

Maritime Administration

FY 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the America's Marine Highway Program Webcast 05/24/2022



Maritime Administration
Office of Ports & Waterways Planning



Disclaimer for the “Amendment to the FY 2022 America’s Marine Highway Notice of Funding Opportunity” webinar:

- Please note that if there is a conflict between something that is said today and the content in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY 2022 AMH Grant Program, the content in the NOFO controls.
- The “How to Apply” webcast was presented in its entirety on March 22, 2022. Links and FAQs can be found on the Marine Highway website at <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/grants-finances/marine-highways/grants>

Webinar Agenda

- Purpose of NOFO Amendment
- Federal Award Information (Purpose, Notice, & Timelines)
- Eligibility Requirements
- Matching Funds and Funding Restrictions
- The Grant Application
- Selection Criteria
- Domestic Preference
- Questions

Purpose of NOFO Amendment

- To reflect additional funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022
- An extension of the deadline
- Incorporation of explanatory statement language, which is described as the following:
 - *MARAD will give preference to projects that reduce air emissions and vehicle miles traveled (This does not apply for grant applications related to noncontiguous trade as defined in 46 U.S.C. 53501(4))*

Federal Award Information – Purpose, Notice, & Timeline

- On April 21, 2022, the Amended NOFO for the FY 2022 AMH Grant Program was published on [Grants.gov](#).
- The Program Office will now accept applications until **5:00 p.m. EDT on June 17, 2022.**
- Guidance on Federal Award Information is found in Section B of the NOFO.
- **The total funding available under this NOFO is \$39,819,000.**
- MARAD will retain 3% of the funding for administrative expenses.
- There is no minimum or maximum award size.
- MARAD will seek to obtain the maximum benefit from the available funding by awarding grants to as many qualified projects as possible; however, MARAD will give preference to those projects or components that present the most financially viable transportation services and require the lowest percentage of Federal share of costs.

Federal Award Information – Continued

- MARAD may also award grant funds to support a portion of a project described in an application by selecting a discrete component(s).
- If the NOFO solicitation does not result in the award and obligation of all available funds, MARAD may publish additional solicitations.
- MARAD seeks to award projects that will obligate funds not later than September 30, 2025. Obligation occurs upon execution of a grant agreement. Various administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental reviews such as NEPA and Section 106 consultations, must be completed before a grant agreement can be executed.
- Prior recipients of AMH grants may apply for funding; however, to be competitive, the applicant should demonstrate the extent to which the previously funded project has met estimated schedules, budgets, and benefits.

Eligibility Requirements

- **Eligible applicants** include:
 - Original Project Applicants; or
 - A substitute applicant that has been referred to the Program Office by the original Project Applicant in a written letter of support.
 - The substitute applicant must have operational or administrative areas of responsibility that are adjacent to or near the relevant designated Project.
 - The letter of support must be included as part of the grant application.
 - Substitute applicants can be public or private sector entities.
 - Multiple eligible applicants can submit a joint application; however, the application must:
 - Identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and recipient of the Federal funds;
 - Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant; and
 - Include a signed letter of support from each Eligible Applicant as an attachment.
- All public and private entities are required by law to comply with all Federal requirements.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects or components of projects must support the development and expansion of vessels documented under 46 U.S.C. Chapter 121 or port and landside infrastructure. This includes projects for:

- port and terminal infrastructure
- cargo and/or vessel handling equipment
- new or used vessel purchase, lease, or modification
- demonstration projects of a limited duration
- planning, preparation, and design efforts in support of designated Marine Highway Projects

However, operating subsidies and market-related studies are **ineligible**.

Cost Sharing or Matching

- Guidance on Cost Sharing or Matching is in Section C.2. of the NOFO.
- An eligible applicant must provide at least 20 percent of project costs from non-Federal sources.
- The application must demonstrate sources of non-Federal funds being committed to the project.
- Matching funds may:
 - Be from State funds, local funds, or private funds.
- MARAD will require grant recipients to complete the project using at least the level of non-Federal funding specified in the application.
- More non-Federal funds=more competitive application
- Matching funds may not:
 - Be counted as the non-Federal share for both this program and another Federal grant program.
 - Consist of previously-incurred costs or previously-expended funds.

Funding Restrictions

- Funds may not be used as an operating subsidy or for market-related studies.
- Funds may not be used for improvements to Federally owned facilities.
- Unless authorized in writing by MARAD after award announcement, any costs incurred before a grant agreement is executed will not be reimbursed and will not count towards cost share requirements.
- Prohibition on using covered telecommunications equipment or services. See 2 CFR 200.216 & 200.471.

How to Apply

- **Submission date**
 - The Program Office will accept grant applications until **5:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, June 17, 2022**
 - Grant applications must be submitted through **Grants.gov**.
- **Content and form of submission**
 - Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
 - Project Narrative (may not exceed 12 pages in length, excluding table of contents and appendices)
 - Recommended to include:
 - Maps
 - Letters of Support
 - Attachments Form (if applicable)
 - Available in the **Grants.gov** opportunity listing

How to Organize the Project Narrative

- First Page of Project Narrative (see D.2.i. of NOFO)
- Project Description (see D.2.ii. of NOFO)
- Project Location (see D.2.iii. of NOFO)
- Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds (see D.2.iv. of NOFO)
- Selection Criteria (see D.2.v. and E.1. of NOFO)
- Other Application Requirements (see D.2.vi. of NOFO)

Selection Criteria

The applicant must demonstrate how the project proposed for grant funding aligns with the criteria described in Sections D and E of the NOFO, including the following primary selection criteria:

- The application demonstrates the extent to which the project is financially viable;
- The application demonstrates that the funds received will be spent efficiently and effectively;
- The application demonstrates that a market exists for the services of the proposed project; and
- The application describes the public benefits anticipated by the project. Applicants should organize the external net cost savings and public benefits of the proposed grant project based on the following six categories:
 - Emissions benefits;
 - Energy savings;
 - Landside transportation infrastructure maintenance savings;
 - Economic competitiveness;
 - Safety improvements; and
 - System resiliency and redundancy.

Selection Criteria

Climate Change and Decarbonization

- MARAD also seeks projects that proactively consider climate change, reduce greenhouse gases, promote energy efficiency, or address environmental justice.
- All applicants can describe:
 - evidence that the project supports a climate action plan, includes an equitable development plan, incorporates an energy baseline study, employs environmental justice tools, addresses the goals outlined in Executive Order 14008, etc.
 - evidence that the project has a direct impact on climate change and/or environmental justice (such as a shift in freight movements that reduces net emissions, incorporation of electrification or zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, energy demand management, positive impacts on environmental justice communities, etc.)

Selection Criteria

Climate Change and Decarbonization

For projects that are not related to noncontiguous trade, MARAD will give preference to projects that reduce air emissions and vehicle miles traveled when awarding grants. Applicants can demonstrate that the proposed grant project reduces VMT by:

- 1) Calculating the increase in cargo, by tonnage, that will be transported on the marine highway if the proposed project is implemented
- 2) Calculating the increase in cargo, by tonnage, and subsequent increase in VMT, that would be transported by commercial motor vehicles on the nation's roadways if the proposed grant project could not be implemented
- 3) Calculating the overall difference in cargo moved, by tonnage, from the nation's roadways to the marine highway, and the subsequent reduction in commercial VMT that will result upon completion of the proposed grant project

Selection Criteria

Noncontiguous Trade

- MARAD will consider an application to be related to noncontiguous trade if the proposed grant project includes noncontiguous trade as defined in 46 U.S.C. 53501(4). The term “noncontiguous trade” means:
 - trade between one of the contiguous 48 states; and Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or an insular territory or possession of the United States; and
 - trade between a place in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or an insular territory or possession of the United States; and another place in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or an insular territory or possession of the United States.
- Applications should clearly state whether the proposed grant project is related to noncontiguous trade, and, if so, provide sufficient information so that MARAD can verify the claim.

Selection Criteria

Noncontiguous Trade

- Evaluation of whether a project reduces air emissions and vehicle miles traveled will not affect MARAD's decision in awarding grants for projects related to noncontiguous trade.
- For projects that are related to noncontiguous trade, applicants should still address the climate change and decarbonization criterion, but do not need to address VMT.
- Evaluation of the demonstration of a movement towards lower carbon emissions or near-zero emissions preference as described earlier in this presentation and in Section E.1 of the NOFO will still apply to projects related to noncontiguous trade.

Selection Criteria

Advancing Equity and Barriers to Opportunity

- MARAD seeks projects that address equity and barriers to opportunity.
- Applicants are encouraged to describe:
 - How the project incorporates an equity impact analysis.
 - How the project adopts an equity and inclusion program/plan or implementation of equity-focused policies related to project procurement, material sourcing, construction, inspection, etc.
 - Documentation of equity-focused community outreach and public engagement in the project's planning and project elements in underserved communities, including Historically Disadvantaged Communities.
 - Applicants can use the DOT Disadvantaged Census Tract tool for help in identifying whether a project is in a Historically Disadvantaged Community.

Additional Considerations

- Applications should also address:
 - Planned compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - Timeline for implementing the Project
 - Does the project address supply chain issues
 - ROUTES Initiative

Domestic Preference

- All AMH projects funded under FY 2022 NOFO must comply with the Build America, Buy America Act (Pub. L. 117-58, Division G, Title IX, Subtitle A, November 15, 2021)
- Requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless the USDOT determines that a waiver of those requirements is warranted
- Each application should address how the applicant plans to comply with domestic preference and the applicant's efforts to maximize domestic content.

Domestic Preference

- If an applicant proposes to use foreign content, MARAD asks that it provide information demonstrating that the item is not manufactured domestically, including its efforts to maximize domestic content in the proposed project, in order for MARAD to best assess the application for funding
- MARAD expects all Marine Highway projects proposed for funding to comply with the domestic content requirements without needing a waiver.
- For more information on USDOT's implementation of the Build America, Buy America Act, please refer to OMB's Buy America Preference Initial Implementation Guidance at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/M-22-11.pdf>.

Questions?

1. Questions related to the NOFO can be sent by email to MH@dot.gov
2. Responses will be posted to the America's Marine Highway FAQ page
3. For general information regarding MARAD's support, please contact your Gateway Directors: <https://www.marad.dot.gov/about-us/gateway-offices/>
4. Program Office POC: **Tim Pickering** Timothy.pickering@dot.gov



**America's
Marine Highways**

U.S. Department of Transportation