Maritime Administration
FY 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Notice of Funding Opportunity for the America’s Marine Highway Program
“How to Apply” Webcast 03/22/2022
Disclaimer for the FY 2022 America’s Marine Highway “How to Apply” 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.
Webinar Agenda

- Background – MARAD, the Program, & Gateway Offices
- The America’s Marine Highway Program Introduced
- Federal Award Information (Purpose, Notice, & Timelines)
- Eligibility Requirements
- The Grant Application
- Critical Elements of the Application
- Other Considerations
- Evaluation Criteria
- Post Award Requirements
- Questions
America’s Marine Highway Program

- The Marine Highway Program is set up by first designating Marine Highway Routes, which are navigable waterways capable of moving freight, see [https://cms.marad.dot.gov/grants-finances/marine-highways/route-designation-one-pagers](https://cms.marad.dot.gov/grants-finances/marine-highways/route-designation-one-pagers).

- Marine Highway Projects are then designated, which create new or expand existing marine highway services on designated Marine Highway Routes, see [https://www.maritime.dot.gov/grants-finances/marine-highways/project-designation](https://www.maritime.dot.gov/grants-finances/marine-highways/project-designation).

- Original Project Applicants of designated Marine Highway Projects or a substitute applicant with a written referral from the original Project Applicant can then apply for Marine Highway Grants.

- Grants can be used to alleviate the upfront capital risk associated with starting new services.
Route Designation, Project Designation, & Grant Application

1. **Marine Highway Route Designation** – a public entity must apply and receive route designation prior to any grant funding

   My service is in proximity to a designated route ☑️ Check!

2. **Project Designation** – a public entity must apply and receive a Project Designation prior to any grant funding

   The Marine Highway Project has been designated by the Secretary of Transportation ☑️ Check!

3. **Grant Funding** - provided to successful eligible applicants if the proposed project directly relates to a project that has been designated and is submitted by or with support of the original Project Applicant

   I am the original designated Project Applicant or have a referral to utilize a project designation for Grant application purposes ☑️ Check!

   IF NOT: You are not eligible to apply. Contact the Gateway Director in your region.
Grant Funding – Purpose, Notice, & Timeline

• Finding the Marine Highway Grant NOFO on Grants.gov is easy. Applicants can search using keywords like “America’s Marine Highway” or search for the Federal Assistance Listings number: 20.816.

• New applicant registrations in Grants.gov should be completed as soon as possible.

• The NOFO outlines the requirements that need to be addressed in each application. Specific requirements may change each year based on statutory or AMH Program policy, so read the NOFO carefully.

• Late applications and those that fail to comply with all Federal requirements will not be considered.
Federal Award Information – Purpose, Notice, & Timeline

• On March 1, 2022, the NOFO for the FY 2022 AMH Grant Program was published on Grants.gov.

• The Program Office will accept applications until 5:00 p.m. EDT on April 29, 2022.

• Guidance on Federal Award Information is found in Section B of the NOFO.

• The total funding available under this NOFO is $24,250,000.

• 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.

• 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.
Federal Award Information – Continued

• 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.

• A project’s likelihood to be ready for obligation of funds by September 30, 2025 will be considered during the evaluation process.

• The goal is to expend funds within five years of obligation.

• 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

- **46 U.S.C. § 55601 – Marine Highways Transportation Program**
  
  **(a) Establishment.**—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a marine highway transportation program to be known as the “America’s Marine highway program” and designate marine highway transportation projects to be conducted under the program to provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation or to promote marine highway transportation

  **(b) Program Elements.**—The program shall encourage the use of marine highway transportation through the development and expansion of —

  (1) Vessels documented under chapter 121 of this title;

  (2) shipper utilization;

  (3) port and landside infrastructure; and

  (4) marine transportation strategies by State and local governments

At a minimum, a 20 percent non-Federal match is required; however, the Secretary will give preference to those projects that provide a larger percentage of costs from non-Federal sources.
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, April 29, 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
Critical Questions While Writing Grant Application

- Eligibility requirements - please ensure these are reviewed and understood. For example, is your proposed project component associated with a Project Designation?

- Do you have a letter of support from the original Project Applicant to submit a grant application?

- Have you updated your market research studies and business case from the original Project Designation or previous grant submission?

- Do you have a public/private partnership in place between ports, vessel operators, labor, and shippers?

- Is there an operational plan & adequate capital for start-up and initial operations?

- Is there a coordinated promotion effort by key stakeholders?
Critical Elements of the Grant Application Process

• Applicants must register on Grants.gov and www.SAM.gov prior to applying. We recommend that all new applicant registrations be completed as soon as possible.

• For your SAM.gov registration, you must submit a notarized letter appointing the authorized Entity Administrator.

• When submitting the application, please complete the SF-424 provided on the Grants.gov website.

• Applicants should review the NOFO for more information regarding format and submitting additional supporting documentation. Website links to supporting documents are acceptable.
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)
First Page of Project Narrative

• The first page of the Project Narrative should provide the following:
  – Marine Highway Designated Project name and original Project Applicant;
  – Primary point of contact;
  – Total amount of proposed grant project cost;
  – Executive Summary;
  – Public/private partners;
  – Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number associated with the application—Note, this number can be found in Sam.gov. The Federal Government will no longer be using DUNS numbers to identify applicants; and
  – Evidence of registration with Sam.gov.
Project Description

– Include a description of the project in enough detail so that the NEPA class of action can be determined without additional requests for information.

– Include a timeline for implementing the project, including major project milestones, with enough detail to show that project will be completed within 5 years after obligation.

– If the project addresses regional or national supply chain delays or strengthens supply chain resiliency:
  • Describe the existing or anticipated supply chain delay and how the project will address the delay.

– ROUTES Initiative – describe how the project addresses challenges faced by rural transportation networks.

– Describe how the project addresses equity and barriers to opportunity (described in next slide).
Project Description

- **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.
Project Location

- Include a detailed geographical description of the proposed project, a map of the project’s location, and geospatial data describing the project location.

- Identify the project location:
  - Is it in a community development zone (such as a qualified Opportunity Zone, Empowerment Zone, Promise Zone, or Choice Neighborhood)?
  - Is it in a Historically Disadvantaged Community, including the relevant census tract(s)?
  - Is it in a 2010 Census-designated rural or urban area?
Grant Fund, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

– At a minimum, this section should include:
  • Project costs;
  • Sources and amount of funds;
  • Documentation of non-Federal funding commitments;
  • Information on the required non-Federal match for Federal funds; and
  • A budget that shows how each source of funds will be spent, with a letter of commitment from each funding source as an attachment.
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

• **Addressing Climate Change and Decarbonization**
  
  – MARAD also seeks projects that proactively consider climate change, reduce greenhouse gases, promote energy efficiency, or address environmental justice.

  – 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, 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.)
Additional Considerations

• Applications should also address:
  – Planned compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
  – Domestic Preference – All AMH projects must comply with the Build America, Buy America requirements outlined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act:
    • Requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States.
    • Each application should address how the applicant plans to comply with domestic preference and the applicant’s efforts to maximize domestic content.
    • If a project intends to use a product with foreign content or of foreign origin, the applicant should demonstrate that a domestic source is not available and how that determination was reached.
Additional Application Requirements

• CEO Certification from all applicants

• Registration in *Sam.gov*

• Additional information **from all private sector applicants**, including previous AMH recipients:
  – Letter of support from original Project Applicant
  – Description of the entity
  – UEI of parent company
  – Most recent year-end financial statements
  – Relationship between applicant and any parents, subsidiaries or affiliates
  – Evidence of match
  – Pro-forma financial statements
  – Statement regarding Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code
  – Company Officer’s certification
Section E of the NOFO explains the process as to how the Program Office evaluates grant applications and is provided as background material only. Applicants should refer to the NOFO.

MARAD will consider the following primary selection criteria when evaluating grant applications:

- Whether the project is financially viable;
- Whether the funds will be spent efficiently and effectively;
- Whether a market exists for the services of the project; and
- The public benefits of the project, as outlined in 46 CFR 393.3(c)(8).
The Grant Application Evaluation Process

• Projects are more competitive if they:
  – represent the most financially viable marine highway transportation services and require the lowest total percentage Federal share of the costs;
  – demonstrate a movement towards lower carbon emissions or near-zero emissions;
  – improve the regional or national supply chain; or
  – are in a Historically Disadvantaged Community or a Federally designated community development zone.

• MARAD will also consider the extent to which projects address equity and barriers to opportunity and a project’s likelihood of obligating funds by September 30, 2025.
Review and Selection Process

- The application package is screened for completeness through a MARAD technical review of the application.
- During the review process, the Program Office may request additional information from applicants, but expects all applications to be complete upon submission.
- Upon completion of the technical review, MARAD will forward applications to the Intermodal Review Team (IRT). The IRT reviews applications and provides comments to the Program Office based on the selection criteria.
- The Program Office will use the comments from the IRT to inform its recommendations of awards to the Maritime Administrator and the Secretary.
- The Secretary selects and announces grant awards.
- Timing – Award announcements are anticipated by September 2022.
Examples of Successful Grants

Applicants typically request funding to purchase marine terminal or handling equipment essential for the efficient loading and unloading of container-on-barge operations at ports.

Some examples of successful Marine Highway Grant requests include:

• Tidewater Barge Line, Inc. was awarded grant funds to support expanded barge services between the Port of Morrow in Boardman, Oregon and Tidewater Terminal in Vancouver, Washington. Funds will be used to procure a new barge that would be uniquely capable of handling a combination of both 40’ and 48’ containers.

• Planning and design study projects can be funded as well. Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority was awarded AMH grant funds to design a 520’ x 30’ long access trestle and combination dock/ramp.

• The Connecticut Port Authority was awarded funding for a construction-enhancement project designed to improve the flow of vehicular and passenger traffic at a ferry terminal—this included maintenance dredging and the relocation of ferry platforms.
Administration Information

• Award notifications
  – MARAD representative will then reach out to POC listed on the SF-424.

• Grants are reimbursement grants.
  – Notice of award is NOT authorization to begin performance.
  – MARAD written pre-approval is required if a grantee wishes to begin expending non-Federal funds before grant agreement execution.
  – Reimbursement after: (1) grant agreement complete; (2) allowable expenses incurred; and (3) valid request for reimbursement.

• Administrative and National Policy Requirements
  – Grants are administered in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200).
  – Other requirements to keep in mind: Build America, Buy America Act; Brooks Act; Federal prevailing wage rate requirements, and Title VI.
Progress and Performance Reporting

- All grantees will be required to provide a quarterly report with:
  - Project progress made and planned activities for the next reporting period;
  - a listing of any supplies and/or equipment purchased with grant funds;
  - an explanation of any deviation from the projected budget and timeline;
  - a statement that the grant funds consistent with the Grant Agreement;
  - if applicable, a description of the budgeted activities not procured; the rationale for recipient’s failure to execute the budgeted activities;
  - if applicable, explanation as to how and when grant recipient intends to accomplish the purposes of the Grant Agreement; and
Progress and Performance Reporting

- a budget summary showing funds expended since commencement, anticipated expenditures for the next reporting period, and expenditures compared to overall budget
- performance indicators used should align with the measures included in the grant application and should relate to at least one of the selection criteria
- performance reporting continues for three years after project construction is completed
- a Federal Financial Form SF-425 must be submitted to cover all expenditures on the grant from the start date of the reporting period to the end date of the reporting period
- the reports are a requirement in consideration of the award and do not have a reimbursable value
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