

FY 20 Passenger Ferry Grant Program Webinar Transcript

February 18, 2020

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Slide 1: Good afternoon, everyone. And, again, welcome to the Passenger Ferry Grant Program webinar. And I also want to thank you, Tom, by the way for the introduction. All of the webinar transcript, PowerPoint slides, and audio recording will be posted on the ferry website sometime this week, if it's not this week it would be early next week. If you're having any technical difficulties, please make sure you enter that into the chat box, and we will try our best to walk you through.

Slide 2: On today's agenda, I'm giving a brief overview of the Passenger Ferry Grant Program. I hope everyone had the opportunity to read the Notice of Funding Opportunity, also known as the NOFO. I'm going to talk about eligibility information, the six evaluation criteria, application requirements and forms, grants.gov, and then after that we will answer any questions you may have.

Slide 3: Section 5307(h) is the Passenger Ferry Grant Program, and it authorizes FTA to award on a competitive basis for ferry projects that support passenger ferry systems in the urbanized areas, such as ferry vessels, terminals and related infrastructure. This program, it's under Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program. A total of \$30 million is authorized per year through FY 2020.

Slide 4: Quick facts from the FY 19 ferry competition. FTA received 20 projects proposals from 9 states for a total of \$99 million requested. Out of that 20 projects, 9 projects were funded for 32.8 million, and the largest award was \$5.9 million. If you're interested in seeing the types of projects that were awarded, you can go to the FTA website link to view those projects. Since 2013, FTA has processed over 70 applications requesting approximately \$378 million in Passenger Ferry funding. So you can see it is a very popular, popular program.

Slide 5: Important dates that you should be aware of. The NOFO was published on January 30th, 2020. Applications are due March 30th, 2020, by 11:59 p.m. EDT. The opportunity number is FTA-2020-008-Ferry. The application package, can be found at grants.gov, and you can find that by searching for the keyword "Passenger Ferry," "Ferry Program" or you can use the opportunity ID number. It is also recommended that applicants register on grants.gov at least four weeks prior to applying to ensure that there's no issues with the systems or anything like that. So, again, it's recommended that please try to apply four weeks prior. The project evaluations are scheduled the first week in May. The award announcements estimated around late summer 2020. After the award announcements, there's a press release and all the final project selection will be posted on the FTA website, along with the implementation and guidance.

Slide 6: Funding award information. A total of \$30 million has been made available for ferry projects that support the six evaluation criteria listed in the NOFO. Projects will be selected on a competitive basis that's consistent with the criteria outlined in the notice. Funding available for obligation of year of award announced, plus five years. FY 20 funds are available for obligation until September 30, 2025. Pre-award authority starts on the date that selected projects are announced.

Slide 7: The maximum federal share is 80% federal and 20% local. The exceptions are 85% for the net project cost, and that's for acquiring vehicles for compliance with the Clean Air Act and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act. It's the 85% is for the whole vehicle. The 90% is for the net project costs for vehicle-related equipment or facilities, and that's for compliance with CAA and ADA. And in addition, the applicant, you must itemize the cost of any cost related to the vehicle-related equipment associated with compliance with ADA or CAA to be eligible for the 90%. If you're going to provide a federal share that is greater than 80%, you must clearly explain in details why your project is eligible for the proposed federal share. All the eligible sources of local match are listed in the NOFO and they are in Section C, eligibility information with subsection 2, cost sharing or matching.

Slide 8: Eligible applicants are designated recipients, direct recipients of section 5307 funds or those eligible to become such recipients. States include territories of the United States and recognized tribes.

Slide 9: Eligible projects under the passenger ferry program are capital projects to purchase, replace, or rehabilitation passenger ferries, terminals and related infrastructure and equipment, and that's including fare equipment, communications devices. Project must support public transportation ferry systems serving an urbanized area. Vehicle ferries are eligible if they also accommodate walk-on passengers. Workforce development is also an eligible expense. Agencies you can use up to 0.5 percent and an additional 0.5 percent for costs associated with the training at the national transit institution. If you're going to use the workforce development, the workforce amount should directly relate to the ferry project and identify them separately in the project budget section on the supplemental form. Ineligible projects are planning, operating expenses, preventive maintenance. Any project that does not include the purchase, replacement, or rehabilitation of ferries, terminal-related infrastructure or related equipment is not eligible.

Slide 10: Grant requirements - Buy America and Strengthening Buy-American Preferences for Infrastructure Projects, all capital procurements must meet FTA's Buy America requirements. All iron, steel or manufactured products be produced in the United States. For the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) all the projects that include ferry acquisitions must comply with DBE regulations. More detailed information is in the NOFO Section G, Federal Award Administration Information.

Slide 11: I'm going to provide a brief overview of the evaluation criteria, and you must refer to the NOFO for additional detailed information and requirement. The six

evaluation criteria show how your proposed project will be evaluated based on the responses provided in the supplemental form. When you are preparing your supplemental form, we want clear, detailed, concise information in your narrative. Any additional documentation must be directly referenced on the supplemental form, it must include the file name and where the additional information can be found.

The first criterion is the Demonstration of Need. In this section, you must demonstrate the application, your project must demonstrate how your project will address an unmet need for capital investment and passenger ferry vehicles. It could be equipment and/or facilities. Your proposal should demonstrate if transit needs for resources such as what is the age, condition, and performance of excess to be replaced or rehabilitated, whether the -- what are the capacity constraints and/or demand for new or expanded services? Explain the age or condition of your capital asset and how does that impact the service. Include information about potential service disruption, cancellation or reduction of service, if you have information on backlog of maintenance, you may want to include that. You may want to include information such as destinations and services not currently accessible by transit.

The second criterion, Demonstration of Benefits. In this section, describe what is your proposed project benefit. How will the proposed project improve the state of good repair, safety, ridership, and reliability of service? And does the proposed project connect to other modes? Possible benefits may include increase or sustained ridership, improve operation or maintenance capacity, capability, or expanded mobility options or economic benefits to the community. Other benefits can include safety enhancements, such as life saving devices, security cameras and first aid kits. Is it connected to other modes of transportation? So you may want to include information about transfer connection to other modes of transportation, and that can be rail, bus, inter-city bus, private transportation providers. Supporting documentation, if you have that, that should include data that demonstrates the number of trips, and that can be passengers and vehicles. And the number of walk-on or passenger and transfer to other modes.

The third criterion is Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization. In this section, you want to describe how is the proposed project consistent with local and regional priorities? Is it identified in the long range plan? And TIP and STIP? You must demonstrate that the project is either in the TIP or STIP, or it can be added to the TIP and STIP if it is funded. Be sure to attach documentation to your application. You just can't state on your application that the project is in the planning documents. You must provide some evidence. Are there letters of support? That could be from your local stakeholders. We want to see and we encourage to see local support from your local government officials, your local transit agency, community partners, Congressional and other stakeholders. So please, please provide letters of support.

Slide 12: The fourth criterion is the Local Financial Commitment. In this section, describe how will the local funds be secured. And what is the source of your local share, and is it available and set aside for the project? Your application must identify the source of the local cost share and describe whether such funds are currently available

for the project or it will be secured if the project is selected for funding. Must submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project. And applicants that requires a federal share greater than 80%, you must clearly explain why the project is eligible for the proposed federal share. Examples of local share sources are in the NOFO Section E.

The fifth criterion Project Implementation Strategy. In this section, describe how will the proposed project be implemented? Is the project ready to be implemented within a reasonable period of time? Are your implementation plans are reasonable and completed? What is the status of planning and environmental work? For example, has the environmental work, has there been initiated or completed? Include project timelines with key dates and milestones. You also want to state whether your proposed project can be obligated within 12 months, and that's from the time of award.

The last criterion is the Technical, Legal and Financial Capacity. In this section, we're asking does the applicant describe to demonstrate the ability to carry out the proposed project? Does the applicant have experience with projects comparable and that can be size/scope/requirements? Indicate whether the applicant has the ability to successfully undertake this project. And if there are any outstanding legal, technical or financial issues, please identify them upfront in the application. You can include any steps that the agency is taking to rectify those deficiencies. Additional information is in Section E in the application review for the complete and detailed list of all other criteria in the NOFO.

Slide 13: Okay, so now your application has been reviewed and now they've been scored according to the evaluation criteria. Now we're in the review and selection process. The FTA's Acting Administrator will determine which projects we'll be funding. To make that determination, there are some additional factors that may be considered. In addition to the six evaluation criteria or how the project is scored there are other considerations. Geographic diversity. This is where the projects are located and this is to make sure the awards aren't concentrated in one particular area of the country. Size of the transit system to make sure funds are not disproportionately awarded to small or large systems. Qualified opportunity zone, whether the project is in an opportunity zone and designated by the Treasury Department. Other competitive awards. Percentage of local share. And this is whether or not the applicant proposed a local share that's greater than the minimum. Departmental objectives, there are key departmental objectives as listed in the NOFO. You could look in there for more details about that and that's in the NOFO section F, Review and Selection Process Information.

Slide 14: New in the FY 20 NOFO are two initiatives that also will be used by the administrator for other considerations. AIM (Accelerating Innovative Mobility), we are encouraging applicants to propose projects to support the AIM initiative. We're focusing on the introduction of new technology or practices that's not commonly found in the U.S. transit systems; innovative operating models, financial or procurement arrangements; value capture. Such as integrated fare payment system, permitting complete trips or advancements to propulsion system. Innovation can also include practices such as new public transportation operational models, financial procurement arrangements or value

captured. Another initiative is the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success, and that's ROUTES. Consistent with the ROUTES initiative, the Department wide it's encouraged applicants to consider how your project will address the challenges faced by the rural areas. If you have a project that's in an urban area that specifically discuss how the project will serve rural transportation needs, please link all of that to the demonstration of benefits. With the two new initiatives, the AIM and ROUTES, I have a link for both initiatives, please address that link that to under the Demonstration of Benefits, what was described in the NOFO.

Slide 15: Application and Submission. I provided a link to the NOFO and application information. A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: you must have your SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and that's from Grants.gov and the FY 2020 and that's the passenger ferry program supplemental form, and that is also from Grants.gov or the FTA website. Supporting documentation must be described and it has to be referenced in your narrative and referenced by your file name in the appropriate response section of the supplemental form, or it may not be reviewed. We're asking that so it will make it easier for the review team to look for documentation. So application must be submitted to Grants.gov. And this is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on March 30, 2020. And late applications may not be accepted. And also, one supplemental form is per SF-424 submission.

Slide 16: Key Takeaways. Please take the time to read the NOFO. It has a lot more in-depth details on everything that I have presented. Everything you need to know about the program eligibility, cost sharing, matching, evaluation criteria, the application requirements, all of that and the two new initiatives, the AIM and the ROUTES, all of that is in the NOFO. The NOFO tells you exactly what we are looking for for successful application. Documentation is crucial. The application, again, must include documents to support the information that is in the narrative in the supplemental form. When you are including documentation in the narrative in the supplemental form, please name of the document for each attachment. And, again, so that way the technical review team can easily find your attachment. And last, but not least, tell your story. The review team, don't have a clue about your project, your agency or whatever your transit needs may be. This is the opportunity to show how committed you are to the project and how your project will benefit the community, and it also is an opportunity to demonstrate that you are ready and able to implement your project.

Slide 17: Applying for FTA Grant Opportunities in Grants.gov. I'm going to provide an overview on some of the resources available to applicants, organizations on the FTA website. Grants.gov website and the application process. Here at FTA, and we do not provide any technical assistance on Grants.gov. Grants.gov is a government-wide website and they have their own technical assistance help desk. If you have any issues submitting your applications in Grants.gov, you would need to contact Grants.gov help desk and not FTA. And that's why when I mentioned earlier it is recommended for you to, if possible, to submit your application in Grants.gov four weeks prior. However, if you have any problems with the supplemental form, then that you will contact me, the program manager.

Slide 18: This slide is the FTA funding opportunity that was published on the FTA website. So the Federal Register and it was on the Grants.gov website. So, again, we recommend you review the FTA NOFO page as your starting point because it contains the information and links to the website and resources to assist with the application. So if you look at the notice of funding page, it provides the links, all the current opportunity available, as well as old or expired notices, and additionally, this page also provides a link to the program page, which is sponsoring the discretionary funding and soliciting applicants. And this is as well as the opportunity ID.

Slide 19: This is the FTA NOFO page. And this is my passenger ferry NOFO page. And on that it contains a summary of the opportunity announcement. It has important dates such as application deadline, a brief explanation of eligibility requirements and it to slides links to the grants.gov site, the FTA supplemental form, the Federal Register notice and all other important information about my program, about the ferry FY 2020 NOFO. And the supplemental form, it is a fillable PDF which is used to capture the key elements of the applicant's proposal. So this form contains fill-in blanks for information, which will be used by FTA to evaluate the proposed projects and funding requests. And this form must be attached to the application in Grants.gov in order to receive consideration. And do not use forms from prior years or attempt to create your own PDF form because it won't work in Grants.gov. And this is the download application.

Slide 20: This slide shows you how you can navigate directly to the Grants.gov site and you can click on the hyperlink, the opportunity ID in the NOFO page or so anyone can download the application packet. But only individuals who have been designated as Grants.gov as authorized organizational representatives can submit. And again, this is the application package.

Slide 21: This slide shows the contents of the Application Package that's available in Grants.gov. You have the mandatory SF-424, the log-in form, you have the attachment form, and please note that this application package does not include the supplemental form. The supplemental form must be downloaded separately from the FTA site or from within the related documents tab. And the supplemental form is to be attached to the attachment form. And the attachment form is the way for the applicant to include supplementary or other required information which is related to the application.

Slide 22: And so this is what the FY 2020 Passenger Ferry Supplemental Form. Again, do not use supplemental forms from prior years or create your own form. You must use the file that's provided in the FTA website. And in addition, you have the mandatory SF-424, and so you have to include that with the supplemental form. So, again, a complete proposed submission consists of two forms. You have the SF-424 application for federal assistance, and that's downloaded from Grants.gov. And the supplemental form for the FY 2020 Passenger Ferry Grant Program. And also that's downloaded from Grants.gov or on the FTA website. And then applicants, you may submit additional supporting documentation.

Slide 23: Please review the FY 2020 Passenger Ferry Grant Program NOFO page. And then you go into the Grants.gov site and this is where you create an account to register and to complete the application process. FTA will not accept applications submitted outside of grants.gov. Grants.gov registration process assures that applicants meet all the requirements in order to apply for and to receive federal funding, and some of the examples of such requirements you must have or the organization must have a valid DUNS number. You must be registered in SAM, which the System for Award Management. Applicants who have not previously applied for or have received federal funds, Grants.gov registration process will assist such organization in how to navigate through the hoops and how to obtain the required credentials.

Slide 24: Applicant – Organization Registration. This slide right here, so accepted application submitted via Grants.gov, and that's from organizations and not individuals. Organizations must be registered in Grants.gov, and all of the information in the links are available on the applicant tab on Grants.gov site, and so please note that if you are encounter technical issues when submitting these applications, just please make sure you go to the Grants.gov help desk.

Slide 25: Workspace in Grants.gov. The Grants.gov has been enhanced to allow organizations a Workspace in which assigned individual can collaborate, you can share your file, you can perform various tasks to develop the application. And this is also the place for which your AOR can submit the completed application to Grants.gov. And I have some websites, some web addresses for the FTA Funding Opportunities. There's a link to the Grants.gov. Again, if you have any Grants.gov issues or anything like that, please contact their support desk. And that concludes my presentation. Any questions?

Questions from webinar:

Q: Define planning as it relates to ineligible projects.

A: Under the Passenger Ferry Grant Program, funds may not be used to fund operating expenses, planning, or preventive maintenance. Projects cannot be in the planning stage, such as studies or planning-only project.

Q: Where would I find FTA policy regarding useful life of ferry boats?

A: For more information, on the useful life of a ferry boat refer to FTA Circular 5010.1 and FTA Circular 9030.1E.

Q: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also provides funding for ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities. Can you tell us how the FTA program is different or similar to the highway's program?

A. There may be subtle differences between FTA's and FHWA's programs. However, FHWA no longer has a competitive program. FHWA Ferry Boat Program funds distributed annually according to a formula that is defined in statute. Please refer to FHWA's page for more information: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

Q: How do you know if your proposal meets urbanized area requirements?

A: Contact the FTA regional office to determine the designated urbanized area. The regional contact information can be found at www.fta.dot.gov.

Q: Is there funding specifically for rural areas? Another way to ask that and can rural areas compete?

A. No, Rural areas cannot apply.

Q: Can you please describe eligible applicants in a little more detail, who are the categories of grantees that will be considered the eligible applicants?

A: Eligible applicants include designated recipients and direct recipients as defined FTA C9030.1E. Public entities engaged in providing public transportation of passenger ferry service in urban areas that are eligible to be direct recipients.

Q: Is there a past list of approved projects or projects that were successful in competitions?

A: If you're interested in seeing the types of projects that were awarded, go to the FTA ferry website.

Q; Is the operating data for ferry boats reported to the NTD?

A: Yes

Q: Do water taxis count as passenger ferries?

A: Yes, as long it supports a passenger ferry service that operates within an urbanized area.