

FY 2020 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program webinar transcript

02/11/2020

>>Tom Wilson:

I would like to turn it over to Mark Bathrick, our Program Manager for the bus program.

>>Mark Bathrick:

Good afternoon, everyone, and good morning to our friends out West and thank you, Tom for your work in helping us set up this webinar this afternoon. We are now in the fifth round of the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Program so we are very excited about this opportunity to share with you all here today not only how to apply but some items for consideration.

So looking at the next hour and a half or so of how we will be spending our time, we will start with some general program overview. For those of you that have been part of this program or presentation in prior years, hopefully this is very familiar to you. We will then give a brief synopsis on the prior year's competitions. I have certainly found when talking with folks in presenting or doing debriefs, this definitely helps in setting the stage for all applicants just what to expect when it becomes a little competition that you will see in the bus competitive program. The next item, item number 3, there will cover the eligibility criteria in detail. I know folks from time to time have unique situations, so if you have some of those, feel free to save those questions until the end of the presentation or you can feel free to e-mail me directly.

>>Tom Wilson:

We did have someone pointing out that there was an echo. Typically that is an issue with the connection with the phones, so you might try hanging up and calling back in to see if that fixes your audio issues.

>>Mark Bathrick:

Thanks, Tom. Appreciate that. Once we go through the eligibility, we will then talk about the evaluation criteria and for most of you, this is what you are here for today to listen to, so we will spend a good amount of time going over what is listed there in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and then just some general items to be aware of. Second to last there, we will talk about the application submission process, and then finally, we will go through and have the Q&A.

So looking at the general program overview for the grants or Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program. So here we have the general statutory reference and I always encourage folks when you are looking at applying for a competitive program, any competitive program for that matter, it's always a good idea to familiarize yourself with the authorizing legislation. This certainly helps give you the intent behind what was Congress' motivation for the creation of the particular program and will also give you some insight into how any agency, and in this case FTA, has gone ahead and

developed the program. Just to note here, there is an emphasis in particular on what is eligible when it comes to the project types. So in this particular program we are able to assist in the financing of buses and bus facility capital projects, which do include -- and they are broken out into two particular categories. The first is replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing or leasing buses or related equipment. And the second is rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities. And we will talk a little bit more about what those mean here in a second.

So some important dates. So those key dates that you want to keep on your time horizon here as you consider applying for this particular program. So the Notice of Funding Opportunity was published there on January 30th. Here today, we are February 11th. We want to make sure we had this webinar as quickly as possible. A, because we understand there are a lot of grant opportunities out there that you folks might be looking at applying for and, B, just understanding as well the amount of time and effort you all put into putting these applications together, we want to make sure we got the information out to you as quickly as possible.

Looking down the road here, applications are due March 30th, 2020. They are due at 11:59 p.m. Eastern time. You will hear that mention throughout the presentation; not only to further emphasize that, but also to advise and ask folks, please do not wait until the last minute to apply. We want to make sure your applications are accepted and do not have any issues, especially technical issues, at the last minute, so we always tell folks it is best to at least work your way three days prior to the application due date to begin to start working on submitting your application.

This year, we anticipate having project evaluations here in November. For those folks that have been part of the program or experienced debriefs in the past, you know that we actually -- because of the size of the bus program and the amount of applications we get and really just a wide range of projects that we have, we actually get our reviewers and bring them here to Washington for two full weeks, so that will be taking place here tentatively in April of this year, which then puts us on pace for award announcements in summer of 2020.

I know folks traditionally reach out to me and ask, when they are looking at their project timelines, about what dates they should be using. That -- with the bus programs in particular because it's not outlined in statute, we do provide a general timeframe. So look at that summer 2020 and make sure you take that into consideration, but just be advised that is a fluid date.

So some general information, we talk about the program itself. So this is a competitive program. These projects are selected based on a competitive process that we go through, both in our technical evaluations and our final review and selection process. But everything that your application will be rated on and we will talk about here today is all found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity as well as those items for potential consideration when final projects are selected. So it's always a good idea to have this Notice of Funding Opportunity with you throughout the entirety of developing your

applications because this is really the directions that we are providing for you on what we are going to be looking and rating your applications on.

The next bullet there, really in further emphasizing just the point to familiarize yourself with the authorizing legislation. Within that, there is actually a particular quote that FTA takes into consideration, and that is, "In making grants under this subsection" -- which would be the 5339(b) program -- "the Secretary" -- and in essence the department in FTA for that matter -- "shall consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, bus-related equipment and bus-related facilities." So that is just something to keep in mind as you are working on any of your responses and your projects and to keep in mind that is something we must take into consideration. So once again, just familiarizing yourself with the intent that Congress provided and how these programs are structured.

Item number 3 just highlights the availability of these funds. So looking at a summer 2020 announcement date that would put the announcements here being made in fiscal year 2020, which would then give you three subsequent years following fiscal year 2020 for those funds to be obligated in a grant and that would be through TrAMS.

Item number 4, a pre-award authority. So for those of you that will be lucky enough to be selected this year in fiscal year '20, pre-award authority will actually start on the day that the projects are announced and posted on FTA's public website. So as part of the announcement process, we as a department are required to give Congress a three-day notification prior to it being released publicly on our website. So some folks may hear a little earlier or you may start to see news articles about some projects that may be selected based upon their congressional notification. Just please be aware that, A, we as an agency cannot comment on that until after those three days and, B, the date and time for pre-award authority starts when it's posted on FTA's public website, not when you may have heard from congressional delegation.

And then the last two items are just to highlight once again, some of the operating parameters that we are working under when developing funding projects and straight from the law itself. The first is that no applicant may receive more than 10 percent of the funding made available in a particular year. So this is in essence an applicant cap. And then we also have a floor, and at a minimum 10 percent of the funding must be allocated to rural projects, and those are traditionally your state departments of transportation or your Native American tribes.

So let's look now at the previous competitions just to give folks some context if you're interested in applying. So as I mentioned, we are now in the fifth year but we had the most recent three years here of data just for folks to be able to see kind of what we are trending across the program. Last year, we received 318 eligible proposals. As you can see here, a slight decrease from fiscal year '18, but for the most part looking at the funds requested, we stayed right around the 1.9 to \$2 billion mark. What we've seen is a lot of folks are utilizing the consolidated application technique or having several projects or several applicants in one proposal versus having individual applications

submitted. So that really is attributable there to the downturn in proposals received, but still seeing the funding requested amount remain fairly static.

And then looking at some of the projects awarded. Now we have seen an increase each year based upon not only the authorized amount for the program in the FAST Act, but also the appropriations compromises now for the past several years in Congress and have seen more funding allocated to the program, with last year 423 million being awarded in fiscal year '19.

Just a few highlights from last year's competition. The first bullet, I hope, just really highlights not only what a great job you-all are doing when putting together these applications, but also I think just really the merit to the project you-all are applying for within this program. Last year out of those 318 eligible proposals that we received, 188 of those of actually totaling about \$1.17 billion worth of 5339(b) funding requested received a highly overall rating coming out of FTA's technical evaluation phase, so extremely competitive.

Last year, we awarded projects in 43 states and territories that applied. And then you can also see the funding split here as well. So 45 percent of the funding last year went to large urban entities, 27 percent to small urban entities and 28 percent went to rural entities. And then the last piece just to give some context of when you are looking at applying, last year we saw the average award was slightly over 4.5 million and in keeping with FTA's -- certainly our emphasis on making sure these projects are successful, 79 actual projects last year received their full federal funding amount.

So let's now talk about eligibility. Three key points. The eligible applicants as pulled straight from the law: Eligible applicants include designated recipients that allocate funds to fix route bus operators. We also have states -- so those are traditionally your state departments of transportation -- and then we also have local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and then lastly, Indian or Native American tribes. The second bullet in particular I want to highlight for folks because this comes into play when you are submitting your application and determining how to partner with submitting your application: Rural areas must submit as part of a consolidated application through a state proposal. So in essence what this means is if you are a rural applicant -- so traditionally are those folks that are receiving 5311 funding, for example -- you are going to need to apply through your state department of transportation as part of their consolidated application to this program. And then lastly, in regards to sub-recipients, eligible sub-recipients include all of those folks that were listed there in bullet one and they also include private nonprofit organizations in public transportation. And just to highlight -- because I do get this question a lot -- that does not include private for-profit, only private nonprofit organizations.

Looking at the projects, so we discussed the first two bullets there when talking about what the program's intent is. So jumping down now to the third bullet, other eligible projects do include costs that are incidental to the acquisition of the buses or the construction of the facility. I will caveat though that they must be directly relatable

expenses to this particular project that you are applying for. So it can't just be general and administrative cost for your agency. And then the last two bullets are additional items: 0.5 percent of your application or what the amount you are applying for can be used for workforce development activities specifically related to buses and 0.5 percent can also be used for training at the National Transit Institute also specifically related to buses.

So just a quick overview of what a bus facility is because this is a fairly wide ranging definition, and we see as you can imagine very wide ranging applications for folks and what they are looking for and what might be considered a bus facility. So in particular within FTA circulars, we are talking about a facility that supports your transit operations. So these are what you would normally consider as your general bus facility. So your maintenance garages, administrative facilities, operations hubs, those particular items.

The second one is one that folks might not be too familiar with, but that actually includes facilities that provide passenger amenities and also extended to the building environment. So here we are looking at bus or rail terminals -- and those rail terminals would certainly we could fund the bus component not the rail component. But that also includes bus stations, bus shelters, park and ride lots for facilities that would attribute to bus transportation and then those types of services that would also help with transit and intercity for bus and rail operations as well. So a very wide ranging amount of projects that could be applied for as a bus facility, but please keep in mind that we need to have that bus transportation nexus there in order for the project to be considered eligible. Ineligible projects, so those certainly include operating expenses. This is a capital program. So make sure that what you are applying for in your application and in your project budget is capital-related because we cannot fund operating expenses of any kind. We also cannot fund preventative maintenance. Expanded capital items, so these are what you are talking about security drills, for example, or the establishment of a debt service. We cannot fund previous project expenses, so this comes back to once again, that pre-award determination date, which would be when it's posted to FTA's website. We cannot fund mobility management activities. And then we finally cannot fund nonpublic transportation projects, so school buses, prisoner transport, inter-facility shuttles and to an airport, for example, and then just general services that are not open to the general public. These types of transportation services are not eligible projects in the program as classified as public transportation.

Looking at the cost sharing for this particular program, there are three key items to keep in mind. The first is that the traditional cost sharing in this program is 80 percent federal, 20 percent nonfederal. And that certainly can increase when it comes to the nonfederal portion, but 80 percent is your traditional threshold. However, we do have two additional items that could change that. The first is vehicles that allow for compliance with the Clean Air Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act may be eligible for a maximum federal share of 85 percent. Furthermore, we also have for facility improvements that would allow folks to maintain compliance or become compliant with the Clean Air Act or American with Disabilities Act could be eligible for up to 90 percent federal share. And I just want to highlight -- once again, we have that bolded and

underlined -- it must be directly attributable. So if you are building a facility, for example, the entire facility would not be eligible for 90 percent federal, 10 percent local, just those items that are part of the facility that are allowing you to maintain or come into compliance would be eligible. And then lastly, as always, please refer back to the Notice of Funding Opportunity where we have a general list of what we traditionally define as eligible sources of match.

So next, let's talk about the evaluation criteria or section E of the Notice of Funding Opportunity for those folks that are following along. So we have six particular categories and the first is our demonstration of need. So what we have here for folks is -- and I will read these out loud just to further emphasize them -- are some items that you might want to consider asking yourself as you are looking at our Notice of Funding Opportunity and what we are asking you to address there and then just some food-for-thought questions. So starting with demonstration of need, questions you might want to post to yourself, would be how will the proposed project address an unmet need for capital investment? How will the proposed project enhance the safety of the transit system? How will the proposed project improve connectivity of bus systems with other networks through the use of deployment-ready information technologies? And then this one definitely want to emphasize -- to make sure that folks cover this in your narratives and your application -- how is the application a one-time or periodic investment that cannot be reasonably funded from FTA formula program allocations or state or local resources? And then lastly, as you will hear me mention throughout all six of these, what substantiating evidence can you provide to help support the statements? So just to continue to emphasize and we talked about, this is a very competitive program with 318 eligible proposals and 188 of those receiving highly recommended ratings, we are really looking for folks not only to be able to tell us your story in particular demonstration of need, but provide us that supporting evidence as well to be able to really set the stage as your application goes through the review process. So please keep that in mind.

Next, for demonstration of benefits. How will the proposed project improve the condition of the transit system? How will the proposed project improve the reliability of the transit system? How will the proposed project enhance access and mobility? And then we have a new question here -- and we will talk a bit more about the AIM initiative in the upcoming side but just to highlight here a new item in demonstration of benefit. How will the proposed project accelerate the introduction of innovative technologies or practices? And then lastly, what substantiating evidence can you provide to help support the statement that you are making in your demonstration of benefits narrative?

Looking at the next two, our third one is planning and local regional prioritization. So here the questions to ask yourself might be, how is the proposed project consistent with local and regional long-range planning documents? How is the proposed project consistent with local government priorities? And then what substantiating evidence can you provide to help support these statements discussing the planning process that was undertaken as well as the local support? So two different items to note here as well. As we note in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, additional consideration will be given

to letters of support. And then applicants may also address how the project will affect the performance of the system, the asset or specific performance measure that may be tracked by the applicant.

Moving on to local financial commitment. Questions to ask here, when will the local funds be fully secured? And we highlight that because we do understand there are various processes for the budgeting that agencies go through in budgeting, so be sure to highlight that and provide context when answering. What is the source of the local share? This is certainly critical to make sure that the source is actual eligible local match. What is the percentage of the local share that may be provided by the applicant? So is it 15 percent, 10 percent, 20 percent or greater than those particular benchmarks? And then lastly, what substantiating evidence can you provide to give context to the local financial commitment?

And the last two. So for project implementation strategy, how soon can the proposed project be obligated. And just to highlight that, once again, that is not asking when the project will be completed, but when the project can be obligated in a grant in TrAMS. How complete is the proposed project timeline? And then coupled with that, how reasonable is the proposed project timeline? So we are looking for both a complete timeline as well as a reasonable timeline. What environmental work has been done? So in particular as we note in the notice, we are looking at any NEPA work that has been done or will needed to be do, any coordination with the SHPO, for example, any of those items, have that conversation here. And then lastly, if you find yourself in a position where you do have items for any of these that are still outstanding, have that discussion and ask yourself what procedural steps remain to project implementation.

And then lastly, with technical, legal and financial capacity, does the applicant have the know-how to carry out the proposed project? And then if you find yourself in this position where you have open issues whether it is technical, legal or financial, have a discussion and identify what those items are and how you are working to remedy or correct those. So those are, as mentioned, the six technical evaluation criteria in particular in the notice located in section E, and that is what FTA will be reviewing your application on when we are conducting our technical reviews that will be taking place in April.

So the next section, F, outlines the review and selection process, so this is after we've gone ahead and conducted our technical evaluations and rated your six criteria under section E, we then have section F. And in particular, this outlines other items or what I call additional tools in the tool chest, if you will, that can come into play when we are working on narrowing down all those applications that we have -- and as you saw how many highly recommended ones we had last year -- into various funding options that are then selected and how we come up with our final project selections that were announced last year for fiscal year 2019.

So one in particular is departmental objectives. So for this in particular, we are looking at all these items, but we are also looking at how we can support economic vitality at the

national or regional level, how you can utilize alternative funding sources and innovative financing models to attract nonfederal sources, how you can promote a state of good repair -- and in particular how you can account for life cycle costs -- what innovative approaches you can use to help improve safety or expedite project delivery, and then finally how you can use performance metrics and measurable outcomes to hold yourself as the grant recipient accountable. So these are all additional items that can be taken into consideration. We ask you to address not only in your supplemental form -- there's a section for that to fill out, but really we are asking you to address those throughout your narrative and throughout your application. So make sure all of your answers reflect any of these objectives that you believe your project meets.

Next, another item for consideration is Opportunity Zones. So this was a byproduct of the 2017 Tax and Jobs Act. And I won't read this in its entirety, but if you believe that your project is either located in or impacts an opportunity zone, be sure to identify those Opportunity Zones in your application for consideration. And you can find more information about those at the link that's provided here on this slide.

So we have two key additions here in the fiscal year '20 Notice of Funding Opportunity that I just want to particularly highlight for folks. The first is we have FTA's accelerating innovative mobility, or AIM initiative. This was recently announced by Administrator Williams and what this is is we as an agency are encouraging applicants across all of our programs, our competitive programs here within FTA's portfolio, to consider proposing projects that might introduce innovative technologies or practices not commonly found within U.S. transit systems. So we want to make sure to caveat folks that this is something you would not commonly find here in the United States. A couple examples of this that are listed specifically in the Notice of Funding Opportunity could be integrated fare payment systems that would allow for complete trips or advancements to propulsion systems. A couple more potential examples for folks out there as food for thought could be innovation in practices that might include new operational models, new financial or procurement models, or a value capture. And once again, just continue to highlight, we are looking for any of these that you would not commonly find here in the United States right now.

And for more information on a particular program itself, if you are looking for any literature we have about it or better familiarize yourself with what this particular program will be looking for, definitely please visit FTA's Accelerating Innovative Mobility homepage where you can find out more.

The second is a Department of Transportation wide initiative, and this is our rural opportunities to use transportation for economic success, or our routes initiative. And in essence what we as a department are saying is that rural transportation networks play a vital role in supporting our national economic vitality. Addressing the deteriorating conditions and disproportionality high fatality rates on our rural transportation infrastructure is of critical interest of the department. So consistent with this initiative, the department is encouraging applicants to consider how your project will address any of these challenges faced by rural areas. So I just want to highlight this

does not mean that your project must be located in a rural area to have an impact on this particular initiative but we are looking for folks, if you believe that your project impacts or is in alignment with the routes initiative, similar with the AIM initiative, make sure that your application as a whole and all of your responses, documentation, et cetera, reflect that.

So next we will talk about the application submission. So as most of you are familiar with you will be applying through grants.gov and we have some slides here that we will just kind of walk you through that process. So first, you are going to want to locate where the Notice of Funding Opportunity is. You can find that in several different locations. Certainly you can find it on FTA's main page, going through and looking through the bus particular program, so the bus competitive program; we have it on our landing page as well on the right-hand side, there's a link to the Notice of Funding Opportunity. You can also search our Notice of Funding Opportunity table that we have on FTA's website as well. Or you can also find it directly in grants.gov by searching the opportunity number or by searching a keyword, for example, bus.

So a couple items to highlight of what we have on our current FY 20 notice of funding webpage on FTA's website, there you can find a description of the program, you can find the supplemental form as well. You can find the direct link to grants.gov where you will be submitting your application and working on both your SF-424 or your standard request form as well as supplemental form. And you will also find links to all the various program information that we have, whether it's last year's recording webinar, a listing of prior year projects that have been funded and any other information that FTA has posted all has links that are available by using this homepage as your starting point.

So anyone can download the application package from grants.gov, so here is the main view that you will see when you are looking at the bus opportunity number. But we just want to highlight that only authorized organizational representatives can submit that application to grants.gov. So I would definitely recommend for folks that you start going into grants.gov now if you haven't been on in a while, and make sure your usernames and password are up to date and that you are aware of who that authorized organization representative is because you are going to want to make sure you have all of that ready well in advance of the March 30th closing date there at 11:59 p.m.

So your application package, so that in particular there are three key documents that you are going to want to make sure that you have as a part of your submittal at a minimum. The first is going to be your SF-424 form. So you can see there that is located directly there in the application package, and that is your standard federal assistance request form so I'm sure most of you have seen that in one form or fashion. That is in essence your coversheet where you will have your information about who you are as an agency, your address, contact information and how much you are applying for. The next document there on the bottom right-hand corner is the attachments document. And this is where you will be able to attach your Supplemental form and any other information that you would like to attach as part of your comprehensive application. And these will all be submitted through grants.gov so you will be able to

find both of those there on the main page.

Then you can also locate there in related documents, the supplemental form. So we tried to make that as accessible for folks as possible. You can find it on FTA's website in two locations and you can find it on grants.gov which is the actual packet itself, and we do that because this in essence is your application. This is going to be the heart of what you will be filling out and what our review teams will be reviewing. So please make sure if you have any questions that you use this document and if you are having any difficulty, that you reach out to us the moment that you have that. A couple of items to note. This document needs to be saved as is in order for our system to read it and accept your application. So please do not scan the document, turn it into a Word document, re-PDF it, for example, or any of those items. We need it to be saved as is, so folks can either use the "save" button or "save as" button to your desktop, fill it in and then attach it to the attachments form that will then be used along with your SF-424 form to be submitted in grants.gov.

Grants.gov also has some useful resources for applicants so be sure to use the applicants tab, and in particular what I found valuable when working with folks is there is a great how-to on what versions of Adobe PDF are supported by grants.gov. So if you find yourself having any issues navigating the supplemental form or the site itself, be sure to go to those how-to's because they are very helpful, especially for first-time users.

We also have information there on the organization registration, so if you are a new entity that has not applied for a grant before, this will walk you through exactly how to set up your organization, make sure your subsequent information is available so your SAM number, your DUNS number, all that information. So be sure to use those tabs as well if you're brand-new. And if you're on the call here today and you are in the organization, I would encourage you to start that today, begin that process because that can take anywhere from 2-4 weeks to get your organization fully set up in grants.gov.

So within grants.gov, you will be using the workspace function to make sure that your application will be compiled and submitted. So that allows for multiple roles within a single agency to be allocated, so you can have someone in your budget office working on that at the same time you have someone in your maintenance office working on it, for example, or any array of groupings that you see fit for your agency. So definitely use this function, but you will be doing all of your work here -- and to highlight again, you may have the roles clearly defined, so in the end you know who is the person that has the authority to submit on behalf of your agency.

If you have any questions on the workspace itself, there is a tutorial on grants.gov and you can also reach out directly to grants.gov helpdesk and they will be able to advise you on that. Grants.gov is a federal level website, so it's not something that FTA in particular can control, so if you find yourself having any hiccups using grants.gov, definitely start with the help desk and they can bring us in if it's anything in particular that relates to our program specifically.

And then lastly, here are some great web addresses, some items for you are bookmarked, so you have where our funding opportunities are located as the agency. We have grants.gov links, so just the general grants.gov as well as the Applicant Help tool, and then the contact information for grants.gov help and support.

And just to further emphasize what Tom mentioned when we started, at the bottom left-hand corner you can download the slide presentation there and on slide 36 is where you can find all of this, so you don't have to scramble and jot it all down right now.

So the wrap up and then we will definitely jump into Q&A for folks. So the pitfalls that I come across when working with folks or when conducting debriefs. The first is ineligible applicants or ineligible projects. Definitely, we as FTA understand the amount of time and resources that you-all put into compiling the information for these applications and filling it in, so we want to make sure that time is used wisely. Make sure that you go through and the eligibility is listed in the notice as well as on our website and on this phone call, and make sure that your project is eligible. If you still find yourself not too sure and you are right there on that thin line, you can always reach out to your FTA Regional Office or directly to myself or the Program Manager and we would be more than happy to make sure you are eligible or you are not before you begin starting work on an application.

The next bullet is correctly identifying the useful life of the asset. As I mentioned when we started on the webinar, the age and condition is something that we at FTA must take into consideration based upon the statute itself. So it is crucial for folks no matter your type of project, whether it's a replacement, rehabilitation or even an expansion project to correctly identify and have a discussion about the useful life of the asset that you are going to be applying for and/or will be replacing with rehabilitation, et cetera. So make sure you use FTA standard guidelines for useful life or if you have your own agency useful life that may be more restrictive than FTA's, be sure to identify both of those in your conversation.

Next, that the priorities or outcomes are not aligned with the criteria. So this one, unfortunately, we see all too often and what in particular we are highlighting here is not only those priorities that we address in section F, so looking at departmental objectives, opportunities zones, the AIM initiative, the routes initiative, folks not having a conversation about those in their narratives, but more importantly, entities that take, for example, their responses for the low and no-emission program that's open right now to the public, the build program that's a department-wide competitive application program, the infra-program, any of those other programs, and unfortunately copying and pasting their responses from that program to this program. And there are distinct differences not only in what the program is looking for, but also in the items listed of what we will be reviewing and rating your application on and they may not be compatible between the two. So make sure that you have read through that notice -- our notice -- in its entirety and adjust your narratives accordingly.

The fourth item here is lack of evidence. So we've mentioned that for all six of those particular typical evaluation items we chatted about. This is just to further emphasize that we receive a lot of applications. Folks do a great job describing the need, but we are also looking for folks to give us that context as well that can provide that further substantiating evidence to go above and beyond just discussing your particular project but giving us all of the work you may have done in coming up with identifying why you are asking for funding for this particular project.

The next is not citing evidence and narratives. So this really ties in with the lack of evidence. If you are going to use attachments, we would ask and really stress folks make sure that your narratives advise where you want the review teams to go look for that information. For example, if you have a short-range plan that maybe identifies where your transition to a new type of bus or the creation of a new intermodal facility might be, make sure you either just scan the page and identify that file name or that you identify where in a larger document you should be looking for that information. In essence, make it as easy as possible for the review teams to correctly identify where you want them to look to find that substantiating information.

Second to last, not providing the statutorily-mandated match. So this, in particular, 80/20 is the traditional threshold for this program. If you are going to be doing anything less than that, make sure that you identify in your application that this is a Clean Air Act or an ADA compliant vehicle. And if you are looking at facilities, just to highlight once again, just to reemphasize, the entire facility is not eligible for that 90/10 split; it's only those items that allow for compliance with those two acts, and those two items should be explicitly identified in your project budget and in your request.

And then lastly, just to make sure that the local match is eligible because we do see that as well from time to time where folks use an ineligible source of match, so make sure you reference back to the Notice of Funding Opportunity as well as FTA's website if you have any questions on if your source of match is eligible. And, lastly, just late submission. We understand that there are a lot of groups you are going to be working with within your organization to pull the information to create your application, but we would ask that you please do not wait until the last minute. There are no guarantees that there might not be a technical glitch as you are working to submit, and we hate for folks to either run into that where your grants.gov account is locked or something else unforeseen may happen and you are unable to get your application in there at the last minute. I always tell folks work three days backward at a minimum from the due date and make that at least your target date to get your application in.

So just a last item here, and then Tom and I will open it up for questions. Some keys to success. First and foremost, follow the Notice of Funding Opportunity. As I mentioned, this has everything listed that we as FTA will be not only reviewing your application on, but also using to determine which projects we are going to be selected. So use this -- we are giving you basically the directions to the test, so make sure that you always have this as your key document.

Next, be sure to use qualitative and quantitative information. So an application, and in particular a capital application, folks tend to go one way or the other. They may have a very substantive conversation about the general need at the local level or folks may really focus in on the data and just the true metrics of why a particular asset may need to be replaced. You want to make sure you bridge the gap and use both of those to really tell your story. Reviewers that will be part of the review team looking at your application, 9 out of 10 will not be probably from your area, your state and they may not even be with your organization. So you want to make sure you tell your full story about what's going on at the local level, and I always use -- and it's on bullet number four there -- always use the adage, tell folks where you have been as an organization in regards to this project, where you are now as an organization and then where you would like to go or how this project will help move you forward and into the future. Going backing up there for the third bullet point, just to further emphasize, provide evidence to support your work statements. We mentioned that a lot so I won't belabor that point. And the last one here is how will you judge success. So certainly, FTA when awarding these projects, we are looking to make an impact on public transportation but we also want folks to have a discussion about how you will judge success if, for example, the buses that you are applying for are replaced or the new maintenance facility is constructed or any of those items, tell us how you will judge it not just how FTA will judge the success of your particular project.

So with that, there is my contact information; it's also on FTA website and in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. If you have questions, feel free to reach out to me and we will definitely do our best to track down those answers for you. And with that, it looks like we've got about a half-hour left or so. So we will start the Q&A process. So I will turn it over to Tom and he will give you some guidance on how to submit your questions and we will get started.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great, thanks, Mark. We did receive quite a few questions during the presentation, so we will run through those here shortly. And if you have questions, please use the Q&A pod on the left-hand side of the screen toward the middle to submit a question and we will put that in our queue and try to answer the questions. If we cannot, we will follow up and try to provide you with information. Wanted to again apologize for the lack of captioning. This presentation is being recorded -- has been recorded and we will provide a transcript on our website and we can send out an e-mail to everyone who participated when those are available, but if you in particular need to access that -- have an accessible version or a colleague does, you can also use the Q&A pod to send me a note, and I will make sure to e-mail that to you.

All right, so let's start with some questions. So this is a question about the expiration of funds. Just clarifying that with the 2020 funds and having three years, does that mean the funds are good through FY 2023?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's an excellent question, and I want to make sure that I give you the full context for

that. So if the funds are awarded here in the summer of fiscal year 2020, you would have until the end of year fiscal year 2023 to obligate the funds. Once obligated, these funds would not expire so for those folks that may be familiar with the build program as an example where we have an obligation date and expiration date, this particular program only has an obligation dates. So these funds would need to be obligated in a grant by the end of this year fiscal 2023 if we are announcing projects in the summer of 2020. I will also say that we as FTA and certainly as the government want to get those funds obligated and spent as quickly as possible to make sure we are making an impact on local public transportation. So please keep that in mind not only when you are looking at your project but also your project timelines which are part of the supplemental forms.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. So we had a few questions about -- from providers in tribal communities, and so we will try and cover some of those here now. Kim is asking what percentage of funds have been successfully awarded to Indian tribes in the past?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's an excellent question, and we actually have not pulled tribes out from the large urban, small urban and rural split which we identified in an earlier slide. So unfortunately I do not have that information readily available to provide for you. I did want to mention something to further highlight for our tribal actives on the call here, tribes are unique in that you do not need to submit through your state department of transportation as part of that consolidated applications. So I want to make sure that I make that caveat for folks that rural applicants who are not tribes need to submit to your state department of transportation. Tribal applicants have the obligation; they could certainly submit to state department of transportation, but they are eligible to submit directly here to the Federal Transit Administration.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great, thank you. I think that actually answers a couple of questions coming up, so we covered that already. So for eligibility of an applicant for a tribe, does it need to be a fixed route in order to qualify?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Another excellent question. Tribes as written in the legislation do not have any of those caveats that you may have seen when looking at eligibility that had a fixed route focus, whether on our designated recipients or our local governmental entities. So tribes do not need to provide a fixed route in order to be eligible to apply, but you must provide public transportation. So I always caveat that for folks. Whether it is para-transit, demand response, fixed route, it must qualify as public transportation in order for you to be eligible.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great. So for the 20 percent nonfederal match -- it relates to tribes -- does CFR part 170, section 170.133 apply? That basically says that TTP funds may be used to meet

matching or cost participation requirements for any federal or nonfederal transit grantor system.

>>Mark Bathrick:

If you are referring to tribal dollars -- so we have had this conversation. So federal highways TTP dollars are eligible to apply as match. So definitely you can look at using those as part of your funding portfolio. The other piece, just to mention as well for folks out there that may find themselves in unique situations with various funding, sliding scales, et cetera, this program is very prescriptive in the fact that it is 80/20 for capital projects and then 15 percent -- or 85 percent federal for vehicles for Clean Air Act and ADA, and then 90 percent for those components of a facility. So please if you find yourself in those other unique situations, just make sure that you understand that this program, in its competitive nature, is unique and that it looks at those three particular thresholds.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great, thank you. We also had a couple of questions about the AIM. You had covered that, so couple of questions about clarifying that.

If you could mention again what the innovative technology projects, examples of those, and how applicants know if an innovative technology they are applying for is not commonly found in the U.S., which is the stipulation they had. So if you could provide examples of what some of those might look like.

>>Mark Bathrick:

You bet. The first -- I will read off again what we have listed directly from the Notice of Funding Opportunity. And I also just want to further provide some context that as will you see in the notice, it says "such as" before going to the examples, so these are just examples and not meant to be an exhaustive list. But they could include integrative fare payment systems that permit complete trips and also advanced propulsion systems. We've also got a conversation here on new public transportation operational models, financial models, procurement arrangements or value capture. So this is a newer initiative. We are actually as an agency currently working on a grant program that will be announced at a later date specifically for this program. So once again, very new when it comes to the types of projects we would be looking for. Regarding your second question there, how will we know. I would certainly just take it as a rule of thumb that if you haven't seen a lot of publication about your particular topic that you are looking to explore, whether it is in research materials or just in industry publications or you don't see it mentioned on FTA's website, it is probably something that is not very commonly found at this time and is something you definitely want to consider putting -- or at least highlighting within your application.

I also want to mention we want folks to make sure you are applying for what you need as well. So please keep in mind that as we talked about what the statute says for this particular program and the intent of this program. So please keep that in mind that when looking at your application you don't go too far to one side or the other. We are

just asking folks if you have applications that help meet this initiative that we're encouraging you to apply for it this year and highlight it in your application.

>>Tom Wilson:

Another question on the AIM initiative, can you explain a little bit about what an integrated fare payment system would look like? What does that mean? Is that an example where multiple transit providers are using the same fare system or what does that look like?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's definitely an example. Being innovative, these are things certainly we as an agency are just thinking of or ideas we might not have considered yet, but Tom to your point there and I think what the individual mentioned, these could be systems that would allow for the same fare card to be used across multiple public transit providers, for example. It could be a streamlining of fare collection systems across multiple agencies and part of a singular network. It could be a transition to more of an electronic system perhaps. All of those are just various examples, but just to highlight again that looking for integration of fare payment systems and really helping folks to make that complete trips; so that is something certainly to highlight. When someone maybe using public transportation, they may be going from walking to biking to using demand response to using fixed route. All of those are what we would be considering part of a complete trip, so how will your project impact the fare payment systems allowing folks to either make that more seamless or easier on the end user.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thanks. We have a couple of questions as well about parking lots. If an application is for the construction of a multi-modal capital facility, such as a park and ride, must the budget request only -- represent the cost allocated to transit services? And the second question is similar but more straightforward, as part of bus and bus facilities programs, can that include parking lots?

>>Mark Bathrick:

The second question is a little easier. It can include parking lots, so parking lots would be an eligible bus facility as long as the parking lot is for a park-and-ride facility itself or certainly could be subsequently associated with the construction of an operations facility, an administrative facility and any of those types of traditional bus facilities. So parking lot would be eligible. Certainly you won't need to look at those six technical evaluation criteria to determine how competitive your parking lot may be with what we are looking for, but a parking lot would be eligible.

Regarding the first question with larger-scale construction projects, and I will use that as a more general example versus just discussing a parking lot that maybe has a transit component to it. FTA certainly will be looking to have the asset and the federal funding identified for the public transportation portion. We can at times support incidental use of a facility and that could be a parking lot or any structure for that matter, but you would want to make sure you are familiar with FTA's incidental use policies and FTA's circular

on that as well as make sure you identify the intent of that incidental use in your application and not apply for a full trans facility and at a later date look to change your application and an incidental use. So all of that needs to be taken into consideration upfront. And make sure you have the relationship identified in your application, so the review teams can make sure that all of the agreements are in place or that you have an understanding about how that will work, and then certainly you can apply for items such as that.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great. If the grantee is looking to purchase several different types of buses, can that be combined into one application?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Definitely. We see that across the multiple years now that we've had the program, where folks will submit consolidated applications in particular for single bus procurements for an agency that might be for various ages, conditions, types and sizes. What I would mention is that you want to make sure that you are providing and filling out the supplemental form in particular looking at the type, so we ask for the VIN, the type, the length, the mileage, the age because all of that helps us identify if the vehicle that you are applying for has met or will meet its intended use for life. So when we have applications that might have various vehicle types or sizes, just make sure you are as detailed as possible and make sure we can separate out, for example, what vehicles may have a 12-year, 500,000 useful life and what vehicles may have a four-year useful life.

>>Tom Wilson:

On the topic of useful life, Stephanie was looking for clarification. What year did the useful life of buses go from 12 years to 14 years? And does the 14 years apply only to buses purchased in that year?

>>Mark Bathrick:

So Stephanie, I would want to get a little more information in particular on what you are referencing with the 14 years because as we mentioned there, there is a lot of different levels that FTA has its useful life broken down based upon weight, the size, the passenger count, et cetera. So if you want to e-mail me directly, I can point you in the direction of where we have that or we can have a discussion about the particular type of vehicle and how that might fit, but definitely for folks out there, make sure you use the useful life located on FTA's website as your guide for this.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. A lot of other tribal questions. May a tribe use their own land as an in-kind local match? And do they need to provide appraisal for it as a supporting document?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's an excellent question on both of those items, so kudos on that. The first is land, depending on certainly the procurement process and what it's currently being used for --

so I won't make a blanket statement -- but land can be used as an in-kind match for the project itself. So you can't use land to buy buses, but if you are looking to build a facility, land could be used as an in-kind match as long as all the pre-items are met. You do need to identify that in your application that you're planning on using in-kind and identify with the in-kind will be. So in this case land. And then yes if you have information available and have done your appraisals as part of the outlined real estate process and you have those, you will definitely want to include those as supporting evidence.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. Jeff asks if as a designated recipient, we provide services in both rural and urban areas. If the project is classified as a rural area, do we still need to submit with that state?

>>Mark Bathrick:

No. So the rural item in particular is looking at the classification of the entity. So I'm glad you made that clarification. If you are an urban entity that provides a rural service, we are not asking you need to submit as part of a state application; however, and this applies to the relationship for 5311 folks out there, mainly if you just receive that funding, you already have your sub-recipient relationship and thus we would want you to continue that relationship when applying for the 5339(b) funding as well. So I appreciate whoever asked that question there for helping us make that distinction for folks.

>>Tom Wilson:

Great. We've had a couple of questions about low and no-emission buses, whether they are eligible for this particular program; can we apply for funding for zero emission buses infrastructure; more specifically hydrogen fuel cell buses infrastructure? And another person asks about whether a CNG bus is eligible for Low-No grant if the bus is fueled in part by renewal recaptured methane for gas.

>>Mark Bathrick:

Interesting. So the blanket response is yes. Low and no emission buses are eligible in this program. But the 5339(b) program is actually propulsion agnostic.

>>Tom Wilson:

We had an indication some people may have lost sound. So just want to check on that real quickly. Great. Sorry, continue.

>>Mark Bathrick:

So the 5339(b) program, which is the bus and bus facilities competitive program, versus 5339(c) program, which is low and no emission program here at FTA, the 5339(b) program is propulsion agnostic, so we do not look at whether it is a clean diesel, CNG, battery, electric, hydrogen fuel cell, you name it, all the various propulsion systems out there, we do not look at that as a criteria. So you're definitely eligible to apply. I will say in particular because we have the Low-No program open right now as well, just to further emphasize make sure that you also read the demonstration of need

and benefit for the Low-No program and the bus program, and please be aware that they are different. And so make sure that you are looking at the benefits of what the Low-No emission might be looking for versus the bus program, just to highlight that difference between the two.

>>Tom Wilson:

All right, thank you. So here is an easy one for you. What is the exact definition of public transportation?

>>Mark Bathrick:

The exact definition and actually it is on FTA's website and is statute and is continual open service -- or continual ridesharing service that is open to the general public. So really why I mentioned that and why I have mentioned that several times throughout this webinar here this afternoon is just to highlight to make sure that public transportation is open to the general public. So where I've seen this now for the past several years in the program is that we get questions particularly from universities who may be a local government authority based upon the way the state has commissioned in particular public universities, but they may provide bus transportation on their campus that's only for students, as an example, so that would not be considered public transportation because it's only for a select identified group. However, if that service was open to students and the general public and anyone that was on the campus who are a part of that organization, was visiting, would be able to use the bus, then it would be open to the general public and thus be eligible. Something to keep in mind when you are dealing with unique groups out there, that public transportation must be open to the general public.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thanks. Jim asks will an application request for lower federal match be a preference; if someone is seeking a higher local match, will that help in the competition?

>>Mark Bathrick:

So we do have listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity that the percentage of local share that someone is providing could be given greater consideration when projects are being selected. So it really is, as I mentioned on debrief calls with folks, all of those tools in the tool chest we discussed or other items there in section F, those are all options that could be taken into consideration. It doesn't mean they will be from year to year, but certainly as listed in the notice, we do say that folks that provide greater local share could be given additional consideration in both your rating and final selection.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thanks. You did mention a couple of times about the different match that ADA projects get. So if someone is making ADA changes for the whole building, do they get a higher match or is it only the parts that are to make it ADA compliant?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Only the parts that would make it ADA compliant. The example I always use for folks is

if you are rehabbing an existing facility and looking at adding in a ramp that may make the entrance to the facility ADA accessible, the work being done on that ramp would certainly qualify for the 90/10, but for example, general replacement of the windows on the front façade of that facility would not be eligible for the 90/10. So make sure that if you are looking at using that 90/10, which is why we always stress to folks, make sure you specifically call out that line item in the budget because we want to make sure that we are not marking your application as ineligible for not requiring the statutory match if you don't provide that for us.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. I will summarize this little longer question, but for a trans providers that in this case is under 200,000 and received 5307 funding from the state also provide transportation in small rural areas, are they qualified to be able to apply themselves or would they need to go through the state to do that?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Small urban entities, which would be those folks under 200,000, are eligible to apply as long as you are an eligible applicant. So I just want to continue to remind folks of that that we have it listed there talking about the designated recipients, that we talk about local governmental entities, so as long as you as a small urban provider, or any provider for that matter that is not a strictly rural provider, meets one of those two you can definitely apply directly to FTA. If you find yourself not in that position, then you would certainly be able to explore applying through your state department of transportation who would be an eligible applicant and you would have to be an eligible sub-recipient at which point then you would have to look at yourself being a private nonprofit. So small urban entities, to wrap up, are eligible to apply directly, but just make sure you are an eligible applicant and don't take it that if you are a smaller entity you can apply without looking at the applicant eligibility criteria.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. And you'd be awarded this grant and Low-No project. A broader question there is can you use the same project to apply to both programs since they are both at the same time? And how would that work out?

>>Mark Bathrick:

So there are two ways I want to answer this for folks. The first is that you can apply for the same project in both programs. We do coordinate across the entire agency and the departments to make sure that we are not funding the same project in two particular programs, especially those running parallel in timing. The second part I would say is -- not sure quite if the question was asking this, but I'll mention it for the good of the group here -- if you are looking at, for example, applying for Phase I within the Low-No program and Phase 2 in the bus program, but it is for the same project, make sure you explicitly talk about that in your narrative and your project description and mentioned that throughout the application. That is a very unique instance and I've only seen that on several occasions, but we want to make sure that if folks are attempting that, that you identify that because we will, if it looks to be the same project, will take that into

consideration and make sure we don't fund the same project twice.

>>Tom Wilson:

The no photo requests and explanation of the scalability of the project, can you verify what scalability the FTA is looking for?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Sure, so scalability is the minimum amount of federal funds that you could accept if you were awarded, that you could still have a successful project. So, for example, if you were applying to replace 10 buses in your fleet, but at a minimum you could at least replace two and still have an impact on your system, it would still meet whatever procurement guidelines you set forth, then 10 would be your request and the cost of two vehicles would be your scalable amount. So it provides us context here at the department when we are making awards that, as we talked about when you have so many highly competitive applications in such an oversubscription requested, allows us to make sure we can't give you your full federal funding amount, we are giving you an award hopefully that makes some practical sense that you could still be successful.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. Certainly back around to the routes initiative.

>>Mark Bathrick:

Depends where you are in the country exactly.

>>Tom Wilson:

Can you give some more examples for projects that would be considered eligible for routes?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Sure, the routes initiative, this is a department-wide, so not just within FTA, but across the department, and in essence we are just looking for applicants and projects that recognize that rural transportation faces unique challenges and that your project might be able to better improve either specifically rural transportation or provide access to rural transportation that might further impact connectivity, it might impact safety, and as we mentioned we talked about the higher fatality rates in rural areas on our highways. So any of those types of projects that have that nexus would potentially meet the routes initiative. So that's why we certainly say it does not have to be a project that is by a rural entity, it could be an urban entity that runs service into a rural area of your network. You could have other synergies that I'm not going to think of at the moment, but you want to make sure you are having that discussion about how your project is going to be directly impacting rural transportation and connectivity, and safety certainly.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. Are activities that provide access to bus transit, such as completing a sidewalk, bike lanes and ADA ramps, eligible under the program, and if so what distance from the bus stop would that be relevant?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Most of those services you described are eligible. Certainly we have seen folks that have applied for sidewalks up to bus shelters, bus stations, ramps to provide ADA access and some bike connectivity. We ask folks -- certainly the traditional mindset has usually been within about a quarter mile or so, but certainly folks need to make their case in the application that there is a transit nexus to their project. So be careful in how you look at those projects. Sometimes folks will apply for a broad network they are looking for, and remember this is a bus and bus facilities program, so we are particularly looking to fund buses and bus facilities. These types of projects are ancillary to those and they certainly support bus facilities which would be the shelters themselves but just make sure that you are being within reason if you are looking to apply for something like that.

>>Tom Wilson:

Crystal asks, is a deviated fixed route in a rural community considered acceptable as a fixed route for this funding?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Yes, so I just want to make sure -- I heard something in that question I want to make sure I highlight. State departments of transportation do not have to provide fixed route, so there is a distinction there when looking at the applicant eligibility. So for two of the items in particular in the statute itself, it mentions fixed routes explicitly, which is why we include that. State departments of transportation and tribes do not have that listed. So an applicant that, for example, operates a deviated fixed route in a rural area would still need to apply through the state department of transportation and thus would be an eligible applicant, so I just want to make sure we understand state department of transportation can apply for folks that may not operate a fixed route.

>>Tom Wilson:

Thank you. Just going through and making sure we haven't missed any questions here. Would a body shop be considered a bus facility?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Yes, we have funded similar projects that have had an all-encompassing maintenance project that had a wash bay and bodywork for paint rehabilitation on the vehicles; that's considered a bus facility and would be eligible.

>>Tom Wilson:

On similar lines, aren't things like supervisory vehicles or computers and shop and garage equipment eligible projects?

>>Mark Bathrick:

So, yes, as a short answer. Most of what you described there as long as it relates to bus operations would be eligible and would be considered bus equipment. I just want to further stress for folks in particular make sure you are looking at the technical

evaluation criteria and understanding how your project will meet in particular the six evaluation criteria and those additional considerations for project selection and how these will directly impact bus transportation. So whether it's the computers that you described or supervisory vehicles, you are going to -- very similar to the previous question there, so relating to those ancillary items to a bus facility or bus shelter -- you are going to need to really make the case and provide the review team and FTA an understanding of where bus nexus is.

>>Tom Wilson:

Anthony asked, does the project have to be in the [inaudible]?

>>Mark Bathrick:

It does not have to be at this time; it will have to be at that time of obligation. We mentioned in the Notice of Funding Opportunity that we ask applicants to have a conversation about that. So definitely up to each agency; it's a little different on where they might be in the process, but you will need to provide as much context as possible when answering that question.

>>Tom Wilson:

You did mention that you offer a follow-up with grantees. Are there examples of successful applications available?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's a good question. We do not provide applications that have been selected for funding publicly on our website. You can however find a listing of all of the entities and their projects and the dollar amounts on the bus and bus facilities main page, and we definitely encourage folks -- I know many of you are part of industry organizations out there, definitely encourage you to reach out to some entities you might be familiar with and ask if they'd be more than willing to share their information, their application or even just tips or tools of the trade with you. But we do not provide the applications themselves, just the applicant, the project and amount funded.

>>Tom Wilson:

What should be considered if applying for rehab of a bus maintenance facility?

>>Mark Bathrick:

That's a pretty broad question and I would just say make sure we look at the Notice of Funding Opportunity and understand what we are looking for in the technical evaluation criteria. Make sure you have an understanding of the useful life and how that will impact it, your particular project, and be as thorough and comprehensive as possible both in your narratives and answering all the information we are asking you to fill in in your supplemental form or provide as supporting evidence.

>>Tom Wilson:

I think that we are -- I think we have covered it, and wrapping it up.

>>Mark Bathrick:

That sounds great once again -- we have about four minutes here left -- thank all of you for your participation this afternoon, and the questions were great and really that's attributable to the amount of effort you are putting in to putting together your applications for this program. So as Tom mentioned, we will work on getting the transcript up and available for you all. If you have any questions, we want to get this webinar done as quickly as possible so you had plenty of time between now and the application closing to work on your applications and projects. So if you have questions, definitely feel free to reach out to us. We are always happy to help folks around the country to navigate this process. And with that, I think if there's any last minute questions we will have a chance to answer those, but if not thank you so much not only for your time this afternoon, but for all you-all do on the ground actually helping to provide public transportation to folks across the country. We really appreciate all you do so, thank you.

>>Tom Wilson:

We do have one or two questions, if we can try to squeeze them in.

>>Mark Bathrick:

We can try to squeeze them in.

>>Tom Wilson:

All right. Can we request comments from reviewers after the award date?

>>Mark Bathrick:

The comments from FTA reviewers. So we do not -- the first part is you can request a debrief, and that debrief actually -- I've done 45 of those this year so far. So that debrief is a verbal meeting that goes anywhere from 30-45 minutes, and I'll go over with your organization the review and selection process that took place in a particular year, and we will provide you with a general summary, much of what you saw today, on the prior year's competition, and then we'll go over the review team's notes and the rationale of what went into your ratings and any observations that we may have here and I may have as a Program Manager. So we definitely provide that for folks across all of our programs at FTA because we want to be as helpful and transparent as possible, but we do not provide the actual notes from the review team themselves or the name of the reviewers or anything like that. So that's the distinction for that particular question.

>>Tom Wilson:

Let's slide another one in. What about software for fixed route, including kiosks for fare purchase outside of bus stations?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Yes, definitely; that would be considered bus equipment and would be eligible.

>>Tom Wilson:

Are new types of fuel, such as working with a partner that purchases trash fuels for buses considered an eligible project?

>>Mark Bathrick:

Fascinating. If the project was for a facility, the bus facility that is a refueling station, for example, that would have the fuel coming from that unique source, that fueling station would be eligible. We have funded CNG stations, we have funded better electric fueling stations, you name it. So that particular project would be eligible. I just would caveat that the key word that was mentioned there was "partner," and we do not have a partnership provision in the bus program. So all items must go through a competitive procurement, so keep that in mind as general food for thought. But we can fund fueling facilities and in this case it sounds interesting, but, yes that sounds interesting. Granted if it was for the private individual, make sure that the applicant is eligible, so just want to continue to reemphasize that point that the applicant who is applying must be eligible and private entities are not eligible.

So with that, I think we've hit the 3:30 p.m. mark. So thank you very much for everyone for your participation, and thank you for -- Tom, for doing a great job helping us out this afternoon, and with that, have a great rest of your day. Thank you.