

>> Vanessa Williams:

Good afternoon, everyone, and I'd like to welcome everyone to FTA's Passenger Ferry Grant Program webinar. My name is Vanessa Williams. I am the Program Manager for the passenger ferry grant program. Right now I want to take the time to thank all of the FTA staff that's here in the room with me. We have John Bodnar, acting Division Chief for the urbanized area division. Mark Bathrick, Program Manager for the bus and bus facility competitive program, and we have a presentation on how to apply in Grants.gov. This webinar will be recorded. All of the slides and questions will be posted to our website at the conclusion of this presentation. And that should be within 48 hours. So if you have any questions, please use the chat box to answer any questions. You can ask your questions throughout the webinar and we will be addressing questions at the end of the presentation. If you are having any technical difficulties, please make sure that you enter that in the chat box so that we can talk you through. The agenda for today.

Today we're going to talk about the program overview, eligibility information, we're going to talk about the evaluation criteria, application submission, and applying in Grants.gov. And again, at the end of the presentation, we will answer all of the questions that's in the chat box. Section 5307(h), passenger ferry grant program, authorizes FTA to make awards on a competitive basis for passenger ferry projects that support passenger ferry systems in urbanized areas such as ferry vessels, terminals, and related infrastructure. The passage of the ferry grant program, it is a set aside from the section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program. A total of \$30 million is available per year, and this is through FY2020.

Here's some quick facts from the 2017 and 2018 ferry competition. FTA received 22 project proposals from 12 states for a total of \$65.4 million requested: 20 projects were funded for a total of \$58.2 million. The largest award was \$6 million. And if you're interested in seeing the types of projects that were awarded, I provided a link where you can go into the FTA website and see the type of awards this were awarded. Some of the examples of the funded projects, one of them is the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, they received funding of \$3.3 million and they're using the funds to make improvements to the St. John's river ferry slip, the vessels and the ferry terminal. Another project is the rock Allen county metropolitan mass transit district. They received funding of \$1.9 million, and they're using that funding to construct a terminal that will include safety and security, and to expand stock base. Also please check out FTA's video, highlighting the passenger ferry grant program. It's a 3-minute video on traveling by water, and this video was made when FTA announced the \$58 million in passenger ferry grants back in 2017 and 2018.

Here's some important dates that you need to be aware. the passage of ferry grant program notice of funding opportunity was published on February 12TH, 2019. Applications are due April 15TH, 2019, by 11:59 p.m., and that's eastern daylight time. The application package can be found at Grants.gov. So the application package can be found at Grants.gov and you can find that by searching for keywords requests

passenger ferry "or" ferry program." so the applicants should register on Grants.gov at least four weeks prior. And this is to ensure that there is no problem with the system. The technical review team will be evaluating projects late April, and award announcement is estimated late summer 2019. So after the award announce, that's when we have the press release and the final project selection will be posted on the FTA website, along with project selection guidance.

Funding award information. So a total of \$30 million has been made available for ferry projects that supports the evaluation -- six evaluation criteria that's in the NOFO. The projects will be selected on a competitive basis consistent with the criteria that's outlined in the NOFO. Funding available for obligation for year of award plus five years. And so funds allocated in this FY 19 competition must be obligated in a grant by September 30TH, 2024. And pre-award authority starts on the date that selected projects are announced.

Cost sharing and matching. The federal share is 80% Federal and 20% local. The exceptions, 85% for net project costs for acquiring vehicles, including clean-fuel or alternative fuel, that's attributable to compliance with the Clean Air Act, or attributable to compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. And so the 85% is for the whole vehicle. The 90% is for the net project costs for vehicle-related equipment or facilities, and that's including the clean-fuel or alternative-fuel vehicle-related equipment or facilities, attributable to compliance with the Clean Air Act and the Americans with disability act. So the 90% that can be filtered is the piece or the part that makes it CAA or ADA, it's not the whole facility, but it's the equipment itself. And there's more information in section C.2 in the NOFO for cost sharing or matching.

Eligibility applicant. So eligible applicants are 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.

Capital projects. So the capital projects that are listed above, there are capital projects to purchase, replace, or rehabilitate the passenger ferries, terminals, related infrastructure and equipment, including fare equipment, communications devices. Projects must support public transportation ferry systems serving an urbanized area. For vehicle ferries, they're also eligible if they accommodate walk-on passengers. Agencies can use up to .5% of the grant award for workforce development activities, and additional .5% for costs associated with training at the national transit institution. The workforce development should directly be related to the ferry project, and you must identify them separately in the project budget section on the supplemental form. Ineligible projects are planning, operating expenses, and preventive maintenance.

Now we're going to go over the evaluation criteria. I'm going to provide a brief overview of the evaluation criteria. I'll get a drink of water. The six evaluation criteria are how your proposed projects -- this is how they'll be evaluated and this is the responses provided in your supplemental form. So we want to see clear detailed concise information in your narrative.

The first criterion is the demonstration of need. In the section, the application must demonstrate how your project will address an unmet need for capital investments in passenger ferry vehicles, equipment, and/or facilities. Your proposal should demonstrate its transit needs or resources. What is the age, position and performance of assets to be replaced or rehabilitated. What is the capacity constraint and/or demand for new or expanded service? In the next section, you may want to explain the position of your capital assets and how that impacted your service. You may want to include some potential service disruption, cancellations, or reduction of service. You may also want to include information on backlog of maintenance, and you may want to include information such as designations and services that's not currently accessible by transit.

The second criterion is the demonstration of benefit. In this section, it describes what is your project benefit, how will the proposed project improve state of good repair, safety, ridership, and reliability of service. And does the proposed project connect to other modes. Some possible benefits you may include increased or sustained ridership, how your project improves operation or maintenance capabilities, or expanded mobility options. Other benefits you may want to include, if you have safety enhancement such as the lifesaver devices, security cameras, and first aid kits. And also if your project is connected to other modes, include information about transfer connections to other modes of transportation. Such as rail, bus, intercity bus or private transportation provider. Supporting documentation should include data that demonstrates a number of trips, that could be passengers and vehicles, or the number of passengers and walk-on passengers to other modes.

The third criterion is the planning and local and regional prioritization. In this section, you will describe how is the proposed project consisting of local and regional priorities, is it identified in a long-range plan, you must demonstrate that the project is in the tip or the stip or it can be added to the tip and stip if it is funded. And be sure to attach documentation to your application. You just can't say in your application that the project is in a planning document. You have to provide evidence. Other letters of support from local stakeholders. Also we love to see local support and that could be from your local government official, your local transit agency, community partners, congressional and other stakeholders. Please provide those letters of support.

The fourth criteria, local financial commitment. In this section, describe how will the local funds be secured? What is the source of your local share, and is it available and set aside for the project? In your application, you must identify the sources of local cost share and describe what funds are currently available for the project or will be secured if the project is selected for funding. You need to submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project. Applicants that request a federal share of greater than 80% must clearly explain why the project is eligible for the proposed federal share.

The fifth criteria, project implementation strategy. In this section describe how will the proposed project be implemented. Is the implementation strategy details reasonable and complete? What is the status of your planning in environmental work? So for example, has the environmental work, has it been initiated or completed? You also want

to include project timeline with key dates and milestones. And state whether your proposed project can be obligated within 12 months from the time of the award.

Last but not least, the sixth criterion is the technical, legal, financial capacity. In this section, the applicant demonstrates the ability to carry out the proposed project. Does the applicant have experience with projects of comparable size, scope, requirements? So in this section, indicate whether the applicant has the ability to successfully undertake the project. If there are any outstanding technical, legal issue, identify them up front in the application. And you can also include any steps that the agency has taken to help to deal with those deficiencies. So for additional information, please refer to section E in the application review for more detail for the list of the six criteria in the NOFO.

FTA encourages applicants to consider projects with the following departmental objective during project selection. I have a list, using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery, supporting economic vitality, and that could be at the national and regional level. Attracting non-federal sources of investment, for example, utilizing alternative funding source and innovative financial sources, accounting for life cycle costs, repair, and accountability for performance and meeting specific, measurable outcomes. Other consideration would have been the provision of an over-match, geographic diversity and system size, other competitive award.

I provided the link to the Federal Register notice, and I also provided the link for all of the application information, application must include the SF-424 application for federal assistance. The supplemental form, the FY 2019, that's the Passenger Ferry Grant Program, that's the supplemental form, and supporting documentation, such as letters of support.

Key takeaways. The three key takeaways from this presentation. Please, please take the time to read the NOFO. I just provided an overview of everything that I provided. It's more in depth on everything that I presented, as far as the program eligibility, cost sharing, evaluation criteria, the application requirement, that is all in the NOFO, and so the NOFO tells you exactly what we are looking for for a successful application. The second, documentation is crucial. The application must include documents to support the information that is in the narrative in the supplemental form. So when you are including documentation, please, on the supplemental form in your narrative, please label if this is attachment 1 and so that would be easier, so that way the technical review team, they can easily find your attachment. And finally, tell your story. So the review team, they don't have an idea or a clue about your agency, your project, or your local community or what your transit needs may be. So this is the opportunity to let your light shine to show how committed you are to the project and how your project will benefit your community. It's also your opportunity to demonstrate that you are ready and able to implement your project.

We're going to move on to applying in Grants.gov. I'm going to come out of my presentation and put up the slides for the Grants.gov. Give me a moment.

Sorry, everyone, we are aware that some of you are experiencing technical difficulties with both the sound and the transcript. We are trying to figure out what the issue is. Some people are able to get the presentation just fine and others of you are experiencing difficulties. So we do apologize for that, we'll carry on as best we can, but please be aware that this presentation will be available for download from FTA website. In the next few days?

Yes, in the next couple days, yes.

So thank you for your patience right now.

Thank you. I'm going to discuss, basically orient you on the resources that FTA is making available for you on the applicant organization, it's both on the FTA website as depicted in this chart, which is the background, the home page of the FTA website, the notices of opportunity page on the FTA website, as well as the Grants.gov applicants tab, if you will, on Grants.gov site.

These are the items I'll be talking about in helping to orient you to the resources on each of these pages. This FTA opportunities are all published on the FTA website. We also published them in the Federal Register as well as in Grants.gov website. Some of this information is redundant but it's in different forms to meet various requirements. I would recommend that you begin your navigation when going through these requirements, starting with the FTA NOFO page as shown here on the right.

This page will give you a good start point and as well as the major resources that you're going to be using such as Federal Register notice, the links to the program information, links to Grants.gov site where you can apply. To get to this notice of funding opportunity, the quick way, we have the direct links indicated in the slide, but you can also simply go to the FTA home page at FTA.DOT.gov, click on funding, and another option menu will pop up, select "applying," and then select "notices of funding." you'll see we have current notices as well as expired notices on this page. The important piece is that this page provides you with the Federal Register file, which contains all the prerequisites and all the information about applicant eligibility, and basically all the questions that you may have about either the funding or your ability to obtain this award. The other key elements on this NOFO page is the supplemental form.

We've been alerted now by one of our participants on this webinar that there appears to be a problem with the PDF supplemental form that we've published on the Grants.gov site, so we're going to look into that but the form on the FTA website is working and so we recommend that you use the existing form, but we'll check into it and if necessary, we'll publish updates.

Just to cut in, we did check the form on Grants.gov and if you click it to download and select "save as" and then work from that document, it does appear to be saving properly. Make sure you select "save as" after you click the link to get the document.

You'll need to run it from your computer as opposed to running it from memory. Thank you, John. So the supplemental form is a fillable PDF, it's an FTA product; it basically is to capture your proposal for the award, or what you intend to do with the funding. It has various blanks, and it's structured so we can tract the data more easily and as well as accurately, and use it in our evaluation tool. I would also caution you that some applicants may have participated in previous competitions for passenger ferry. Do not use any past versions of the supplemental form. Please use the existing FY 19 form that we have shown on the slide.

From the NOFO page, from our FTA website, you can simply select the opportunity FTA 21902 -- that long number, and that hyperlink will move you directly to the Grants.gov site. This download application page shows the Grants.gov site. As you can see, the initial in the background, we have the Grants.gov home page, the synopsis page, and there are four tabs on this page. The first tab, the synopsis basically gives the summary information about opening dates, closing dates and relevant information, the dollar amounts, things that are key for you to fill out your application. Then there's a version history. So let's say a week from now, we have to make some modification or changes to either the files or any other steps that you have to go through in the application process, we will publish that and you'll be able to see it in the version history, and it will be noted in Grants.gov as well. The related documents tab, this is where you can select as you can see the three files, the folder, the Federal Register notice and the supplemental form. These are the forms basically for your reference, you can download from this site, or these same forms are available to you on the FTA NOFO page. These files are there for your convenience as you're working through your application process. Then of course is the package tab. The package tab is contained -- well, basically leads you to the application process. You can preview the application by clicking on the preview option in the tab, or you can simply move to the apply process. And also remember that in your -- we're accepting applications from organizations and you can only submit -- certain individuals can submit the application.

This is what the applications package would look like. You have your -- the summary of the application package, on the right, the application form contains all the fields that you will have to complete. Some of these fields, if you need instruction -- we're having an issue here I think.

If you need instructions on this, the forms tab in Grants.gov contains the files and references for each of the elements if you would have to complete. So this is for all applicants, they must complete this form. Then you see on the bottom right, you'll see the attachment tab. This is where Vanessa indicated that she would like for you to attach your supplemental form as a first attachment in this attachment form. And any other documentation you wish to include with your application on this attachment page. The application -- this is a depiction of your Passenger Ferry Grant Program proposal form or your supplemental form. This again, this is in PDF form, it's fillable, so please remember that this is -- we're using this and the content of these forms as the basis for the evaluation of your application.

This is the form has certain data elements that we extract so that it's a formatted proposal form and we can easily compare applications and the content. Also remember that we must receive all applications via the Grants.gov, and Grants.gov ensures that we have all applicants that are eligible to apply, are also registered. In order to receive federal funding, you must be or to even apply for federal funding, you must be registered in the system for award management. When you register in Grants.gov, Grants.gov automatically checks if you're not registered previously, it will take you through the steps to obtaining the registration, validating your DUNS number and ensuring that you're registered in SAM which will prequalify you for your application to actually be submitted to the FTA.

I would recommend that applicants who have not previously registered either in Grants.gov or submitted applications to FTA previously, that you review and go to the applicants' tab in Grants.gov. It has extensive training materials and support materials for you to use and to basically help you develop your team that's going to develop the proposal and the application process. The other key factor here is, on the left-hand side of that webpage you'll see Adobe compatibility. Grants.gov requires certain software to be used in the application process. Adobe compatibility, there's various versions and types of expensive versions that are being used. Unfortunately Grants.gov will not accept all these, so please check the version of compatibility and use only the version that's defined in the Grants.gov site. Many of our reject or issues that we've had applicants encounter have been versioning problems with incompatible Adobe files. Some, for example, have where they can edit or will whatever advanced features which are not compatible with Grants.gov. At any rate, please review the compatibility, check software that you're using.

The next item I want to highlight is the work space in Grants.gov. So Grants.gov has created an opportunity for organizations to have teams work on the application process to avoid using emails have given -- they allow for organizations to register and create virtual teams who have participate in share files and collaborate on developing the proposal as well as submitting the proposals. So for example, previously, if you had a contractor working on your proposal and he was not in your organization and had difficulty in supporting you in working in Grants.gov. Now you can -- Grants.gov will allow you to add specific individuals and give them specific permission so that they can perform in the assigned roles so they can help you create the proposal and develop the application and help you submit. But again, I remind you that only the organization authorized representative, which is a specified role in Grants.gov, can actually submit to Grants.gov.

These are some of the categories or the roles and different types of work spaces you can select. I would recommend you review these and also the various roles and options that are available in the work space. So you can minimize lost documents or versioning in all of your proposals. This is where to do it, and also from this work space, you can also submit directly into Grants.gov.

This is a summary of basically our key points in the presentation, as well as addresses that may help you to identify the funding opportunity itself, the Grants.gov site as well as the other elements. Should you encounter any problems with submitting the application working through the application in Grants.gov, I suggest that your first resource be either the 800 number or the email you support line so they can help you resolve the issue. For all intents and purposes, FTA staff can only address the programmatic issues that if you have questions about eligibility or other issues that, please address those to Vanessa and she will respond appropriately. She's really equipped only to handle the program side of the submission process rather than the technical issues.

>> Thank you, Walt, for providing information on how to apply for the Passenger Ferry Grant Program funding opportunity in Grants.gov. You must register at least four weeks prior, don't wait to the last minute to apply so that way if you have any problems, you have plenty enough time to resolve it. So now we're going to ask if anyone has any questions, so this is the end of our presentation.

>> This is John Bodnar, I'm going to play moderator for the questions that were submitted during the webinar. If you do have any questions, please type them into the chat box and we will address them in order. So the first question was, I downloaded the supplemental form from Grants.gov, the version supplied doesn't let me save the text. So we mentioned this kind of mid-way through the webinar. If you're downloading from Grants.gov, please click "save as." once you get to the form and save to your computer to work or you can go to FTA's website and download the supplemental form there.

John, if I may, I would recommend that you not change the file names so that the supplemental form is clearly identified, and it retains the naming -- the names that we have provided it. So just fill in, save it as that same file name on your computer and then fill it in. Whereas if you change the names, we may have issues once you submit the supplemental form. Or we'll be looking for a form with that -- the name that we have given it.

Okay. But don't change the name.

Don't change the file name.

Okay.

Thank you, Walt.

The next question. Is upgrading to an electric passenger ferry applicable to this grant and would this be considered a competitive project?

Yes, it is (eligible). That's capital expense, yes.

>> So it would be an eligible project but you would, again, have to link the project back to the evaluation criteria. So you would want to make sure under demonstration of need,

if you're replacing old ferries, that you talk about the age and condition of those ferries or how much it costs to maintain them or how often they break down, things like that, and then under demonstration of benefits, you would need to link those to what's described in the NOFO. So while it being electric in itself is not the intent of this program, if you link the other benefit to your grant application, it could be a competitive project.

Next question. A lot of people having technical difficulties and I do apologize for that.

Here's the next question. If an eligible applicant submits an application involving a partnership [named partners] and is selected for funding, will the competitive selection process be deemed to meet the requirement for a competitive procurement under 49 USC 5325 for the named entities?

No.

I see a lot of heads shaking in the room. The answer is no. The next question, here, okay, eligible applicants include agencies, quote, eligible to become recipients of 5307, unquote. What is the definition of agencies that are eligible to become recipients of 5307 funding?

What's the definition of a direct recipient or perhaps a better way to phrase it would be how do you become a recipient of 5307 funding.

A direct recipient, my understanding, is the eligible entity. It's authorized by designated recipient or state to receive urbanized area formula funds, and that's directly from FTA.

All right. You need to come to an agreement with the designated recipient in an urbanized area and you can start that process. To learn more about this process by talking to your FTA regional office.

Next question. As part of required documentation, do you expect to see a STIP strip, showing the project in the current STIP?

No. It could be added if the project is selected for funding.

If it's in the STIP already, you can provide a copy of the page, or you can talk about how it can be added.

Right.

Here's the next question. I have a Grants.gov user name for my personal non-profit. Should I get a new user name for work-related applications?

I would check with the Grants.gov in the user role, for FTA purposes, we're only allowing organizations to apply, so if you are a member of an organization that's going

to apply, there may be a way that the user role -- your user role can be modified specifically in a work space, but recommend you go in to Grants.gov and specifically look at the applicants tab to see the options. Generally individuals and organizations maintain different access as well as permission codes, so whoever is extending the AOR or the organization that's submitting the application must assign specific user roles and if you are let's say a consultant outside that organization, they can assign you a role in that work space. But they'll walk you through the user I.D. and user rules process. grants.gov will manage that.

Next question is, will award winners be required to report on project progress on a monthly, quarterly, annual or project milestone basis? [multiple speakers]

For these grants, a lot will be quarterly or annually, depending on the size of the grant, you'll be required to submit both milestone project reports as well as federal financial reports.

The next question is: How do we find out if we are eligible as urban?

Well, to find out if you're urban, you can contact an FTA regional office and to determine designated urbanized area, NTO as well.

If you're currently receiving any section 5307 funding, you are eligible. So that would be another way to tell.

Right.

The next question, is this presentation available for download now? It is not available for download yet.

We need to save it and we're going to post the presentation with the audio as well as the transcript, but that will come a little bit later.

It will be sometime next week. Everything will be posted on the FTA website.

The next question is, would the modernization of harbor and pier piles be considered an eligible project? If it's used for ferry service, yes.

The next question, for a larger capital site development project such as a new passenger ferry terminal with high cost, how would an application fare that requested only design and environmental funds without a construction element? So no construction.

Repeat that again.

For a larger capital site development project such as a new passenger ferry terminal with high cost, how would an application fare without a construction element? You

should go back to your eligible projects slide.

We talked about capital projects, that is to purchase a place where -- related infrastructure and equipment, including fare equipment and -- devices -- planning. Planning would be ineligible.

So it would not fare well. The last round awarded 22 projects from a \$30 million solicitation. Is 1.36 million an average award size? So I believe the last total amount awarded was 58?

58 million, right.

It was two years combined, two years' worth of funding combined in one announcement. I think there were 22 projects submitted but 20 awarded, correct?

That's correct.

Next question, is a NEPA or CE needed for this application?

Yes, it is.

So if you go and look at the planning criteria in the NOFO, it explains what you should talk about there. -- Next question, when would any potential award be required to be obligated?

Projects that are allocated in this FY 2019 must be obligated in a grant as of September 30TH, 2024. I think that's it.

Just got one more. For clarification, the capital facility design and environmental elements are considered planning phase and are ineligible?

This is Mark Bathrick. So those particular items would be eligible if they were intrinsically related to the overall capital project you would be applying for as a whole. So if the design and environmental were going to result in a capital construction project, that of which you were applying for funds in this particular program, then they would potentially be eligible. But applying for design and environmental work on its own without the end product being the construction of a ferry-related facility, that would in this instance be ineligible.

There aren't any other questions, but we can leave the chat box open for another minute or two and see if anyone thinks of anything.

You have three more minutes. If you have any additional questions, you can also email me, Vanessa.williams@DOT.gov. I know I have talked to many of you and answered a lot of emails so if you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me. I want to take the time and thank everyone for participating in this webinar. We apologize for any

technical difficulty, and I wish everyone good luck and success as you prepare your application. Thank you. Have a good evening.