



# REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE)

The Secretary's Office

Maryland Department of Transportation

# BACKGROUND & MDOT

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- Since the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, USDOT has awarded **billions of dollars annually in competitive discretionary grants to fund transportation projects** across the country.
- MDOT is growing its resources to **share** information and **coordinate** efforts **internally** and **externally** to maximize grant opportunities and successes for Maryland, across all levels of government.
- Our [resources and tools](#) include a monthly grants newsletter, dedicated online information, direct consultations with local governments and additional efforts, such as this webinar!

# RAISE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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- The **\$1.5 billion** RAISE program provides **multimodal funding** for both **project development** and **capital** projects that, largely, support surface transportation infrastructure. There is a required **50/50 Urban-Rural award split**.
- The goals of the program are to support projects that improve **safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility** and **community connectivity, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, partnership**, and **innovation**.
- Eligible applicants:
  - States
  - Units of local government
  - Public agencies
  - Special purpose district w/ transportation function
  - Transit agencies
  - Multijurisdictional group of the listed entities

# ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

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- Highway, Bridge or Road
- Public Transportation
- Passenger and Freight Rail
- Intermodal Projects
- Surface Transportation Components of an Airport
- Port Infrastructure
- Culvert Replacement and Rehabilitation
- Planning and Pre-Construction Activities

# AWARD CATEGORIES

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- Capital Grants
  - Surface transportation, infrastructure capital construction or certain vehicle and equipment procurement.
  - Projects that include right-of-way acquisition.
  - **Minimum project award is \$5 million in urban areas and \$1 million in rural areas.**
- Planning Grants
  - Planning, preparation, or design of surface transportation infrastructure projects.
  - Examples include: environmental analysis, equity analysis, community engagement, feasibility studies, benefit-cost analysis, and other pre-construction activities.
  - **There is no minimum project award amount for planning grants.**

**\*\*The maximum project award for capital and planning grants is \$25 million.\*\***

# RESTRICTIONS ON FUNDING

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- No more than 15% (or \$225 million) made available for RAISE grants may be awarded to projects in a **single state**.
- USDOT must award at least 5% (or \$75 million) to **planning projects**.
- USDOT must award at least 1% (or \$15 million) to projects located in **historically disadvantaged communities or areas of persistent poverty**.
- Not more than 50% of the funds provided for RAISE grants (or \$750 million) shall be awarded to **rural** projects.
- Not more than 50% of the funds provided for RAISE grants (or \$750 million) shall be awarded to **urban** projects.
- USDOT may retain up to \$30 million for **oversight and administration** of grants.

# MERIT CRITERIA

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- Applications should address each criterion or expressly state that the project does not align with a criterion:
  - Safety
  - Environmental Sustainability
  - Quality of Life
  - Mobility and Community Connectivity
  - Economic Competitiveness
  - State of Good Repair
  - Partnership and Collaboration
  - Innovation

# FY 2024 RAISE NOFO

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- The FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is **open** and **closes on February 28, 2024**.
- Key changes from FY 2023:
  - FY 2024 grant submissions that are **Highly Recommended** and **not** selected, will be **carried forward automatically for consideration under FY 2025** RAISE funding.
  - Changes in requirements for the Project Budget document for the Financial Completeness Review; **now required to list project costs/budget by census tract**.
  - Updated data sources used to determine Urban, Rural, and Areas of Persistent Poverty designations. **The Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CJEST) will be used to identify Historically Disadvantaged Communities**.
  - Provides application deadlines for FY 2025 and FY 2026 RAISE Funds:
    - FY 2025: 1/13/2025
    - FY 2026: 1/13/2026
  - **Additional changes may be made when Congress finishes the FY 2024 appropriations process.**



# FEDERAL COST SHARE

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- The federal share shall not exceed 80% unless the project is in a **rural area**, a **historically disadvantaged community** (HDC), or an **area of persistent poverty** (APP).
- Use the following equation when determining the cost share of the project:

$$\frac{(\text{RAISE Grant Request} + \text{Other Federal Funds})}{\text{Total Project Cost}} = \text{Federal Cost Share}$$

- USDOT does not use an applicant's cost share when evaluating applications on merit. However, it is considered during the evaluation and selection process only to confirm eligibility for urban projects that are not located in an APP or HDC.

# FY2024 RAISE NOFO

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- APP/HDC Set Aside
  - Areas of Persistent Poverty = APP, Historically Disadvantaged Communities = HDC
  - Note: Urban projects located in an APP or HDC are eligible for greater than 80% federal share.
  - USDOT must award at least \$35 million to projects located in APP/HDC.
  - [Areas of Persistent Poverty & Historically Disadvantaged Communities | US Department of Transportation](#)
- Urban/Rural
  - Urban: Urbanized area with a population > 200,000
    - Urban projects have a federal share limit of 80%, with some exceptions.
  - Rural: Urbanized area with population < 200,000 or outside an urbanized area
    - Rural projects are eligible for greater than 80% federal share.
  - USDOT must award exactly 50% of funds to projects located in rural areas and 50% to projects located in urban areas.
  - [RAISE Grant Urban and Rural | US Department of Transportation](#)

# GETTING READY TO APPLY

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- [SAM.GOV](https://sam.gov)

- Check your entity's status.
- Renew your entity's registration.
- Register your entity.
- Obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI).

- [GRANTS.GOV](https://grants.gov)

- Register or confirm your registration.
- Update the Authorized Representative.
- Confirm contact information is correct.
- Submit up to 3 applications.
- You must complete the registration before submitting; this can take 2-4 weeks.

- The FY 24 Notice of Funding Opportunity is **OPEN** and **CLOSES February 28, 2024**.

- Opportunity Number: DTOS59-24-RA-RAISE
- Assistance Listing: 20.933 National Infrastructure Investments

- Apply by 11:59 PM Eastern on **February 28, 2024**

- Submit on grants.gov
- No late applications accepted
- OST plans to conduct outreach regarding the FY 2024 RAISE NOFO in the form of webinars. The schedule will be posted on [RAISE outreach webpage](#).

# APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

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The project information form can be downloaded [here](#).

- Project Description
  - Area of Persistent Poverty, Historically Disadvantaged Community, Urban Areas, etc.
- Project Location
  - Physical project location and area of impact
- Project Budget
  - Sources/Uses/Availability, Contingency Amount, Level of Design, Cost Estimates, Cost Share or Non-Federal Match
- Merit Criteria
  - Demonstrate alignment
- Project Readiness
  - Environmental Risk Assessment, Project Schedule, Technical Capacity Assessment

# PROJECT READINESS

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- Environmental – capital applications only, include narrative for review
- Technical – all applications, include narrative for review
- Financial – all applications, review based on budget section of application
- Reviews assess:
  - Overall reasonable schedule and plan to deliver the project.
  - Ability to meet the obligation deadline of **September 30, 2028**.
  - Ability to complete the project by the expenditure deadline of **September 30, 2033**.
  - Clear plan to mitigate risks of project delivery.

# PROJECT READINESS – ENVIRONMENTAL RISK REVIEW

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## Capital Applications Only

- Ratings: High Risk, Medium Risk, or Low Risk
  - Based on the project's ability to complete all environmental requirements/permits and meet the obligation deadline.
- Project Schedule: Identify all major project milestones and ensure these are reasonable.
- Permits and Approvals: Outline clear plan to complete required approvals and permits such as NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) and other State or local environmental and planning approvals. Provide any completed environmental documents to support.

# PROJECT READINESS – ENVIRONMENTAL RISK REVIEW CONT.

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## Capital Applications Only cont.

- Risk Mitigation: Identify potential risk and outline a mitigation plan.
- Public Engagement: Detail public involvement, particularly for disadvantaged communities where applicable.
- Right-of-Way Acquisition: If applicable, detail right-of-way acquisition plans including a detailed schedule and compensation plan.



# PROJECT READINESS – TECHNICAL CAPACITY REVIEW

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- Ratings: Certain, Somewhat Certain, Uncertain
  - Based on applicant's capacity to successfully deliver the project using information in the application and USDOT Operating Administration knowledge of the applicant's performance.
- Sample characteristics of a strong application for Technical Capacity include:
  - Experience completing projects with similar scope and scale;
  - Feasibility/constructability of specific project;
  - Sufficient resources;
  - Minimal or no ROW acquisition;
  - Or demonstrated understanding and plan to comply with all applicable Federal requirements including but not limited to Buy America, Civil Rights, Americans with Disabilities Act.



# PROJECT READINESS – FINANCIAL COMPLETENESS REVIEW

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- Ratings: Complete, Partially Complete, or Incomplete
  - Based on detailed project budget that identifies all sources of funding, including RAISE funds, other federal funds, and non-federal funds.
- Design Completion: Indicate the basis for the funding estimates (e.g. 30% design).
- Contingency Amount: Indicate the contingency amount in the budget.
- Cost Overruns: Describe a plan to address potential cost overruns even if seeking 100% grant funding.
- Committed Funding: Document through letters of support, STIP/TIP, or other means, that the other federal and/or non-federal funds are committed and secured for the project.
- Any/all non-RAISE funding sources included in a project budget should be secured to receive a rating of “Complete.” USDOT does not consider the amount of non-federal contribution as a selection criterion or a competitiveness factor.

# MERIT CRITERIA RATING

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- For each merit criterion, USDOT will consider where the anticipated benefits are clear, direct, data-driven, and significant, which will result in a rating of high, medium, low, or non-responsive, as described in the rubric in the NOFO.
- The combination of individual criterion ratings will inform one overall rating:
  - Highly recommended
  - Recommended
  - Acceptable
  - Unacceptable

# BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS (BCA)

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- A BCA is a systematic process for identifying, quantifying, and comparing expected economic benefits and costs of a proposed infrastructure project.
  - Provides a useful benchmark from which to evaluate and compare potential transportation investments.
- Capital projects **should** submit a BCA.
- Planning applications **do not need to submit** a BCA.
- A BCA is needed to show a clear understanding of the problem the project is intended to solve and how the project addresses the problem.

# BCA EVALUATION

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- USDOT will consider the relative magnitude of estimated project benefits and costs in its evaluation.
- Assign projects one of two ratings:
  - Positive net benefits (benefits exceed costs)
  - Negative net benefits (costs exceed benefits)
    - Projects will not be selected unless the project has unquantified benefits that demonstrate clear outcomes for underserved communities.
- USDOT economists will review the applicant's BCA to:
  - Examine key assumptions,
  - Correct for any technical errors,
  - Perform sensitivity analysis on key inputs,
  - And consider any unquantified benefits.

# BCA

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- Sources of information:
  - Project planning and engineering documents
  - Industry technical references and analytical tools
  - USDOT BCA Guidance
  - Partners
- Submission should include:
  - Technical memo/discussion describing the analysis, including any unquantified benefits, and documenting sources of information used (assumptions and inputs);
  - And an unlocked spreadsheet (e.g., an Excel workbook) showing the calculations used to produce the estimates of benefits and costs.

# BCA

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- “Dos”

- Factor in any projected changes that would occur even in the absence of the requested project.
- Factor in ongoing routine maintenance.
- Consider the full long-term impacts of the no-build.
- Explain and provide support for the chosen baseline.
- Provide sources and documents for inputs and assumptions.

- “Don’ts”

- Assume that the same (or similar) improvement will be implemented later.
- Use unrealistic assumptions about alternative traffic flows or travel.
- Submit a PDF/screenshot of a spreadsheet.

# BCA RESOURCES

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- [BCA Guidance](#)
- Key Resources
  - Local traffic counts and travel survey data
  - U.S. Census Bureau
  - Project Partners
  - Publicly Available BCA's
- [FRA's Crossing Inventory and Accident Reports](#)
- [NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System](#)
- [Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse](#)

# GRANT TIPS

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- Define the transportation problem clearly and describe how the project is the solution to that problem.
- Clarify that minimal/no residual risk to the environment will occur.
- Present a clear story walking through the transportation challenges and detailing what the local, regional, or national impacts will be.
- Align with the Merit Criteria and include data-driven, reasonable and justifiable outcomes.



# GRANT TIPS CONT.

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- Explicitly consider climate change and racial equity throughout the project life cycle.
- Demonstrate a reasonable schedule and timeline relative to the statutory deadlines in the NOFO.
- Shows there is collective support from owners/partners/community/etc.

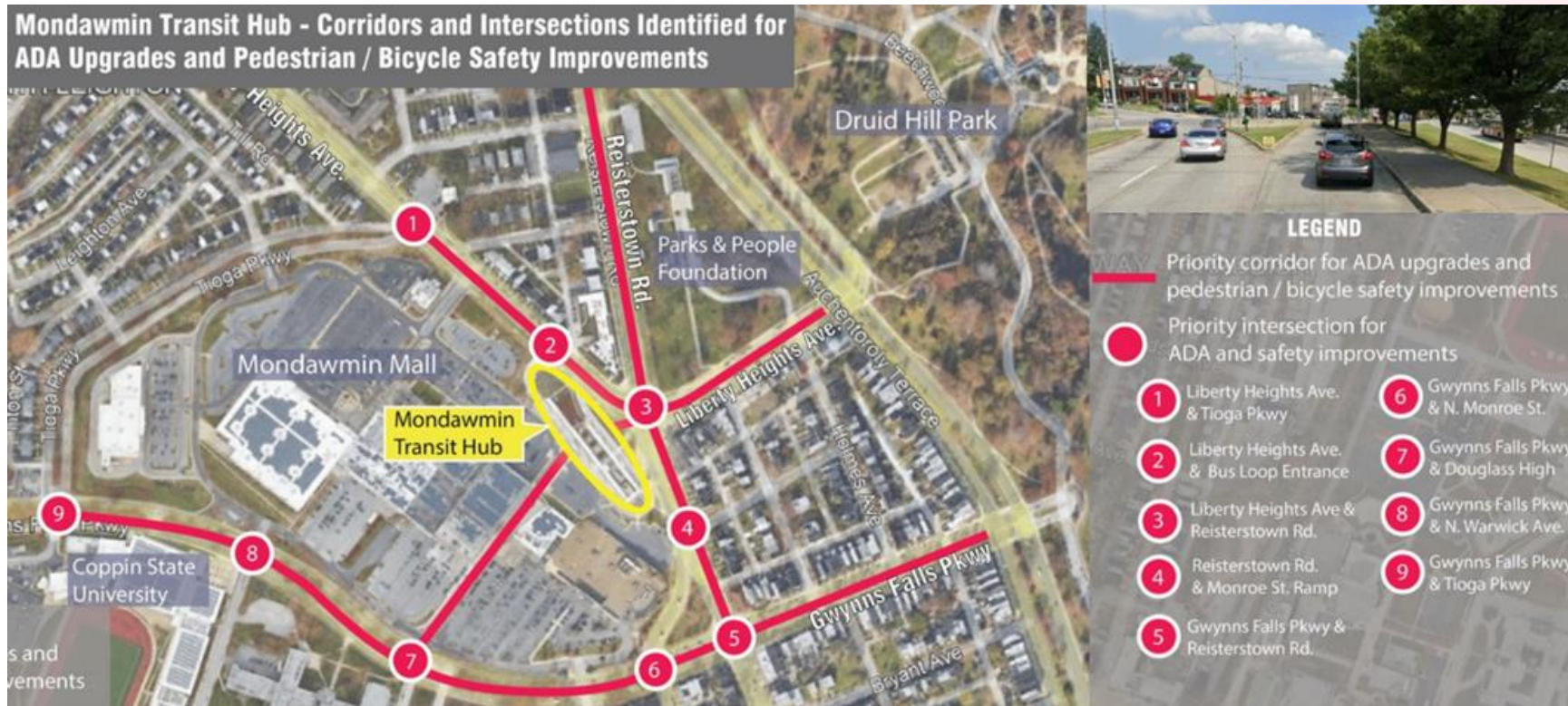
# PITFALLS

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- Ineligible project types or applicants.
- Unclear scope of work.
- Incorrect file format and content.
- Inconsistent project budget, or inclusion of previously incurred costs in the budget.
- Incorrect location designation that affects eligible minimum project size or cost share and results in ineligibility.
- Unrelated scopes of work combined within one application.
- Misalignment with the program criteria.
- Late applications.
- Insufficient supporting information or evidence for merit criteria or project readiness.

# SUCCESS STORIES

- The Mondawmin Transit Hub Project **Award - \$20,000,000**



# USDOT RESOURCES

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- [RAISE FAQ](#)
- RAISE Inbox
  - [raisegrants@dot.gov](mailto:raisegrants@dot.gov)
- [RAISE Webinars](#)
- [Additional Guidance](#)
- [Urban & Rural Guidance](#)
- [APP/HDC Guidance](#)
- [USDOT Navigator](#)
  - Help communities understand the best ways to apply for grants, and plan to for and deliver transformative infrastructure projects.

# MDOT RESOURCES

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- [Video & Webinar Playlist](#)
- [Grant Debrief Notes](#)
- [Federal Discretionary Grants Interactive Map Application](#)
- [Grant Fact Sheet](#)
- [Letter of Support Request](#)



# MDOT IS READY TO SUPPORT AND PARTNER

*Our strategy: To share and coordinate efforts internally and externally as often as possible to maximize grant opportunities for Maryland, through resources and tools.*

- **MDOT FEDERAL DISCRETIONARY GRANTS**

[mdot.maryland.gov/iijagrants](https://mdot.maryland.gov/iijagrants)

- **FEDERAL GRANT INFORMATION**

[mdot.maryland.gov/grants](https://mdot.maryland.gov/grants)

- **FEDERAL GRANTS – LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Visit our websites to learn more about IJA grant opportunities, view projects awarded to MDOT, and explore local resources when applying for federal grants.

## **MDOT Federal Discretionary Grants Newsletter**

This newsletter highlights news, awarded projects, open federal and state opportunities and resources available.

Questions? [MDOTTSOOPCP@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:MDOTTSOOPCP@mdot.maryland.gov)