

# Local Infrastructure Hub: Update on DOT Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Programs

On January 18, 2024, The United States Conference of Mayors hosted the Local Infrastructure Hub: Update on DOT Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Programs session at their 92nd Winter Meeting in Washington, DC. The session included key officials from the United States Department of Transportation, notably Polly Trottenberg, Deputy Secretary; Mariia Zimmerman, Strategic Advisor for Technical Assistance and Communities Solutions; Scott Goldstein, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy; and Keith Benjamin, Associate Administrator, Highway Policy and External Affairs as well as Jaime Lavin, Senior Director of Government Innovation at Bloomberg Philanthropies. The session also included remarks from Mayor James Hovland of Edina, Minnesota; Mayor John Giles of Mesa, Arizona; Mayor Aftab Pureval of Cincinnati, Ohio; and Mayor Acquanetta Warren of Fontana, California who spoke about their cities and how the infrastructure law is advancing key transportation infrastructure projects and initiatives.

## Key Insights

### Take advantage of the Local Infrastructure Hub (LIH).

City leaders and partners urged all cities to take advantage of the [Local Infrastructure Hub](#) when applying for federal infrastructure funding. LIH helps cities understand what grant opportunities are available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, how to develop high quality applications, opportunities to understand what federal partners are looking for, and how to engage the community.

### Bipartisanship is key.

[The Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project](#), a bridge connecting Kentucky and Ohio, received \$1.6 billion in federal funding. This is one of the largest infrastructure grants in U.S. history, and Cincinnati was part of the team that secured this funding. This bridge required support from a Republican governor in Ohio, a Democratic governor in Kentucky, and local officials on both sides of the river from different parties. This bridge was not improved for generations, but through the infrastructure law and bipartisan cooperation, the project was brought back into focus and made possible.

### Pay close attention to each Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

It is essential that cities pay close attention to each specific NOFO. Mariia Zimmerman suggested thinking of NOFOs like an open book test, as it lets you know exactly how applications will be evaluated so cities don't leave any points on the table. She also cited the [DOT Navigator](#) as a valuable tool that pulls together resources to help navigate the grant application process and pinpoint which grants local governments are eligible for. Lastly, she recommended that cities include the broader community story in their applications. Don't just focus on the specific project details, but show how the larger community will benefit. And don't presume that the application reviewer knows anything about the community or the need for the project—tell your whole story!

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## Use a collaborative approach.

Scott Goldstein advised cities to work with regional partners when applying for federal infrastructure funding. Initially intending to apply for DOT's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program alone, Athens, Ohio found that working as a collaborative was a better fit for the city. Athens worked with [Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council](#) (SOPEC) to secure a substantial \$12,545,691 grant. SOPEC is one of only two entities in Ohio to receive this grant, the other being the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), highlighting just how important regional collaboration can be in the application process.

## Statistics are the foundation for a good application.

Mayor Warren had a vision for a safer Fontana, California through the [Foothill Boulevard Safety Improvements project](#), but knew a good application required statistics to support the broader story. If your city's application can follow the application guidelines and bring a level of statistical confidence to show how your project can improve health and well being, then you are on track to have a successful application.

## Have an electric vehicle action plan in place.

Mayor Giles suggested that communities should use experts to develop an electric vehicle (EV) action plan as they did in [Maricopa County, Arizona](#). Once that planning is in place, it becomes very easy to fold the action plan into the application process for federal infrastructure funding. The plan will help guide decisions on policy and infrastructure investments that can accelerate the community transition to EVs.

## Resources Shared During the Discussion:

- [Information on LIH grant application boot camps](#)
- [Technical Assistance Guide](#)
- [DOT Discretionary Grant Dashboard](#)
- [Upcoming Local Infrastructure Hub webinars](#)

## Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamps

The Local Infrastructure Hub is here to support cities in communicating the success of BIL-funded projects through a mix of webinars, practical tools, and templates. Our webinars and Grant Application Bootcamps can guide you through different application processes and actionable steps to submit a strong application.

Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamps are especially helpful for cities as they provide technical assistance for city staff on relevant tools and templates that can be applied to grant applications; how to build community engagement plans; how to leverage community assets; how to effectively incorporate data into the grant application process; and how to construct a strong budget and grant narrative. [Register for our bootcamps now](#) and receive expert assistance to construct your next federal grant application!