

Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program – Grant Reviewer’s Checklist

Pre-Review Considerations

- Are there environmental concerns or conflicts associated with the project?
- Are there Right of Way (ROW) concerns or conflicts associated with the project?
- Are there other local/ political concerns or conflicts associated with the project?
- Are there other factors that you can identify that would inhibit completion of this project?
- Is the application complete, including the SF-424; are there letters of support from the appropriate Federal Land Management Agency or Tribal government indicating support for this project? Is there a letter from the entity that will manage this grant award confirming that it will do so?

Review Status:

- Continue with Review
- Revise (send back to applicant to address specific concerns)
- Reject (Based on the above considerations, the application request is premature)

Identifier Information + Geographic Location

- 1. State
- 2. Title
- 3. Congressional Information
- 4. Geographic Location

Check Title, Contact and Congressional Information and Project Administration

- Keep the title and location in mind as you’re reviewing for consistency throughout review

Things to look for:

- Is the title reflective of the funding request, and specific enough to be understood by reviewers?
- Is the Congressional information correct? Are both congresspersons and senators listed? Have you verified that they are correct?

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Project Abstract + Narrative

- 5. Abstract
- 6. Narrative
 - a. Description of Proposed Work
 - b. Amount of PLHD funds requested
 - c. Project Schedule
 - d. Previous Federal Funds
 - e. Commitment of Other Funds
 - f. Federal land management agency or Tribal government support
 - g. Project Administration
 - h. Project ready to advance
 - i. Safety, state of good repair and/or livability connection

Read Abstract and Narrative

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- Does the abstract succinctly state how PLHD funds will be used, as well as the intended outcome of the funding request? The abstract should be no longer than 5 sentences and not just repeat the narrative.
- Does the narrative explain how the Federal Land Management Agency or Tribal government supports the funding request?
- Is it clear who is administering this project? For example, if this project will be administered by other than the State DOT, such as a Federal Lands Division or Federal Land Management Agency, is there a letter of support or e-mail communication confirming this?
- Does the project schedule include a completion date? Based on the project schedule, is this project ready to advance? Is the timeline realistic?
- Is there a letter of support or email communication to substantiate the applicant’s assertion of the project’s benefit to Federal or Tribal lands?
- Can the funds be obligated within one year of the date funds are made available?
- Are all elements of the funding request eligible for PLHD funding?

Things to look for:

- Superfluous narrative that does **not** specifically describe the project for which funds are being requested; overemphasis on Federal lands or tribal descriptions or the planning process or project background, but not the project itself.
- Description of ineligible activities
- The abstract and narrative do **not** clearly and succinctly describe how Public Lands Highway Discretionary funds will be used to complete the proposed project or how it meets the project selection criteria.
- The narrative does **not** describe what the intended outcome of the project is; or how it supports the transportation needs, strategic goals or priorities of a Federal Land Management agency or Tribal government.
- The narrative provides little or no detail regarding project goals and expected results in context of the eligibility categories identified.
- There is no project schedule, or it does not include a timeline from “cradle to grave.”
- The narrative does not include a line item (scalable) budget that associates each line item with a completed task or deliverable that contributes to the completed funding request.
- The narrative does **not** discuss leveraged funding, both public and private, or any other PLHD or other Federal funding being used for this project?
- For applicants other than State DOT’s, the narrative does **not** discuss coordination with State DOT and MPO as well as the ability to act on behalf of the applicant jurisdiction, and ability to meet Federal funding requirements?

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Background information that you may know, or can check into as a reviewer: Capacity to Implement

7. Prior Projects

Prior Projects

- Does the applicant have the capacity to implement the project?
- Does the applicant have previous outstanding grant awards that may reflect poorly on this request?

Things to look for:

- Has the applicant adequately identified prior projects to date, noting specific PLHD prior awards, and their current status? This does not need to be included in the narrative, but would be part of a discussion you may have during the solicitation process.
- Does the applicant adequately distinguish prior efforts from the current proposal, such that this project request does not appear duplicative of past efforts?

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Check and Double Check: Other Considerations

- 8. Compare Narrative to Budget/Project Schedule
- 9. Assess Reasonableness of Cost
- 10. Are PLHD funds the best source of funding for this project request?

Review Narrative against Project Timeline and Budget

- Does the funding request include all project elements from inception to completion?
- Is the budget and project timeline consistent with what is stated in the narrative and vice versa?
- Does it have reasonable costs and time estimates necessary to complete identified deliverables?
- Does it have a clear beginning or phase associated with the project?
- Does it have an end date to complete the project?
- If the applicant is willing to accept partial funding, have they indicated that? if so, can a component of the funding request be completed with the amount identified?

Things to look for:

- Missing components of the application, such as no cost estimate or project schedule or letters of support
- Inconsistencies: Elements mentioned in the abstract that are not discussed in the narrative or vice versa
- Inconsistencies: Elements in the project timeline that are not reflected in the cost estimate or vice versa
- Unrealistic costs or deadlines
- No real project administration identified such that project delivery cannot be guaranteed, or delivered in an expeditious manner

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Review Leveraged Funding

- Has prior investment identified contributed to completion of prior stages of the project?
- Are the leveraged funds from a viable source and reasonable?

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Reasonableness of Costs

- Is the cost of each project element (deliverable) sufficient or excessive? Has the applicant provided cost estimates to substantiate identified costs?
- Are there elements of this project that are of benefit beyond Federal or Tribal lands? If so, are funds requested proportionate to all activities/services directly involving Federal or Tribal lands? Example: a Visitor Center proposed for a shared use space should request less than the 100% of the total project cost from PLHD funds.

Things to look for:

- Are all identified costs associated with this funding request?

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Attachments

Relevant attachments

- If attachments are included, are they related to the specific project request, such as cost estimates, site plans, contextual maps, support letters, visualization of completed project?
- Do attachments support or conflict with information provided in the application?

Things to look for:

- Information unrelated to project request or general information on the project that does not support the funding request.
- Information in the attachments is inconsistent, or conflicts with what is provided in the application narrative.

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Some State Considerations

- Does this project request fit into my State’s transportation plan?
- Is the project outcome sustainable? If maintenance is required upon completion, does the applicant have the means and a plan to do that?

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- Reject (Based on the above considerations, the application should not go forward)

Reviewer’s Notes