

USDOT Competitive Grant Program – Eligibility Self-Checklist

(Use with a published Notice of Funding Opportunity / NOFO) Instructions
Go through each section while reading the specific NOFO. Mark Yes / No / Unsure.
Any “No” or “Unsure” in critical sections usually means you cannot apply (or must partner with an eligible entity). Always confirm final eligibility in the NOFO itself
—requirements vary by program.

1. Applicant Entity Eligibility (Critical)

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes / NOFO Page
☐	Is my organization listed as an eligible applicant type in the NOFO? (Common types: State/local government, MPO, transit agency, port authority, Tribal government, special-purpose district, public authority, multi-jurisdictional group, nonprofit, institution of higher education, private entity – varies widely)				
☐	If applying as a joint/multi-entity applicant, is there a clearly designated lead applicant that is itself eligible?				
☐	Are individuals, federal agencies, or purely private for-profit entities excluded (as is common in many programs)?				
☐	Does my entity type match any rural, Tribal, or other set-aside definitions if the program has them?				

If “No” to the first question → Stop. You are not eligible to apply as the primary applicant.

2. Project / Activity Eligibility (Critical)

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes / NOFO Page
☐	Does the proposed project or activity fall within the eligible project types/scope described in the NOFO?				
☐	Are the proposed costs eligible under the NOFO and 2 CFR Part 200?				
☐	Does the project meet any location requirements (e.g., rural definition, specific geographic eligibility, facility type)?				
☐	Is the project consistent with relevant state/regional transportation plans (if required)?				

3. Funding Amount & Cost Share / Match

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes / NOFO Page
☐	Does the requested amount fall within the minimum and maximum award sizes stated in the NOFO?				
☐	Can I provide the required non-Federal match (commonly 10–20%, sometimes higher or waived)?				
☐	Are the proposed match sources allowable (cash, in-kind, etc.) and documentable?				
☐	If match flexibility or waiver is available, do I meet the criteria?				

4. Administrative & Registration Prerequisites

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes
☐	Is my entity registered (and registration active) in SAM.gov? (Unique Entity ID required)				Must be current; can take weeks
☐	Do I have a Grants.gov account and can I submit applications?				
☐	Have I obtained any required Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and confirmed no exclusions/debarment?				

5. Project Readiness & Capacity (Often scored; sometimes threshold)

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes / NOFO Page
☐	Do I have (or can I demonstrate) the legal, financial, and technical capacity to deliver the project?				
☐	Is the project sufficiently advanced in planning/scoping/design for the program's readiness expectations?				
☐	Can I commit to the required schedule, environmental review process (NEPA), and right-of-way acquisition if applicable?				
☐	Do I have a realistic budget, schedule, and risk management plan?				

6. Other Common Threshold / Statutory Requirements

Check	Question	Yes	No	Unsure	Notes / NOFO Page
☐	Does the application address all mandatory statutory selection criteria or priority areas listed in the NOFO?				
☐	Are there any disqualifying factors (e.g., outstanding Federal debt, prior grant non-compliance, lobbying restrictions)?				
☐	If the program has rural, equity, climate, safety, or other set-asides/preferences, does my project qualify?				
☐	Have I reviewed the full list of required application components (forms, narratives, BCA if required, letters of support, etc.)?				

Quick Decision Summary

All critical items (Sections 1–3) = Yes → You appear eligible to apply. Proceed with full application preparation.

Any critical “No” → Not eligible as currently structured. Consider partnering with an eligible lead applicant or selecting a different program.

Multiple “Unsure” → Contact the program office listed in the NOFO immediately for clarification.

Recommended next steps

1. Download and carefully read the entire current NOFO (and any FAQs or webinars).
2. Use DOT’s official resources:
 - Competitive Grant Preparation Checklist
 - Project Readiness Checklist
 - DOT Competitive Grants Dashboard / Navigator
3. Confirm SAM.gov registration is active before the deadline.
4. Reach out to the program point of contact listed in the NOFO with specific eligibility questions.

