



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety
Administration
(PHMSA)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Pipeline Safety Information Grants to Communities: Technical Assistance Grants (TAG)

Fiscal Year 2020

NOFO Posted Date: February 4, 2020
Application Due Date: March 19, 2020, 11:59 pm ET
Questions Due Date: March 16, 2020

Applicant must register at www.Grants.gov to apply online. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid delays in submission. Additionally, applicants must maintain a valid Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.SAM.gov.

Furthermore, applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. Your organization's Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from SAM, is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how to use the portal, view the [*FedConnect: Ready, Set, Go! Tutorial*](#) under the *Need Help?* Section on the FedConnect home page.

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)
20.710 "Technical Assistance Grants"**

**PHMSA NOFO Number:
693JK320NF0003**

Table of Contents

Program Summary.....	3
Mission.....	4
Section A – Program Description.....	4
Section A.1 Statement of Purpose.....	4
Section A.2 Statute and Program Authority.....	4
Section A.3 Background.....	5
Section B – Federal Award Information.....	5
Section B.1 Funding.....	5
Section B.2 Period of Performance.....	5
Section B.3 Type of Award.....	5
Section B.4 Previous Awards.....	5
Section C – Eligibility Information.....	5
Section C.1 Eligible Applicants.....	5
Section C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching.....	5
Section D – Application and Submission Information.....	6
Section D.1 Address to Request Application Package.....	6
Section D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission.....	7
Section D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).....	8
Section D.4 Submission Dates and Times.....	8
Section D.5 Funding Restrictions.....	8
Section D.6 Other Submission Requirements.....	9
Section E – Application Review Information	10
Section E.1 Criteria.....	10
Section E.2 Review and Selection Process.....	11
Section E.3 Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates	12
Section F – Federal Award Administration Information.....	12
Section F.1 Federal Award Notices.....	12
Section F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	13
Section F.3 Reporting Requirements.....	13
Section G – Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s).....	13
Section H – Other Information.....	14

Program Summary

Federal Agency Name:	U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)
Funding Opportunity Title:	Pipeline Safety Information Grants to Communities: Technical Assistance Grants (TAG)
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
Funding Opportunity Number:	693JK320NF0003
CFDA Number:	20.710
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MISSION

The mission of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is to ensure our nation has the safest, most efficient and modern transportation system in the world. DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) protects people and the environment by advancing the safe transportation of energy and other hazardous materials that are essential to our daily lives. To do this, the agency establishes national policy, sets and enforces standards, educates, and conducts research to prevent incidents. We also prepare the public and first responders to reduce consequences if an incident does occur. To accomplish this, PHMSA awards grants to states, localities, communities, and non-profit organizations that help make sure pipelines operate safely and shipments arrive without incident.

SECTION A – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1 Statement of Purpose

Pipeline safety is a shared responsibility and informed communities play a vital role in the safety and reliability of pipeline operations. The Pipeline Safety Information Grants to Communities: Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) provide funding to local communities and groups of individuals for technical assistance related to pipeline safety. The program also provides opportunities that strengthen the depth and quality of public participation in the safe operation of pipelines in and around communities. Technical assistance is defined as engineering or other scientific analysis of pipeline safety issues.

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 in advancing pipeline and hazardous materials (hazmat) transportation safety.

A.2 Statute and Program Authority

The TAG program is authorized pursuant to the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-355, codified at 49 U.S.C. 60130), to make grants to local communities and groups of individuals (not including for-profit entities) for technical assistance relating to pipeline safety. The TAG program is further authorized under the Pipeline Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-468), the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-90), and the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-183).

A.3 Background

Since the inception of the TAG program, PHMSA has awarded almost \$10.5 million for 212 individual technical assistance projects. TAG awards have funded a broad range of activities, including improvement of local pipeline emergency response capabilities; improvement of safe digging or damage prevention programs; development of pipeline safety information resources; implementation of local land use planning practices that enhance pipeline safety; community and pipeline awareness campaigns; and public participation in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety. A summary of the TAG awards, including final reports from completed grant projects, is available at <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/tag>.

SECTION B – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1 Funding

Subject to the availability of appropriations, PHMSA anticipates \$1,500,000 will be made available to support the TAG program. Grant awards under this NOFO may not exceed \$100,000 for a single recipient.

Recipients may request up to 50 percent of the total amount of the award upon execution of the grant agreement. The remaining amount may be requested upon receipt and approval (by the PHMSA Agreement Officer) of the mid-term progress report.

B.2 Period of Performance

The period of performance is 12 months from the effective date of award for each grant. Applicants must only apply for funding that can be reasonably expended within this time frame and for projects that can be completed within the period of performance.

B.3 Type of Award

Discretionary grant award.

B.4 Previous Award

TAG recipients from previous years are eligible to apply for a FY 2020 TAG, however, applications should be for new projects and not for renewal or supplementation of existing projects.

SECTION C – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

Applicants for the TAG must be local communities or groups of individuals (not including for-profit entities) relating to the safety of pipeline facilities in local communities, other than facilities regulated under Public Law 93-153 (43 U.S.C. 1651 et seq.). Eligible applicants include cities, towns, villages, counties, parishes, townships, and similar governmental subdivisions, or consortiums of such subdivisions, and groups of individuals; not including for-profit entities. States, universities, and for-profit entities **are not eligible** for TAG funding.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no cost-sharing or matching requirements.

SECTION D – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

PHMSA requires applicants for this funding opportunity to apply electronically through www.Grants.gov. Applicants must download the application package associated with this funding opportunity by following the directions provided at Grants.gov. To request a hard copy of the application package, please contact:

Dwayne Cross, Agreement Officer
Acquisition Services Division
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, E22-306
Washington, DC 20590
Phone: 202-366-4429
Email: Dwayne.Cross@dot.gov

If you are a hearing-impaired person, please contact the FR/TTY at 1-800-877-8339 or email PHMSA-Accessibility@dot.gov.

Applications will only be accepted via Grants.gov. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

The application package contains the required electronic forms/templates and provides the ability to upload attachments for the budget narrative, project narrative, assurances, and certifications. The applicant must submit the information outlined in the application package. A copy of this NOFO and corresponding forms package can be retrieved from www.Grants.gov using the following basic search criteria:

- (1) Keyword(s): Technical Assistance Grants
- (2) NOFO#: 693JK320NF0003
- (3) CFDA Number: 20.710

To begin the process, applicants must register at www.Grants.gov. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid submission delays.

Failure to comply with the prescribed application requirements as described in this section will result in an application not being reviewed.

Accessing Grants.gov:

For new users, go to <http://www.Grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>, or go to the main page at <http://www.Grants.gov/> and select “Register.” **NOTE: New user registrations for Grants.gov can take up to two weeks to complete.** For additional questions on how to register, contact Grants.gov support by phone at (800) 518-4726 or by email at support@grants.gov. Carrie Winslow may also be able to help answer questions on applying for Grants.gov usernames/passwords as they specifically relate to the TAG program. Please contact Carrie Winslow by phone at (757) 689-3168 or by email at carrie.winslow@dot.gov.

Accessing FedConnect:

Applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. Your organization's Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from SAM, is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how to use the portal, view the [*FedConnect: Ready, Set, Go! Tutorial*](#) under the *Need Help?* section on the FedConnect home page. For other technical issues or questions, either email fcsupport@unisonglobal.com or call us at 1-800-899-6665 option 2. The FedConnect Support Center is staffed Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., EDT, except Federal holidays.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

Consistent with the Department's R.O.U.T.E.S. Initiative (<https://www.transportation.gov/rural>), the Department encourages applicants to describe how activities proposed in their application would address the unique challenges facing rural transportation networks, regardless of the geographic location of those activities.

Each application must consist of the following required documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance Standard Form (SF-424)
2. Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Project Narrative
4. Budget Narrative and Estimates
5. Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances
6. Certification Regarding Lobbying

The standard forms (SF-424 and SF-424A), templates for the Project and Budget Narratives, Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances, and the Certification Regarding Lobby form are available on Grants.gov in the 'Related Documents' tab with detailed instructions on the application process.

Applications should be clear, concise, and free of mathematical errors in the line-item budget and budget narrative. Project narratives should have the sections clearly identified and follow the structure requested in the application package.

Applicants should state whether the project is located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone designated pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 1400Z-1 in the project narrative.

- If your proposal includes **indirect costs**, please attach a copy of your **approved indirect cost rate agreement** along with your proposal. If your entity does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, please include a statement to that effect in your budget request.
- If your proposal includes **personnel costs**, please include a complete breakdown, including *personnel title/position, hourly rate, and the number of hours expected to be spent by each person* on the proposed project.
- If your proposal includes **travel costs**, please include adequate details on how the cost has been calculated. Travel costs are those costs for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items requested for fieldwork or for travel to professional meetings associated with grant activities. Provide the purpose, method of travel, number of persons traveling, number

of days, and estimated cost for each trip. If details of each trip are not known at the time of application submission, provide the basis for determining the amount requested.

- If your proposal includes **equipment costs**, please include adequate details on how the cost has been calculated, including information on each specific equipment piece(s) required and their individual costs. Equipment costs must comply with 2 CFR § 200.439.

Further, please note that in order to comply with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E, and DOT's Guide to Financial Assistance, PHMSA's Agreement Officers and Grant Specialists may request additional information pertaining to your application during the application review/evaluation process.

Please refer to sections E.1 and E.2 for the Evaluation Criteria and Rating Guidelines, to which the Project and Budget Narratives will be evaluated.

D.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by PHMSA. PHMSA may not make a grant award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. We recommend that applicants review the SAM database to ensure that their DUNS number is updated and active: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. **PHMSA will review an applicant's registration status to make a responsibility determination to ensure that the applicant is responsible, current on all Federal taxes, and is not on the list of parties excluded from Federal awards.**

D.4 Submission Dates and Times

Complete applications must be received electronically through Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 19, 2020. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

PHMSA will only accept one application from each applicant. Applicants awarded FY 2020 TAGs may not subcontract with or otherwise receive TAG funding from other FY 2020 TAG recipients for purposes of performing work under the FY 2020 TAG program.

D.5 Funding Restrictions

The funding for the TAG program may not be used for lobbying, in direct support of litigation, in direct advocacy for or against a pipeline construction or expansion project or other pipeline policy matters, or for activities associated with regulatory compliance or typical operations and maintenance of pipeline facilities as defined below.

While operators of non-profit municipal pipeline systems are considered communities, and are eligible for a TAG, **the funds may not be used for activities associated with regulatory compliance or typical operations and maintenance of pipeline facilities. This restriction includes compliance with pipeline safety integrity management regulations.**

Prohibited activities include:

- Lobbying, which is defined as the act of attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of officials, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies. This is a form of advocacy where a direct contact is made to legislators.
- Direct support of litigation.
- Advocacy, which is defined as an activity by an individual or group that aims to advance particular views or influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Advocacy may include undertaking activities such as media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research, conducting exit polls, or filing an amicus brief.

Some examples of prohibited activities include:

- Expenses claimed and or reimbursed by another program.
- Expenses counted as match funds toward another Federal program.
- Any additional costs disallowed or stated as ineligible in 2 CFR part 200.
- One-on-one meetings and contacts with members of the Administration or Congress.
- Letters, policy reports, or recommendations sent directly to policymakers to sway policy debate or decisions.
- Billboards or advertisements aimed at attracting the attention of congressional staffers and administration officials.
- Hill briefings to converse with and educate members of Congress and their staffs.
- Hearings in congressional committees where public witnesses can testify on an issue.
- Protests, media (mainstream and social) campaigns, and letter/e-mail campaigns.
- Posting pro- or anti-pipeline advocacy documents and messages on websites developed with grant funds.

D.6 Other Submission Requirements

See **Attachment 1: Terms and Conditions** of this announcement for a list of statutes and regulations that discuss allowable uses of the TAG funds. PHMSA may award, at its discretion, applications from non-profit municipal pipeline operators that propose projects that clearly exceed what is required of pipeline operators under existing pipeline safety regulations.

Examples of eligible project work include, but are not limited to:

- Adopting Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) recommended practices (<http://www.pipa-info.com>);
- Increasing awareness of “811 – Call Before You Dig” program (<http://www.call811.com>);
- Developing information or technologies that could aid in pipeline emergency response, pipeline excavation damage prevention, risk-informed land use planning, community awareness, public education, and engineering (except activities already required by existing regulations); and,
- Understanding and fulfilling pipeline safety data needs to improve data analysis.

Questions regarding the eligibility of specific activities may be directed to Dwayne Cross at dwayne.cross@dot.gov or (202) 366-4429.

For summaries of past TAG projects, including all final reports that have been submitted to PHMSA to date, visit <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/tag>. Please note that in the first two years of the TAG program (2009 and 2010), PHMSA did not explicitly prohibit the use of funds for regulatory compliance or operations and maintenance by municipal operators.

SECTION E – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

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.

PHMSA will evaluate applications through administrative, technical, and programmatic reviews based on the evaluation criteria.

PHMSA developed evaluation criteria to rate and select competing applications. Submission of an application is not a guarantee of award. PHMSA may, at its discretion, award a grant based on an application in its entirety, award only portions of a grant based on its application, or not award a grant at all. Applications will be evaluated against the following evaluation criteria:

1. The extent to which the applicant's project scope establishes clear goals and objectives that focus on areas where a pipeline failure could pose a significant risk to people or to unusually sensitive environmental areas (see definition in 49 CFR 195.6).
2. The extent to which the applicant's project scope identifies specific pipeline safety concerns or risks to address in affected geographic areas to stakeholders and/or communities.
3. The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the applicant's experience with and commitment to foster open communication with affected operators and other key members of the community to ensure project success.
4. The extent to which the applicant's project aligns with the challenges and strategies for advancing pipeline safety and seeks to improve performance and safety over time in areas such as engineering, damage prevention, land use planning, public awareness, education and outreach, emergency response, and community awareness.
5. The extent to which the applicant's project plan clearly establishes resources, milestones, and estimated project costs that align with project goals and objectives.
6. The extent to which the applicant's project plan identifies measurable results and deliverables and specifies how results will be evaluated and disseminated to affected stakeholders.
7. The extent to which the applicant's project scope provides the potential for learning or technology transfer to other groups and communities.

In addition, PHMSA expects the proposed results of the projects to be factual, unbiased, verifiable, and repeatable to the extent practicable. **Applicants should also be aware that a**

grant award will not convey any authority to grant recipients to secure information or cooperation from pipeline operators.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

Administrative Review: PHMSA will conduct an administrative review to ensure the application meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section C on Eligibility Information. Each application will be reviewed for completeness to ensure it includes all of the required elements to qualify for the grant. If the application does not meet the required elements, then the application is likely to be rejected.

Technical Review: PHMSA will conduct a technical review of the application(s) to assess how the proposed work is to be performed and whether the application(s) are responsive to the applicable program requirements (i.e. performance measurement, methodology, and technical merit). PHMSA may use outside stakeholders as part of the technical review panel. Member outside stakeholders may be comprised of pipeline safety stakeholder groups with expertise in pipeline safety.

Programmatic Review: PHMSA will conduct a programmatic review to assess programmatic factors. Programmatic factors are relevant and essential to the process of selecting applications that best achieve the program objectives, in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines. Programmatic factors may include history of performance, program priorities, and other modal needs (i.e. rural areas and Qualified Opportunity Zones).

Based on these results from each review, each application will receive an overall rating either as:

Rating Guideline
Highly Recommended - The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are very well understood and the approach will likely result in a very high-quality performance. The application clearly addresses and exceeds requirements with no weaknesses. The application contains outstanding features that meet or exceed on multiple dimensions the expectations of the Government. The application scope aligns very well with the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is very low.
Recommended - The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are understood and the approach will likely result in satisfactory performance. The application addresses and meets requirements with some minor, but correctable weaknesses. The application demonstrates requisite experience, qualifications, and performance capabilities. The application scope aligns with the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is low.
Acceptable - The application demonstrates that the NOFO requirements are mostly understood and the approach will likely result in satisfactory performance for part of the requirements. The application addresses some of the requirements with some weaknesses. The application demonstrates some experience, qualifications, and/or performance capabilities. The application partially aligns with the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is moderate.
Not Acceptable - The application does not meet the NOFO requirements. The

application fails to address many requirements. The applicant may be ineligible to apply for the grant. The application could not satisfy critical requirements without a major revision and/or a rewrite of the application or a major redirection effort. The application scope does not align with the DOT objectives and priorities. The risk of poor performance is high.

Selection Process

Final award recommendations will be made by the PHMSA Administrator after taking into consideration recommendations made during the administrative, technical, and programmatic reviews. The Secretary of Transportation will make final award selection decisions.

E.3 Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Applications chosen for funding will receive electronic notification of the Federal Award. Upon notification, an applicant's authorized official must sign the award within the time frame prescribed by PHMSA. Subject to the availability of funding, PHMSA plans to make awards no later than September 30, 2020, with a proposed period of performance start date of September 30, 2020.

SECTION F – FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

PHMSA's awarding official will make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this NOFO. All funds provided by PHMSA must be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable Federal cost principles, and the U.S. DOT financial assistance regulations. Funds may not be used in direct support of litigation, lobbying, for direct advocacy for or against a pipeline construction or expansion project or other pipeline policy matters, or for activities associated with regulatory compliance or typical operations and maintenance of pipeline facilities.

The grant award agreement, signed by both the PHMSA Agreement Officer and the recipient's Authorized Representative, is the authorizing document and will be provided through electronic means to the Authorized Representative. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- 1) The legal name and address of the recipient;
- 2) Title of project;
- 3) Name(s) of key personnel chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- 4) Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN) assigned by PHMSA;
- 5) Period of performance;
- 6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the project;
- 7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- 8) Assistance Listing Program Number (formerly CFDA);

- 9) Applicable award terms and conditions;
- 10) Approved budget including category of spending; and,
- 11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by PHMSA.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and grants awarded under this program. See the Terms and Conditions attached to this NOFO for a list of statutes and regulations that are applicable to this funding opportunity.

F.3 Reporting Requirements

Six months after the effective date of the grant award (progress report) and 90 calendar days after the end of the grant period (final report), each recipient must submit a written report that includes the following information:

1. A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period;
2. Where the output of the project can be quantified, a computation of the cost per unit of output; and,
3. The reasons for delays if established objectives were not met.

Further, the final report must demonstrate completion of the work as outlined in the grant agreement.

In addition, each recipient of a grant must ensure that:

- 1) The technical findings made possible by the grants are made available to the relevant pipeline operators; and,
- 2) Open communication is maintained between the grant recipients, local operators, local communities, and other interested parties.

In total, four reports (a mid-term progress report, a mid-term financial status report, a final progress report, and a final financial report) are required. Standard Form 425 (SF-425) must be used for submission of the mid-term and final financial status reports.

SECTION G – FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Grant Related Questions

Primary Point of Contact

Dwayne Cross, Agreement Officer (AO)
 Acquisition Services Division
 Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, E22-306
 Washington, DC 20590
 Phone: (202) 366-4429
 Email: dwayne.cross@dot.gov

Grants.gov Questions

Grants.gov Contact Center

Phone: (800) 518-4726

E-mail: support@grants.gov

SECTION H – OTHER INFORMATION

Given the complexity of some aspects of the application process, technical assistance is available to rural applicants and inexperienced or under-resourced applicants to help with the application process. Please contact the primary point of contact listed in Section G.