

Federal Discretionary Grant Programs

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Overview

- Federal funds go to states, local governments, tribes and transit agencies via formula programs (apportionment) or through competitive, discretionary (allocated) programs.
- Before FFY2011 Congress earmarked funding for discretionary programs. Congress banned earmarks in FFY2011, which has resulted in more competitive discretionary grant opportunities.
- There are dozens of different grant programs at USDOT. Most provide relatively small amounts of funding.
- They have various application deadlines and eligibility requirements, and vary in the amount of time applicants have to respond.
- The application deadlines change from year to year and depend on when Congress finishes its appropriations work for the year.

TIGER GRANTS

- TIGER was created by Senator Murray in ARRA (2009). There have been four rounds of TIGER grants. Funding is awarded on a competitive basis for “projects that have a significant impact on the nation, a metro area, or a region.” The program is oversubscribed and very competitive.
- The process for the fourth round of TIGER (“TIGER IV”) was announced on January 31st, with pre-applications due February 20th and final applications due March 19th.
- WSDOT worked with the Governor’s office to submit three TIGER IV applications: \$18.9 million for the North Spokane Corridor, \$15 million for extending the SR 167 hot lanes, and \$6.9 million for improvements at the Lynden/Aldergrove border crossing on SR 539.
- Many locals also submitted their own applications.
- TIGER IV grant announcements are expected in mid to late June.
- We likely won’t know until December whether or not Congress will fund a fifth round of TIGER grants.

FHWA Discretionary Grants

- FHWA has roughly twelve discretionary grant programs. Each program has its own eligibility and selection criteria that are established by law, by regulation, or administratively.

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP)

Ferry Boat Discretionary

Public Lands Highways Discretionary

Interstate Maintenance Discretionary

Value Pricing Pilot Program

National Scenic Byways

Truck Parking Facilities

Highways for LIFE

Innovative Bridge Research and Deployment

Rail Highway Crossing Hazard Elimination in High Speed Rail
Corridors

National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation

Delta Region Transportation Development

FHWA Discretionary Grants

- For FFY2011 and FFY2012, FHWA combined all of its grant programs into one solicitation.
- FFY2011 – FHWA announced grant competition May 6, 2011, with applications due June 3rd.
- FFY2012 – FHWA announced grant competition November 9, 2011, with applications due January 6th.
- Locals had to submit applications through their state DOT, who forwarded them on to FHWA. State DOTs were required to prioritize applications for certain programs.
- WSDOT assembled a review panel to evaluate applications in order to meet the prioritization requirement. WSDOT staff, AWC, WSAC, Tribes and MPOs were part of the panel.
- FFY2011 grant awards were announced in August 2011. Washington received 25 grants worth roughly \$25.5 million (out of 136 submitted). Of those, WSDOT received 4 grants worth roughly \$5.6 million.
- FFY2012 grant awards expected in “early summer.”

FTA Discretionary Grants

Alternatives Analysis

Bus and Bus Facilities

- Bus Livability
- State of Good Repair

Clean Fuels Grant Program

Major Capital Investments (New Starts/Small Starts)

National Research & Technology Program

Over-the-Road Bus Program

Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program

Public Transportation on Indian Reservations

TIGGER Program

Transit Cooperative Research Program

Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative

FTA Discretionary Grants

- Grant solicitations and deadlines vary from program to program.
- WSDOT Public Transportation applies for some discretionary grants on behalf of small transit agencies.
- WSDOT is applying for a New Starts discretionary grant to pay for the light rail component of the Columbia River Crossing project. It is a multi-year process.
- WSF competes for FTA formula funds through a PSRC regional competition.
- WSF has applied for FFY2011 and FFY2012 FTA discretionary grants from the TIGGER, Bus Livability and State of Good Repair (SGR) programs.
 - TIGGER – In FFY2011 WSF applied for funds for a LNG retrofit. The application was not successful. Congress did not fund TIGGER in FFY2012.
 - Bus Livability – FFY2012 grant availability announced February 7th with applications due March 29th. WSF submitted six applications.
 - SGR – FFY2012 grant availability announced February 7th with applications due March 22nd. WSF submitted seven applications.

FRA Discretionary Grants

- Before ARRA (2009), the FRA was not a grant making agency.
- Congress funded the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program in ARRA and again in the FFY2010 annual transportation appropriations bill.
- WSDOT has received nearly \$800 million in competitive HSIPR grants.
- Congress did not appropriate money for HSIPR grants in FFY2011 or FFY2012.

Other Discretionary Grants

- Maritime Administration: WSF applied for a FFY2012 grant through MARAD's Small Shipyard Grants Program for a project to rehabilitate the Weld Shop at the Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility. WSF plans to apply for a FFY2012 Vessel Emissions Reduction Program grant to cut fleet fuel consumption and diesel emissions. Applications are due July 9th.
- FEMA: WSF has three active grants with FEMA through the Department of Homeland Security's Port Security Grant Program from federal fiscal years 2008, 2010 and 2011. The funds are being used for a variety of security infrastructure improvements, including controlled access to TWIC (Transportation Worker Identity Credential) card holders at secure port facilities, improved security cameras, and monitoring data processing capabilities.
- FAA: The FAA awards Airport Improvement Program funding to airports through entitlements and grants.
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: FMCSA awards grants for motor carrier safety.
- Research and Innovative Technology Administration : RITA awards grants for University Transportation Research Centers (UTCs) and other research and technology programs.

Summary

- There are a variety of USDOT discretionary grants.
- Most provide very small grant amounts and require a local match.
- The application deadlines vary from year to year and from program to program.
- Congress is moving towards eliminating all discretionary programs.

Questions?

For more information on federal discretionary grants, please contact:

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