronic application, which will represent 100% of the submissions. The application will assist in soliciting proposals for funding from eligible applicants for the remaining two-year grant program funding to evaluate project proposals and assess project outcomes.

The reporting requirements are submitted by recipients and will be completed during the application stage, grant agreement, and project management stages.

Application Stage
To be considered an eligible applicant and a Congestion Relief Program grant recipient, applicants must submit an application to the DOT containing information as detailed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The project narrative should include the information necessary for the Department to determine that the project satisfies eligibility requirements as warranted by law. The current FY 2025-FY 2026 program funding opportunity application package include the following electronic documents, as applicable to the project type: Standard Form (SF) 424 Application for Federal Assistance, Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form, Standard Form 424A-Budget Information, SF-424B Assurance for Non-Construction Programs, SF-424C Budget Information for Construction Projects, and SF-424D Assurances for Construction Programs, averaging three pages per document. In addition, the Congestion Relief Competitive Grant Program Application Template must be included as part of the application package.

Grant Agreement Stage
The grant agreement is between FHWA and the grantee. In the grant agreement, the recipient must describe the project that FHWA agreed to fund, which is typically the project that was described in the Congestion Relief Program application (or a reduced-scope version of that project). The grant agreement must also include a detailed breakdown of the project schedule and a budget listing all major activities that will be completed as part of the project.

Project Management Stage

The reporting requirements under this stage are necessary to ensure the proper and timely expenditure of federal funds within the scope of the approved project. The requirements comply with the Common Grant Rule and are also included in sections of the grant agreement. During the project management stage, the grantee recipient will complete semi-annual progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) to monitor project progress and ensure accountability and financial transparency in the Program, as well as FHWA may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the evaluation and/or use information available through other reporting related to project's performance based on performance indicators FHWA identifies related to program goals.

The substantive requirements of the report include: the project's overall status; significant project activities and issues; action items/outstanding issues; project scope overview; project schedule; project cost; an SF-425 Federal Financial Report; and certifications. This reporting requirement will greatly reduce the need for on-site visits by staff. Much of the information will be produced and collected through the normal process of project management, so the additional burden of Government information collection is small in comparison to the data management related to information that grant recipients already collect to manage their projects properly.

The purpose of the project management information collection is to ensure that the project scope, budget, and schedule will be maintained to the maximum extent possible to support project completion to the highest degree of quality, and in compliance with Federal regulations.

3. Extent of automated information collection:

The Department will receive applications via grants.gov, reports will be received electronically via the FHWA's GrantsSolutions web portal and fiscal management, and via email from grant awardees upon approval from OMB. Certain agencies within the Department have found that delivery of reports electronically is the most reliable way to collect information and will use their existing grant administration systems to collect the information covered under this request. To minimize the burden on applicants, OMB-approved standard forms are being used to collect information where possible. Such standard forms include the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), available online at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf, and the post-award Federal Financial Reports form (SF–425), available online at https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF425_2_0-V2.0.pdf.

4. Efforts to identify duplication:

The information collected from grant recipients is project-specific, and the information is not available other than from the applicant or grantee. The information will be used to monitor projects semi-annually and to ensure, on an annual basis, that the project's plan conforms to the project's real operating environment.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses:

Business organizations, small or otherwise, are not eligible applicants (State, regional MPO bodies, and local governments), and there is a limited to no burden on small businesses.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information:

If the information requested in the reports is not collected, the Department will not be able to evaluate project progress or financial conditions in accordance with the 23 U.S.C., Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the program published in the *Federal Register*. The annual collection of financial data ensures that the use of Federal funds can be appropriately monitored.

7. Special circumstances:

During the negotiation of the grant agreement, FHWA may require the recipient to report information to the agency more often than annually to assist with the allocation and obligation of funds. Otherwise, all information collected is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

FHWA published the 60-day Federal Register notice on January 29, 2026 [91 FR 4782] intended to solicit comments from the public on this information collection. No comments were received.

The 30-day Federal Register notice intended to notify the public this information collection was submitted to OMB for review and approval was published on April 8, 2026, at [91 FR 18524]. No comments were received.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents:

No payment is made to respondents, other than remuneration to the successful Congestion Relief Program grantees. The remuneration to grantees is in the form of reimbursements up to the amount of the Congestion Relief Program grant award as negotiated in the signed and executed grant agreement.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

All information submitted as part of or in support of any application shall use publicly available data or data that can be made public. If the application includes information the applicant considers to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information, the applicant should do the following: (1) note on the front cover that the submission “Contains Confidential Business Information (CBI)”; (2) mark each affected

page “CBI”; and (3) highlight or otherwise denote the CBI portions. DOT protects such information from disclosure to the extent allowed under applicable law. In the event DOT receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information, DOT will follow the procedures described in its FOIA regulations at 49 CFR 7.17. Only information that is ultimately determined to be confidential under that procedure will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA. Retention of records will adhere to DOT Order 1351.28 Records Management, 28.4.5 Electronic Records.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

None of the information is of a sensitive nature.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

There is a wide variance in the level of effort required by recipients to comply with the application, grant agreement, and project management stage reporting requirements. As noted, applications and grant agreements will be submitted electronically, and many reports will be simple based on status updates. The figures in Tables 1 and 2 are representative of a straightforward project of average complexity that has completed the pilot project scope of work over five years, with five years of performance measurement once the project is complete.

All burden hour estimates are based on an estimated review of all the requirements associated with the Congestion Relief Program and the previous hours performed for the initial FY 2022-FY2024 application submission, grant agreement, and management stages, discussions with appropriate modal staff, and analysis of other Departmental programs. In the initial round of funding opportunity, 20 applications were received, and 10 awards were made.

The total burden for all potential applicant hours for the initial Application Stage is 480 burden hours.

Table 1: Congestion Relief Program Burden Hours for Applicants/Respondents

Requirements	**Estimated Annual Submissions** (20 applications annually based on the initial FY22-FY24 funding round)	**Applicant/Respondent Burden Hours Per Submission** (8 hours per day with 5 business days a week)	**Applicant/ Respondent Total Burden Hours**	**Percentage of Responses (submissions) collected electronically**
Application Stage				
Application submissions	20	24	**480**	**100%**
Total			**480**	

Application Stage:

The 50-to-70-word (30-page overall limit) application narrative and budget summary at a minimum will provide the following information: table of contents, detailed statement of work, detailed project schedules (identifying all major project milestones), staffing

description, and any appropriate exhibits or attachments that will aid in the review and assessment of the application.

We estimate that it takes approximately 24 person-hours (burden hours are based on an eight-hour day) for a Congestion Relief Program application package.

- 20 applications * 24 hours per submission (burden hours are based on an eight-hour day/three days) = 480 burden hours

We estimate 480 total hours are required on a one-time basis for the initial **Application Stage**. Although various personnel contribute to the development of an application, the estimated labor cost is based on the mean hourly wage of Project Management Specialists in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria metropolitan area. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the mean hourly wage for this occupation was $62.04[1] as of May 2025. The loaded hourly wage rate is $62.04 * 1.4 = $86.86.

Therefore, the total cost to the respondents is computed at $41,692.80 (480 hours x $86.86 = $41,692.80) to adhere to the *Application Stage as shown above*.

Grant Agreement and Project Management Stage:

We estimate it will require approximately 16 hours to coordinate the signing of the grant agreement. A total of three documents will be required to be submitted annually, 16 total burden hours for annual reporting is estimated per grantee, 16 burden hours for data management plan submittal, and an additional 16 burden hours may be required for system engineering document submittal for deployment pilot projects only, as shown in

Table 2 below:

Table 2 **Grant Agreement and Project Management Stage**	**SIRC Program Burden Hours for Applicants/Respondents**					
	Documents Submitted Annually 3 documents (1 agreement, annual report, and data management plan)	**Applicant/ Respondent Burden Hours Per Document Submission (8 hours per day with 5 business days a week)**	**Total Applicant/ Respondent Burden Hours Per Submission**	**10 projects awarded annually based on initial FY 2022-FY2024 funding opportunity**	**Total Applicant/ Respondent Burden Hours Per Grant Award Annually**	
Grant agreement coordination and signing	1	16	16	**10**	**160**	100%
Annual Progress Report **(1 report annually x 16 hours per submission)**	1	16	16	**10**	**160**	

1 Table 1. Employment and wage data for business and financial operations occupations, Washington metropolitan area, May 2025, project management specialists mean hourly rate: $62.04, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, May 2025 BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics — Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, May 2025

Data Management Plan **(1 document annually x 16 hours per submission)** System Engineering Document **(Estimate only 1 document annually for deployment pilot projects only)**	1	16	16	**10**	**160**	
Total Burden Hours					**480**	**10 0%**

- 1 grant agreement signing * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours
    - 16 total burden hours * 10 annual awards = 160 total burden hours annually per grant award
- 1 annual report * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours
- 16 total burden hours * 10 annual awards = 160 total burden hours annually per grant award
- 1 data management plan annually * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours
- 16 total burden hours * 10 annual awards = 160 total burden hours annually per grant award *(1 system engineering document may be required annually based on the estimated number of awarded deployment pilot projects)* * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours

We estimate 480 *total burden hours* (160 + 160 + 160 burden hours = 480 total burden hours) annually per grant award for the *Grant Agreement and Project Management Stages*.

Although various personnel are involved in the development of an application and project management, the primary staff person is a local government project management specialist. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the average salary is estimated to be $62.04 per hour. **The loaded hourly wage rate is $62.04 * 1.4 = $86.86.**

The cost to the respondents is computed at $41,692.80 (480 burden hours x $86.86 = $41,692.80) to adhere to the requirements of the Grant Agreement and Project Management Stages.

The combined burden hours for the Application, Grant Agreement, and Project Management Stages are 960 burden hours. As denoted, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the average salary is estimated to be $62.04 per hour. The loaded hourly wage rate is $62.04 * 1.4 = $86.86. **The total annual cost to respondents for the application, grant negotiation, and program management stages is $83,385.60.**

The total annual hourly burden and costs are shown below for all respondents:

Table 4	**Eligible Congestion Relief Program Applicants**

	(States, local governments, and MPO entities) Application, Grant Agreement, and Project Management Stages
Average Wage Rate	$62.04/hour
Loaded hourly wage	$86.86/hour
Hours	960
Total	**$83,385.60**

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents:

There is no additional cost beyond that shown in items 12 and 14 below.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government:

The Federal government costs, as shown above in Table 3, are calculated as follows:

Table 3: Application Stage

	Number of Annual Application Submissions	**Federal Government Burden Hours Per Submission** (8 hours per day with 5 business days a week)	**Federal Government Total Burden Hours**	**Percentage of Responses (submissions) collected electronically**
Application submissions	20	24	**480**	**100%**
Total			**480**	**100%**

Application Stage:
Based on the previous submittals from the initial FY2022-FY2024 funding opportunity, FHWA expects to evaluate 20 applications.

- 20 applications * 24 hours per submission = 480 burden hours, and

FHWA will review the applications to assess project eligibility and merit and to provide information for the discretionary decision-making process before the award of any future SIRC Program grants. Individuals managing projects throughout FHWA vary from GS-11 to GS-14; however, according to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)[2], the average hourly rate for a GS-13/Step 6 and GS-14/Step 1 is approximately $68.52 per hour with locality pay. The loaded hourly wage rate is $68.52 * 1.4 = $95.93. We estimate 480 total hours (20 * 24 burden hours = 480 total burden hours) required on a one-time basis for the *Application Stage.* **Therefore, the cost to the Federal Government is computed at $46,046.40 (480 hours x $95.93= $46,046.40) to evaluate the *Application Stage***.

2 OPM Salary Table 2026. Locality Pay Area of Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA

Grant Agreement and Project Management Stage:
We estimated 480 total burden hours to coordinate the signing of grant agreements electronically per grant award, review quarterly reports and data management plans, and an additional 16 burden hours may be required for system engineering document review for deployment pilot projects only, as shown in Table 3 above.

- 1 grant agreement signing * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours
  - 16 total burden hours per submission * 10 annual grant awards = 160 total FHWA burden hours per grant award annually

- 2 semi-annual reports * 8 burden hours per submission = 16 total burden hours per submission
  - 16 total burden hours per submission * 10 annual grant awards = 160 total FHWA burden hours per grant award annually

Grant Agreement and Project Management Stage	**SIRC Program Burden Hours for Federal Government**					
	Documents Submitted Annually 3 documents (2 semi-annual reports and 1 data management plan)	**FHWA Burden Hours Per Document Submission (8 hours per day with 5 business days a week)**	**Total FHWA Burden Hours Per Submission**	**10 projects awarded annually based on the initial FY2022-FY2024 funding opportunity**	**Total FHWA Burden Hours Per Grant Award Annually**	
Grant agreement coordination and signing	1	16	16	**10**	**160**	100%
Semi-annual Report **(2 reports annually x 16 hours per submission)**	2	8	16	**10**	**160**	
Data Management Plan **(1 document annually x 16 hours per submission)**	1	6	16	**10**	**160**	
System Engineering Document **(Estimate only 1 document annually for deployment pilot projects only)**						
Total Burden Hours					**480**	**10 0%**

- 1 data management plans annually * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours (*1 system engineering document may be required annually based on estimated number of awarded deployment pilot projects*) * 16 hours per submission per grantee = 16 burden hours

  - 16 total burden hours per submission * 10 annual grant awards = 160 total FHWA Burden Hours Per Grant Award Annually

We estimate 480 *total burden hours* (160 + 160 + 160 burden hours = 480 total burden hours) required for the *Grant Agreement and Project Management Stages*. **Therefore, the cost to the Federal Government is computed at $46,046.40 (480 hours x $95.93= $46,046.40) to evaluate the *Grant Agreement and Project Management Stages.***

The combined burden hours for the Application, Grant Agreement, and Project Management Stages are 960 burden hours. As noted above, we estimate that the average grade level of an FHWA Program Manager is GS-13/Step 6. According to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) the average hourly rate for a GS-13/Step 6 and GS-14/Step 1 is approximately $68.52 per hour with locality pay. The loaded hourly wage rate is $68.52 * 1.4 = $95.93. **Therefore, the cost to the Federal Government is computed at $92,092.80 (960 hours x $95.93 = $92,092.80) to evaluate the *Application, Grant Agreement, and Project Management Stages***

	Cost to the Federal Government-FHWA
Average Wage Rate	**$68.52/hour**
Loaded hourly wage rate	**$95.93/hour**
Hours	**960**
Total	**$92,092.80**

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments:

Not applicable. This is a new information collection

16. Publication of results of data collection:

There are no plans for the publication of outcomes currently.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date of OMB approval:

There is no reason not to display the expiration date of OMB approval.

18. Exceptions to certification statement:

No exceptions are stated.