



5 Winning Strategies for PROTECT Grant Applications

Application Deadline: 8/18/23

The Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) discretionary grant program will provide \$848 million to improve the environmental resilience of America's surface transportation system, including highways, ports, public transit, and intercity passenger rail. Listed below are five winning strategies for city leaders as they seek funding for this opportunity.

#1 Identify which type of PROTECT grant fits your community's needs

There are four categories of PROTECT discretionary grants, and each carries a different purpose. For full descriptions of these grants, refer to pages 16-20 of the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO).

- **Planning Grants** provide funding for resilience planning, evacuation planning or preparation, and technical capacity support to allow applicants to assess vulnerabilities in surface transportation. The minimum award size is \$100,000; there is no maximum size.
- **Resilience Improvement Grants** fund interventions to upgrade existing transportation infrastructure to withstand the impacts of changing environmental conditions resulting from climate change. The minimum award size is \$500,000; there is no maximum size.
- **Community Resilience and Evacuation Route Grants** are used to strengthen and protect evacuation routes necessitated by climate-related emergency events. The minimum award size is \$500,000; there is no maximum size.
- **At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants** support projects that enhance the resilience of transportation infrastructure on the coastline or Great Lakes regions. The minimum award size is \$500,000; there is no maximum size.

#2 Emphasize nature-based solutions

The PROTECT NOFO will prioritize applications that leverage [nature-based solutions](#) as a key way to promote environmental resilience. Nature-based solutions include, but are not limited to, the restoration, conservation or construction of marshes, wetlands, vegetation, breakwaters, reefs, dunes, parks, urban forests, and shade trees. They reduce the risk of erosion, flood risks, heat impacts, and wave damage, while also creating natural habitats and providing recreational activities.



5 Winning Strategies for PROTECT Grant Applications

#3 Align with the Administration's Justice40 goals

[Justice40](#) is an administration-wide initiative specifying that at least 40% of the benefits of climate-related investments flow to underserved communities disproportionately impacted by climate change. Three of the four grants in the PROTECT application (all besides the planning grant) require that the applicant discuss how the project is advancing Justice40 goals and how meaningful outreach is targeted towards disadvantaged communities. Additionally, these applications must include an equity assessment and discuss how the project will reduce disparities. For more details on equity assessments, refer to this [toolkit](#) from the Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

#4 Partnerships are key

All four grants under PROTECT require applicants to include a [detailed plan for public engagement](#), [partnerships](#) and [collaboration](#). For example, applicants must discuss how they will solicit diverse input from community-based organizations, and collaborate with other agencies and relevant sectors (like emergency management, environmental planning, housing, as well as state, local, and/or federal stakeholders).

#5 Inform your application with data

The PROTECT grant application is considerably technical—this is especially true for the resilience and coastal infrastructure grants, which require that the applicant complete a [cost-benefit analysis](#) to ensure that projects are [cost-effective](#). Potential grantees are also required to outline how they are going to [build and maintain technical capacity](#), and even the planning grants require applicants to identify the climate data sets that will be used to inform the planning process. For information on climate data, see [Climate Mapping for Resilience and Adaptation](#), as well as this resource from C40 on [City Climate Data Management](#).