

TIGER Surface Transportation Discretionary Grants

ARRA provided \$1.5 billion in discretionary grants for surface transportation projects across all modes. The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) has named this the TIGER Grant program and has released preliminary guidance on criteria for distributing funding.

Application Deadline: Applications are due September 15, 2009.

Eligible Applicants: Funds under this program will be awarded to State and local governments, including U.S. territories, tribal governments, transit agencies, ports, other political subdivisions of State or local governments, and multi-State or multi-jurisdictional applicants. Those seeking funding need not apply through state DOTs.

Eligible Projects: Projects must have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region. Projects eligible for TIGER Discretionary Grants include, but are not limited to, capital investments in: (1) highway or bridge projects; (2) public transportation projects; (3) passenger and freight rail transportation projects; and (4) port infrastructure investments, including projects that connect ports to other modes of transportation and improve the efficiency of freight movement.

Grant Size: Grants are to be from \$20 million to \$300 million, though US DOT can waive the minimum grant size and encourages smaller projects to apply.

Selection Criteria: TIGER Discretionary Grants will be awarded based on the following selection criteria. US DOT will give more weight to the primary selection criteria (Long-Term Outcomes and Jobs Creation & Economic Stimulus) than to the secondary criteria.

Primary Selection Criteria

Long-Term Outcomes: US DOT will give priority to projects that have a significant impact on desirable long-term outcomes for the Nation, a metropolitan area, or a region. The following types of long-term outcomes will be given priority:

- ***State of Good Repair:*** Improving the condition of existing transportation facilities and systems, with particular emphasis on projects that minimize life-cycle costs.
- ***Economic Competitiveness:*** Contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United States over the medium- to long-term.
- ***Livability:*** Improving the quality of living and working environments and the experience for people in communities across the United States.
- ***Sustainability:*** Improving energy efficiency, reducing dependence on oil, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and benefitting the environment.
- ***Safety:*** Improving the safety of U.S. transportation facilities and systems.

Job Creation & Economic Stimulus: Consistent with the purposes of the Recovery Act, US DOT will give priority to projects that are expected to quickly create and preserve jobs and stimulate rapid increases in economic activity, particularly jobs and activity that benefit economically distressed areas.

Projects that are unable to demonstrate a likelihood of significant long-term benefits in any of the five long-term outcomes will not proceed in the evaluation process. For the Jobs Creation & Economic Stimulus criterion, a project that is not ready to proceed quickly is less likely to be successful.

Applications will be required to provide a cost-benefit analysis quantifying the project's benefits across a number of areas.

Secondary Selection Criteria

Innovation: US DOT will give priority to projects that use innovative strategies to pursue the long-term outcomes outlined above.

Partnership: US DOT will give priority to projects that demonstrate strong collaboration among a broad range of participants and/or integration of transportation with other public service efforts.

Additional Statutory Selection Criteria

ARRA specified that US DOT must ensure an equitable geographic distribution of funds and an appropriate balance in addressing the needs of urban and rural communities. No more than 20 percent of funds can go to any state.

Priority will be given to projects that are expected to be completed within three years of enactment (February 17, 2012).

Priority will be given to projects for which federal funding is required to complete an overall financing package that includes non-federal funding.