FY 2021 Passenger Ferry Grant Program
Webinar Transcript
31 August 2021

Welcome remarks: My name is Mark Bathrick and I'm the division chief for FTA's Urbanized Area Programs Division within the Office of Transit Programs and it's my pleasure to welcome you all to our FY21 passenger ferry grant program webinar. I'm happy to introduce Vanessa Williams who is s our program manager in our office who oversees the passenger ferry program and this afternoon she'll be walking through the program parameters. How to apply for the program and will also be addressing some of the new items that you'll be noticing in the notice of funding opportunity at the end of the webinars will also have plenty of time for a question and answer session, so please make sure to put those into the Q&A box as you proceed. With that I will turn it over to Vanessa to get us started.

Slide 2: Good afternoon everyone and thank you, Mark. For today's agenda, we're going to start with a program overview and then we're going to discuss the eligibility information, and then we're going to go over the six evaluation criteria listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity which we refer to as the NOFO. We will go over the application requirements and the documents that are needed to submit your applications. That will be presented by Johnita Glover, our grants.gov expert, and end answering your questions.

Slide 3: Starting with the general program overview of the Passenger Ferry Grant Program, also known as the Ferry program.

Slide 4: Starting with the statutory authority reference to Section 5307 (h), which is the passenger ferry grant program. This program awards grants for passenger ferries through a competitive process for projects that support passenger ferry systems in urbanized areas such as s ferry vessels, terminals and related infrastructure. This program is a set-aside from the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula program. For FY21, $38 million is available, at a minimum $4 million is set aside for low or zero-emission ferry projects. This is the first time there has been a requirement for this type of technology in this program.

Slide 5: Highlights from the FY 20 Ferry program competition. We've received in 19 eligible project proposals from 9 states plus the US Virgin Islands requesting $102 million. We awarded 12 projects for a total of $47.5 million. The largest award was $5.2 million. This program is oversubscribed each year and we anticipate being this way for this year's competition. If you're interested in seeing the types of projects that was funding from FY20, you can on the FTA website in the link. We are now in our ninth year of the ferry program and to date approximately $257 million has been awarded for 85 ferry projects.

Slide 6: Important dates that you should be aware of. The ferry program NOFO was published on August the 6th. Applications are due on October the 5th by 11:59 PM Eastern Time. The opportunity ID is FTA-2021-006-TPM-Ferry. The application package can be found at www.grants.gov by searching the keyword, passenger ferry or ferry program. It is recommended that the applicants we register on grants.gov at least four weeks prior to apply it, that's to make sure that there's no technical difficulties on due date, October the 5th, we may not have anyone

available after pilot after 5:00 PM if you happen to encounter any issues, so please keep that in mind. Project evaluations is scheduled in October. Award announcement is expected late winter. Final project selections that's awarded they will be posted on our FTA website along with the implementation guidance. Also, please note that as part of their announcement process, we are required to give Congress at three-day notification prior to the final project selections prior to being released to the public and posted on the website.

Slide 7: I will discuss the eligibility information under the ferry program.

Slide 8: Eligible applicants under this program, includes designated recipients, direct recipients of Section 5307 funds or those eligible to become such recipients. States, including territories of the United States and federally recognized tribes. For more information about the eligible see eligibility information in the NOFO.

Slide 9: Eligible projects under this program includes capital projects to purchase, replace, or rehabilitate passenger ferries, terminals, and related infrastructure equipment, including fare equipment, communication devices. Projects must support public transportation ferries systems serving an urbanized area. Vehicles ferries are eligible if they also accommodate walk-on passengers. Workforce development and training are eligible expenses and will go in more details on the next slide.

Slide 10: Workforce development it's not a new eligible expense, we've had it in our past NOFOs, but it is highly encouraged. Agencies can use up to 0.5 percent of their grant award for workforce development activities and an additional 0.5 percent for training at the National Transit Institute (NTI). I've listed the workforce development statue on this slide, which has information on the eligible activities. I recommend you check there first before reaching out to us with any questions. Applicants must identify the proposed use of funds for these activities in the project proposal and identified them separately in the project budget section in the supplemental form.

Slide 11: The following projects on this slide are not eligible for funding under the ferry program, planning, operating expenses and preventive maintenance. Remember, this is a capital program, so any project that does not include the eligible projects that I just discussed in the earlier slide is not eligible.

Slide 12: For cost sharing or matching the maximum Federal share 80% and 20% non-Federal match. The exceptions are for vehicles is a maximum 85% federal and 15% non-federal If compliance with the Clean Air Act, or the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. For a vehicle related equipment or facilities, the maximum is 90% federal and 10% non-federal match if compliant with CAA and/or ADA. The award applicant must itemize the costs of the related to the vehicle-related equipment associated with compliance with ADA or CAA to be eligible for the 90%. Please refer to the NOFO where we list eligible sources of match.

Slide 13: I'm going to provide a brief overview of the evaluation criteria. I hope everybody had the chance to read the NOFO and you can always refer back to it for additional information or what we are looking for in an application. Six evaluation criteria is how your proposed project

will be evaluated and this is based on the responses provided in the supplemental form, so we want clear, detailed, concise information in your narrative as possible and if you're going to reference supporting documents, please document them by the file name in the narrative in your supplemental form so that we can match them to your attachment. Otherwise, it may not be review by the review team. We want to make it easier for the review team to review the supporting documents.

Slide 14:
1. Demonstration of Need: In this section, application must demonstrate how your proposed project will address an unmet need for capital investment within your community. Here are some questions that you may want to think about as you develop your application. What is age, condition, and performance of assets to be replaced or rehabilitated? What are the capacity constraints and/or demand for new or expanded service? If this is a replacement or rehabilitation project, including low or zero emission ferries, this is where you want to explain the age, condition, and performance of the proposed project, if it has met, or exceeded their useful life at the time of project implementation. If this is a vessel or facility expansion, explain the capacity constraint and this may include potential service disruption cancellation or reduce of service. You may want to include information such as your destination services not currently accessible by transit. Provide documentation that support your narrative.

2. Demonstration of Benefits: In this section, describe what is your proposed project benefits and how it was support the program objectives? How will the proposed project improve state of repair safety, ridership, and reliability of service? Does the proposed project connect to other modes? For low or zero-emission ferry project, does the proposed project reduce energy consumption? Possible benefits that may include increased or sustained ridership, improved operations or maintenance capabilities or expanded mobility options or economic benefits to the community. Other benefits include safety enhancement, such as lifesaver devices, security cameras, and first aid kits. If your project is connected to other modes, you want to include information about transfer connection to other modes of transportation and supply some supporting documents that show the data that demonstrates the number of trips. For low or zero-emission ferries projects you want to explain how ferries, or the infrastructure reduce harmful emissions that impact local air pollution, will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

3. Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization: In this section, describe how the proposed project is consistent with your local and regional priorities. Is it identified in the long-range plan and TIP/STIP? You must demonstrate that the project is either in the TIP/STIP or can be added to the TIP/STIP if funded. Be sure to attach documentation to your application. You can't state on your application that the project is in the planning document. You must provide evidence. Are there letters of support from your local stakeholders? We want to see local support from local government official, local transit agencies, community partners, congressional and other stake holders, so please provide letters of support and attach to the application.

Slide 15:
4. Local Financial Commitment. In this section, describe how will the local funds be secured. What is the source of the local share and is it available and set aside for the project application?

Identify the source of the local cost share and describe whether such funds or currently available for the project. Or will it be secure if the project is selected for funding? Attach evidence of the availability of funds for the proposed project to the application. Sources of local match are listed in the NOFO. Suggest that you read that section carefully so that you can have a clear understanding what funds or an eligible for local match.

5. Project Implementation Strategy. In this section, describe how will the proposed project be obligated or how it will be implemented. Is the implementation strategy detail reasonable? Complete? What is the status of planning and environmental work? Has the required environmental work been initiated or completed? Include project timeline with key dates in milestones, which is on the supplemental form. State whether your proposed project can be obligated within 12 months from the time of the award. We are asking more than just, issue the RFP, begin the contract, and end contract. Be a descriptive as possible to show that you can implement the project in both and realistic and reasonable time frame.

6. Technical, Legal and Financial Capacity. In this section we're asking, does the applicant demonstrate the ability to carry out the proposed project? And does the applicant have experience with projects of comparable size scope requirements? We are looking for information on your capability to carry out this project if funding and follow all the federal and program requirements. I just gave a brief overview of the evaluation criteria and all of those are listed in NOFO and has more details.

Slide 16. The next few slides I will discuss other considerations that is outside of the scored evaluation criteria. These considerations are the discretion of the Administration to help with the final project selection. More detail information is in the NOFO Section E. Application Review Information (2. Review and Selection Process).

Slide 17. This year on the supplemental form we have 4 new questions. The first question is related to climate change that advance the goals of this Administration Executive Order 13990: Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis. We are encouraging applicants to considered climate change and environmental justice during the planning project for your proposed project. Your project should include specific elements to how to address climate impacts. Reducing emission, promote energy efficiency, incorporate how you're going to incorporate low or no emission technologies. Additional information can be found in this link on this Federal Register notice.

Slide 18. Environmental Justice, which include low income and minority population that advance Executive Order 12898. Low income is defined as a person whose medium income household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. A minority population includes but is not limited to, the following American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American Hispanic. Latinos native Hawaiian. You can also use it locally developed threshold so if you have developed and environmental justice definition for another purpose or grant program you can use that here as long as it's appropriate for the project. And you can also use the percentage of median income for the area as long as it's consistent with HHS property probability guidelines. Applicants should identify any EJ

population located within a proposed service area and you want to describe anticipated benefits to the population. We're really looking for information on environmental justice. Population in your area as you defined then and how the project can benefit in those population. A formal EJ analysis is not required or requested, so if you need additional information you can refer to FTS environmental, circular or the executive order is listed on the slide and you can also look at Health and Human services guidelines, updated in 2021.

Slide 19. Racial Equity and Barriers To Opportunity. This support this Administration goals of Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. How does your project address racial equity and barriers to opportunity? Was this thought about in the planning stage of your application about fair treatment for all individuals. And that's including individuals who belong to underserved communities that are characterized by poverty and lack of access to resources. Those that have been denied such treatments, such as Black, Latino, American Asian, LGBTQ persons, persons with disability persons who live in rural areas, or persons whose otherwise it's affected persistent poverty or inequality. We are looking for a project that had consider racial equity in the planning stage and was designed with specific elements to address racial equality and barriers to opportunity. Summarize the project investment costs that are related to racial equity and barriers to opportunity. See link for more information on advancing racial equality and support for underserved communities through the federal government.

Slide 20. Other Considerations are geographic diversity, diversity in transit system size, other competitive awards and low or zero-emission ferry projects and the infrastructure to support such ferries. Projects should include components that reduce admissions produce. Energy efficient incorporate zero emission vehicle infrastructure and existing infrastructure.

Slide 21. Now I will transition into the application instruction and how to apply for the funding. I will now turn this over to Johnita Glover. Johnita, are you ready? Yes, thank you Vanessa and good afternoon or good morning to some.

Slide 22. This portion of the webinar is to provide an orientation on the resources available to applicant organizations on the FTA website. Grants.gov website and on the application process.

Slide 23. FTA funding opportunities are published on FTA website. The Federal Register and on grants.gov website. We recommend applicants begin their search and application process on FTA funding opportunities. NOFO webpage. Using a NOFO page as your start provide links to related information and links to websites and resources to assist with the application process. To locate the full page to the FTA homepage, which is at the top of the web page, click on funding. It's select applying, then click on a notice of funding on the left side of the page. The notice of funding Page provides links to all the current or active FTA opportunities available. Select the opportunity ID, which is hyperlinked to the FTA website NOFO summary page. If you click on grant program this link brings you to the program page which is sponsoring the discretionary funding and soliciting applicants if you are searching for. Or expired notices they are e available in a separate menu directly under the notice of funding.

Slide 24. As mentioned, the full page contains a summary of the opportunity announcement Important dates such as application deadline, brief explanation of eligibility requirements, and it links to the grants.gov site. Additionally, it has the FTA supplemental form Federal Register notice and other relevant information about FTA programs which may assist you in developing and submitting accessible proposal or application. The supplemental form is a fillable PDF which is a FTA product. It is used to capture the key elements of the applicants proposal. This form contains fill in blanks for information which will be used by FTA to evaluate the proposed projects and funding requested This form must be attached to the application and grants dot in order to receive consideration. Please do not use forms from prior years or attempt to create your own PDF form in lieu of the supplemental form that we have provided specifically for the opportunity. Please use only current forms provided on FDA website oringrants.gov. So do not attempt to attach images or scanned copies of the supplemental form. The PDF form must be completed with tight. And attached to the application and grants.gov you can navigate directly to the grants.gov site by clicking a blue hyperlink opportunity ID on a NOFO page.

Slide 25. Once you select the blue hyperlink opportunity ID on an official page you will be taken to the grants.gov site grant opportunity page. The synopsis version history related documents, and package this is also the page where you can begin to apply for the funding opportunity. The synopsis test provides similar information which we published on FDA website. But also shows if any changes have been posted. Additionally, it provides key dates and related regulatory references. The version History tab is just that, a history of any changes made since the original announcement. The related documents tab leads to a folder which contains documents related to the funding opportunity and includes items such as the Federal Register notice and FTA supplemental form to be used for submitting a proposal or application or other related documents. The package tab contains references and links to download and or apply for the opportunity. Please note that anyone can download the application package but only individuals s who have been designated in grants.gov as the authorized organizational representative can submit the application.

Slide 26. This what shows the contents of the application package available in grants.gov which includes the mandatory SF 424, the lobbying form and the attachment form used to attach supporting materials for the application. Note that the application package does not include the FTA supplemental form.

Slide 27. This slide depicts a screenshot of the FTA supplemental form each opportunity. Each opportunity has its own form. The supplemental form must be downloaded separately from the FDA website or from within a related documents tab. The form is be attached to the application or attachment forms. The attachment form is a way for applicants to include documents supporting their application. The supplemental form is a fillable PDF as mentioned and is used to capture the information FTA will need to evaluate your proposal. Please do not attach scanned copies or the supplemental form. Otherwise, FTA will reject the application. And also do not submit forms from prior years or for other programs.

Slide 28. Applicants who have not previously applied for grants.gov must visit grants.gov and select the applicants the applicants tab. Applicants who have previously applied or still

encouraged to review the applicants tab in grants.gov to make sure that you have the latest information about the application process. The applicants tag will walk you through the process of registering on grant.gov as well as help you check to make sure you have the correct or compatible version of Adobe Acrobat. This site will also provide you with training on the use of grants.gov. Note that there is an Adobe compatibility check on a site to ensure that you are using the correct version and software packages in order to submit your application. This site also provides the option to download the software if needed. There are many instances where applicants will frequently encounter technical issues with submitting your application and as typically because you're using a different version of Adobe Acrobat from what is specified in grants.gov.

Slide 29. For new applicants to grants.gov or federal funds from the grants.gov site. Assists organizations with registration process in the system for award management. Sam and with obtaining a DUNS registration or UI which will be implemented soon.

Slide 30. Register organizations can create a workspace in which grant proposal teams can collaborate in developing the application proposal and associated documents. It is workspace eliminates the need for email and documents between team members. Grants.gov has been enhanced to allow applicant organizations the Workspace in which assign individuals can collaborate, share files, and perform various tasks to develop the application. This is also the place from which the authorized organization representative can submit the completed application to grants.gov. And please review the workspace information and identify the type of workspace and team members who were prepared your application please review the roles and privileges and remember that only the authorized organization representative can submit the application. FTA is accepting applications submitted via grants.gov from organizations and individuals in such organizations must be registered in grants.gov. All the information and pertinent links are available on applicant tab in grants.gov.

Slide 30. So lastly, if you encounter any technical issues or problems while working on the application or submitting the application, please address those concerns to grants.Gov which the information is listed here and any program related questions or issues should be addressed to the FTA program manager. And so Vanessa, I will hand it over back over to you. Thank you Johnita and so now I'm at this time we will answer any questions.

Slide 32. We do we have some questions and thank you Johnita and Vanessa, for all of your work here this afternoon and making sure that the program gets put out for folks to apply. We have a few questions that have come in and certainly here in the time remaining. If anyone has any additional questions, feel free to put those into the chat box and we can look at answering those right now. And certainly if you think of things along the way, feel free to email Vanessa in our shop would be more than happy to help you.

Our first question comes from Mayor Raymond. They have three local municipal port authorities and the question is our local port authorities and eligible recipient. Yes, they are. Excellent thank you Vanessa. So most public authorities are there, Mayor Raymond. And if you have any

questions about your particular legal structure for your Port Authority, I know there are a few that are structured unique in their legislative makeup. You can certainly send us an email and we can look at your specific situation, but for the most part public authorities are eligible as long as you're located in an urban area.

The next one we have. Vanessa comes from Ben and then this is a good follow up to the first question. What is defined as an urban area? What is the finance or urban area at urban area has to have a population of 50,000 or more? Excellent thanks Vanessa.

Our next question we have comes from Kelly and does technology that will say technology will refer in more broad senses equipment. So, since this is a capital project program, we fund equipment, does equipment that combats COVID and other pathogens as well as mold satisfy the grant requirements or would be ineligible project under the ferry program? Repeat that again. You bet so does technology or in this case equipment that combats COVID, COVID-19 and other pathogens as well as mold satisfy the grant requirements to be an eligible project. Yes. Yes, that would be considered an eligible project.

We've got a few questions from folks, and I'll just take this one here about where the slides be available. Yes, the slides will be available as well l as a recording of this webinar. Those will be posted to FTA ferry very webpage, and typically we aim to have those out within three to five business days after the webinar.

Is there a restriction on the quantity of project submissions by an organization? I'm doing me about how many projects they can submit Yes, exactly. So how many different applications they could submit to us? We don't have a restriction on how many applications, but you may want to see me. I'm not sure if this is the consolidation. Consolidate the project, but we really don't have a restriction on how many applications that can be submitted.

Alright thanks Vanessa our next question is from Laura if the recipient has an open grant, are they allowed to apply for additional funding? Yes, they should be able to apply for additional funding. Yes, the one caveat I would make up for that particular question is please be sure to address your current award and how this application that you would be submitting would dovetail with your current open award. That way our reviewers would be able to make sure that the two are In Sync and not be have any concerns about double funding a project for example.

Do we have an estimated timeline for when the announcements will be made for the project selections? In my previous slide come we are expected late winter and so that's the best time frame that I can give you.

Next question is for Johnita. Is there an expiration date to the login information that was used previously or is it good forever so it sounds like it's their grants dot login and does that expire? I'm not completely sure if it expires it could be a situation where if you haven't logged in quite awhile you may have e to update some information. Uhm, but other than that you should be able

to. Get in if you forgot the password or something to that nature, but I wouldn't say it completely wipes out everything or aspires. But definitely to Vanessa's point, please folks, make sure to log in as soon as you can to avoid any issues. As Johnita pointed out there an expired password or anything like that. Sometimes it takes time. I was just dealing with updating my password this morning and it takes a while to get through that process, so don't wait till the last minute.

Can this funding pay for dredging? That's a very good question, and if you send me an email, I can follow up with you with that question. Mark, I can definitely talk about dredging as its as its as its own activity is not necessarily a capital project, so typically when we discuss capital projects in terms of FTA programs were thinking of a tangible item. So, the construction of the ferry terminal or birthing dock or the vessel itself. If the dredging is a part of a larger capital project, that would potentially be a part of your application, that is certainly something that has the potential to be eligible. But just as Vanessa noted, we would like more information before that particular instance and want to see what else that dredging is associated with before we could provide you a definitive answer. So that's a great example of those questions that are very unique that we get from across the country and so feel free to send us an email for those and we can look at your specific situation.

Alright our next question does s VMS system qualifies an eligible project. For example, technology that helps track the location of ferries in order to relay back accurate schedules. Yes, that sounds like an eligible project.

From Rich must all projects by private organizations support a formal, public, private project partnership? Then I would maybe bring this one up a little bit higher to talk about eligible applicants to this program. Private ferry operator they are not allowed to apply directly. And so, you will have to coordinate with a eligible recipient or sub recipient for public transportation purposes. But they cannot apply directly for funding. But you can be able to operate a capital assistance which is purchased by its eligible recipient. Vanessa, so definitely our private sector partners out there are able to operate capital assets that are purchased through this program. But the applicant themselves and those folks that will retain ownership of the federal asset need to be ineligible applicants. So those entities that are eligible to be designated or direct recipients of section 5307 funding.

Alright, our next question, l looks like there's a city or a jurisdiction that is trying to start a new ferry service. And are they eligible to apply if they have not received FTA funds prior? if an entity is not a current FTA grantee for 5307 funding, that does not necessarily mean that you're not eligible to apply. We would certainly want to look at as we mentioned, for the Port Authority, but there is your particular legal makeup, and if there's any question about that, but the other item I would mention is that you certainly welcome to contact your local FTA regional office. We have ten of those across the country and they would be able to give you more information about the actual process. To become an FTA grantee, there are various steps that are needed for folks that are new to become eligible to actually have the grant itself with FTA. So, I would just put that out there. If you're not familiar with that process, it would probably be best to reach out to your regional office and learn a little bit more about that just to kind of know what you're getting into.

Our last question, a ferry route, serves an urban area, but the ferry landing is a few miles outside of the census designated urban area, so this looks like a question more about the actual endpoints of a ferry route. A ferry service can go out of the urbanized area to a non-urbanized area, but the ferry service has to start within the urbanized area in cause this program is under the urbanized area Formula program. Exactly, so we've been looking for one of the terminals to be located in one of those urbanized areas that it would be serving. Certainly, there's a broader range of service as a whole, but for this program in particular we would need one of those to be eligible under the 5307 program, which is where the ferry program is a subset of that authorizing statute.

Alright everyone come. That's gone through our questions here. We've got a couple more here. They're just coming in, so we got a few more minutes here by 5 minutes left so will look to get through those up. Alright, so will at least qualify as opposed to the purchase or refurbishment of a fairy. And it repeat that again, Willie what will the leasing of a ferry vessel qualify? Versus purchasing or refurbishing a ferry vessel. Yes, the links you can't lease that is a that is eligible. Tulisa ferry is eligible. Alright excellent thanks Vanessa and then let's see here and then. It looks like it was just a same question came in twice that we just answered.

Alright. Will do a last call for questions anyone? OK, seeing none, I want to thank all of you for joining us here this afternoon to learn more about the ferry program, definitely look forward to seeing as many applications as they're out there this year within the program and certainly if you have any questions as you're working on developing your application, please go ahead and make sure that the contact Vanessa or your FT Regional office and will be more than happy to assist you. That ends the webinar and thank you so much everyone.