



## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Competitive Awards - ADOT Grant Policy

#### MPD ADOT Grant POLICY

Effective: March 24, 2026

Supersedes: N/A

Responsible Office: MPD Grant Coordination Group

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Page 1 of 7

#### 1.1 PURPOSE

To establish a strategic, coordinated approach to grant seeking that advances organizational priorities. This policy establishes a strategic framework for pursuing competitive grants and ensures that all competitive grant (formerly discretionary grant) pursuits serve as strategic tools to advance ADOT's mission, vision, and values.

Competitive grants shall be sought when they maximize funding opportunities that demonstrate support for highway infrastructure and transportation services, safely connect people, and align with statewide priorities including safety (i.e., reducing life-altering crashes by 20% by 2030 per the Strategic Highway Safety Plan).

#### 1.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all ADOT employees, divisions, contractors, and partners involved in identifying, preparing, submitting, or administering applications for competitive grants (federal and state) related to transportation infrastructure, safety, mobility, multimodal facilities, technology, resiliency, or related services.

ADOT manages Arizona's transportation network amid rapid growth, safety challenges, and economic demands. Competitive grants—federal programs like INFRA, RAISE now BUILD, PROTECT, or state-supported programs such as AZ-SMART Program can provide critical non-formula grant or formula continuation grant funds to accelerate projects. This policy guides ADOT staff and partners (cities, towns, counties, tribes, MPOs/COGs, transit agencies) on pursuing these opportunities while ensuring tight alignment with ADOT's mission, vision, and FY 2025-2029 Strategic Plan priorities (e.g., 20% fatality reduction, 150 miles multimodal expansion, EV charging deployment).

Grants are highly competitive (10-30% success), and should focus on readiness and mission fit. ADOT's grant policy provides a framework for ADOT, Counties, Towns, Cities, Tribes and Municipalities who submit applications for Competitive Grant Awards.

This policy details the function of the Grant Team for in PreAward, Award, and Post Award grant phases and outlines best practices ADOT, County, Towns, Cities, Tribes and Municipalities in securing Competitive Grants and guidance for the coordination between MPO's, COG's, and ADOT DA's for the anticipated project and funding within their areas.

It is recommended that competitive grant applicants adhere to this policy. Adherence to this will provide a forum for communication between ADOT Leadership, ADOT departments, Counties, Towns, Cities, Tribes and others in understanding of new funding, and new projects anticipated for Arizona's mobility.

This policy does not cover the AZ-SMART Program policy, guidelines or processes. This policy does refer to funding assistance that may be utilized from a successful AZ-SMART application and for more information on the AZ-SMART Program can be found at this URL: <https://azdot.gov/planning/grant-coordination/az-smart-fund>

### 1.3 AUTHORITY

Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) § 28-334  
 ADOT 2025-2029 Strategic Plan  
 Arizona Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) 2025-2029  
 ADOT Mission, Vision, and Values (official)  
 Federal grant program guidelines

### 1.4 DEFINITIONS

| Term              | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ADOT              | Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is a state agency responsible for planning, building, and operating Arizona's multimodal transportation system, including highways, transit, and aviation                                                                                                                                     |
| ADOT DA           | Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) District Administrator (DA) often referred to as a District Engineer is a senior regional official responsible for planning, constructing, operating, and maintaining highway infrastructure within a specific geographical district.                                                         |
| AZ-SMART          | The AZ SMART Fund is an Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) program established in 2022 to help local agencies compete for federal transportation grants. It provides funding for grant development, application submission, and required non-federal matching funds, focusing on projects that enhance transportation efficiency |
| Competitive Grant | Funds are awarded through a formal application and review process, where applicants compete for limited resources based on merit and program criteria (formerly called discretionary grants)                                                                                                                                              |

|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concurrence                                      | Formal agreement or approval by ADOT leadership (specifically the District Administrator and Executive Grant Team) that a proposed competitive grant application aligns with ADOT's strategic priorities, is feasible, and warrants ADOT support or submission.                      |
| Consideration                                    | The Grant Team process of review and evaluation by the Executive Grant Team (EGT) to determine whether to approve a Grant Support Form (GSF), leading to a decision on ADOT's concurrence on the submission of the, ADOT-led application or Letter of Support.                       |
| Discretionary Grant                              | Funds are awarded through a formal application and review process, where applicants compete for limited resources based on merit and program criteria (formerly called discretionary grants). These funds are now referred to as a Competitive Grant                                 |
| Executive Grant Team (EGT)                       | A core group of ADOT leadership (including Director, CFO, and GRRO where relevant) responsible for reviewing GSF submissions and determining whether ADOT will support or submit a competitive grant application.                                                                    |
| Grant Team (GT) or Grant Coordination Team (GCT) | The ADOT team or group responsible for managing the competitive grant process including receiving EGT approval for ADOT Applications and ADOT Letters of Support, submitting ADOT Applications, returning signed letters of support, and submitting quarterly reports.               |
| Grant Support Form                               | The required internal ADOT document that applicants (internal or external partners) must complete and submit to the Grant Coordination Team for review, detailing the proposed project and requesting ADOT's support or concurrence to proceed with a competitive grant application. |
| Formula Funds (another type of grant)            | These funds are FHWA-USDOT funds distributed non-competitively based on specific, legislated formulas.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Letter of Support (LOS)                          | A formal document provided by ADOT to an external applicant (e.g., MPO, city, county) indicating ADOT's endorsement of their competitive grant application and alignment with statewide transportation priorities.                                                                   |
| NOFO                                             | Notice of Funding Opportunity. The official announcement released by the funding agency (typically federal) that solicits applications for a competitive grant program, detailing requirements, eligibility criteria, submission deadlines, and evaluation factors.                  |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pass Through Grants  | These are federal funds received by a State or other municipality which are then "passes-through" with Grantor concurrence to administrator (lead Agency) of the project. |
| Project Manager (PM) | The PM who is assigned to the competitive award project and assists with required reporting.                                                                              |

## 1.5 POLICY

This policy establishes that competitive grants are strategic tools to advance ADOT's foundational directives. All grant pursuits must demonstrably support the agency's mission, vision, and values while contributing to statewide transportation priorities.

Grants are a critical source of funding for projects in areas such as infrastructure, design development, innovation, and technology enhancements. Competitive grants supplement formula grants and recurring grant programs. To be competitive, applications must not only meet basic eligibility but also stand out by addressing gaps, providing robust evidence, and articulating a compelling narrative.

### A. Strategic Framework:

ADOT's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan identifies priority outcomes focused on reducing fatalities by 20% by June 2029, expanding multimodal infrastructure by 150 miles, deploying electric charging infrastructure, constructing interstate broadband conduit, and improving workforce retention. Competitive grants are a critical lever to accelerate these outcomes without sole reliance on state or federal formula grants.

The 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which ADOT last adopted in October 2023, provides a framework for Arizona's transportation system through 2050. During this planning period, projected needs significantly exceed anticipated revenues from the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF), regional sales taxes, and federal formula funds. This shortfall creates a substantial funding gap. The 2050 LRTP emphasizes the preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure and relies on formula-based funding sources, supplemented by competitive federal grant programs such as INFRA, BUILD (now RAISE), PROTECT, and the Bridge Investment Program. By aligning with ADOT's mission to deliver a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system, the LRTP underscores the critical need to pursue discretionary federal grants to help close the funding gap and advance Arizona's long-term mobility goals.

In pursuing competitive grant funds the objective is to secure and deploy grants that directly support ADOT's mission (providing highway infrastructure and transportation services), vision (safely connecting people and empowering the economy), and values (easy to work with, collaborative, results focused), while contributing to key plan outcomes (e.g., safety reductions, multimodal expansion, resiliency enhancements). ADOT supports applications for grants, whether ADOT initiated or as an administrator for another entity, that enhance ADOT's strategic plan and mission, which is to provide highway infrastructure and transportation services.

Note: Please see Competitive Grant Guidelines for further steps on submitting applications

## **B. Competitive Grant Submission Requirements & Review and Concurrence Process**

### **1. Proposed Project Requirements:** All proposed projects must include

- Clear justification of need
- Defined project scope
- Anticipated benefits and outcomes
- Estimated total cost, match, and match source
- Realistic project timeline (start/end dates)
- Identification of the administering entity
- Explicit alignment with ADOT's Strategic Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, and relevant District goals

### **2. Applicant Requesting ADOT Support/Concurrence:**

Applicants must complete and submit the **ADOT Grant Support Form (GSF)**. Recent changes to the GSF include the addition of project start/end dates and a requirement for approval from the District Administrator (DA) or Manager.

### **3. Applicant Concurrence Process Steps:**

- Manager/DA approval.
- Fill out and submit the Grant Support Form (GSF).
- Grant Coordination Team (GCT) reviews GSF for completeness/NOFO compliance and presents it to the EGT for approval consideration.
- GCT provides the EGT decision to the GSF submitter.

### **4. District Administrator (DA) Review and Approval:** Before GSF submission, the Project Manager/Supervisor and DA must confirm

- Alignment with ADOT strategic plans and district priorities.
- Operational feasibility and resource availability (staffing, equipment, scheduling).
- Plan for ongoing maintenance costs.
- Project location and timing (to avoid conflicts with other projects).
- Coordination with Finance to confirm the availability of match funds.

**Note on Timing:** Early submission of the GSF is **strongly recommended**—ADOT advises submitting the GSF **at least 30 days** prior to the grant deadline to allow sufficient time for review and coordination.

## 5. ADOT Executive Grant Team (EGT) Review:

Upon receipt of the GSF and supporting documents (mailed to *grant@azdot.gov*), the GCT conducts an initial review for NOFO compliance (eligibility, match commitments, completeness). The request is tracked in the Leadership Dashboard.

The EGT (Core Approvers: ADOT Director, CFO, GRRO as relevant) holds a review meeting to determine whether to:

- Proceed with submitting an ADOT-led application.
- Provide an ADOT Letter of Support (LOS) for a partner-led application.

## Outcomes and Notification:

- **Approved:** GCT notifies the submitter, issues the LOS (if requested), and initiates application preparation.
- **Not Approved:** GCT promptly communicates the decision and specific reasons for denial (e.g., misalignment, resource constraints, NOFO non-compliance).

## C. Administering the Award: Post-Award Management, Reporting, and Amendments

Effective administration is crucial for compliance with federal regulations (2 CFR Part 200), NOFO terms, and ADOT policies. The assigned Project Manager (PM) or ADOT-designated lead oversees execution and coordinates with the GCT and Finance.

### 1. Award Setup and Kickoff:

- Execute necessary agreements (IGA/JPA).
- Establish the project in ADOT systems.
- Conduct a kickoff meeting to confirm scope, budget, timeline, roles, performance metrics, and compliance requirements (e.g., DBE, Buy America).
- Invoice any required local match or ADOT administration fees.

### 2. Ongoing Project Management and Monitoring:

- Monitor progress against milestones, budget, and schedule.
- Ensure timely obligation and expenditure of funds.
- Maintain comprehensive records.
- Proactively identify and address variances, delays, or risks.

### 3. Reporting Requirements: Frequency and content vary by program but generally include:

- **Monthly:** Reimbursement/invoice submissions with detailed expense documentation and match verification.

- **Quarterly:** Progress reports, financial status reports, and performance indicators.
- **Final/Closeout:** Final invoice, report, and closeout certification within the grant-specified deadline.

**4. Amendments and Modifications:** Any change to scope, budget, timeline, key personnel, or other material terms **requires prior federal approval.**

- **Process:** The PM contacts the GCT, who initiates the request with justification and supporting documentation.
- **Common Changes Requiring Prior Approval:** No-cost extensions, budget reallocations (cumulative shifts >10% between categories), scope changes, carryover, or changes in key personnel.
- **Timeline:** Initiate requests early, as federal reviews can take weeks to months.

**5. Closeout and Final Requirements:** Upon completion

- Submit final invoice and report within the specified window.
- Perform final audit/review, reconcile expenditures, de-obligate unused funds, and complete closeout certification.
- Retain records in accordance with federal rules.

**Key Point:** Early, proactive engagement with the GCT (*grant@azdot.gov*), Finance, and the Project Manager is critical for successful administration, risk mitigation, and timely reimbursements.

#### **D. Communications - website**

The ADOT Grant Coordination Team (or Grant Coordination Group) website, located at <https://azdot.gov/planning/adot-grant-coordination-group>, is the central online resource for ADOT staff and partners seeking guidance on federal and state grant opportunities. The page details the team's role in ADOT-led applications and support for local entities (e.g., securing letters of support, application submission). Proactive communication is key; stakeholders must contact the Grant Coordinator and submit the completed ADOT Grant Support Form (GSF) at least 30 days before deadlines for thorough review and alignment with ADOT's strategic priorities. For direct inquiries, the team is available via email at *grant@azdot.gov* or phone (e.g., Grant Manager Martha Solorzano at 480-848-0193). The site centralizes resources, staff directories, FAQs, forms, and procedural guidance to streamline grant development, compliance, and administration.

### **1.6 CONTACT INFORMATION**

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|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| A. MPD Grant Team | Grant Manager | (480) 848-0193 |
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### **1.7 REFERENCES**

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Page 8 of 8

[Grant Support Form](#)