



Transportation Committee

February 25, 2016

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) VIII

Issue: Should SACOG provide letters of support and technical assistance for 2016 TIGER applicants as part of a regional approach for prioritizing projects?

Recommendation: That the Transportation Committee recommend that SACOG provide technical assistance and letters of support as a means for increasing competitiveness at the federal level.

Discussion:

On February 23, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the eighth round of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program (<https://www.transportation.gov/tiger/tiger-nofo>). The TIGER program will award a total of \$500 million to fund highway, bridge, transit, intermodal, port, and passenger and freight rail projects. Applications are due by April 29, 2016. (See Attachment A for DOT's 2016 TIGER Fact Sheet.)

The TIGER program is highly competitive. The previous seven rounds of the TIGER program provided over \$4.6 billion to projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The SACOG region has been successful in previous funding rounds, securing funding for Port of West Sacramento improvements, the Sacramento Intermodal station, and environmental documentation for the Broadway Bridge.

As with previous TIGER programs, the 2016 TIGER program will focus on capital projects that “generate economic development and improve access to reliable, safe and affordable transportation for disconnected communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas, while emphasizing improved connections to employment, education, services and other opportunities, workforce development, or community revitalization.” Funds available in this round must be obligated by September 30, 2019 and expended prior to September 30, 2024.

The 2016 TIGER program reduces the minimum grant level to \$5 million from \$10 million for urban areas and the maximum grant award to \$100 million from \$200 million. For projects located in rural areas the minimum request size is \$1 million. SACOG staff has informed local and partner agency staff of the NOFO announcement through emails to recipients of SACOG's various advisory committee notifications.

SACOG staff encourages interested agencies to register for the series of webinars hosted by DOT to assist potential applicants with various aspects of the TIGER program and application process. Attachment B provides schedules, summaries and registration links to the available webinars. Upon request, SACOG staff will also provide technical assistance and guidance on project

competitiveness to prospective applicants, and respond to requests for support letters to help the region be more competitive.

SACOG staff will prepare a memo for the April committee cycle identifying letter of support requests by agency.

Approved by:

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Attachments

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Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions pertain to the FY 2016 TIGER program.

What is the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 appropriated \$500 million, available through September 30, 2019, for National Infrastructure Investments otherwise known as TIGER grants. As with previous rounds of TIGER, funds for the FY 2016 TIGER program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

TIGER Discretionary Grants have supported innovative projects, including multimodal and multijurisdictional projects which are difficult to fund through traditional Federal programs. Successful TIGER projects leverage resources, encourage partnership, catalyze investment and growth, fill a critical void in the transportation system or provide a substantial benefit to the nation, region or metropolitan area in which the project is located. The 2016 TIGER grant program will continue to make transformative surface transportation investments that dramatically improve the status quo by providing significant and measurable improvements over existing conditions.

Who can receive TIGER Grants?

Eligible Applicants for TIGER Discretionary Grants are State, local and tribal governments, including U.S. territories, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other political subdivisions of State or local governments.

Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact. Each project party in a joint application must be an Eligible Applicant. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each project party and must be signed by each project party.

What types of projects are eligible for TIGER Discretionary Grant funding?

Eligible projects for TIGER Discretionary Grants are capital projects that include, but are not limited to:

- highway or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code (including bicycle and pedestrian related projects);
- public transportation projects eligible under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code;
- passenger and freight rail transportation projects;
- port infrastructure investments (including inland port infrastructure); and

- intermodal projects.

This description of Eligible Projects is identical to the description of eligible projects in earlier rounds of the TIGER Discretionary Grant program.

Please note that the Department may use a TIGER Discretionary Grant to pay for the surface transportation components of a broader project that has non-surface transportation components, and applicants are encouraged to apply for TIGER Discretionary Grants to pay for the surface transportation components of these projects. Research, demonstration, or pilot projects are eligible only if they result in surface transportation infrastructure.

Do I need to submit a pre-application in order to be eligible for a TIGER Grant?

No. A pre-application is not required to be submitted prior to submitting a final application for the FY2016 round of the TIGER grant program. In lieu of the pre-application, we will be capturing much of the information previously collected there through the “TIGER 2016 Project Information” form available at www.transportation.gov/TIGER.

Where can I access the Final Application?

Final applications must be submitted through Grants.gov. Access to the “Apply” function will be made available in Grants.Gov on February 26, 2016.

What if I am having technical issues with grants.gov?

Please refer to the following links for technical issues with grants.gov:

- [Grants.gov Applicant User Guide](#)
- [Grants.gov Organization Registration User Guide](#)

You can also contact Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 1-800-518-4726, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. EDT.

Are planning grants available for the FY2016 TIGER Discretionary Grant program?

The FY2016 Appropriations Act does not provide dedicated funding for the planning, preparation, or design of capital projects; these activities may be eligible to the extent that they are part of an overall surface transportation construction project.

How do I determine if my project qualifies as being rural?

The TIGER Grant Program defines “rural area” as any area not in an Urbanized Area, as defined by the Census Bureau. For Census 2010, the Census Bureau defined an Urbanized Area as an area that consists of densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people. DOT considers a project to be in a rural area if all or a majority of the project money to be spent is located in a rural area.

To determine if a project is located in an urban or rural area, please consult Census maps of Urbanized Areas:

- http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ (detailed PDF maps for every UA)
- <http://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/TIGERweb2010/> (click the layer for urban areas and zoom in to see)

Urban Clusters are rural areas for the purposes of the TIGER Discretionary Grant program.

What criteria will be used to evaluate applications for TIGER Discretionary Grants?

The TIGER Discretionary Grants Final Notice of Funding Opportunity outlines the selection criteria in detail. For more information, please view the NOFO.

What is the minimum grant award for TIGER Discretionary Grants?

For projects located in urban areas, the minimum award is \$5 million. Please note that the minimum total project cost for a project located in an urban area must be \$6.25 million to meet match requirements.

For projects located in rural areas, the minimum award is \$1 million.

What is the maximum grant award for TIGER Discretionary Grants?

Pursuant to the FY 2016 Appropriations Act, the maximum award is \$100 million and no more than \$100 million may be awarded to projects in a single State. Across seven rounds of capital projects, TIGER Discretionary Grant awards ranged from \$1 million to \$105 million. Although the average award size has been \$14.5 million, the Secretary may make considerably larger awards to appropriate projects. Applicants should not artificially limit their request to align with the average award size. However, if an applicant submits an application with a substantial TIGER funding request, DOT strongly encourages the applicant to identify in their application discrete project components that have independent utility and separately detail the costs and requested TIGER funding for those components, as well as the overall TIGER funding request

What is the difference between a joint applicant and a partner?

A joint applicant refers to one or more Eligible Applicants, as described in the NOFO, who submit a single application. Multiple States or jurisdictions may submit a joint application and must identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact. Joint applications must include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant and must be signed by each applicant. Only an eligible entity may receive and administer TIGER funds upon award, and lead applicants who wish to administer their grants through eligible co-applicants (such as State DOTs) should create those relationships (such as through MOUs) to the extent possible prior to award.

A project partner refers to one or more stakeholders or collaborators that support the project. Project support can vary from, but is not limited to, help with public engagement or outreach, monetary contributions, planning, or public alignment with project priorities. A project partner need not be an Eligible Applicant.

Can an application contain more than one project component?

Yes, as long as the components demonstrate a strong relationship or connection between them. DOT strongly encourages the applicant to identify in their application the project components that have independent utility, independently align with the selection criteria, and meet NEPA requirements; and DOT encourages the applicant to separately detail the costs and requested TIGER funding for those components, as well as the overall TIGER funding request.

If you intend to demonstrate independent utility on project components, is a BCA needed for each component or only for the entire project?

A best practice for BCA is to provide delineated benefits and costs for each component which has independent utility. All project components that are presented in a single application must demonstrate a strong relationship or connection between them. DOT recognizes the technical challenges in preparing a BCA and encourages applicants to do their best in demonstrating the anticipated benefits and estimated costs of the entire project as well as appropriate components.

What does Ladders of Opportunity mean?

Ladders of Opportunity projects may increase connectivity to employment, education, services and other opportunities, support workforce development, or contribute to community revitalization, particularly for disadvantaged groups: low income groups, persons with visible and hidden disabilities, elderly individuals and minority persons and populations.

Are freight projects competitive in TIGER?

DOT encourages the submission of projects that will improve economic competitiveness as highlighted in the national freight goals established in section 167 of title 23, United States Code. Such projects may also advance specific goals established in a state freight plan, as described in MAP-21 Section 1118; to the extent these plans are available, they may be used to

further support the economic benefits of a project. Freight projects may help the United States compete in global economy by facilitating efficient and reliable freight movement, particularly if the project will help reduce the costs of transporting export cargoes. Other examples of freight projects include projects that facilitate the safe movement of trucks through towns, cities and urban areas, as well as at rail grade crossings; provisions for improving work zone safety in areas of truck operations; and projects to provide safe truck parking facilities to address the shortage of long-term parking for commercial motor vehicles on the National Highway System (NHS).

Are eligible projects allowed to apply to both the TIGER and the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects programs?

Yes, projects that meet the minimum eligibility requirements for both programs may submit applications to both programs, but must timely submit separate applications that independently address how the project satisfies applicable selection criteria for the relevant grant program. In addition, TIGER and NSFHP have independent application limits.

How do we get feedback on previous TIGER grant submissions to improve chances of success?

DOT will debrief previous grant submissions with previous applicants. Please email TIGERgrants@dot.gov to schedule a debrief.

Is capital equipment or rolling stock eligible for TIGER funds?

Yes, equipment is eligible, but federal requirements apply to the use of any grant funding. Please see section F.2. of the TIGER NOFO for information on federal requirements.

What is the different between the obligation and expenditure deadlines?

The obligation deadline, September 30, 2019, is the date by which a TIGER awardee must have a signed and executed grant agreement with the DOT. The execution of the grant agreement obligates TIGER funding for the awarded project. The expenditure deadline of September 30, 2024, is the date by which all TIGER funding must be spent.

2016 TIGER Webinar Series

For the 2016 TIGER round, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is offering a series of special topic webinars that delve into various aspects of the TIGER application process. These webinars are a great resource for anyone either considering applying to TIGER this year or actually preparing a TIGER application, as the webinars come from the funding source and share the expertise of USDOT to prospective applicants.

Tuesday, March 1, 2016 - 1-3pm - How to Compete for TIGER Discretionary Grants - All Applicants

https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/e3546pvp1zc/event/event_info.html

Wednesday, March 2, 2016 - 1-3pm - Preparing a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA)

https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/e31kks4ww3k/event/event_info.html

Tuesday, March 8, 2016 - 1:30-3:30pm - How to Compete for TIGER Discretionary Grants - All Applicants

https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/e9gopg47cfx/event/event_info.html

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 - 1:30-3:30pm - How to Compete for TIGER Discretionary Grants - Rural and Tribal Applicants

https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/e3dmg5z301h/event/event_info.html