

Funding Sustainable and Equitable Transportation

The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Discretionary Grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), provides investments in road, rail, transit, and port projects to enhance freight and passenger transportation networks. This discretionary transportation infrastructure program allows project sponsors at the state and local levels to obtain funding for multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are difficult to support through traditional DOT programs.

On October 24, 2023, the Local Infrastructure Hub hosted a webinar to discuss the winning strategies for advancing sustainable and equitable transportation projects. **Shailen Bhatt, Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** and **Andrea Jacobson, RAISE Grants Program Manager** shared insights on how federal funding can be used to improve roadway safety and sustainability and make cities more equitable and accessible. **Mayor Barbara Buffaloe of Columbia, MO; Mayor Acquanetta Warren of Fontana, CA; Mayor Fred Teague of Russellville, AR, Sara Jondahl, City Planner of Russellville, AR; and Shane Creech, Director of Public Works for the City of Columbia, MO,** shared information on their winning RAISE projects and how they are now approaching project implementation.

Key Insights Shared During the Webinar

- **Communicate a clear story of your project's local, regional and/or national impacts.** Shailen Bhatt reiterated the need for descriptive detail and consistency of project budget statements throughout a city's application. He also highlighted that FHWA is willing to engage with State DOTs to promote the Administration's Justice 40 goals and to encourage partnerships and close working relations with local governments.
- **Bolster partnerships to develop a portfolio approach.** Fontana partnered with the state, neighboring communities, local schools, and the Department of Transportation to illustrate the importance of safe roads and sidewalks in creating a healthy community. The application was more than just about the project but included what could then be activated as a result of the grant and how the entire community and beyond benefit.
- **Set a high-level vision.** Columbia created a [Master Plan](#) before receiving the RAISE grant showing the importance of their COMO Transportation Center Project as well as the cost. This was essential in their application by highlighting the city's commitment to the project and ensuring that the project will be realized. Their application demonstrated how the project would support the grid improvements to support electric buses as part of their ambition to move their fleet to net zero by 2050.
- **Don't reinvent the wheel.** Russellville, AR worked closely with the Arkansas Municipal League, the Arkansas Department of Transportation, and a neighboring RAISE grant winner, Conway, AR, to highlight how their trail program would improve quality of life and attract talent to the community. By listening to and getting feedback from the community, Russellville is ensuring that the trails link historically disadvantaged neighborhoods in their city.

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Resources Shared During the Webinar and in Discussion

- [5 winning strategies for RAISE Applications](#)
- [Winning RAISE applications](#)
- [Toledo Winning Application One Pager](#)
- [Phoenix Winning Application One Pager](#)
- [Albuquerque Winning Application One Pager](#)
- [Lincoln, NE Multimodal Transit Transfer Center Case Study](#)
- [RAISE Grant Bootcamp Program and Registration](#)

Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamp Materials

With a mix of webinars, practical tools, and templates, the Grant Application Bootcamp materials are designed to provide an overview of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Discretionary Grant program. It can guide you through the application process, and present actionable steps that can be taken to submit a strong application. As more RAISE bootcamps are completed, more materials will be made available after the completion of the bootcamps and the website will be updated accordingly.

These materials were prepared as part of the Local Infrastructure Hub's Fall 2022 Grant Application bootcamps. They include information on how to apply for federal funds and relevant tools and templates that can be applied to your grant application. The materials focus on how to build a community engagement plan, how to leverage community assets, how to effectively incorporate data into the grant application process, and how to construct a budget and a strong grant narrative. [The RAISE bootcamp materials can be found here.](#)