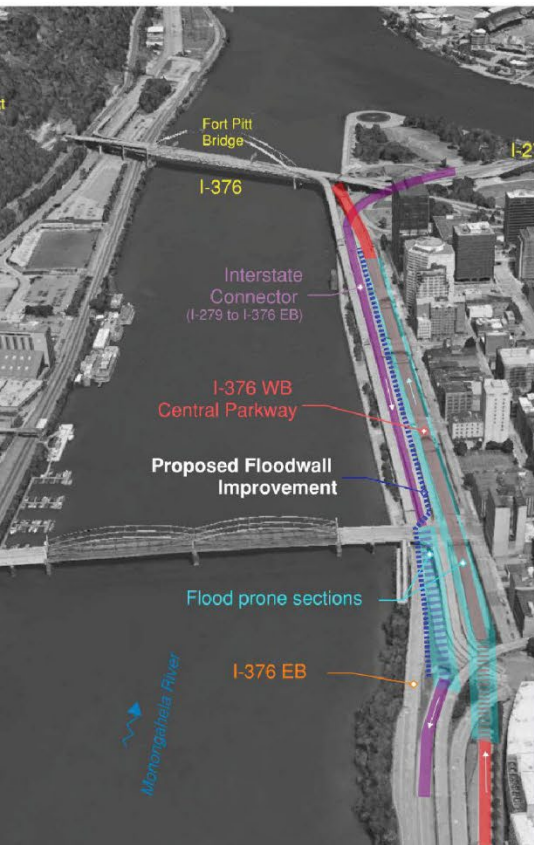




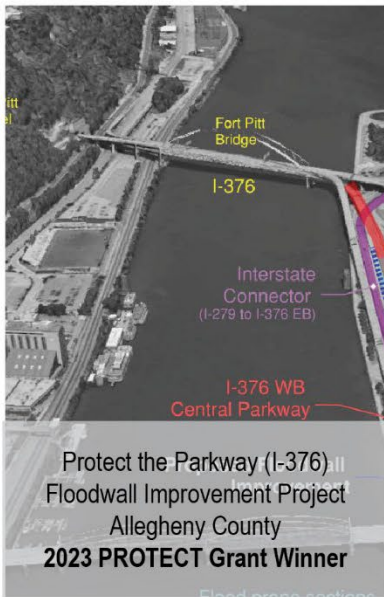
# Pursuing Federal Grant Funding: A Guide for Regional and Local Applicants



On the cover:



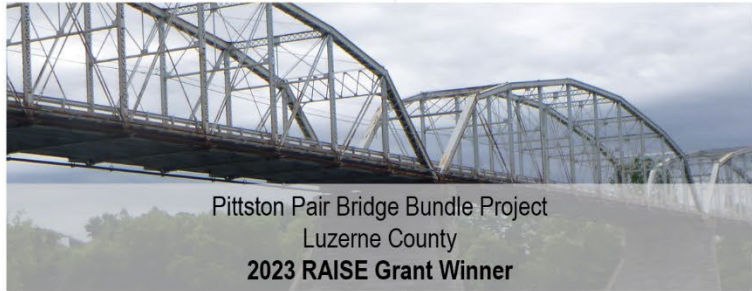
I-83 South Bridge Replacement Project  
Dauphin County  
**2024 Large BIP Grant Winner**



West Newton Historic Bridge Rehabilitation Project  
Westmoreland County  
**2025 RAISE Grant Winner**



Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program  
Statewide  
**2023 WCPP Grant Winner**



Pittston Pair Bridge Bundle Project  
Luzerne County  
**2023 RAISE Grant Winner**

# INTRODUCTION

Federal competitive grant funding can be an essential piece of the funding package to advance much-needed transportation infrastructure projects. However, there is intense competition for every grant dollar. To be competitive, grant applications must be completely compliant, make a compelling case for the subject project as a sound investment of taxpayer dollars, and capture the attention of reviewers who are committed to advancing the goals of the grant program.

PennDOT first issued its *Guide for Developing IIJA Grant Proposals* in 2022 to aid in developing high-quality grant proposals to compete for the discretionary funds made available through the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The guide is periodically updated to capture best practices and lessons learned. This edition, renamed *Pursuing Federal Grant Funding: A Guide for Regional and Local Applicants*, broadens the focus beyond an individual transportation funding law. The principles conveyed apply broadly to most federal grant pursuits.

The guide is organized around five stages of the grant application development process, depicted below. The narrative includes links to tools provided in the appendix as well as external resources that may be of use in developing a grant application and conducting post-submission activities.



# SUMMARY: GRANT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT KEYS TO SUCCESS

## Positioning for Success (Pre-NOFO Activities)

- Regularly monitor grant websites and analyze potential funding sources.....[Link](#)
- Evaluate grant eligibility, criteria, and requirements; project readiness and funding strategies; and available staff and consultant resources .....[Link](#)
- Solidify partnerships and build stakeholder support for securing project funding .....[Link](#)
- Establish a tentative grant strategy.....[Link](#)

## Organizing the Effort (Post-NOFO Activities)

- Confirm Go/No-Go decision and approach .....[Link](#)
- Mobilize the grant pursuit team .....[Link](#)
- Refine and implement the grant strategy.....[Link](#)
- Proactively manage the schedule .....[Link](#)

## Soliciting Letters of Support

- Follow up with stakeholders and seek further contacts .....[Link](#)
- Actively manage the Letters of Support (LOS) process.....[Link](#)

## Making the Case

- Adhere to the NOFO .....[Link](#)
- Develop a strong BCA (if required).....[Link](#)
- Quantify and visualize.....[Link](#)
- Tell a compelling story .....[Link](#)
- Build confidence in successful project delivery .....[Link](#)
- Finalize and submit the grant application.....[Link](#)

## Performing Post-Submission Activities

- Examine why the project was—or was not—selected.....[Link](#)
- Recontact stakeholders to thank them for their support.....[Link](#)
- Properly administer grant funds.....[Link](#)

# GRANT APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT TIPS

## Positioning for Success (Pre-NOFO Activities)

A successful grant pursuit begins well in advance of the funding agency issuing the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

### Regularly monitor grant websites and analyze potential funding sources

- Become familiar with how to access upcoming and posted federal grant opportunities.
- Make use of USDOT Navigator and other online resources.
- Develop an annual schedule for grant applications with the approximate timelines for each grant cycle.
- Review active project lists and match with potential grant programs projected to be active over a long-term planning horizon. Update the list periodically (e.g., quarterly) to keep opportunities in view on a multi-year rolling basis.

## RESOURCES

- The PennDOT website offers several useful online resources for accessing federal information (including the USDOT Navigator) and state information regarding the many discretionary grant programs and resources available through IJA:

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Pages/IJA.aspx>

**Evaluate grant eligibility, criteria, and requirements; project readiness and funding strategies; and available staff and consultant resources**

- Scrutinize the most recent NOFO for the grant program of interest to fully understand:
  - a. Applicant and project eligibility
  - b. Selection criteria and overarching grant program purpose
  - c. Local match and reimbursement implications
  - d. All submission requirements and application components
  - e. Typical grant cycles and deadlines
- Determine which projects meeting the necessary criteria may be at the right phase for seeking grant funding, which may be the highest priority based on locally or regionally defined needs, and which may be the best fit for federal funding versus other types of local or state funding.
- Recognize that developing a competitive federal grant application is a major undertaking. Be realistic about the level of effort and resources needed to submit a competitive application for a major federal grant program.
- Begin to match priority projects with the most promising grant programs.

## **Solidify partnerships and build stakeholder support for securing project funding**

- If the grant pursuit or project delivery would involve formal partnerships with other entities (e.g., a submission by adjoining municipalities), ensure that all entities meet eligibility requirements and understand and agree to their obligations during the grant application phase and through grant administration and project completion. Ensure a shared understanding of the principles of reimbursement grants.
- Communicate with other relevant government entities to avoid duplicate or conflicting grant submissions. Further, ensure shared awareness and seek opportunities for mutual support and collaboration among local and regional partners.
- Communicate with the appropriate PennDOT District Office if the proposed project impacts a State Route.
- Understand how your project may or may not align with larger-scale priorities and plans (i.e., those of higher-level entities).
- Reconnect with stakeholders and likely project champions to bring them up to speed on the proposed project and its benefits to the community and their organization. This effort lays the groundwork for subsequent requests for letters of support (LOS).
- Think about the big picture—not transportation only, but how a grant award could influence bigger outcomes, such as economic and community development, or regional freight movement. Understand that grants are awarded in large part for the ripple effects of investment.

## **Establish a tentative grant strategy**

- Decide upon the project, scope, and major partners for the upcoming target grant cycle.
- Budget for and secure non-federal matching funds, as needed.
- Identify and begin to assemble the data needed for the submission—including an updated, defensible cost estimate and the target amount of the grant request.
- If applicable, ensure that the project is listed or can be listed on all necessary plans, such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization/Rural Planning Organization (MPO/RPO) regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Identify and coordinate with all technical experts with project-specific knowledge to make them aware of the upcoming submission and their vital role as an information source.
- Assemble a tentative grant application production team, including consultants if possible, to augment staff time and expertise.

## **Organizing the Effort (Post-NOFO Activities)**

Having laid the groundwork for the grant pursuit, take immediate action upon release of the NOFO for the current funding round.

### **Confirm Go/No-Go decision and approach**

- Study every detail of the NOFO, particularly noting any changes since the previous funding round.
- Make a formal go/no-go decision on the grant pursuit.
- Confirm or modify project partners, strategy, support, etc.

## Mobilize the grant pursuit team

- Confirm the availability and roles of the core team responsible for producing the grant submission. Roles typically include:
  - Application Manager – Leads the overall completion of a high-quality competitive grant application.
  - Section Authors – Write portions of the application narrative.
  - BCA Lead – Oversees development of a compliant and defensible benefit-cost analysis (BCA), if required.
  - Support Letter Coordinator – Manages the complete letters of support (LOS) process.
  - Editor – Review and revises drafts in close coordination with the Application Manager to ensure a readable, complete, consistent, and compelling application.
  - Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) – Confirms that all NOFO requirements have been satisfied and that all statements are substantiated and plausible.

For large grant pursuits with consultant support, these roles will typically be held by separate individuals. In other instances, there may be one Grants Coordinator who wears many hats and completes most of the work, with technical assistance from one or two technical or project experts.

- Establish an organized electronic file and folder system on a shared drive to foster orderly collaboration. Ensure all contributors have appropriate access.
- Conduct a kick-off meeting—ideally within a week of NOFO release—convening the full roster of individuals who will be leading or contributing to grant application development and submission. Make introductions, confirm roles and communication protocols, identify general data and information needs, discuss big-picture strategy and the overall development approach.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Roles Checklist](#)
- [Sample Folder Structure](#)
- [Sample Work Group Meeting Agenda](#)

## Refine and implement the grant strategy

- Identify key “win themes” that advance the grant program’s goals and the current administration’s priorities. Aim to weave these themes consistently throughout the grant application.
- Develop a high-level application outline in accordance with the NOFO and list the information required in each section. Include notes on selection criteria.
- Assign drafting responsibility for each element of the application.
- Identify and gather data needed for the BCA and to quantify statements in the narrative, including in support of the win themes.
  - Consider measures of all the modal elements associated with the project.
  - Coordinate data needs and analysis with the relevant MPO/RPO.
  - Appropriate data types may include:
    - Current and historical internal data.
    - Current and historical external data (provide lead time for external agencies).
    - Travel demand modeling and GIS data.
    - Mobile device data and Direct-from-Vehicle data (e.g., StreetLight Data, Wejo).
    - “Big data” from third-party vendors.
  - Check the NOFO for data that may need to be collected post-award to demonstrate the results of the project.
- Brainstorm a list of maps, photos, and graphics that would advance a compelling narrative. Consider partner organizations that may be a good source of visuals or other essential information. Maps should be drafted as early as reasonably possible to ensure data completeness and accuracy. Consider the GIS resources of the various organizations involved to determine what data layers might help in telling the story of the proposed project’s merit.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Sample Maps](#)
- [Sample Graphics](#)
- [Sample Data](#)
- [Sample Appendices](#)

- Validate the project cost estimate, anticipating realistic expenditures needed throughout the project's implementation. Determine the exact amount of the grant request and finalize the rest of the funding package.

### **Proactively manage the schedule**

- Recognize that the time between the NOFO announcement and the submission deadline will disappear rapidly. Plan to gain traction immediately.
- Develop a "workback schedule," setting milestones backward from the submission date. Develop the first full draft early to accommodate several iterations of reviews and revisions.
- Depending on the size of the grant pursuit team, establish a regular meeting schedule (at least weekly). Make assignments at each meeting to help ensure steady progress; use a detailed agenda to follow up on assignments week to week. Communicate proactively and regularly.

## **RESOURCES**

### **TOOLS:**

- [Grant Application Development Summary](#)

## Soliciting Letters of Support

Letters of support (LOS) from a broad range of stakeholders are an essential component of most grant applications. They enable grant reviewers to understand the need for and importance of the project from diverse perspectives, and they help showcase how the project would further the overall goals of the grant program. The number of letters secured is less important than the range of community support demonstrated.

### Follow up with stakeholders and seek further contacts

- Develop a spreadsheet for tracking LOS requests with columns for organization, category (e.g., local government; private sector; education) individual name, contact information, dates of contact, and notes on LOS status.
- Begin to populate the matrix with the names of stakeholders contacted during the preliminary grant strategy stages.
- Contact those individuals (more info next page) and ask for suggestions on additional leaders who might provide meaningful letters of support.
- Consider various agencies, local governments, elected officials, local civic and neighborhood associations, businesses, chambers of commerce, etc.
- Local economic development groups and chambers of commerce may be helpful in engaging other entities, such as private employers, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and community advocates.
- In addition to identifying target support organizations, consider the political implications when seeking support. A given opportunity may be highly visible in the communities affected, and the support requested should be consistent with support organizations' own interests, objectives, and positions.

## Actively manage the Letters of Support (LOS) process

- The Letters of Support Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for the various stakeholders. This ensures that requests for LOS are consistent, and communication is clear throughout the grant process.
- Develop a template LOS that stakeholders may use as a model if desired. Include:
  - Standardized project name and grant program name.
  - Any identifiers in the NOFO that are mandatory (e.g., unique number that is provided when the application is opened in the grant portal).
  - Correct official and address of grantor agency (e.g., U.S. Secretary of Transportation).
  - How the grant project satisfies the criteria of the NOFO.
  - How the grant project benefits the community, including the individual stakeholders and their constituents.
- Transmit the template with information including:
  - A one-page summary of the project and its benefits. Emphasize the value and importance of the project beyond its direct transportation benefits, in line with the grant program's goals and selection criteria. Introduce the grant program, who is submitting the grant application, and why grant funding is needed.
  - What exactly you are requesting from the stakeholder, and why. Encourage stakeholders to use the template as a guide but to customize their letter, providing their own perspective on the project.
  - When letters of support are due (should be well in advance of the grant deadline), and how to submit to the LOS Coordinator.
  - Whom to contact with any questions.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Sample Request for LOS](#)
- [Sample LOS](#)

- Other relevant details. For example, letters should be submitted on the stakeholder organization's letterhead.
  - Make it as easy as possible for stakeholders to submit a meaningful letter of support.
- Consider asking related entities to sign a single LOS, which may demonstrate coordinated and dedicated support.
- Track LOS status and follow up with stakeholders as the deadline approaches.
- If appropriate, enlist the assistance of recognized organizations to help make the LOS requests (e.g., chambers, associations).

## **Making the Case**

The grant application must have a compelling, well-written narrative, telling a persuasive story—backed up by meaningful community support, data, and visuals—as to why grant funding will make possible a project with far-reaching impacts that will clearly advance the goals of the grant program and be a worthy investment of public funding.

### **Adhere to the NOFO**

- Understand that a grant application is foremost an exercise in following directions and will be evaluated against the NOFO in exacting detail.
- Follow the NOFO structure for your application and be clear and complete with all responses. Make it easy for reviewers to verify that your application is complete and compliant.
- Note that the volume of grant applications will far exceed available funding. Reviewers must look for reasons to reject applications. Even an otherwise outstanding grant application will be rejected if it does not meet all requirements.
- Focus first on developing a complete and compliant application, then seek ways to enhance the submittal.

## Develop a strong BCA (if required)

- If the grant program requires a benefit-cost analysis (BCA), it must be conducted in accordance with the latest BCA methodology guidance from USDOT, which is generally updated annually.
- Consider outside expert assistance for BCA development and independent QA/QC. BCAs are complex, specialized analyses that must be flawlessly developed.
- Study the NOFO for instructions on the required BCA components. A BCA typically comprises two parts that must be mutually supportive: an Excel workbook showing detailed calculations, and the narrative summary of the BCA approach and results.
- The framing of the BCA should consider the entire range of quantifiable benefits, including those related to the immediate community and to the region, state, and nation (in accordance with federal BCA guidance). Most NOFOs also invite a discussion of unquantifiable benefits in the BCA narrative.
- Recognize that optimizing the various data is essential to telling a compelling story and achieving a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) that indicates a competitive return on potential public investment.
- However, the BCA must be defensible and conservative—the USDOT will scrutinize it. An unrealistic or improperly developed BCA can disqualify an application.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [BCA Checklist](#)

### EXTERNAL RESOURCES:

- [BCA Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs:](#)

<https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance-discretionary-grant-programs-0>

## Quantify and visualize

- Weave data generated by the BCA into the narrative sections as appropriate to help quantify statements and to ensure consistency among all sections of the grant submission.
- Review an early draft of the grant application and identify all statements that could/should be quantified, sourced, or otherwise backed up with verifiable facts. Where appropriate, include footnotes with links to sources so reviewers can easily validate claims.
- Maps, photos, and charts can be highly effective in helping quantify and communicate points made in the narrative. For example, a map showing the proximity of an elementary school to a project, photos of rusted-through bridge members from the most recent bridge inspection report, or a graph of the increase in traffic volume over the past decade can help reviewers “see” the problem that the proposed project aims to solve. Being mindful of page limits, look for opportunities to show the reader current conditions and planned improvements rather than relying solely on narrative description.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Generalized Data Types](#)

## Tell a compelling story

- Grant applications must rigidly adhere to the NOFO, and yet winning grants manage to stand out from the very crowded field and tell a story about transportation users.
- Work to understand not only the engineering need for the project, but also how it will affect the surrounding community. Look for personal stories and perspectives that help make the need for the project real and help reviewers relate to the users of the infrastructure.
- Use the network of stakeholders to help in crafting a persuasive case about the need for and benefits of the proposed project, including and beyond infrastructure improvement. For example, the local transit provider may know of frequent riders who could make meaningful statements about their dependence on transit for work or medical appointments and the impact a potential bridge closure and change in bus routes would have on their daily life. The chamber of commerce may direct you to local business owners who depend upon a walkable Main Street for pedestrian traffic at their shops.
- Excerpts from letters of support can be effective as pull quotes throughout the application, adding more voices and helping to back up statements on needs or project benefits that can't easily be measured.
- Revisit the win themes—such as economic development, freight movement, and safety—that align with the overall objectives of the grant program and ensure they are effectively and consistently woven throughout the application. Where at all possible, back up such claims with hard data, and humanize them with real-world stories and community viewpoints.

## Build confidence in successful project delivery

In accordance with the NOFO and as appropriate for the project, address the following to provide the grantor agency with confidence that the project will be successfully completed:

- Demonstrate the organization’s experience and capability to deliver the project.
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of those who will be involved in executing the project and administering the grant funding.
- Provide details on stakeholder coordination, including the previous rounds of public and stakeholder involvement that demonstrate widespread support for the project and low risk of public opposition, as well as coordination that will be conducted during the grant-funded portion of the project.
- Demonstrate that there is a well-defined plan for project delivery that clearly lays out project readiness and feasibility.
- Demonstrate that the project execution will align with the goals of the grant program (e.g., sustainability, innovation, job creation, etc.).
- Establish and describe milestones and performance metrics to track the progress and outcomes of the project execution.
- Identify and describe how the project execution will mitigate potential risks to schedule, budget, etc. It is better to acknowledge and demonstrate a plan to mitigate specific risks than to downplay project risks.
- Describe how budget and other resources will be managed and how any unavoidable cost overruns would be handled.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Project Delivery/Grant Management Checklist](#)

## Finalize and submit the grant application

- Create an attractive cover page, including photos and pertinent information, such as the:
  - Name and location of project
  - Funding program and opportunity number
  - Application type
  - Primary contact
- Each separately submitted section should have a matching cover clearly labeled with the section name (e.g., Project Narrative).
- Consider what is appropriate for inclusion in appendices, such as:
  - LOS
  - Data/information gathered through the process that supports the narrative and approach
  - Maps and data sets
  - Links to data platforms to facilitate access to and the exchange of larger files
- Schedule enough time to allow for review and revision of the full grant application, considering technical accuracy, big-picture grant strategy, and general readability and visual clarity—as well as straightforward proofreading.
- Revisit the NOFO instructions and scoring criteria and ensure that the narrative is clearly responsive to all NOFO requirements for every section and subsection and can realistically receive high scores in each section.
- Well in advance of the deadline, discuss appropriate coordination of the submission, according to the steps outlined in the NOFO. Federal grant applications usually must be uploaded via grants.gov by an authorized user.
- Confirm all elements are completed and ready for uploading.
- Plan to submit the application at least 24 hours prior to the deadline, in case of technical difficulties uploading files or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Inform the team of the successful submission, and thank them for their work on the grant application.

## Performing Post-Submission Activities

A successful grant application is just the beginning. If the project is selected for award, the grant sponsor is responsible for meeting specific federal grant management obligations in addition to the usual federal, state, and local requirements associated with transportation planning, design, and construction.

If the application was not selected, it is important to explore why the grant application may have been rejected, as a means for identifying a better approach to resubmission and new opportunities.

### Examine why the project was—or was not—selected

- Regardless of the outcome, assess the grant development process through an After-Action Review (AAR) among team members to capture best practices and lessons learned. Aim to discuss the effort within a week of submission while memories are fresh.
- If not selected:
  - Request a debrief from grant agency staff to clarify why the project was not selected and discuss factors that could help make the project more competitive for future applications.
  - Discuss the agency debrief results with the grant pursuit team as a learning opportunity.

### Recontact stakeholders to thank them for their support

- In the week following submission, provide a personal thank you to stakeholders who provided letters or other support.
- Later, when notified of the outcome of the application, either share the good news with project champions and stakeholders or let them know of the intent to pursue other options for advancing the project, including future grant submissions, as appropriate.

## RESOURCES

### TOOLS:

- [Questions to Guide the AAR](#)
- [Grant Application After Action Review Form](#)

## **Properly administer grant funds**

- Once awarded, implement strategies for managing the grant to ensure complete compliance with grant administration requirements.
- Manage subrecipients and reporting.
- Understand audit requirements, especially federal audits.

# APPENDIX

## Positioning for Success

### Sample Work Group Meeting Agenda

- Project Overview
- Team (Work-Group Composition)
  - Roles and responsibilities
- Schedule and Milestone Reviews
  - NOFO requirements review and facilitated walk-through
- Grant Proposal Strategy
  - Data available and data needed
  - Mapping
  - Win themes
  - BCA
  - Critical support—including (but not limited) to LOS
  - Communication, document sharing, collaborative platform
  - Other (may add other items to this list)
- Scheduling Team/Work-Group Meetings in Line with Schedule
- Other

## Organizing the Effort

### Roles Checklist

The following list of potential roles is intended to be fairly comprehensive, recognizing that involvement will be dictated by the specifics of the opportunity. The list may serve best as a means of ensuring that no valuable player has been overlooked rather than as a set of required roles.

- **Grant-Development Activities**
  - Oversight (QA/QC) – consultants in a purely oversight role
  - Consultants in a development role
  - Required disciplines
  - Technical/Engineering expertise
  - Staffing (internal and external) and timing commitments
  - Program Center Contract Management Unit
  - Editorial and graphics
  - Benefit-cost analysis
- **Expert Support** (as required by grants)
  - Planners
  - Engineers
  - Environmental specialists
  - Economists (e.g., benefit-cost analysis)
  - Writers/Editors
  - Graphics specialists
  - GIS
  - QA/QC
- **External Stakeholders/Advisory**
  - MPO/RPO
  - Local development districts
  - Local governments
  - Local government associations
  - Transit agencies
  - Airport and port authorities
  - Freight rail entities
  - Amtrak
  - Chambers of commerce
  - Employers/industry
  - Workforce development boards
  - Economic development agencies

- **General** (Depending on the project, the following entities may be able to strengthen the approach by identifying benefits and outcomes for their respective communities and constituencies.)
  - Public/Private nonprofit beneficiaries in the project area, including educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and major employers
  - Other supportive project champions/stakeholders

## Grant Application Development Summary

<b>NOFO:</b>	
Project Name:	
Owner:	
Key Stakeholders:	
Brief Description:	
<b>Grant Application “Workback” Schedule</b>	
<b>Key Step</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Go/No-Go Decision (If Go, proceed with summary)	
Due Date and Time	
Final Draft Application QA/QC	
Final Draft Application Review	
Draft Application QA/QC (Draft with BCA and forms completed)	
Draft Application Review	
Annotated Outline Review	
Annotated Outline	
Data Collection Requests with Deadlines	
LOS Requests with Deadlines	
Outline	
<b>Team Roles</b>	
Application Manager	
Section Authors	
BCA Lead	
Support Letter Coordinator	
Editor	
QA/QC	

## Sample Application Cover Page

**PA Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Strategic Plan and Analytical Tools**

**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**FY 2022-2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program**  
Funding Opportunity Number: 693JJ323NF00011

Application Type: Non Construction  
Location: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Area Type: Urban/Rural, Statewide  
Amount Requested: \$840,000

## Sample Section Cover Page

**Protect the Parkway (I-376) Floodwall Improvement Project**  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

**PROJECT NARRATIVE**

**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

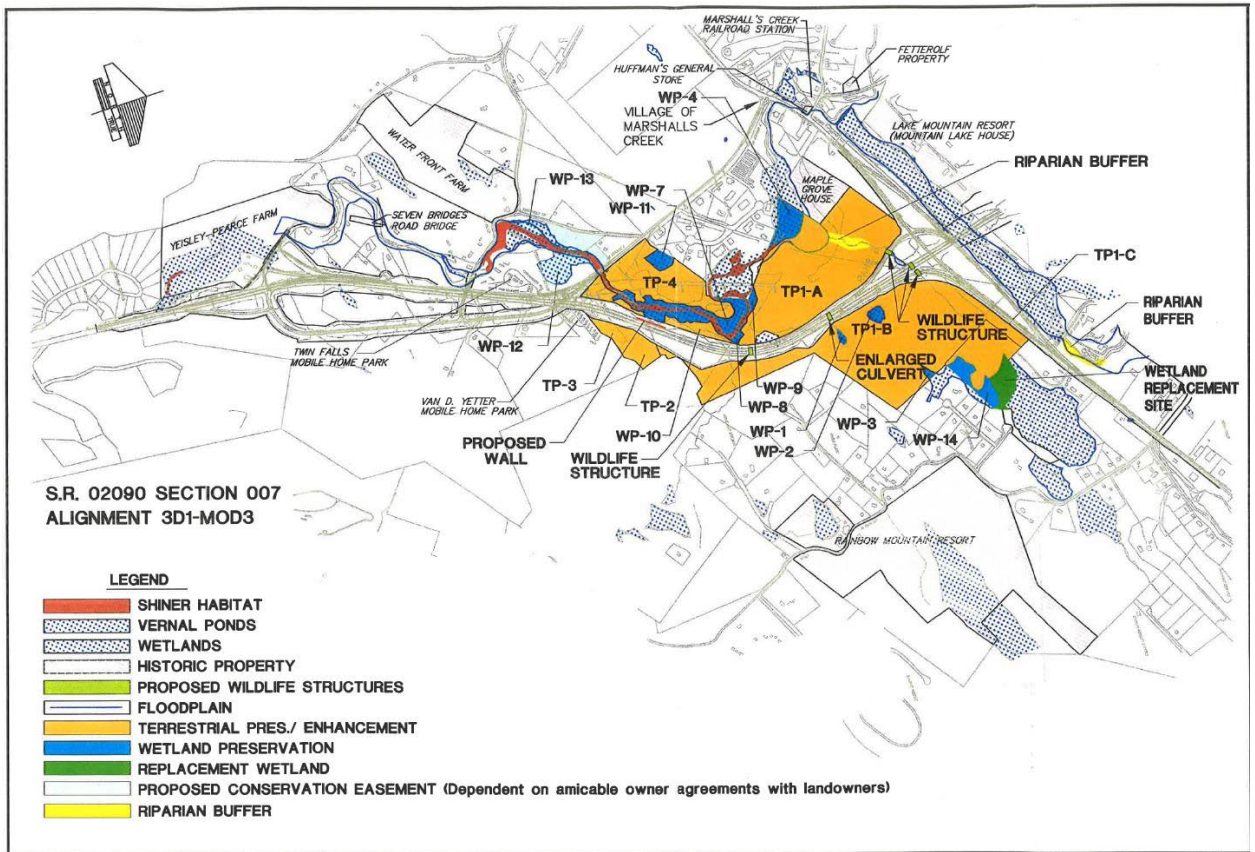
**2023 PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program Resilience Improvement Grant Application**  
August 18, 2023

## **Sample Folder Structure**

The folders listed below may be useful for organizing grant information. Setting up these folders in a shared environment will help make grant information easily accessible to all who will work on the application. Additional folders and subfolders can be added as the application develops.

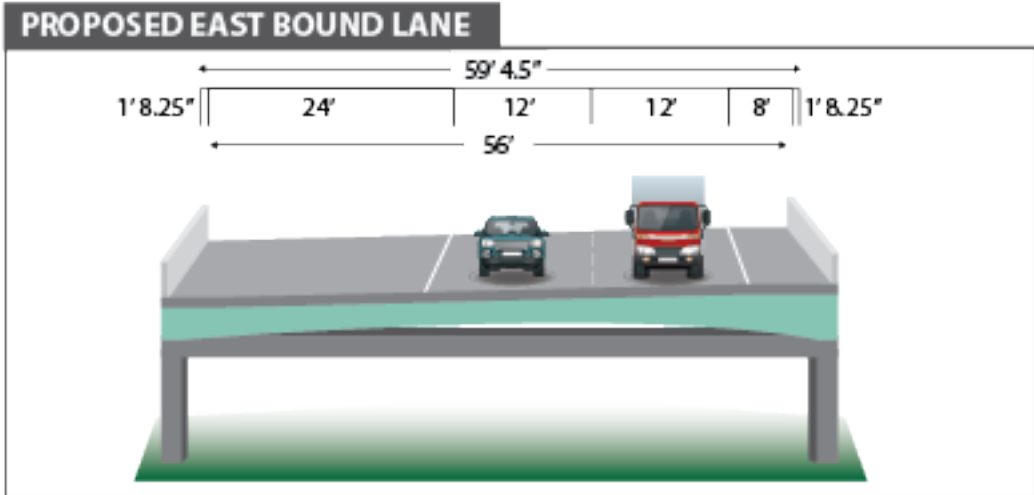
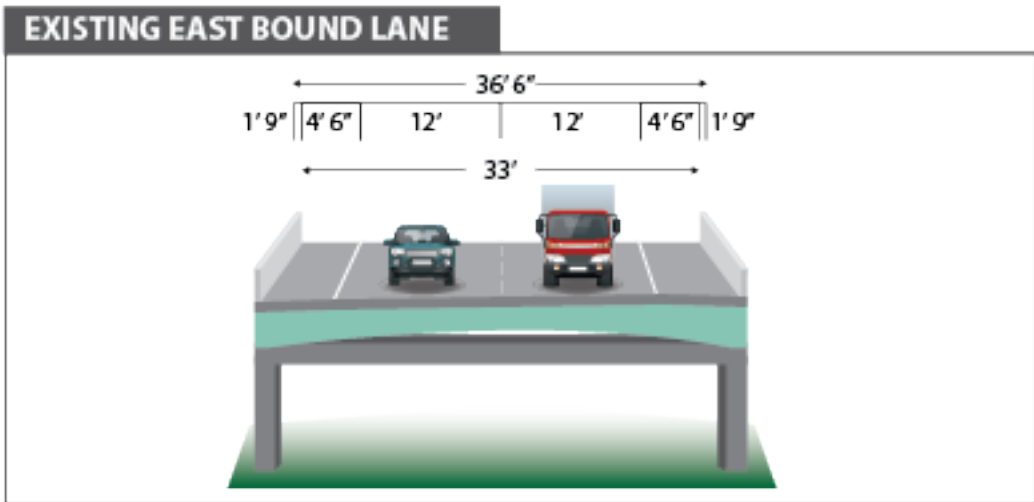
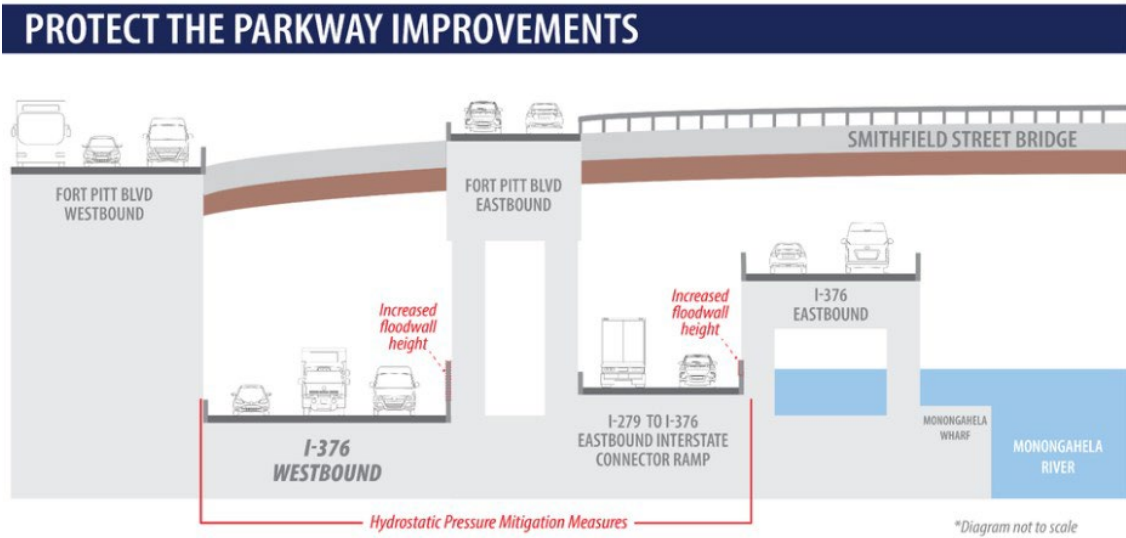
- Background Materials and Data
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Drafts
- Final Deliverables for Upload
- LOS
- Maps and Visuals
- Meetings
- NOFO and Related Guidance

# Sample Maps





Sample Graphics



# Sample Data

BY: NAL DATE: 2/27/2019  
 CHKD BY: JEB DATE: 2/27/2019

**FIGURE 3.3  
 DESIGN CRITERIA MATRIX**

1

MPMS NO. 90021  
 SR: 80 SECTION: 365 COUNTY: Clarion

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION: I-80 Bridge Replacement Over Canoe Creek and Tippecanoe Road

NHS? (Y / N) Yes STRAHNET? (Y / N) Yes

3 DESIGN DESIGNATION  
 SR I-80 Eastbound  
 DESIGN CRITERIA New Construction / Reconstruction  
 AREA SYSTEM (Urban / Rural) Rural  
 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION Interstates/Freeways  
 ROADWAY TYPOLOGY Limited Access Freeway, Rural Interstate  
 TOPOGRAPHY Rolling  
 REMARKS \_\_\_\_\_

4 TRAFFIC DATA  
 OPENING YEAR ADT (Average Daily Traffic) 14994 (2025)  
 DESIGN YEAR ADT (Average Daily Traffic) 22456  
 DESIGN YEAR (for Design Year ADT) 2045  
 DHV (Design Hourly Volume) 1572  
 D (Directional Distribution) 53%  
 T (Truck Percentage) 41%

5 CRITERIA*	LOCATION (ENTIRE PROJECT OR BY STATION)	EXISTING VALUE	REQUIRED VALUE	PROPOSED VALUE	CRITERIA MET?	SOURCE OF DESIGN CRITERIA (AASHTO or DM-2 Reference)	REMARKS (NOTE ANY DESIGN EXCEPTIONS)	
Design Speed	Entire Project	70 mph	75 mph	75 mph	Yes	DM-2	70 mph Posted Speed. 75 mph Design Speed selected based on DM2, 2.9.B	
Lane Width	Entire Project	12'	12'	12'	Yes	DM-2		
Shoulder Width	Entire Project	10'-0" Right, 4'-0" Paved Left	12'-0" Right, 8'-0" Left	12'-0" Right, 8'-0" Left	Yes	DM-2	DDHV (Trucks) > 250, therefore 12'-0" shoulder is required	
Minimum Bridge Width	Entire Project	33'	Lane Widths Plus Shoulders Each Side	44'	Yes	DM-2	44' required. Proposed structure width will be evaluated for future maintenance considerations.	
Minimum Horizontal Radius	Entire Project	1910'	2210'	2210'	Yes	AASHTO		
Maximum Superelevation Rate	Entire Project	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	Yes	DM-2		
Vertical Grade	Minimum	Entire Project	1.00%	0.50%	3.00%	Yes	DM-2	
	Maximum	Entire Project	3.80%	4.00%	3.80%	Yes	AASHTO	
Minimum Stopping Sight Distance (SSD/HLSD) (vertical and horizontal)	Entire Project	820'	820'	1444'	Yes	AASHTO		
Minimum Intersection Sight Distance (ISD)	Entire Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	AASHTO	Limited Access Facility - Intersection Sight Distance is not applicable.	
Minimum Cross Slope	Entire Project	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	Yes	DM-2		
Minimum Vertical Clearance	Entire Project	Exceeds 14'-8"	14'-8"	110'	Yes	DM-2	Over SR 4005 (Rural Minor Collector)	

\* FHWA has established thirteen (13) controlling criteria requiring formal approval of design exceptions. Refer to Publication 10X, Design Manual Part 1X, Appendix P for more information.

6 Any pedestrian and bicycle concerns / needs? Explain. N/A - Limited Access Facility  
 Any ADA compliance issues? Explain. N/A - Limited Access Facility  
 Any transit issues? Explain. None  
 Any additional design issues? Explain. None

## Sample Appendices

As appropriate, the following items may be included as appendices to the grant application (if not already part of the submission per the NOFO):

- Maintenance Commitment Letter
- Costs
- BCA
- Maps and Data Sets
- Project Schedule
- Letters of Commitment
- Other LOS
- Letter of Administration (demonstrating proactive coordination with PennDOT or the applicable pass-through entity for the proposed grant funding)

## Soliciting Letters of Support

### Sample Request for LOS

REQUEST: Letter of Support for PA Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan Federal Grant

I am reaching out on behalf of PennDOT regarding the pursuit of a major competitive grant from the USDOT Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program. The proposed grant would fund a Pennsylvania Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan and the development of Wildlife Crossing Project Development mapping tools.

Letters of support from leaders across the Commonwealth are an essential element of a competitive grant application. **Please strongly consider providing a letter of support for this project given its critical importance to the State's wildlife and motoring public.**

Attached is more information on the grant opportunity and how to provide a letter, along with a template to get you started and ideas for customizing your letter. The following talking points provide basic information on the project to assist in the personalization of the letter.

The proposed project is a non-construction project that is made up of three primary components as follows:

- **Phase I:** Develop a multiagency PA Statewide Wildlife Crossings Strategic Plan.
  - The Strategic Plan seeks to develop a strategic plan for wildlife crossings and ecological connectivity based on prioritized transportation corridors to reduce wildlife vehicle crashes and improve wildlife movement.
- **Phase II:** Develop Wildlife Vehicle Collision Project Development Data Collection and GIS Mapping Tools.
  - The data collection and mapping tools will provide the Department with a systematic method to collect and analyze and prioritize wildlife vehicle conflict areas.
- **Phase III:** Develop and Implement a Multi-year Public Outreach and Education Plan.
  - The public outreach and education program will engage a wide range of stakeholders and provide information and education to the general public on wildlife crossings.

The deadline to submit your customized letter is **July 26, 2023**. It is greatly appreciated if you could confirm intent of providing a letter of support for this grant pursuit.

This project addresses a very important statewide need and opportunity. Discretionary funding is competitive across all the states. Stakeholder support is essential for Pennsylvania to leverage discretionary program funds.

Thank you for your help in improving the safety of Pennsylvania's wildlife and motorists.

[Name] on behalf of PennDOT

## Sample LOS



The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Pennsylvania Wildlife Crossings Strategic Plan and Analysis Tools Development

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my strong support for the application by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to the 2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP) for the Pennsylvania Statewide Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan. This planning grant would result in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for wildlife crossings and ecological connectivity in Pennsylvania, and development of a set of analytical tools to help PennDOT and its partners make better investment decisions to improve roadway safety and protect wildlife.

As a conservation organization, maintaining and enhancing ecological connectivity for people and wildlife is at the forefront of our mission. We also recognize that this work requires close coordination amongst diverse partners and across multiple scales and strategies. No matter how much habitat is protected, species won't persist over time if habitat becomes too fragmented or impermeable due to roads and other development. Wildlife-vehicle collisions also result in significant social, environmental, and economic costs.

We are excited to be partnering with PennDOT and other agencies across 8 northeastern states on our newly launched Transportation and Connectivity Project, with goals of developing science and tools to identify opportunities for barrier mitigation and passage enhancement, guidance to optimize connectivity and infrastructure funding needs through IIIA, and trainings and resources to support connectivity planning and implementation going forward. Our regional efforts will be significantly bolstered and leveraged by PennDOT's proposed Statewide Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan.

This work aligns squarely with our vision for a connected and resilient Appalachians—which we have identified as one of four global focal areas based on its rich biodiversity, carbon storage, and potential to serve as a connected superhighway for nature, allowing species to move and adapt to a changing climate. Pennsylvania is a critical link in this chain, and PennDOT's successful efforts will be an incredible step in making our collective vision a reality.

We are extremely excited to collaborate with PennDOT and other agencies and stakeholders on the Statewide Wildlife Crossing Strategic Plan, with numerous benefits for all involved. Thank you for your consideration in funding this strategic investment, and for your leadership in passing the historic BIL legislation that makes investments like the Wildlife Strategic Plan possible.

Sincerely,

Alissa Fadden

Wildlife Connectivity Project Manager, The Nature Conservancy



## Borough of West Newton

112 South Water Street  
West Newton, PA 15089

Mayor  
(724) 872-3537

Chief of Police  
(724) 872-8610

Borough Secretary  
(724) 872-6860

Fax Number  
(724) 872-8333

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S. E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: West Newton Historic Bridge Rehabilitation regarding the American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Application, Letter of Support

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

As Mayor of West Newton Borough, I am writing a letter of support to advocate for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT's) grant application for the rehabilitation of the historic West Newton Bridge. This bridge is vital to our community, since the Youghiogheny River and PA Route 136 divide West Newton and serves as our Main Street corridor to carry traffic across the bridge through our town. A favorable response to secure this grant is an urgent infrastructure concern for our business community, residents, and public safety response units.

I have lived in West Newton my entire life and understand the significance of preserving historic landmarks and to my understanding only 1 of 2 Parker Truss Bridges are left in Pennsylvania. The recent historic designation of the bridge also connects other historic landmarks in our downtown district, creating a destination place on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Additionally, the bridge serves as an important connection to our community from the GAP Trail which borders the Youghiogheny River on the West Side of the bridge. Unfortunately, despite ongoing maintenance by PennDOT, the bridge has a condition rating of "Poor" and is under weight-restrictions due to its advanced structural deterioration. This is also a safety concern for the diverse types of equipment and vehicles that cross the river daily.

The plan for rehabilitation also included installation of a temporary bridge while repairs to the historic bridge take place. This was necessary due to the geographical location of our community and the negative economical impact that our community endured during 2010. The detour crippled our community for vehicles with a detour of about sixteen miles, and a 29-mile detour for trucks, with no access for pedestrians or emergency vehicles. As Mayor, safety for everyone is top priority and we respectfully request project approval to maintain viability of our businesses and community. This project includes safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and trucks and emergency vehicles, to offer safe and reliable routes of transportation for all.

In closing, connectivity during construction is especially important to residents and visitors to our community as I previously stated. The RAISE grant affords an opportunity to preserve an historic structure, maintain traffic flow to keep our community alive and offer safe modes of transportation that will affect individuals as well as business viability.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important project.

Kindest personal regards,



Mary E. Popovich  
Mayor, West Newton Borough  
(724) 972-3779  
marypopovich@gmail.com

## **Making the Case**

### **Generalized Data Types**

The sources below may also be best explored with the assistance of subject matter experts from the PennDOT District Office and the MPO/RPO. Consider both quantitative data and qualitative benefits.

- Safety Data
- Operations Data
- Traffic Data
- Bike/Pedestrian Data
- Freight/Commerce Data
- Multimodal Freight Data
- Transit Data
- Bridge Condition Data
- Pavement Condition Data
- Environmental Data
- Demographic Data
- Public Health Data
- Economic Data
- Housing Data
- Employer Data
- Workforce Development Board Data
- Chamber of Commerce Data
- Additional Grant-Specific Data
- Project Costs (Past, Present, and Future)

## BCA Checklist

- Review and reference the current USDOT BCA Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs.
- Document all assumptions and methodology used to produce the BCA.
- Use present-value methodology in analysis.
- Link benefits with expected outcomes.
- Ensure that those assigned to draft the BCA are fully qualified with the requisite experience of preparing BCAs.
- Establish a list of all known direct and indirect benefits and the associated data (quantitative and qualitative) that will be used for each.
- Review the work group as early as possible to identify the associated data sources (quantitative and qualitative) and the contacts for each.
- Prepare a schedule for BCA development that fits with the overall grant proposal schedule and that is completed in successive drafts as early as possible as the completed BCA can positively shape the narrative.
- Ensure the narrative sections correctly integrate BCA results, such as the expected reduction in the crash rate or greenhouse gas emissions over the BCA period.
- Verify data accuracy and reliability, as well as the calculations in the spreadsheet and its completeness and logic.
- Considering requesting that a BCA expert not otherwise involved in the grant application development perform a detailed review of the BCA.
- Present the BCA to the work group for review and comment.

**Sample Submission Checklist**  
(customize according to NOFO)

Category	Attachment Name	Description
Forms	SF424	High level project info
Forms	SF424C	Budget form
Forms	SF424D	Assurances - signature only
Forms	SF LLL	Signature only
Application	Application Template	Excel Sheet
Application	Supplemental Narrative	PDF Document
Application	Budget Narrative	PDF document required with the SF424C form
Attachments	Attachment 1. Letters of Support	Letters of Support
Attachments	Attachment 2. BCA Model	BCA Model
Attachments	Attachment 3. BCA Technical Memorandum	BCA Memo
Attachments	Attachment 4. Economic Impact Analysis	Economic Impact Analysis
Attachments	Attachment 5. Design Plans	Design Plans
Attachments	Attachment 6. Bike and Pedestrian Technical Memo	Ped Bike Technical Memo
Attachments	Attachment 7. Funding Commitments	Funding Commitments
Attachments	Attachment 8. Freight Analysis	Freight Analysis

## Performing Post-Submission Activities

### Questions to Guide the After-Action Review

The After-Action Review (AAR) identifies both practices to continue and practices to discontinue/change. The following questions can guide your AAR:

- **What was the intended result?**
  - Define the intended outcome clearly, concisely, and comprehensively.
  - Beyond a successful application, what components were required for success? The agency debrief will inform this line of questioning. For example, a successful application requires strong, visible support from key stakeholders. What would be the result of this requirement being satisfied? Is it the number of LOS provided, their content, the profiles of those providing them?
- **What were the actual results?**
  - Compare the actual results with the well-defined outcomes of Step 1.
  - For each component of success, how well did the application measure up? In the example for LOS, how many letters did we request, and how many did we receive. What did they contain? Who supported the effort and who did not?
- **What are the gaps between intended and actual outcomes?**
  - Consider the root causes of the shortcomings.
  - Your line of inquiry might examine whether processes and procedures were effective. Did we allow enough time for critical activities? In the example for LOS, did the prospective supporters understand the benefits to their communities and constituents? Did the BCA yield favorable outcomes?
- **What processes were effective and should be repeated?**
  - List the areas where results were aligned with expectations so that they can be replicated on other applications.
  - Consider ways to ensure successful practices are sustained or even expanded upon.
- **What has to change?**
  - Identify and list ways to address shortcomings throughout the relevant application development steps.
  - Determine where submitted information was missing, inadequate, or confusing.
  - Consider ways to highlight critical information that was provided, but which did not “get through” to reviewers. Could it be more graphically striking? Was there possible doubt or confusion about claims made, particularly with the benefit-cost analysis?
  - Specify the steps that will be taken in research, writing, calculations, support-generation, and editing/proofreading to address inadequacies and strengthen future applications and their chances of success.

**Grant Application After Action Review Form**

<b>Grant application (title and program):</b>				
<b>Step 1: Intended Results</b>	<b>Step 2: Actual Results</b>	<b>Step 3: Gaps</b>	<b>Step 4: Repeat</b>	<b>Step 5: Change</b>
Define clear, concise, and comprehensive intended outcomes	Describe actual results for each.	Define the gap, considering root causes of the shortcomings, if applicable.	List the areas where results were aligned with expectations.	Identify and list ways to address shortcomings.

## **Project Delivery / Grant Management Checklist**

### Grant Acceptance

- Officially accept the grant award

### Grant Agreement

- Coordination with PennDOT on grant administration if applicable
- Detailed project timeline with milestones
- Assure compliance with grant agreement and provide an updated funding plan

### Internal Planning and Coordination

- Project team assembly
- Definition of roles and responsibilities
- Grant administration guidelines

### Financial Management

- Grant funding allocation
- Expenditures tracking system
- Reimbursement schedule

### Project Implementation

- Project execution plan
- Project kickoff meeting
- Procurement process
- Vendor and contractor contract execution plan

### Monitoring and Reporting

- Project progress monitoring system
- Progress reports
- Stakeholder communication plan

### Compliance and Risk Management

- Regulatory compliance plan
- Potential risk and mitigation strategies

### Project Evaluation and Closeout

- Project outcome tracking
- Final report submission plan
- Closeout procedures, including financial reconciliation

### Post-Project Activities

- Lessons learned and best practices documentation
- Sustainability plans
- Additional funding opportunities plan