

Chambers, Blair

Subject: Areas of Persistent Poverty Program FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity - Correction to FTA Links

Dear Transit Partners,

On January 9th, 2023, the FTA announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$20 million in competitive grant funding for projects that help lift communities out of poverty by supporting transit service improvements in underserved communities. You can access the AOPP NOFO here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/notices-funding/areas-persistent-poverty-program-fy-2023-notice-funding-opportunity>. We have created a survey to gauge interest within NCDOT's subrecipients who have strong projects that fit the eligibility requirements of this grant. If you are interested in submitting for this opportunity and meet the criteria, please click on the link below and submit your project to us by **Close of Business on Friday, February 10th**.

[Survey - Areas of Persistent Poverty Program](#)

Summary: The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260, Dec. 27, 2020) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 (Public Law No: 117-103, March 15, 2022) makes available \$20,041,870 (of which \$20,000,000 is funding from Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and \$41,870 is from FY 2021). The Areas of Persistent Poverty Program awards grants to eligible applicants for planning, engineering, or development of technical or financing plans for projects eligible under Chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code to assist Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include entities that are eligible recipients or subrecipients under 49 U.S.C. 5307, 49 U.S.C. 5310, or 49 U.S.C. 5311 that are located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Entities that are subrecipients or indirect recipients under these programs must apply through their ordinary pass-through entities or designated recipients. State departments of transportation may apply on behalf of eligible applicants within their States. Applicants may use FTA's mapping tool (<https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/75febe4d9e6345ddb2c3ab42a4aae85f>) to determine if a proposed project is in an Area of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Community.

Cost Sharing or Matching: The minimum Federal share for projects selected under the AoPP Program is 90 percent of the net total project cost. The non-Federal share will be no more than 10 percent of the net total project cost (not 10 percent of the requested grant amount). Cost sharing is not required, and an application may request up to 100 percent Federal funding. However additional consideration will be given to those projects for which local funds have already been made available or reserved.

Eligible Projects: Under the AoPP Program, eligible projects are planning, engineering, or development of technical or financing plans for projects eligible under Chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code that will assist Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities. For example, these activities may include planning, engineering, or development of technical or financing plans for improved transit services; new transit routes; engineering for transit facilities and improvements to existing facilities; innovative technologies; planning for low or no emission buses; planning for a new bus facility or intermodal center that supports transit services; integrated fare collections systems; or coordinated public transit human service transportation plans to improve transit service in an Area of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Community, or to provide new service such as transportation for services to address the opioid epidemic, as well as increase access to environmental justice populations, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change. An eligible project also may be a planning and environmental linkages study that advances the environmental analysis and review process as part of the metropolitan planning process. Ineligible projects are capital, maintenance, or operating costs of any kind are not eligible for funding under the AoPP Program.

Procurement of vehicles or equipment and support of operations and maintenance of systems are also ineligible activities.

A few other factors could play a role in a project successfully receiving funding. These include the following criteria:

a. Climate Change and Sustainability

In further support of Executive Order 14008, FTA will give priority consideration to applications that create significant community benefits relating to the environment, including those projects that address greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts. FTA encourages applicants to demonstrate whether they have considered climate change and environmental justice in terms of the transportation planning process or anticipated design components with outcomes that address climate change (e.g., resilience or adaptation measures). The application should describe what specific climate change or environmental justice activities have been incorporated, including whether a project supports a Climate Action Plan, an equitable development plan has been prepared, and a tool such as EPA's EJSCREEN at: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen> have been applied in project planning. Applicants could also address how a project is related to housing or land use reforms to increase density to reduce climate impacts. The application should also describe specific and direct ways the project will mitigate or reduce climate change impacts including any components that reduce emissions, promote energy efficiency, incorporate electrification or low emission or zero emission vehicle infrastructure, increase resiliency, recycle or redevelop existing infrastructure or if located in a floodplain be constructed or upgraded consistent with the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, to the extent consistent with current law.

b. Racial Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

FTA will also give priority consideration to applications that advance racial equity in two areas:

- (1) planning and policies related to racial equity and overcoming barriers to opportunity; and
- (2) project investments that either proactively address racial equity and barriers to opportunity, including automobile dependence as a form of barrier, or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity.

Applicants could also address how a project is related to housing or land use reforms to address historic barriers to opportunity. This objective has the potential to enhance environmental stewardship and community partnerships, and reflects Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. FTA encourages the applicant to include sufficient information to evaluate how the applicant will proactively address and advance racial equity and address barriers to opportunity. The applicant should describe any transportation plans or policies related to equity and barriers to opportunity they are implementing or have implemented in relation to the proposed project, along with the specific project investment details necessary for FTA to evaluate if the investments are being made either proactively to advance racial equity and address barriers to opportunity or redress prior inequities and barriers to opportunity. All project investment costs for projects that are related to racial equity and barriers to opportunity should be summarized. FTA also encourages applicants to consider how the project will address the challenges faced by individuals and underserved communities in rural areas.

c. Justice40 Initiative and Environmental Justice

In support of Executive Order 14008, and consistent with OMB's Interim Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative, Historically Disadvantaged Communities include (a) certain qualifying census tracts, (b) any Tribal land, or (c) any territory or possession of the United States. FTA is providing a mapping tool to assist applicants in identifying whether a project is located in an Area of Persistent Poverty or an Historically Disadvantaged Community at <https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/75febe4d9e6345ddb2c3ab42a4aae85f>.

Use of this mapping tool is optional; however, FTA encourages applicants to provide an image or screen shot of the map tool outputs, or alternatively, consistent with OMB's Interim Guidance, applicants can supply quantitative, demographic data of their ridership demonstrating the percentage of their ridership that meets the criteria described in Executive Order 14008 for disadvantaged communities as well as describe the environmental justice population located within the service area. Examples of Historically Disadvantaged Communities that an applicant could address using geographic or demographic information include low income, high or persistent poverty, high unemployment and underemployment,

racial and ethnic residential segregation, linguistic isolation, or high housing cost burden and substandard housing. Additionally, in support of the Justice40 Initiative, the applicant should also provide evidence of strategies that the applicant has used in the planning process to seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally disadvantaged and underserved by existing transportation systems.

For technical assistance using the mapping tool, please contact GMO@dot.gov.

If your transit system has interest in being considered for inclusion on the statewide application, please complete the following survey: [Areas of Persistent Poverty Program](#) by **Close of Business on Friday, February 10th**.

Additionally, the FTA will be holding informational Webinars that applicants are encouraged to register for at the links below to learn more about the opportunity.

[Areas of Persistent Poverty Webinars](#)

Tuesday, February 7, 2023 | 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 9, 2023 | 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 | 1:00-3:30 p.m.

If your projected is selected, our team will be in contact very soon regarding next steps.

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