

GRANT ALERT

December 17, 2025

Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant

DEADLINE	PROGRAM NAME & LINK
<p>Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 5:00 p.m. EST <i>(Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online proposal submission system used by USDOT.)</i></p>	<p>Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) US Department of Transportation</p>
DESCRIPTION	
<p>The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program was previously known as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. This discretionary grant program was authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for investments in surface transportation that will have a significant local or regional impact. Selected projects will plan for or construct surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism, state of good repair, partnership and collaboration, and innovation.</p> <p>What’s New this Round? The FY 2026 BUILD NOFO makes the following changes from the FY 2025 BUILD NOFO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be one round of project selections for the FY 2026 BUILD grant program. • FY 2025 BUILD applications designated “Projects of Merit” will not be carried over into the FY 2026 BUILD competition. Applicants with an FY 2025 BUILD Project of Merit designation need to submit a new application to be considered under the FY 2026 competition. • FY 2026 BUILD applications advanced by the Senior Review Team to the Highly Rated List, but that are not awarded, are automatically designated as “Projects of Merit.” Projects with this designation will be carried over into FY 2027 BUILD, subject to authorization and appropriations, and considered by the SRT for advancement to the Highly Rated List, along with other FY 2027 applications eligible for advancement to the Highly Rated List. • Updates Areas of Persistent Poverty to account for the most recent annual Small Area Income Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of the Census. • Project elements and benefits under the merit criteria rating rubric have been updated to align with Administration priorities and executive orders. • Changes priority merit criteria to: safety, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, and economic competitiveness. • Changes “Technical Capacity Review” to “Applicant Capacity” and “Environmental Risk Review” to “Project Risk Review” under the Project Readiness review. • Conforms to the Department’s Benefit-Cost Analysis ratings of “High,” “Medium-High,” “Medium,” “Medium-Low,” and “Low” instead of “Positive” and “Negative.” 	

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants

- States and District of Columbia
- Territory or Possession of the US
- Local government
- Public Agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States
- Tribal government
- Transit Agency
- Multi-State or multijurisdictional group of entities
- Special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority

USDOT expects the applicant to manage and deliver the project. If the applicant plans to transfer the award to another agency, this should be stated in the application, along with a supporting letter from the designated entity.

Projects

Capital Projects

- Highway, bridge, or other road projects.
- Public transportation projects.
- Passenger and freight rail transportation projects
- Port infrastructure investments including inland port infrastructure and land ports of entry.
- Surface transportation components of an airport project.
- Intermodal projects.
- Projects to replace or rehabilitate a culvert or prevent stormwater runoff for the purpose of improving habitat for aquatic species that will advance the goal of the program.
- Projects investing in surface transportation facilities that are located on Tribal land and for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in the Federal Government.
- Any other surface transportation infrastructure project that the Secretary considers to be necessary to advance the goals of the program.

Planning Projects

- Planning, preparation, design, or engineering of eligible surface transportation capital projects described in the Capital Projects section that will not result in construction with FY 2026 BUILD funding.
- Development of master plans, comprehensive plans, transportation corridor plans, and integrated economic development, land use, housing, and transportation plans.
- Planning activities related to the development of a multimodal freight corridor.
- Development of port and regional port planning, including State-wide or multi-port planning within a single jurisdiction or region.
- Risk assessments and planning to identify vulnerabilities and address the transportation system's ability to withstand probable occurrence or recurrence of an emergency or major disaster.

FUNDING

General

- The IJA authorized and appropriated \$1.5 billion to be awarded by DOT for BUILD grants FY 2026.
- For capital grants, the minimum BUILD grant award is \$5 million in urban areas and \$1 million in rural areas. No minimums for planning grants. Grants may not be greater than \$25 million.
- No more than 50 percent of the funds provided for BUILD grants (or \$750 million) shall be awarded to rural projects and not more than 50 percent of the funds provided for BUILD grants (or \$750 million) shall be awarded to urban projects.
- At least 5 percent (\$75 million) shall be awarded to Planning Projects.
- At least 1 percent (\$15 million) shall be awarded to projects located in Areas of Persistent Poverty and/or Historically Disadvantaged Communities.
- DOT will award no more than \$225 million per state.

Cost-Sharing

- The BUILD grant program shall not exceed 80% unless the project is in a rural area, a historically disadvantaged community (HDC), or an area of persistent poverty (APP).
 - Projects in one of the above designated areas are eligible for 100% grant funding of project.
- Federal cost share may not exceed 80% for urban projects that are not located in an APP or HDC.

APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

Project Criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on the following Merit Criteria:

- Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Quality of Life
- Mobility and community connectivity
- Economic competitiveness and opportunity (to include tourism opportunity)
- State of good repair
- Partnership and collaboration
- Innovation

Additional considerations:

- Project readiness
 - Project Risk Review (capital projects only)
 - Applicant Capacity Review
 - Financial Completeness Review
- Benefit Cost Analysis (capital projects only)

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

FY 2026 BUILD grant funds must be obligated by September 30, 2030. Obligation occurs when a grant recipient and the Department enter into a written grant agreement after the recipient has satisfied applicable local, State and Federal requirements.

FY 2026 BUILD funds must be expended by September 30, 2035. Expenditure occurs when a recipient is reimbursed for eligible project costs and after this date, unexpended funds are no longer available to the project.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Rural and Urban Areas

- **Urban** - A project is designated as urban if it is located within (or on the boundary of) a Census-designated urban area that had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.
- **Rural** - A project is designated as rural if it is located outside a Census-designated urban area that had a population greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.
- The Department provides an [interactive map](#) to show Census-designated urban areas with populations greater than 200,000 in the 2020 Census.

Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities

- **Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP)** - (1) any county that has consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty during the 30-year period preceding November 15, 2021, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial census and the most recent annual Small Area Income Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of the census; (2) any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014-2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census; or (3) any territory or possession of the United States.

PENNDOT ROLE

PennDOT Emphasis

PennDOT promotes a strategic and systematic process to operate, maintain, and improve physical assets. PennDOT, and its partners, seek to continue to complete projects which modernize roads, bridges, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal transportation and make the Commonwealth's transportation systems safer, more accessible, and more sustainable. The BUILD Grant Program provides the opportunity to not only complete construction on projects critical to the Commonwealth's transportation system, but to also plan in-depth for future major projects.

PennDOT Support

Transportation Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Account:

RA-PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov.

PennDOT recognizes this program's potential to significantly benefit communities and individuals and will consider ways to support or collaborate with applicants to strengthen their competitive proposals. PennDOT will also coordinate with other state agencies where there may be an interest in this program.

PennDOT will consider providing support for regional grant proposals when requested through the email above. PennDOT support may include the following:

- Providing data and subject matter expertise, as available.
- Supplying the applicant with a letter of administration confirming PennDOT's agreement to assist with project administration if the grant is awarded.
- Supplying the applicant with a letter of consistency, affirming that the project aligns with PennDOT publications.

The deadline for requesting PennDOT support is February 10, 2026.