

# Grant Writing Techniques – Federal Focus

T.H.E. Conference 2020

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# Agenda

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- Disclaimer
- USDOT Discretionary Grants
- Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)
- Application Considerations
- USDOT Debrief – FASTLANE Case Study
- Lessons Learned
- Discussion and Questions



**U.S. Department  
of Transportation**

# USDOT Discretionary Grants

- Merit-based discretionary grants for surface transportation
- Award projects that advance Department's priorities
- Modal and geographic equity
- Multiple USDOT reviews
  - Intake Processing Team
  - Technical Evaluation Teams
  - Economic Analysis Team
  - Project Readiness Team
  - Control and Calibration Team
  - Senior Review Team
  - Secretary Review and Award



# Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)

- INFRA FY2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Due Date: February 25, 2020
- Projects Awarded: No specified award date
- Application
  - No more than 3 project submissions per applicant
  - Project Narrative: 25 page limit
    - Project Location, Project Parties, Grant Fund Uses, Merit Criteria, Project Readiness, Large/Small Project Requirements
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis Appendix

# Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)

## INFRA FY2020 Funding

- \$906M available for award
- Minimum Award Size:
  - \$25M large projects
  - \$5M small project
- At least 25% of funds for rural projects
- 90% for large projects
- 10% for small projects
- \$158M freight intermodal project constraint
- 60% match
- September 30, 2023 obligation date

## Merit Criteria

- Supporting economic vitality at national and regional level
- Leveraging Federal Funding
- Deploying innovative technology, project delivery, and financing
- Performance accountability



# Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)

- BUILD FY2020 NOFO
- Due Date: May 18, 2020
- Projects Awarded: September 15, 2020
- Application
  - No more than 3 project submissions per applicant
  - Project Narrative: 30 page limit
    - Project Summary, Project Location, Grant Fund Uses, Selection Criteria
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis Appendix
  - Identify if the project is located in an Opportunity Zone

# Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)

## BUILD FY2020 Funding

- \$1 Billion available for award
- 50/50 split urban and rural
- Maximum Award Size: \$25M
- Minimum Award Size:
  - \$5 Million Urban
  - \$1 Million Rural
- \$100 Million cap per state
- September 30, 2022 obligation date
- September 30, 2027 expiration date
- 80% match

## Merit Criteria

- Safety
- State of Good Repair
- Economic Competitiveness
- Environmental Sustainability
- Quality of Life
- Innovation
- Partnership
- Demonstrated Project Readiness
- Project Costs and Benefits
- Geographic Diversity

# Application Considerations

- Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Tell the Story
- Align the Stars
- Address Risks – Scope, Schedule, and Budget
- If you are unsuccessful, request...





# USDOT Debrief – FASTLANE Case Study

## Technical Team Evaluation

- Project summary
- Economic, Mobility, Safety, Community, Partnership, and Innovation Outcomes
- Cost Share Criterion
- Impact on the Nation Highway Freight Network

## Project Readiness Evaluation

## Cost Effectiveness Evaluation

- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Transparency of Analysis
- Key Assumptions
- Comparison to the No-Build

## Large Project Evaluation



# Lessons Learned

## Grant Application

- Easy to read
- Peer review
- Attend the webinars
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Letters of Support
- Realistic schedule
  - NEPA
  - Begin Construction
- FHWA Division review



# Lessons Learned

## Grant Agreement / Term Sheet

- Scope
- Schedule
- Budget
- New Program

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TERM SHEET UNDER THE  
NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FREIGHT AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS  
DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM

This term sheet is between the United States Department of Transportation (the “USDOT”) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (the “Project Sponsor”).

The USDOT published a “Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Department of Transportation’s Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA Grants) for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018,” 82 Fed. Reg. 31,135 (July 5, 2017) (the “NOFO”). The NOFO solicited applications for Federal financial assistance to highway and freight projects of national or regional significance under the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects program, 23 U.S.C. 117. That program is also referred to as the INFRA program.

This term sheet reflects the conditional selection of the Project Sponsor to receive an award for the Design and construction of a portion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvements and Argo Connections (P3, GS19, B9). In this term sheet, “INFRA Grant” means an award of funds that were made available under the NOFO.

The purpose of this term sheet is to set out the parties’ mutual understanding regarding material terms and conditions to be included in subsequent agreements that the parties intend to execute to implement an INFRA Grant.

The parties therefore agree to the following:

1. **The INFRA Application.**
  - (a) The Project Sponsor’s application for funding was dated November 1, 2017, and titled “75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Project and Argo Connections.” In this term sheet, the “Project” means the project proposed in the application, as modified by schedules A and B.
  - (b) The Project Sponsor states that:
    - (1) all material statements of fact in the application were accurate when that application was submitted; and
    - (2) Schedule A and schedule B document all material changes in the information contained in that application.
2. **Division of USDOT Responsibilities.**
  - (a) The Office of the Secretary of Transportation is responsible for the USDOT’s overall administration of the INFRA program and the approval of section 9 and schedule B of this term sheet.

# Lessons Learned

Grant Application → Grant Agreement / Term Sheet

Revisions to:

- Scope
- Schedule
- Budget

**SCHEDULE A  
MATERIAL CHANGES FROM APPLICATION**

The Project Sponsor is committed to delivering its INFRA application for the 75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Improvement Program at a reduced scope and new total project cost of \$413,466,297, including federal INFRA participation of \$132,034,680. Project elements P3, GS19, and B9 will advance, EW2 and P2 design will be removed from our overall federal project scope for this award and will be funded and advanced by the CREATE partners.

The project schedule summarized in Table VI-1 of the INFRA application is superseded by the list of major milestones outlined in Schedule B in this Term Sheet. The Project Sponsor's INFRA submission schedule was based upon an INFRA award in the Spring of 2018 and currently, the anticipated INFRA funds will be available on December 1, 2018 which resulted in project construction start in Spring of 2019.

# Lessons Learned

## INFRA - FY2017/2018

- Applications Due November 2017
- Announced June 2018
- Awarded August 2018
- CREATE Term Sheet signed December 2018
- Allocation February 2019
- September 30, 2020 obligation date
- Performance Reports





# Lessons Learned

Added political interest on your project



# Resources

<https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>

<https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/infragrants>



# Discussion and Questions

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