



City  
of  
Clarksville

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## January/February 2026 ROUTES Newsletter

1 message

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To: michael.ziarnek@cityofclarksville.com

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*The Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) Initiative aims to support rural transportation infrastructure by developing user-friendly tools and information, aggregating USDOT resources, and providing technical assistance. If you want to learn more about ROUTES, or how it can help your community, visit the [ROUTES Initiative](#) website or reach out to the ROUTES team at [rural@dot.gov](mailto:rural@dot.gov).*

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# USDOT Funding & Financing

## USDOT Announces \$1.5 Billion in Infrastructure Funding to Get America Building Again

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has announced a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) through Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grants for Fiscal Year 2026 that makes \$1.5 billion available for infrastructure projects across the country.

Under Secretary Duffy, the merit criteria of BUILD grants will prioritize increasing safety measures, expanding transportation options for American families, as well as projects that:

- Beautify transportation infrastructure with context-appropriate design that enhance user experience while maintaining safety and operational efficiency;
- Improve roadway capacity and makes transportation more affordable;
- Improve the travel experience for families through dedicated facilities for mothers, accessibility for those with disabilities, intuitive design elements, clear signage, intuitive layouts, and predictable operations for caregivers;
- Facilitate tourism;
- Support U.S. energy dominance.

### Additional Information:

The program's goal is to identify transportation projects with the capacity to have significant local or regional impacts, including highway, rail, port, and truck parking projects. BUILD grants are awarded on a competitive basis for planning or constructing surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation.

[Applications](#) are due February 24, 2026, at 5:00 pm eastern.

## FTA Invests \$2 Billion in Modernizing America's Transit Bus Infrastructure

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced an investment of \$2 billion in 165 transit projects in 45 States and Washington, D.C. The funds will deliver 2,400 buses built with American parts and labor—a proud example of President Trump's America First agenda.

Funding from the [Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program](#) and the [Low or No Emission Grant Program](#) will help modernize America's bus infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion, and help people travel more efficiently and affordably. These competitive grants will also create good-paying jobs in both rural and urban communities across the country. A full breakdown of the project selections is available [here](#). In addition, through advance appropriations, FTA is adding \$518 million in fiscal year (FY) 2026 funding through the Low or No Emission Program to make additional selections.

## FHWA Announces Availability of Over \$40 Million to Improve

## **PHMSA Announces Availability of Over \$40 Million to Improve Roadway Safety on Tribal Lands and Get America Building Again**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced over \$40 million in available funding to help Tribal governments improve roadways and address transportation safety issues through the [Tribal Transportation Program Safety Fund \(TTPSF\)](#). This announcement will help eligible applicants – the 574 Federally recognized Tribes – meet their transportation infrastructure priorities and help reduce the risk of serious roadway departures and fatal crashes, particularly for those living and working in Native American and Alaska Native communities. Project improvements may include measures that keep drivers in their lanes, enable safe recovery along roadsides, and strategies that reduce the severity of accidents. You can [read the amended NOFO here](#).

## **USDOT Announces Nearly \$500 Million in Funding to Revitalize American Infrastructure**

The USDOT has announced \$488 million in awards from the [Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development \(BUILD\)](#) grant program for 30 projects across the country. The funding will support critical roadway, transit, rail, maritime, and aviation infrastructure improvements that improve safety, reduce congestion, and spur economic growth.

Key Facts:

- Roads and bridges received 77% of the funding from this grant series to reinforce the arteries of the American economy.
  - Ex: Over \$24 million to widen an approximately 14-mile segment of US Route 54 from a two-lane roadway to a shared four-lane configuration between Farber and Curryville, Missouri.
- 10% of the grants are being awarded to transit upgrades to deliver safe, reliable, and accessible commuter networks.
- Waterway projects received more than \$35 million primarily for port improvements to enhance American maritime dominance.
- Nearly \$3 million will support rail networks to enhance multimodal surface transportation.
- The West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) will receive roughly \$25 million towards expanding trucking parking in Cabell, Monongalia, and Berkeley Counties along I-81, I-64, and I-79.

[The full list of projects can be viewed here.](#)

## **PHMSA Announces \$86 Million in Grants to Support State Pipeline Safety Programs**

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has announced \$86 million in grants to enhance States' pipeline safety programs. The funds will help State partners inspect more than 85 percent of the nation's 3.3-million-mile pipeline network.

For FY 2025, the award amounts are:

- \$82 million in Pipeline Safety State Base Grants
- \$4 million in Underground Natural Gas Storage Grants

These two formula-based programs support State enforcement of Federal pipeline safety

regulations by reimbursing up to 80% of State costs for personnel, equipment, or activities related to pipeline safety inspection and enforcement. Funding amounts for each State are available [here](#). More information on PHMSA's grant programs can be found [here](#).

## **USDOT Announces \$35.9 Million Loan to Expand Freight Capacity for Washington State's Port of Longview**

## **USDOT Announces Essential Air Service Program**

## **FHWA Announces \$175 Million to Build and Improve Ferry Boat Service**

## **FRA Announces Over \$5 Billion to get America Building Safer, More Reliable Railroads**

## **NHTSA Approves More Than \$800M for States to Make Roads Safer**

## **FHWA Delivers Largest Emergency Relief Funding Ever for North Carolina's Hurricane Recovery**

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# Research & Technology

## Traffic Crash Deaths | Early Estimates Jan-June 2025

NHTSA has released [early estimates for motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the first half of 2025](#), projecting a substantial 8.2% decline in roadway deaths. An estimated 17,140 people lost their lives in motor vehicle crashes from January through June 2025, down from 18,680 fatalities during the same period in 2024.

The decline in fatalities occurred even as vehicle miles traveled increased by 12.1 billion miles during the first half of 2025. As a result, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled dropped to 1.06, down 8.6% from 1.16 in the same period last year. This represents the lowest mid-year fatality rate since 2014.

Additionally, 38 States, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, are projected to have experienced decreases in traffic deaths. Only 11 States are projected to see increases, while one State remains unchanged.

## BTS Modernization Efforts

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## Round Up

### Top Transportation Officials Underscore USDOT's Commitment to Safety on Roads for First Responders and Partnership with State DOTs at AASHTO Annual Meeting

The Federal Highway Administrator, Sean McMaster, highlighted the U.S. Department of Transportation's latest actions to improve safety on the nation's highways, roads and bridges, including efforts to make traffic incident management safer for first responders, as well as the agency's ongoing work with its State DOT partners to make travel safer for all road users.

On November 14, the [FHWA announced](#) that U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy has secured nationwide participation from all State partners for the agency's Safe Arterials for Everyone through Reliable Operations and Distraction-Reducing Strategies (SAFE ROADS) initiative. Launched to reduce roadway fatalities, SAFE ROADS emphasizes the administration's effort to get back to basics and address safety on non-freeway arterials, where more than half of all U.S. roadway deaths occurred in 2023.

On November 20, Administrator McMaster spoke at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Annual Board of Directors Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT and commended State DOTs for their hard work on the SAFE ROADS initiative. Looking to the future, McMaster stated that FHWA wants to give more flexibility to State and local governments and get back to basics by building big, beautiful bridges and roads, since State DOTs and local agencies understand their transportation needs best.

### FMCSA Launches New Initiatives to Improve Trucker's Quality of Life on the Road

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has announced the launch of two bold new pilot programs aimed at improving the working conditions and quality of life for America's truck drivers. The FMCSA will study increased flexibility in the current hours-of-service (HOS) regulations, which will help determine if providing drivers with greater control over their own schedule will reduce fatigue and improve safety.

1. **Split Duty Period pilot program:** This will allow participating drivers to pause their 14-hour "driving window" for no less than 30 minutes and no more than three hours. The program seeks to collect data and assess whether added flexibility can maintain or improve safety outcomes.
2. **Flexible Sleeper Berth pilot program:** This will explore additional sleeper berth split options beyond the current "8/2" and "7/3" configurations. FMCSA will test the safety implications of allowing drivers to divide their 10-hour off-duty requirement into "6/4" and "5/5" split periods. The research will examine how these alternatives affect driver fatigue and overall safety performance in order to determine whether a wider range of rest options could benefit both drivers and the motoring public.

#### Additional Information:

The pilot programs are part of the Department's [Pro-Trucker Package](#), unveiled in June by Secretary Duffy in support of President Trump's [Executive Order 14286](#), Enforcing Commonsense Rules of the Road for America's Truck Drivers. The wide-ranging package

includes millions of dollars in investments for expanded truck parking, modernized driver resources, commonsense regulatory reforms to eliminate one-size-fits-all mandates, and efforts to crack down on bad actors.

[Register notices](#) for both the Split Duty Period pilot program and the Flexible Sleeper Berth pilot program are available for review. The notices invite public comment and provide additional details. FMCSA will carefully review all submissions. Protocol development for both pilot programs will begin in early 2026, with more than 500 commercial truck drivers expected to participate in the efforts.

## **USDOT Kicks Off Surface Transportation Reauthorization to Get America Building Again**

The U.S. Department of Transportation brought together Congressional members and infrastructure stakeholders in a first-of-its-kind conference to foster collaboration on priorities ahead of Congress's surface transportation reauthorization process later this year.

During his [remarks](#), Secretary Duffy outlined the America is Building Again agenda, including:

- **Enhancing transportation safety**, including bridges, safety for transportation workers and pedestrians, truck parking, and autonomous vehicles.
- **Accelerating project delivery** for transportation projects, including reforming the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permitting, enhancing One Federal Decision, and increasing the use of technology.
- **Increasing opportunities** through investment in transportation infrastructure that promotes economic growth, including through expanded capacity and mobility, congestion relief, and more private sector investment.
- **Strengthening partnerships** with States and other key stakeholders to improve transportation outcomes, including prioritizing the Federal interest, greater efficiencies, and research.

## **FMCSA Streamlines Vetting Process for Electronic Logging Devices Used by Truckers, Bolstering Roadway Safety and Cutting Industry Costs**

## **PHMSA Implements New Data-Driven Framework for Hazmat Transportation Inspection and Enforcement Standards**

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## Active & Upcoming Notices of Funding Opportunities

ROUTES maintains a running list of open NOFOs that may be relevant to rural transportation. This list can be found [here](#), along with historical information on these grants (including prior NOFOs).

Program	NOFO Close Date	Available Funding	OA	NOFO Link
<a href="#">Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program</a>	February 24, 2026	\$1,500,000,000	OST	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<a href="#">Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)</a>	February 28, 2026	\$450,000,000	MARAD	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>

All Federal grants, including transportation grants, can be found at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). To find transportation related funding opportunities, select "All Department of Transportation" under the "Agency" menu on the left-hand side.

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## Other Federal Agency Updates

**Energy Department Announces \$625 Million Investment to Reinvigorate and Expand America’s Coal Industry**

**Interior Cuts Red Tape, Expedites Broadband Infrastructure Development in Tribal Communities**

**CMS Launches Landmark \$50 Billion Rural Health Transformation Program**

**EPA Partners with Rural Communities to Strengthen Outdoor Recreation Economy**

**NBRC Awards \$53.9 Million in 2025 Spring Round Grants, Supporting Economic Development and Transportation Infrastructure Projects**

**Delta Regional Authority Invests Nearly \$1.8 Million to Address Infrastructure Needs**

<b>Program</b>	<b>NOFO Close Date</b>	<b>Available Funding</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>NOFO Link</b>
<a href="#">Wildfire Smoke Preparedness in Community Buildings</a>	April 15, 2026	\$13,580,000	EPA	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<a href="#">Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects (Small Storage Program)</a>	April 17, 2026	\$43,500,000	DOI	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<a href="#">Rapid Response Rural Data Analysis and Issue Specific Rural Research Studies</a>	April 17, 2026 (Estimated)	\$600,000	HHS	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<a href="#">Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)-Planning</a>	April 27, 2026 (Estimated)	\$4,000,000	HHS	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
<a href="#">Indian Highway Safety Law Enforcement</a>	April 1, 2026	TBD	DOT	<a href="#">Apply</a>

Grant	May 1, 2020	TBD	BIA	<a href="#">Here</a>
Indian Highway Safety Occupant Protection Grant	May 1, 2026	TBD	BIA	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>
Addressing Dementia in Tribal and Urban Indian Communities: CAREs Program	June 1, 2026 (Estimated)	\$750,000	IHS	<a href="#">Apply Here</a>

All Federal grants can be found at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). This list is not exhaustive of all Federal grant opportunities, rather this list highlights selected Federal grants applicable to rural and Tribal communities.

With the goal of passing along outside resources specifically designed to build local capacity, especially for rural and Tribal communities, to successfully develop transportation projects and funding applications, the ROUTES Newsletter includes opportunities that have been shared with the Department. Their inclusion does not indicate USDOT endorsement.

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## ROUTES Initiative Resources

- [Applicant Toolkit for Competitive Funding Programs at USDOT](#)
- [DOT Discretionary Grants Dashboard](#)




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