2019 BUILD Applications FAQs

The following questions pertain to the FY2019 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program.

What is the BUILD Transportation Grant Program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 appropriated $900 million, available for obligation through September 30, 2021, for National Infrastructure Investments. As with previous rounds, funds for the FY2019 BUILD Transportation program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact.

Funding provided under National Infrastructure Investments have supported capital projects which repair bridges or improve infrastructure to a state of good repair; projects that implement safety improvements to reduce fatalities and serious injuries, including improving grade crossings or providing shorter or more direct access to critical health services; projects that connect communities and people to jobs, services, and education; and, projects that anchor economic revitalization and job growth in communities.

When is the application deadline?

The deadline for all application materials is **July 15, 2019 at 8:00 pm EDT**.

Who can receive BUILD Transportation Grants?

Eligible Applicants for BUILD Transportation grants are State, local and tribal governments, including U.S. territories, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other political subdivisions of State or local governments.

Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact, and identify the primary recipient of the award. Each applicant in a joint application must be an Eligible Applicant. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and must be signed by each applicant.

What types of projects are eligible for BUILD Transportation Grant funding?

Eligible projects for BUILD Transportation Grants are capital projects that include, but are not limited to:

- road or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code;
- public transportation projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code;
- passenger and freight rail transportation projects;
- port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure and land ports of entry); and
- intermodal projects.

Please note that research, demonstration, or pilot projects are eligible only if they result in long-term, permanent surface transportation infrastructure that has independent utility as defined in Section C.3.iii of the NOFO. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications only for eligible a

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What has changed in the FY 2019 BUILD Transportation competition?

For 2019 BUILD Transportation grants, the designation for urban and rural projects differs from previous rounds. For more information on this change, see the NOFO or the FAQ on this topic below. Additionally, the FY 2019 Appropriations Act capped the amount of funding awarded to rural and urban projects at 50 percent each.

The merit criteria of the BUILD 2019 program overlap with previous rounds of BUILD and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or "TIGER," discretionary grants. As mandated by the FY 2019 Appropriations Act, the Department will not use additional non-Federal revenue generation or the Federal share as selection criteria in awarding projects.

What is the definition for urban and rural under BUILD?

For the FY 2019 BUILD Transportation Grant Program, a project is designated as urban if it is located within or on the boundary of an Urbanized Area (UA), as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, and that UA had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2010 Census. If a project is not designated as urban, it is designated as rural.

For example, a project located in an Urbanized Area with a population of 150,000 will be designated as rural under the FY 2019 BUILD program. In contrast, a project located in an Urbanized Area with a population of 250,000 will be designated as urban, even if the city or town in which the project is located has a population of 100,000.

For projects that include expenditures in both urban areas and rural areas, the Department will designate the project as urban or rural based on where the majority of project funds will be spent.

How do I determine if my project is urban or rural?

If a project is located within an Urbanized Area (UA) as designated by the U.S. Census, the urban or rural designation under BUILD 2019 is based on the population of that UA. If the UA had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2010 Census, the project will be designated as urban.

A project will be designated as rural if it is located:

- In an UA that had a population less than 200,000 in the 2010 Census
- In a Census designated Urban Cluster
- Outside an UA

To determine if a location is in a Census-Designated UA, please consult Census maps of Urbanized Areas:

> http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ (detailed PDF maps for every UA)
>
> http://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/TIGERweb2010/ (click the layer for urban areas and zoom in to see)

A list of all UAs that had a population over 200,000 in the 2010 Census can be found here:

> https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants/urbanized-areas

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How will the Department divide funds between rural and urban projects?

Not more than 50 percent ($450 million) will be spent on projects located in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Do I need to submit a pre-application to be eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

No. A pre-application is not required to be submitted prior to submitting a final application for the FY2019 round of the BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants program. In lieu of the pre-application, we will be capturing much of the information previously collected there through the "BUILD 2019 Project Information" form available at www.transportation.gov/BUILD.

Where can I submit the Final Application?

Final applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. Access to the "Apply" function will be made available in Grants.Gov by June 3, 2019.

What if I am having technical issues with grants.gov?

Please refer to the following links for technical issues with grants.gov:

Grants.gov Applicant Training

Grants.gov Online User Guide

You can also contact Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. E.D.T.

How will the Department evaluate cost share and matching funds?

The Department will not use Federal share as a selection criterion in awarding projects.

Per the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019, BUILD Transportation grants may be used for up to 80 percent of the costs of projects located in an urban area and up to 100 percent of the costs of a project located in a rural area. For a project located in an urban area, total Federal assistance for a project receiving a BUILD grant may not exceed 80 percent.

Non-Federal financial contributions can include State, local, and private sector funding; or other forms of cost share such right of way contributions or recycled revenue from the competitive sale or lease of publicly owned or operated assets. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, non-Federal cost-share may not be counted as the non-Federal share for both the BUILD Transportation grant and another Federal grant program.

Are planning grants available for the FY2019 BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 allows for the award of funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects. However, applications for BUILD Transportation planning grants will be less competitive than capital grants. While the FY 2019 Appropriations Act allows funding solely for pre-construction activities, the Department will prioritize FY 2019 BUILD Transportation funding for projects that demonstrate the ability to move into the construction phase within the period of obligation. Planning grant applications will be evaluated against the same criteria as capital grant applicatio

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What criteria will be used to evaluate applications for BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants?

The BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants Final Notice of Funding Opportunity outlines the selection criteria in detail. For more information, please view the NOFO.

What is the minimum and maximum grant award for BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grants?

For projects located in urban areas, the minimum award is $5 million. Please note that the minimum total project cost for a project located in an urban area must be $6.25 million to meet match requirements.

For projects located in rural areas, the minimum award is $1 million.

The maximum award for all projects is $25 million. Not more than $90 million can be awarded to a single State.

What is the difference between a joint applicant and a partner?

A joint applicant refers to one or more Eligible Applicants, as described in the NOFO, who submit a single application. Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and must be signed by each applicant. Only an eligible entity may receive and administer BUILD funds upon award, and lead applicants who wish to administer their grants through eligible co-applicants (such as State DOTs) should create those relationships (such as through MOUs) to the extent possible prior to award.

A project partner refers to one or more stakeholders or collaborators that support the project. Project support can include, but is not limited to, help with public engagement or outreach, monetary contributions, planning, or public alignment with project priorities. A project partner need not be an Eligible Applicant.

Can an application contain more than one project component?

Yes, if the components demonstrate a strong relationship or connection between them. DOT strongly encourages each applicant to identify in their application the project components that have independent utility, independently align with the selection criteria, and meet NEPA requirements; and DOT encourages each applicant to separately detail the costs and requested BUILD funding for those components, as well as the overall BUILD funding request.

How many applications can I submit?

Applicants may submit a total of three (3) project applications (planning and/or capital) for BUILD Transportation grants. The Department will only review the three most recent submittals prior to the application deadline.

Are Planning Grant applications required to submit a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)?

To the extent that applicants can describe the costs and benefits associated with planning grant projects, that information should be included in the application narrative. However, DOT is sensitive to the fact that different applicants have different resource constraints, and that complex forecasts and detailed cost

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benefit analyses are not always possible with projects in the early feasibility stages of the planning process. As such, all eligible applications will be reviewed by the technical evaluation team, regardless of whether a BCA is submitted

If you intend to demonstrate independent utility on project components, is a BCA needed for each component or only for the entire project?

While USDOT allows for packages of projects to be included in a single grant application, each component of such package with independent utility should be evaluated separately, with its own BCA. The costs and benefits of each individual component may also be aggregated to provide a summary estimate of net benefits for the entire package. Where projects within a package may be expected to also have collective benefits that are larger than the sum of the benefits of the individual project components, applicants should clearly explain why this would be the case and provide any supporting analyses to that effect. DOT recognizes the technical challenges in preparing a BCA and encourages applicants to do their best in demonstrating the anticipated benefits and estimated costs of the entire project as well as appropriate components.

Are freight and transit projects competitive in BUILD Transportation?

The Department anticipates that in addition to meeting statutory requirements, the BUILD Transportation program's focus on safety, state of good repair, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and quality of life, means that freight and transit projects will be competitive.

Is capital equipment or rolling stock eligible for BUILD Transportation funds?

Yes, equipment is eligible, but Federal requirements apply to the use of any grant funding. Please see section F.2. of the BUILD Transportation NOFO for information on Federal requirements. However, BUILD Transportation grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations, or vehicles that are exempt from Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards or Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

What broadband activities are eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

If construction of the transportation project will allow concurrent installation of fiber or other broadband deployment as an essential service, the applicant should describe those activities and how they support quality of life. The Department will consider that information when evaluating the project's alignment with the quality of life merit criterion. Unless the concurrent activities support transportation, they will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Are eligible projects allowed to apply to both the BUILD Transportation and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) programs?

Applications for INFRA small project funding is highly competitive. Projects that meet the minimum eligibility requirements for both programs may submit applications to both programs, but must submit separate applications that independently address how the project satisfies applicable selection criteria for the relevant grant program.

What border or port security activities are eligible for a BUILD Transportation Grant?

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If the construction of the transportation project will contribute to a state of good repair of transportation infrastructure that supports border or port security the applicant should describe how. The Department will consider that information when evaluating the project's alignment with the state of good repair selection criterion. Unless border security activities support surface transportation and are otherwise eligible under BUILD, they will not be eligible for reimbursement. Improvements to Federally owned facilities are ineligible under the FY 2019 BUILD program.

Are transportation projects that are located at a port or near the border but *without* any security elements still eligible?

Yes, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C.3.i. of the NOFO.

What types of airport projects are eligible for BUILD Grants?

As referenced in the NOFO, intermodal projects located at airport facilities are eligible for BUILD Transportation grants. Examples of eligible projects at airports include transit connections to airports, joint use facilities on airport property that serve additional uses (such as transit connections, intermodal freight transfer facilities, and rail extensions), as well as publicly-accessible roads into, out of, and through airport properties.

Examples of *ineligible* airport projects include runways, taxiways, towers, terminals, gates, and people movers within airports.

How do we get feedback on previous BUILD [or TIGER] Transportation grant submissions to improve chances of success?

The Department strives to provide as much information as possible to assist applicants with the application process. The Department will not review applications in advance, but Department staff are available for technical questions and assistance. To efficiently use Department resources, the Department will prioritize interactions with applicants who have not already received a debrief on the BUILD 2018 applications. BUILD program staff will address questions to BUILDgrants@dot.gov throughout the application period. Department staff will make reasonable efforts to schedule meetings on projects through [insert 45 days after publication]. After that date, Department staff will schedule meetings only to the extent possible and consistent with timely completion of other activities.

How does the evaluation process work?

First, technical evaluation teams made up of Departmental staff will determine whether projects satisfy statutory requirements and rate how well they address the selection criteria outlined in the NOFO. Then, the project readiness and economic analysis teams also made up of Departmental staff evaluate the projects that most align with selection criteria on whether they are reasonably expected to being construction in a timely manner and the project cost effectiveness, respectively. A Senior Review Team, comprising Departmental leadership, considers the analysis to determine which projects to advance to the Secretary for consideration. The Secretary will ultimately make the final selection for awards, consistent with the statutory requirements for BUILD Transportation Grants and the selection criteria in the NOFO.

When will awards be made?

Under the FY 2019 Appropriations Act, the Department must make awards by November 12, 2019.

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What is the difference between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?

The obligation deadline, September 30, 2021, is the date by which a BUILD Transportation award recipient must have a signed and executed grant agreement in place with the DOT. The execution of the grant agreement obligates BUILD Transportation funding for the awarded project. The expenditure deadline of September 30, 2026, is the date by which all BUILD Transportation funding must be expended.

If a consulting firm is hired to help develop a BUILD Transportation grants application and that project is selected for a BUILD Transportation grants award, can that same firm be hired to perform the construction project design and engineering after award?

Under 2 CFR 200.317 and 1201.317, if the recipient of the BUILD Transportation grant is a state, then the recipient must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds, and the answer to this question is dependent on those policies and procedures.

If the recipient is not a state, the answer is yes, the same firm may be hired if necessary competition requirements are satisfied. Per CFR 200.319(a), all procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner that provides full and open competition, eliminates unfair competitive advantage, and ensures objective contractor performance. Project sponsors must avoid creating situations that would unfairly favor the firm that helped develop the BUILD application or preclude other firms from competing. Additionally, the contractor that the project sponsor hires to draft its solicitation for proposals for the construction project design and engineering work must be excluded from competing for that procurement.

For the purpose of BUILD Transportation grants, "state" means any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any state agency or instrumentality excluding local governments.

Are BUILD Transportation Grants a lump-sum cash disbursement at the time of award, or are they reimbursement grants? How do reimbursement grants work?

BUILD Transportation Grants are reimbursement grants. The recipient of a grant will not receive a lump-sum cash disbursement at the time of award announcement or obligation of funds. Instead, the recipient must pay project costs as they are incurred and submit to DOT requests for reimbursement. This means that the recipient must have access to sufficient non-BUILD funding sources to manage cash flow associated with the project.

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