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Notice of Funding Opportunity

Title: Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration – 2021 Port Infrastructure Development Grants
Website: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=332457>
Funding: Total: \$230,000,000. Maximum awards: \$1M-\$57.5M, depending on project.
Dates: Application Submission Deadline: July 30, 2021

Summary: The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 appropriated \$230 million for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) to make grants to improve facilities within, or outside of and directly related to operations of or an intermodal connection to, coastal seaports, inland river ports, and Great Lakes ports. Funds for the PIDP are to be awarded as discretionary grants on a competitive basis for projects that will improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port. All PIDP grant recipients must meet all applicable Federal requirements, including the Buy American Act.

Project Topic Areas:

Eligible projects for FY 2021 PIDP grants shall be located either within the boundary of a port, or outside the boundary of a port and directly related to port operations or to an intermodal connection to a port. Eligible projects are limited to: 1) port gate improvements; 2) road improvements both within and connecting to the port; 3) rail improvements both within and connecting to the port; 4) berth improvements (including docks, wharves, piers, and dredging incidental to the improvement project); 5) fixed landside improvements in support of cargo operations (such as silos, elevators, conveyors, container terminals, Ro/Ro structures including parking garages necessary for intermodal freight transfer, warehouses including refrigerated facilities, lay-down areas, transit sheds, and other such facilities); 6) utilities necessary for safe operations (including lighting, stormwater, and other such improvements that are incidental to a larger infrastructure project); or 7) a combination of activities described above.

Projects addressing environmental mitigation measures, freight intelligent transportation systems, and digital infrastructure systems are eligible if those components support one of the eligible project types listed above. This program will not fund construction, reconstruction, reconditioning, or purchase of a vessel, nor any project within a small shipyard. Mobile equipment, such as mobile harbor cranes or vehicles and similar equipment whose utility depends, in part, on their ability to be routinely relocated from one location to another, is not eligible for funding. Development phase activities (including planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, permitting, and preliminary engineering and design work) that support these capital projects are also eligible. However, DOT will prioritize funding for projects that propose to move into the construction phase within the grant's performance period. Accordingly, applications for only development phase activities will be less competitive than capital grants. Improvements to Federally owned facilities are ineligible under the FY 2021 PIDP.

Funding:

DOT intends to award up to \$230 million on a competitive basis for projects that improve facilities within, or outside of and directly related to operations of or an intermodal connection to, coastal seaports, inland river ports, and Great Lakes ports. The FY21 Appropriations Act directed that at least \$205 million of this amount be reserved for grants to coastal seaports or Great Lakes ports. Additionally, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed that not less than \$41.4 million shall be for projects at "Small Ports and Terminals" meeting certain requirements described in this NOFO. The FY21 Appropriations Act allows up to two percent (\$4.6 million) of the funds appropriated to be available for necessary costs of grant administration. If MARAD does not receive sufficient qualified applications, it will award less than the amount available. The minimum PIDP award size is \$1 million. Except as limited by the amount of available funding and the statutory restrictions on funding, there is no maximum award size. In addition to the FY 2021 PIDP funds, unobligated prior year PIDP funds may be made available and awarded under this solicitation to eligible projects. DOT presently estimates that approximately \$20 million in prior year funds may be awarded under this solicitation. If this solicitation does not result in the award and obligation of all available funds, DOT may publish additional solicitations.

The FY21 Appropriations Act and NDAA impose several restrictions on awards under this notice: Not more than 25 percent of the available funds (\$57.5 million) can be used to make grants for projects in any one State; At least \$205 million is reserved for coastal seaport projects or Great Lakes port projects; Eighteen percent (\$41.4 million) is reserved for small projects at small ports awarded, and no single grant award may be more than 10 percent (\$4.14 million) of this amount. Of this reserved \$41.4 million, not more than 10 percent (\$4.14 million) may be used to make grants for development phase activities; Not more than 10 percent (\$18.4 million) of the funds not reserved for small

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projects at small ports may be awarded for development phase activities for large projects that do not result in construction.

Per the FY21 Appropriations Act, the Federal share of the costs for which an expenditure is made under a PIDP grant may not exceed 80 percent; however, the Secretary may increase the Federal share of costs above 80 percent for: (1) large project grant awards less than \$10 million; or, (2) grants awarded to small projects at small ports. Non-Federal sources include State funds originating from programs funded by State revenue, local funds originating from State or local revenue funded programs, or private funds. The application should demonstrate, such as through a commitment letter or other documentation, the sources of the non-Federal funds. Unless otherwise authorized by statute, State or local cost share may not be counted as the non-Federal share for both the FY 2021 PIDP Grant award and another Federal grant program.

Project Requirements:

DOT must make the following determinations before selecting a project for award. Evidence that a project meets these determinations should be clearly indicated in the Project Narrative. 1) The project improves the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through a port or intermodal connection to the port; 2) The project is cost effective. DOT will determine a project is cost effective if it estimates that the project's benefit-cost ratio is equal to or greater than one; 3) The eligible applicant has the authority to carry out the project; 4) The eligible applicant has sufficient funding available to meet the matching requirements; 5) The project will be completed without unreasonable delay; 6) The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without Federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor.

An application may describe a project that contains more than one component and may describe components that may be carried out by parties other than the applicant. DOT may award funds for a component, instead of the larger project, if that component (1) independently meets minimum award amounts and all eligibility requirements; (2) independently aligns well with the merit criteria; and (3) meets National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements with respect to independent utility. Independent utility means that the component will represent a transportation improvement that is usable, even if no other improvement is made in the area, and will be ready for intended use upon completion of that component's construction. All project components that are presented together in a single application must demonstrate a relationship or connection among them.

To ensure the funds are expended in a timely manner, DOT, to the extent possible, seeks to obligate FY 2021 PIDP funds by September 30, 2024. Obligation occurs when a selected applicant and DOT enter into a written grant agreement after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental review requirements. Recipients of prior PIDP grants may apply for funding to support additional phases of a project previously awarded funds in the PIDP program. However, to be competitive, the applicant should demonstrate the extent to which the previously funded project phase has met estimated project schedules and budget, as well as the ability to realize the benefits expected for the project. A previous PIDP award, or application, does not affect competitiveness under the FY 2021 PIDP competition. Each lead applicant may submit no more than one application.

Eligible Applicants:

To be selected for a FY 2021 PIDP discretionary grant, an applicant must be an eligible applicant and the project must be an eligible project. An eligible applicant for a FY 2021 PIDP discretionary grant is a port authority, a commission or its subdivision or agent under existing authority, a State or political subdivision of a State or local government, a Tribal government, a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States, a special purpose district with a transportation function, a multistate or multijurisdictional group of entities, or a lead entity described above jointly with a private entity or group of private entities (including the owners or operators of a facility, or collection of facilities, at a port). If submitting a joint application, applicants should identify a lead applicant as the primary point of contact and also identify the primary recipient of the award. The applicant that will be responsible for financial administration of the project must be an eligible applicant. Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the authority to carry out the project and are encouraged to submit an assertion with citation of authority with their application.