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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Fiscal Year 2020 Competitive Funding Opportunity; Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the opportunity to apply for approximately \$454.6 million in fiscal year (FY) 2020 funds under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program (CFDA#20.526). As required by federal public transportation law and subject to funding availability, funds will be awarded competitively to assist in the financing of capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, purchase or lease buses and related equipment, and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct or lease bus-related facilities. Projects may include costs incidental to the acquisition of buses or to the construction of facilities, such as the costs of related workforce development and training activities, and project administration expenses. FTA may award additional funds if they are made available to the program prior to the announcement of project selections.

DATES: Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV “APPLY” function by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 30, 2020. Prospective applicants should initiate the process by promptly registering on the GRANTS.GOV website to ensure completion of the application process before the

submission deadline. Instructions for applying can be found on FTA's website at <http://transit.dot.gov/howtoapply> and in the "FIND" module of GRANTS.GOV.

The GRANTS.GOV funding opportunity ID is FTA-2020-006-BUS. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Bathrick, FTA Office of Program Management, 202-366-9955, or mark.bathrick@dot.gov.

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A. Program Description

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C 5339(b)) authorizes FTA to award funds for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program through a competitive process, as described in this notice, for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, purchase or lease buses and related equipment and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct or lease bus-related facilities.

The purpose of the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program is to assist in the financing of capital projects for buses and bus facilities, including replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing, or leasing buses or related equipment, and rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing, or leasing bus-related facilities.

The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program provides funds to eligible applicants including designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, states or local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes. FTA also may award grants to eligible recipients for projects to be undertaken by subrecipients. Eligible subrecipients include all otherwise eligible applicants and also private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation. In accordance with Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(2)), FTA will “consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment, and bus-related facilities” in selecting projects for funding. FTA may prioritize projects that demonstrate how they will address significant repair and maintenance needs, improve the safety of transit systems and deploy connective projects that include advanced technologies to connect bus systems with other networks.

In FY 2020, FTA is encouraging applicants to propose projects that introduce innovative technologies or practices in support of FTA's Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) initiative. FTA is focused on the introduction of new technology not commonly found within U.S. transit systems such as integrated fare payment systems permitting complete trips or advancements to propulsion systems. Innovation can also include practices such as new public transportation operational models, financial or procurement arrangements, or value capture.

B. Federal Award Information

Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5338(a)(2)(M)) authorizes \$289,044,179 in FY 2020 funds for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 appropriated an additional \$170,000,000 for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program. After the mandatory oversight takedown of \$4,417,831 FTA is announcing the availability of \$454,626,348 for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program through this notice.

As required by Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(5) and 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(8)), a minimum of 10 percent of the amount awarded under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program will be awarded to projects located in rural areas and no single grantee will be awarded more than 10 percent of the amounts made available. FTA may further cap the amount a single recipient or State may receive as part of the selection process.

FTA will grant pre-award authority to incur costs for selected projects beginning on the date that project selections are announced. Funds are only available for projects that have not incurred costs prior to the selection of projects, and will remain available

for obligation for three Federal fiscal years, not including the year in which the funds are allocated to projects.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, states or local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes. Eligible subrecipients include all otherwise eligible applicants and also private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation.

States may submit a statewide application on behalf of public agencies or private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation in rural areas or for other areas for which a State allocates funds. Except for projects proposed by Indian tribes, all proposals for projects in rural (non-urbanized) areas must be submitted by a State, either individually or as a part of a statewide application. States and other eligible applicants may also submit consolidated proposals for projects in urbanized areas. The submission of a statewide or consolidated urbanized area application shall not preclude the submission and consideration of any application from other eligible recipients in an urbanized area in a State. Proposals may contain projects to be implemented by the recipient or its subrecipients.

To be considered eligible, applicants must be able to demonstrate the requisite legal, financial, and technical capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

The maximum federal share for projects selected under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program is 80 percent of the net project cost (i.e., the local amount should be at least 20 percent of the net project cost, not 20 percent of the requested grant amount), unless noted below by one of the exceptions.

a. The maximum Federal share is 85 percent of the net project cost of acquiring vehicles (including clean-fuel or alternative fuel vehicles) for purposes of complying with or maintaining compliance with the Clean Air Act (CAA) and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

b. The maximum Federal share is 90 percent of the net project cost of acquiring, installing or constructing vehicle-related equipment or facilities (including clean fuel or alternative-fuel vehicle-related equipment or facilities) for purposes of complying with or maintaining compliance with the ADA or CAA. The award recipient must itemize the cost of specific, discrete, vehicle-related equipment associated with compliance with ADA or CAA to be eligible for the maximum 90 percent Federal share for these costs.

Eligible sources of local match include the following: cash from non-Government sources other than revenues from providing public transportation services; revenues derived from the sale of advertising and concessions; amounts received under a service agreement with a State or local social service agency or private social service organization; revenues generated from value capture financing mechanisms; or funds from an undistributed cash surplus; replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve; or new capital. In addition, transportation development credits or documentation of in-kind match may substitute for local match if identified in the application.

If an applicant proposes a Federal share greater than 80 percent, the application must clearly explain why the project is eligible for the proposed Federal share.

3. Eligible Projects

Under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(1)), eligible projects are capital projects to replace, rehabilitate purchase, or lease buses, vans, and related equipment, and capital projects to rehabilitate, purchase, construct, or lease bus-related facilities.

Recipients are permitted to use up to 0.5 percent of their requested grant award for workforce development activities eligible under Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5314(b)) and an additional 0.5 percent for costs associated with training at the National Transit Institute, to pay not more than 80 percent of the cost of eligible activities (see 49 U.S.C. 5314(b)(4) and 49 U.S.C. 5314(c)(4)(A)). Applicants must identify the proposed use of funds for these activities in the project proposal and identify them separately in the project budget.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address

Applications must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV. General information for submitting applications through GRANTS.GOV can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/applying/applying-fta-funding> along with specific instructions for the forms and attachments required for submission. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted. A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV) and the supplemental form for the FY 2020 Grants for Buses and Bus

Facilities Program (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV or the FTA website at www.transit.dot.gov/busprogram). Applicants may also attach additional supporting information. Failure to submit the information as required can delay or prevent review of the application.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

A strong transportation network is critical to the functioning and growth of the American economy. The nation's industry depends on the transportation network to move the goods that it produces, and facilitate the movements of the workers who are responsible for that production. When the nation's highways, railways, and ports function well, that infrastructure connects people to jobs, increases the efficiency of delivering goods and thereby cuts the costs of doing business, reduces the burden of commuting, and improves overall well-being.

Rural transportation networks play a vital role in supporting our national economic vitality. Addressing the deteriorating conditions and disproportionately high fatality rates on our rural transportation infrastructure is of critical interest to the Department, as rural transportation networks face unique challenges in safety, infrastructure condition, and passenger and freight usage. Consistent with the R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative, the Department encourages applicants to consider how the project will address the challenges faced by rural areas.

A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the FY 2020 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program supplemental form. The supplemental form and any supporting documents must be attached to the "Attachments" section of the SF-424. A complete application must

include responses to all sections of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the supplemental form, unless indicated as optional. The information on the supplemental form will be used to determine applicant and project eligibility for the program, and to evaluate the proposal against the selection criteria described in part E of this notice.

FTA will accept only one supplemental form per SF-424 submission. FTA encourages States and other applicants to consider submitting a single supplemental form that includes multiple activities to be evaluated as a consolidated proposal. If a State or other applicant chooses to submit separate proposals for individual consideration by FTA, each proposal must be submitted using a separate SF-424 and supplemental form.

Applicants may attach additional supporting information to the SF-424 submission, including but not limited to letters of support, project budgets, fleet status reports or excerpts from relevant planning documents. Supporting documentation must be described and referenced by file name in the appropriate response section of the supplemental form, or it may not be reviewed.

Information such as applicant name, Federal amount requested, local match amount, description of areas served, etc. may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF-424 and Supplemental Form. Applicants must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms. Applicants should not place N/A or “refer to attachment” in lieu of typing in responses in the field sections. If information is copied into the supplemental form from another source, applicants should verify that pasted text is fully captured on the supplemental form and has not been truncated by the character limits built into the form. Applicants should use both the “Check Package for Errors” and the “Validate

Form” validation buttons on both forms to check all required fields on the forms, and ensure that the federal and local amounts specified are consistent.

The SF-424 Mandatory Form and the Supplemental Form will prompt applicants for the required information, including:

- a. Applicant name
 - b. Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number
 - c. Key contact information (including contact name, address, email address, and phone)
 - d. Congressional district(s) where project will take place
 - e. Project information (including title, an executive summary, and type)
 - f. A detailed description of the need for the project
 - g. A detailed description on how the project will support the Buses and Bus Facilities Program’s objectives
 - h. Evidence that the project is consistent with local and regional planning objectives
 - i. Evidence that the applicant can provide the local cost share
 - j. A description of the technical, legal and financial capacity of the applicant
 - k. A detailed project budget
 - l. An explanation of the scalability of the project
 - m. Details on the local matching funds
 - n. A detailed project timeline
 - o. Whether the project impacts an Opportunity Zone
3. *Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*

Each applicant is required to: (1) be registered in SAM before submitting an

application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FTA. These requirements do not apply if the applicant has an exemption approved by FTA under Federal grants and agreements law (2 C.F.R. § 25.110(d)). FTA may not make an award until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FTA is ready to make an award, FTA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. All applicants must provide a unique entity identifier provided by SAM. SAM registration takes approximately 3-5 business days, but FTA recommends allowing ample time, up to several weeks, for completion of all steps. For additional information on obtaining a unique entity identifier, please visit www.sam.gov.

4. *Submission Dates and Times*

Project proposals must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 PM Eastern on March 30, 2020. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FTA urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the due date to allow time to correct any problems that may have caused either Grants.gov or FTA systems to reject the submission. Proposals submitted after the deadline will only be considered under extraordinary circumstances not under the applicant's control. Deadlines will not be extended due to scheduled website maintenance. GRANTS.GOV scheduled maintenance and outage times are announced on the GRANTS.GOV website.

Within 48 hours after submitting an electronic application, the applicant should receive an email message from GRANTS.GOV with confirmation of successful transmission to GRANTS.GOV. If a notice of failed validation or incomplete materials is received, the applicant must address the reason for the failed validation, as described in the email notice, and resubmit before the submission deadline. If making a resubmission for any reason, applicants must include all original attachments regardless of which attachments were updated and check the box on the supplemental form indicating this is a resubmission.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the GRANTS.GOV site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered applicants may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) is renewed annually; and, (2) persons making submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in GRANTS.GOV by the AOR to make submissions.

5. *Funding Restrictions*

Funds under this NOFO cannot be used to reimburse applicants for otherwise eligible expenses incurred prior to FTA award of a grant agreement until FTA has issued pre-award authority for selected projects.

6. *Other Submission Requirements*

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case insufficient

funding is available to fund a project at the full requested amount. If an applicant indicates that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget would be affected by a reduced award. FTA may award a lesser amount whether or not a scalable option is provided.

E. Application Review Information

FTA will evaluate project proposals for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program based on the criteria described in this notice. Projects will be evaluated primarily on the responses provided in the supplemental form. Additional information may be provided to support the responses; however, any additional documentation must be directly referenced on the supplemental form, including the file name where the additional information can be found.

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department recognizes that rural transportation networks face unique challenges. To the extent that those challenges are reflected in the merit criteria listed in this section, the Department will consider how the activities proposed in the application will address those challenges, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

1. Demonstration of Need

Applications will be evaluated based on the quality and extent to which they demonstrate how the proposed project will address an unmet need for capital investment in bus vehicles and/or supporting facilities. For example, an applicant may demonstrate

an excessive reliance on vehicles that are beyond their intended service life, insufficient maintenance facilities due to size or condition, a vehicle fleet that is insufficient to meet current ridership demands or passenger facilities that are insufficient for their current use. Applicants should address whether the project represents a one-time or periodic need that cannot reasonably be funded from FTA formula program allocations and State or local resources. As a part of the response for demonstration of need, applicants should provide the following information:

a. For bus projects (replacement, rehabilitation or expansion): Applicants must provide information on the age, condition and performance of the asset(s) to be replaced or rehabilitated by the proposed project. For service expansion requests, applicants must provide information on the proposed service expansion and the benefits for transit riders and the community from the new service. For all vehicle projects, the proposal must address how the project conforms to FTA's spare ratio guidelines.

b. For bus facility and equipment projects (replacement, rehabilitation and/or expansion): Applicants must provide information on the age and condition of the asset to be rehabilitated or replaced relative to its minimum useful life.

2. *Demonstration of Benefits*

Applications will be evaluated based on how well they describe how the proposed project will improve the condition of the transit system, improve the reliability of transit service for its riders, enhance access and mobility within the service area, or accelerate innovation.

System Condition: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to improve the condition of the transit system by repairing and/or replacing assets that are in poor

condition or have surpassed their minimum or intended useful life benchmarks, lowering the average age of vehicles in the fleet and/or reducing the cost of maintaining outdated vehicles, facilities and equipment.

Service Reliability: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to reduce the frequency of breakdowns or other service interruptions caused by the age and condition of the agency's bus fleet. Applicants should document their current service reliability metrics and benchmark goals, including their strategy for improving reliability with or without the award of Bus and Bus Facilities Program funds.

Enhanced Access and Mobility: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to improve access and mobility for the transit riding public, such as through increased reliability, improved headways, creation of new transportation choices or eliminating gaps in the current route network. Proposed benefits should be based on documented ridership demand and be well-described or documented through a study or route planning proposal.

Accelerating Innovation: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to accelerate the introduction of innovative technologies or practices such as integrated fare payment systems permitting complete trips or advancements to propulsion systems. Innovation can also include practices such as new public transportation operational models, financial or procurement arrangements, or value capture.

3. Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will be consistent with local and regional long-range planning documents and local government priorities. This will involve assessing whether the project is consistent with the transit priorities

identified in the long range plan; and/or contingency/illustrative projects included in that plan; or the locally developed human services public transportation coordinated plan. Applicants are not required to submit copies of such plans, but should describe how the project will support regional goals. Additional consideration will be given to applications including support letters from local and regional planning organizations, local government officials, public agencies and/or non-profit or private sector partners attesting to the consistency of the proposed project with these plans. Applicants may also address how the proposed project will impact overall system performance, asset management performance or specific performance measures tracked and monitored by the applying entity to demonstrate how the proposed project will address local and regional planning priorities.

Evidence of additional local or regional prioritization (i.e., Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan) should include letters of support for the project from local government officials, public agencies (i.e., Metropolitan Planning Organizations) and non-profit or private sector partners.

4. Local Financial Commitment

Applicants must identify the source of the local cost share and describe whether such funds are currently available for the project or will need to be secured if the project is selected for funding. FTA will consider the availability of the local cost share as evidence of local financial commitment to the project. Additional consideration will be given to those projects for which local funds have already been made available or reserved. Applicants should submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project, for example by including a board resolution, letter of support from the State or other

documentation of the source of local funds such as a budget document highlighting the line item or section committing funds to the proposed project. In addition, as evidence of local financial commitment, an applicant may propose a local cost share that is greater than the minimum requirement. Additional consideration will be given to those projects that propose a larger percentage of local cost share.

5. *Project Implementation Strategy*

Projects will be evaluated based on the extent to which the project is ready to implement within a reasonable period of time and whether the applicant's proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete.

In assessing whether the project is ready to implement within a reasonable period of time, FTA will consider whether the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion, or whether the required environmental work has been initiated or completed for projects that require an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. As such, applicants should submit information describing the project's anticipated path and timeline through the environmental review process. The proposal must also state whether grant funds can be obligated within 12 months from time of award, if selected, and indicate the timeframe under which the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and/or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program can be amended to include the proposed project. Additional consideration will be given to projects for which grant funds can be obligated within 12 months from time of award.

In assessing whether the proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete, FTA will review the proposed project implementation plan, including all

necessary project milestones and the overall project timeline. For projects that will require formal coordination, approvals or permits from other agencies or project partners, the applicant must demonstrate coordination with these organizations and their support for the project, such as through letters of support.

6. *Technical, Legal and Financial Capacity*

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the technical, legal and financial capacity to undertake the project. FTA will review relevant oversight assessments and records to determine whether there are any outstanding legal, technical or financial issues with the applicant that would affect the outcome of the proposed project. Applicants with outstanding legal, technical or financial compliance issues from an FTA compliance review or Federal Transit grant-related Single Audit finding must explain how corrective actions taken will mitigate negative impacts on the proposed project.

F. Review and Selection Process Information

In addition to other FTA staff that may review the proposals, a technical evaluation committee will evaluate proposals based on the published evaluation criteria. After applying the above criteria, the FTA Administrator will consider the following key Departmental objectives:

- (A) Supporting economic vitality at the national and regional level;
- (B) Utilizing alternative funding sources and innovative financing models to attract non-Federal sources of infrastructure investment;
- (C) Accounting for the life-cycle costs of the project to promote the state of good repair;

- (D) Using innovative approaches to improve safety and expedite project delivery; and
- (E) Holding grant recipients accountable for their performance and achieving specific, measurable outcomes identified by grant applicants.

Prior to making an award, FTA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information Systems (FAPIIS) accessible through SAM. An applicant, may review and comment on information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered.

The FTA Administrator will determine the final selection of projects for program funding. In determining the allocation of program funds, FTA may consider geographic diversity, diversity in the size of the transit systems receiving funding, the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards, projects located in or that support public transportation service in a qualified opportunity zone designated pursuant to 26 USC 1400Z-1, the percentage of local share provided, and whether the project includes an innovative technology or practice. Not less than 10 percent of the Buses and Bus Facilities Program funds will be distributed to projects in rural areas. In addition, FTA will not award more than 10 percent of the funds to a single grantee.

G. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notice

Final project selections will be posted on the FTA website. FTA will also publish a list of the selected projects, a summary of final ratings for selected projects, Federal award amounts and recipients in the *Federal Register*. Selected recipients should contact their

FTA regional offices for additional information regarding allocations for projects under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program.

At the time the project selections are announced, FTA will extend pre-award authority for the selected projects. There is no blanket pre-award authority for these projects before announcement.

2. Award Administration

Funds under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program are available to designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, state or local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes. There is no minimum or maximum grant award amount apart from the restriction that FTA will not award more than ten percent of the funds to a single grantee; however, FTA intends to fund as many meritorious projects as possible. Only proposals from eligible recipients for eligible activities will be considered for funding. Due to funding limitations, proposals that are selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested. In those cases, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the proposed projects are still viable stand-alone projects that can be completed with the amount awarded.

3. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Pre-Award Authority

The FTA will issue specific guidance to recipients regarding pre-award authority at the time of selection. The FTA does not provide pre-award authority for competitive funds until projects are selected and even then there are Federal requirements that must be met before costs are incurred. For more information about FTA's policy on pre-award

authority, please see the FY 2019 Apportionment Notice published on July 3, 2019 which can be accessed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-07-03/pdf/2019-14248.pdf>.

b. Grant Requirements

If selected, awardees will apply for a grant through FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). Recipients of Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program funding in urban areas are subject to the grant requirements of the Urbanized Area Formula Grant program (49 U.S.C. 5307), including those of FTA Circular "Urbanized Area Formula Program: Program Guidance and Application Instructions" (FTA.C.9030.1E). Recipients of funding in rural areas are subject to the grant requirements of the Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program (49 U.S.C. 5311), including those of FTA Circular "Formula Grants for Rural Areas: Program Guidance and Application Instructions" (FTA.C.9040.1G). All recipients must follow the Award Management Requirements (FTA.C.5010.1E), and the labor protections required by Federal public transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5333(b)). Technical assistance regarding these requirements is available from each FTA regional office.

c. Buy America and Strengthening Buy-American Preferences for Infrastructure Projects

The FTA requires that all capital procurements meet FTA's Buy America requirements (49 U.S.C. 5323(j)), which require that all iron, steel, or manufactured products be produced in the United States, to help create and protect manufacturing jobs in the United States. The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program will have a significant economic impact toward meeting the objectives of the Buy America law. Federal public transportation law provides for a phased increase in the domestic content

for rolling stock. For FY 2020 and beyond, the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States must be more than 70 percent of the cost of all components. There is no change to the requirement that final assembly of rolling stock must occur in the United States. FTA issued guidance on the implementation of the phased increase in domestic content on September 1, 2016 (81 FR 60278). Any proposal that will require a waiver must identify in the application the items for which a waiver will be sought. Applicants should not proceed with the expectation that waivers will be granted, nor should applicants assume that selection of a project under the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program that includes a partnership with a manufacturer, vendor, consultant, or other third party constitutes a waiver of the Buy America requirements applicable at the time the project is undertaken.

Consistent with Executive Order 13858 *Strengthening Buy-American Preferences for Infrastructure Projects*, signed by President Trump on January 31, 2019, applicants should maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States, in Federal procurements and through the terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards.

d. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

FTA requires that its recipients receiving planning, capital and/or operating assistance that will award prime contracts exceeding \$250,000 in FTA funds comply with the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program regulations (49 CFR Part 26). The rule requires that, prior to bidding on any FTA-assisted vehicle procurement, entities that manufacture vehicles or perform post-production alterations or retrofitting must submit a DBE Program plan and annual goal methodology to FTA. Further, to the extent

that a vehicle remanufacturer is responding to a solicitation for new or remanufactured vehicles with a vehicle to which the remanufacturer has provided post-production alterations or retro-fitting (e.g., replacing major components such as engine to provide a “like new” vehicle), the vehicle remanufacturer is considered a transit vehicle manufacturer and must also comply with the DBE regulations.

FTA will then issue a transit vehicle manufacturer (TVM) concurrence/certification letter. Grant recipients must verify each entity's compliance with these requirements before accepting its bid. A list of compliant, certified TVMs is posted on FTA's website at www.transit.dot.gov/TVM. Please note that this list is nonexclusive and recipients must contact FTA before accepting bids from entities not listed on this Web posting. Recipients may also establish project-specific DBE goals for vehicle procurements. FTA will provide additional guidance as grants are awarded. For more information on DBE requirements, please contact Scheryl Portee, the Office of the Chief Counsel, at 202-366-0840, email: scheryl.portee@dot.gov.

e. Planning

FTA encourages applicants to notify the appropriate State Departments of Transportation and MPOs in areas likely to be served by the project funds made available under this program. Selected projects must be incorporated into the long-range plans and transportation improvement programs of States and metropolitan areas before they are eligible for FTA funding.

f. Standard Assurances

By submitting a grant application, the applicant assures that it will comply with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, directives, FTA circulars and

other federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA grant. Further, the applicant acknowledges that it is under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement issued for its project with FTA. The applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies and administrative practices might be modified from time to time and may affect the implementation of the project. The applicant agrees that the most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise. The applicant must submit the Certifications and Assurances before receiving a grant, if it does not have current certifications on file.

g. Reporting

Post-award reporting requirements include the electronic submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone Progress Reports in FTA's electronic grants management system. Recipients of funds made available through this NOFO are also required to regularly submit data to the National Transit Database.

H . Technical Assistance and Other Program Information

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” FTA will consider applications for funding only from eligible recipients for eligible projects listed in Section C. Complete applications must be submitted through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on March 30, 2020. For assistance with GRANTS.GOV please contact GRANTS.GOV by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or by e-mail at support@grants.gov. Contact information for FTA's regional offices can be found on FTA's website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/regional-offices>.

I. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice, please contact the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program manager, Mark Bathrick, via email at mark.bathrick@dot.gov or by phone at 202-366-9955. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 800-877-8339. In addition, FTA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on FTA's website at <http://transit.dot.gov/busprogram>. FTA staff will also conduct a webinar for potential applicants to learn more about the program and submittal process.

To ensure the receipt of accurate information about eligibility or the program, applicants with questions are encouraged to contact FTA directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties.

K. Jane Williams,

Acting Administrator.

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