

Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT)

Agency: U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

Category: Transportation; Resilience

Eligible Applicants: States, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), local governments, and Indian tribes. DOT encourages all eligible entities regardless of size, location, and experience administering Federal funding awards to apply for Federal assistance for Planning Grants and Resilience Grants under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Total IIJA Funding: \$1.4 billion in total funds are available for fiscal years (FY) 2022–2026.

FY24 Grant Funding: \$300 million in PROTECT discretionary funding is expected for FY2024. Under the combined FY22/23 NOFO, \$848 million in funding was offered, including up to \$45 million for Planning Grants, up to \$638 million for Resilience Improvement Grants, up to \$45 million for Community Resilience and Evacuation Route Grants, and up to \$120 million for At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure Grants (collectively referred to as Resilience Grants in the FY22/23 NOFO and this fact sheet).

Match Requirements: Per the FY22/23 NOFO, Planning grants do not require a matching contribution. Resilience grants typically require a 20% matching contribution, but reductions to the match may be available.

Key Dates: The NOFO for this grant is expected in Spring 2024. The FY22/23 NOFO opened on April 21, 2023, and closed on August 18, 2023, for reference.

Overview: PROTECT is designed to fund projects addressing the climate crisis by enhancing the resilience of the surface transportation system, encompassing highways, public transportation, ports, and intercity passenger rail. The program's objectives are to minimize damage and disruptions to the transportation system, enhance public safety, and promote equity by addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities that are particularly vulnerable to hazards.

Eligible Activities: The PROTECT program comprises four grant categories, each with different eligible activities:

- 1. Resilience Planning:** Includes resilience planning activities, technical capacity building, and evacuation planning and preparation.
- 2. Resilience Improvement:** Encompasses projects to bolster the resilience of existing surface transportation infrastructure, such as drainage enhancements, upgrades to meet or surpass design standards, roadway relocations, or bridge elevations.
- 3. Community Resilience and Evacuation Routes:** Focuses on improving the resilience of evacuation routes or adding capacity and redundant evacuation routes.
- 4. At-Risk Coastal Infrastructure:** Addresses the protection, strengthening, or relocation of coastal highway and non-rail infrastructure subject to, or facing increased long-term risks of damage from weather events, natural disasters, or changing conditions.

Opportunities for Climate and Racial Wealth Equity: PROTECT is a Justice40 program, and applicants should aim to target at least 40 percent of benefits toward disadvantaged communities, including those underserved by affordable transportation or overburdened. The program also mandates that a minimum of 25% and 2% of annual funding must be allocated to projects in rural areas (areas outside urban areas with a population of over 200,000) and to Tribal governments, respectively.

Key Funding Criteria: Evaluation criteria for Planning grants and Resilience grants, as per the [FY22/23 NOFO](#):

Planning grant applicants can expect evaluation based on project alignment with the PROTECT program, schedule and budget, public engagement, partnerships and collaboration, and innovation.

Resilience grant applicants can anticipate evaluation on vulnerability and risk, criticality to the community, design elements, public engagement, partnerships and collaboration, equity and Justice40, climate change and sustainability, schedule and budget, and innovation.

Additional Information: Find more details on DOT's PROTECT program on the official [PROTECT website](#).