

distribute, and gather information, and to communicate with one another, one on one, or in groups. FRA uses ICT to disseminate research findings and to increase awareness of safety education programs and other FRA sponsored innovation projects. The data gathered in this study will help FRA and DOT attain the strategic goal of improving safety in transportation by providing information that will improve and inform their strategic communication dissemination efforts to reach the railroading population more efficiently and successfully.

The proposed study is a needs assessment designed to understand the current state of railroading industry use and application of ICT. As such, this study asks broad questions about ICT. The main objectives of this study are to: (1) Determine how Transportation, Yard and Engineer railroaders use ICT; (2) identify ways to reach this population with future ICT-based education and communication efforts; and (3) develop baseline awareness data for FRA's research, development and technology programs.

Affected Public: Railroad Union Members.

Form(s): FRA Form 6180.169.

Total Estimated Annual Responses: 1,553.

Total Estimated Annual Burden: 511 hours.

Comments are invited on the following: Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for FRA to properly perform its functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; the accuracy of FRA's estimates of the burden of the proposed information collections; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the collections of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

A comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 3501–3520.

Sarah L. Inderbitzin,

Acting Chief Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2017–15053 Filed 7–17–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–06–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

FY17 Competitive Funding Opportunity; Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the opportunity to apply for approximately \$226.5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 funds under Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program (CFDA#20.526). As required by federal transit law and subject to funding availability, funds will be awarded competitively to assist in the financing of capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, purchase or lease buses and related equipment, and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct or lease bus-related facilities. Projects may include costs incidental to the acquisition of buses or to the construction of facilities, such as the costs of related workforce development and training activities, and project administration expenses. FTA may award additional funds if they are made available to the program prior to the announcement of project selections.

DATES: Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV “APPLY” function by 11:59 p.m. on August 25, 2017. Prospective applicants should initiate the process by registering on the GRANTS.GOV Web site promptly to ensure completion of the application process before the submission deadline. Instructions for applying can be found on FTA's Web site at <http://transit.dot.gov/howtoapply> and in the “FIND” module of GRANTS.GOV. The GRANTS.GOV funding opportunity ID is FTA–2017–004–TPM-Bus. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Bathrick, FTA Office of Program Management, 202–366–9955, or mark.bathrick@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Table of Contents

- A. Program Description
- B. Federal Award Information
- C. Eligibility Information
- D. Application and Submission Information
- E. Application Review
- F. Review and Selection Process
- G. Federal Award Administration
- H. Technical Assistance and Other Program Information

I. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

A. Program Description

Section 5339(b) of Title 49, United States Code, as amended by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. 114–94, Dec. 4, 2015), authorizes FTA to award funds under the Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program (Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program) through a competitive process, as described in this notice, for capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, purchase or lease buses and related equipment and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct or lease bus-related facilities.

The purpose of the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program is to assist in the financing of buses and bus facilities capital projects, including replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing or leasing buses or related equipment, and rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing or leasing bus-related facilities.

The Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program provides funds to designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, and to States, and local governmental authorities that operate fixed route bus service. FTA also may award grants to eligible recipients for projects to be undertaken by subrecipients that are public agencies or private non-profit organizations engaged in public transportation. In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(2), FTA will “consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment, and bus-related facilities” in selecting projects for funding. FTA may prioritize projects that demonstrate how they will address significant repair and maintenance needs, improve the safety of transit systems, and deploy connective projects that include advanced technologies to connect bus systems with other networks.

B. Federal Award Information

Federal transit law at 49 U.S.C. 5338(a)(2)(M) authorizes \$283,600,000 in FY 2017 funds for the Section 5339(b) Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program and the 5339(c) Low or No Emission Grants (Low-No) Program. Of this amount, 0.75 percent, or \$2,127,000, has been reserved for program oversight in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5338(f)(1)(H). Of the amount available for grants, FTA separately announced the availability of \$55 million for Low-No Grants and is making the remaining \$226,473,000 available through this notice for competitive grants under the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program.

As required under 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(5), a minimum of 10 percent of the amount awarded under the Bus and

Bus Infrastructure Program will be awarded to projects located in rural areas. And, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(8), no single grantee will be awarded more than 10 percent of the amounts made available.

FTA will grant pre-award authority to incur costs for selected projects beginning on the date that project selections are announced. Funds are only available for projects that have not incurred costs prior to the selection of projects and will remain available for obligation until September 30, 2020.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Under 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(1), eligible applicants include designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, states or local governmental entities that operate fixed route bus service, and Indian tribes. Except for projects proposed by Indian tribes, proposals for projects in rural (non-urbanized) areas must be submitted as part of a consolidated State proposal. Under 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(3), states and other eligible applicants may also submit consolidated proposals for projects in urbanized areas. The submission of the statewide application shall not preclude the submission and consideration of any application from other eligible recipients in an urbanized area in a State. Proposals may contain projects to be implemented by the recipient or its subrecipients.

To be considered eligible, applicants must be able to demonstrate the requisite legal, financial and technical capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program. Eligible subrecipients under this program include all otherwise eligible applicants and private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

The maximum federal share for projects selected under the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program is 80 percent of the net project cost, unless noted below by one of the exceptions. FTA may prioritize projects proposed with a higher local share.

i. The maximum federal share is 85 percent of the net project cost of acquiring vehicles (including clean-fuel or alternative fuel vehicles) that are compliant with the Clean Air Act (CAA) and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

ii. The maximum federal share is 90 percent of the net project cost of acquiring, installing or constructing vehicle-related equipment or facilities

(including clean fuel or alternative-fuel vehicle-related equipment or facilities) that are required by the ADA of 1990, or that are necessary to comply with or maintain compliance with the Clean Air Act. The award recipient must itemize the cost of specific, discrete, vehicle-related equipment associated with compliance with ADA or CAA to be eligible for the maximum 90 percent Federal share for these costs.

Eligible sources of local match include the following: Cash from non-Government sources other than revenues from providing public transportation services; revenues derived from the sale of advertising and concessions; amounts received under a service agreement with a State or local social service agency or private social service organization; revenues generated from value capture financing mechanisms; or funds from an undistributed cash surplus; replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve; or new capital. In addition, transportation development credits or documentation of in-kind match may substitute for local match if identified in the application.

3. Eligible Projects

Under 49 U.S.C. 5339(b)(1), eligible projects are capital projects to replace, rehabilitate purchase, or lease buses, vans, and related equipment, and capital projects to rehabilitate, purchase, construct, or lease bus-related facilities.

Recipients are permitted to use up to 0.5 percent of their requested grant award for workforce development activities eligible under 49 U.S.C. 5314(b) and an additional 0.5 percent for costs associated with training at the National Transit Institute. Applicants must identify the proposed use of funds for these activities in the project proposal and identify them separately in the project budget.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address

Applications must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV. General information for submitting applications through GRANTS.GOV can be found at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/applying/applying-fta-funding> along with specific instructions for the forms and attachments required for submission. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted. A complete proposal submission consists of at least two forms: The SF424 Mandatory Form (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV) and the supplemental form for the FY 2017 Bus and Bus

Infrastructure Program (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV or the FTA Web site at www.transit.dot.gov/busprogram). Failure to submit the information as requested can delay review of the application.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete proposal submission consists of *at least* two forms: The SF424 Mandatory Form and the FY 2017 Bus Infrastructure Program supplemental form. The application must include responses to all sections of the SF424 Mandatory Form and the supplemental form, unless indicated as optional. The information on the supplemental form will be used to determine applicant and project eligibility for the program, and to evaluate the proposal against the selection criteria described in part E of this notice.

An applicant may submit multiple project proposals in a single submission, and if doing so must include all project proposals on a single supplemental form. To add additional projects, select the “add project” button and complete a separate “project detail” section for each project. FTA will only accept one supplemental form per submission.

The supplemental form must be submitted as an attachment to the SF424 Mandatory Form. All project proposals will be evaluated separately, regardless of whether they are submitted as a single submission.

An applicant may submit additional supporting documentation for each project proposal as attachments. Any supporting documentation must be described and referenced by file name in the appropriate response section of the supplemental form, or it may not be reviewed.

Information such as proposer name, Federal amount requested, local match amount, description of areas served, etc. may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF424 form and Supplemental Form. Proposers must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms. Applicants should not place N/A or “refer to attachment” in lieu of typing in responses in the field sections. If information is copied into the supplemental form from another source, applicants should verify that pasted text is fully captured on the supplemental form and has not been truncated by the character limits built into the form. Proposers should use both the “Check Package for Errors” and the “Validate Form” validation buttons on both forms to check all required fields on the forms, and ensure that the federal and local amounts specified are consistent.

The SF424 Mandatory Form and the Supplemental Form will prompt applicants for the required information, including:

- a. Applicant Name
- b. Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number
- c. Key contact information (including contact name, address, email address, and phone)
- d. Congressional district(s) where project will take place
- e. Project Information (including title, an executive summary, and type)
- f. A detailed description of the need for the project
- g. A detailed description on how the project will support the Bus Infrastructure Program's objectives
- h. Evidence that the project is consistent with local and regional planning objectives
- i. Evidence that the applicant can provide the local cost share
- j. A description of the technical, legal, and financial capacity of the applicant
- k. A detailed project budget
- l. An explanation of the scalability of the project
- m. Details on the local matching funds
- n. A detailed project timeline

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

Each applicant is required to: (1) Be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FTA. These requirements do not apply if the applicant: (1) Is an individual; (2) is excepted from the requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c); or (3) has an exception approved by FTA under 2 CFR 25.110(d). FTA may not make an Award until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FTA is ready to make an Award, FTA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an Award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. All applicants must provide a unique entity identifier provided by SAM. Registration in SAM may take as little as 3–5 business days, but since there could be unexpected steps or delays (for example, if you need to obtain an Employer Identification Number), FTA recommends allowing ample time, up to

several weeks, for completion of all steps. For additional information on obtaining a unique entity identifier, please visit www.sam.gov.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Project proposals must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 p.m. Eastern on August 25, 2017. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FTA urges proposers to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the due date to allow time to receive the validation messages and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification. FTA will not accept submissions after the stated deadline, as determined through the timestamp assigned to the application upon receipt in GRANTS.GOV. GRANTS.GOV scheduled maintenance and outage times are announced on the GRANTS.GOV Web site. Deadlines will not be extended due to scheduled Web site maintenance.

Within 48 hours after submitting an electronic application, the applicant should receive three email messages from GRANTS.GOV: (1) Confirmation of successful transmission to GRANTS.GOV, (2) confirmation of successful validation by GRANTS.GOV, and (3) confirmation of successful validation by FTA. If confirmations of successful validation are not received or a notice of failed validation or incomplete materials is received, the applicant must address the reason for the failed validation, as described in the email notice, and resubmit before the submission deadline. If making a resubmission for any reason, include all original attachments regardless of which attachments were updated and check the box on the supplemental form indicating this is a resubmission.

Proposers are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the GRANTS.GOV site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered proposers may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) Registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) is renewed annually; and, (2) persons making submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in GRANTS.GOV by the AOR to make submissions.

5. Funding Restrictions

Funds under this NOFO cannot be used to reimburse applicants for

otherwise eligible expenses incurred prior to FTA award of a Grant Agreement until FTA has issued pre-award authority for selected projects or unless FTA has issued a "Letter of No Prejudice" for the project before the expenses are incurred.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case insufficient funding is available to fund a project at the full requested amount. If an applicant indicates that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget would be affected by a reduced award. FTA may award a lesser amount whether or not a scalable option is provided.

E. Application Review

FTA will evaluate project proposals for the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program based on the criteria described in this notice. Projects will be evaluated primarily on the responses provided in the supplemental form. Additional information may be provided to support the responses; however, any additional documentation must be directly referenced on the supplemental form, including the file name where the additional information can be found.

a. Demonstration of Need

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will address an unmet need for capital investment in bus vehicles and/or supporting facilities, enhance the safety of the transit system for transit vehicle operators, riders, and the general public, or improve the connectivity of bus systems with other networks through the use of deployment-ready information technologies. For example, an applicant may demonstrate a substantial backlog of deferred capital investment, insufficient size or capacity of maintenance facilities, excessive reliance on vehicles that are beyond their intended service life, a vehicle fleet that is insufficient to meet current ridership demands, or passenger facilities that are insufficient for their current use. For safety, an applicant may demonstrate safety concerns with vehicles, equipment, or facilities that are beyond their intended useful life, or that are no longer appropriate for use due to safety concerns. To improve connectivity, bus systems may deploy Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

technologies or software that link buses with other transportation modes.

Applicants should also describe how the proposed project will improve the operation of the transit system and whether the project represents a one-time or periodic need that cannot reasonably be funded from FTA formula program allocations and State or local resources. As a part of the response for demonstration of need, applicants should provide the following information:

i. For bus projects (replacement, rehabilitation or expansion): Applicants must provide information on the age, condition and performance of the asset(s) to be replaced or rehabilitated by the proposed project. For service expansion requests, applicants must provide information on the proposed service expansion and the benefits for transit riders and the community from the new service. For all vehicle projects, the proposal must address how the project conforms to FTA's spare ratio guidelines.

ii. For bus facility and equipment projects (replacement, rehabilitation, and/or expansion): Applicants must provide information on the age and condition of the asset to be rehabilitated or replaced relative to its minimum useful life.

b. Demonstration of Benefits

Applications will be evaluated based on how well they describe how the proposed project will improve the condition of the transit system, improve the reliability of transit service for its riders, and/or enhance access and mobility within the service area.

System Condition: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to improve the condition of the transit system by repairing and/or replacing assets that are in poor condition or have surpassed their minimum or intended useful life benchmarks, lowering the average age of vehicles in the fleet, and/or reducing the cost of maintaining outdated vehicles, facilities and equipment. Applicants should document how the project's asset(s) will be operated, inspected, maintained, rehabilitated, and replaced to manage the asset's performance, risks, and costs over its life cycle to provide safe, cost-effective, and reliable public transportation.

Service Reliability: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to reduce the frequency of breakdowns or other service interruptions as caused by the age and condition of the agency's bus fleet. Applicants should document their current service reliability metrics and benchmark goals, including their strategy for improving reliability with or

without the award of Bus Infrastructure Program funds.

Enhanced Access and Mobility: FTA will evaluate the potential for the project to improve access to employment opportunities, education, and other services. FTA will also evaluate the potential for the project to improve mobility for the transit riding public, such as through improved headways, creation of new transportation choices, or eliminating gaps in the current route network. Proposed benefits should be based on documented ridership demand and be well-described or documented through a study or route planning proposal.

c. Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will be consistent with local and regional long-range planning documents and local government priorities. This will involve assessing whether the project is consistent with the transit priorities identified in the long-range plan; and/or contingency/illustrative projects included in that plan; or the locally developed human services public transportation coordinated plan. Applicants are not required to submit copies of such plans, but should describe how the project will support regional goals. Additional consideration will be given to applications including support letters from local and regional planning organizations, local government officials, public agencies, and/or non-profit or private sector partners attesting to the consistency of the proposed project with these plans. Applicants may also address how the proposed project will impact overall system performance, asset management performance, or specific performance measures tracked and monitored by the applying entity to demonstrate how the proposed project will address local and regional planning priorities.

Evidence of additional local or regional prioritization (*i.e.* STIP and LRTP) should include letters of support for the project from local government officials, public agencies (*i.e.* MPOs), and non-profit or private sector partners.

d. Local Financial Commitment

Applicants must identify the source of the local cost share and describe whether such funds are currently available for the project or will need to be secured if the project is selected for funding. FTA will consider the availability of the local cost share as evidence of local financial commitment to the project. Additional consideration

will be given to those projects for which local funds have already been made available or reserved. Applicants should submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project, for example by including a board resolution, letter of support from the State, or other documentation of the source of local funds such as a budget document highlighting the line item or section committing funds to the proposed project.

e. Project Implementation Strategy

Projects will be evaluated based on the extent to which the project is ready to implement within a reasonable period of time and whether the applicant's proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete.

In assessing whether the project is ready to implement within a reasonable period of time, FTA will consider whether the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion (CE), or whether the required environmental work has been initiated or completed for projects that require an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended. The proposal must also state whether grant funds can be obligated within 12 months from time of award, if selected, and indicate the timeframe under which the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) can be amended to include the proposed project. Additional consideration will be given to projects for which grant funds can be obligated within 12 months from time of award.

In assessing whether the proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete, FTA will review the proposed project implementation plan, including all necessary project milestones and the overall project timeline. For projects that will require formal coordination, approvals or permits from other agencies or project partners, the applicant must demonstrate coordination with these organizations and their support for the project, such as through letters of support.

f. Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the technical, legal and financial capacity to undertake the project. FTA will review relevant oversight assessments and records to determine whether there are any outstanding legal, technical, or financial

issues with the applicant that would affect the outcome of the proposed project. Applicants with outstanding legal, technical, or financial compliance issues from a Federal Transit Administration compliance review or Federal Transit grant-related Single Audit finding must explain how corrective actions taken will mitigate negative impacts on the project.

F. Review and Selection Process

In addition to other FTA staff that may review the proposals, a technical evaluation committee will evaluate proposals based on the published evaluation criteria. Based on the findings of the technical evaluation committee, the FTA Administrator will determine the final selection of projects for program funding. FTA may consider geographic diversity, diversity in the size of the transit systems receiving funding, and/or the applicant's receipt of other discretionary awards in determining the allocation of program funds. FTA may prioritize projects that have a higher local financial commitment. FTA may prioritize projects that demonstrate how they will address significant repair and maintenance needs, improve the safety of transit systems, and deploy connective projects that include advanced technologies to connect bus systems with other networks. FTA may prioritize projects in rural areas. Not less than 10 percent of the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program funds will be distributed to projects in rural areas. In addition, FTA will not award more than 10 percent of the funds to a single grantee.

G. Federal Award Administration

i. Federal Award Notice

Subsequent to an announcement by the FTA Administrator of the final project selections, which will be posted on the FTA Web site, FTA will publish a list of the selected projects, a summary of final scores for selected projects, Federal award amounts and recipients in the **Federal Register**. Project recipients should contact their FTA Regional Offices for additional information regarding allocations for projects under the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program.

At the time the project selections are announced, FTA will extend pre-award authority for the selected projects. There is no blanket pre-award authority for these projects before announcement.

ii. Award Administration

Funds under the Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program are available to

designated recipients that allocate funds to fixed route bus operators, or state or local governmental entities, including Indian tribes, that operate fixed route bus service. There is no minimum or maximum grant award amount; however, FTA intends to fund as many meritorious projects as possible. Only proposals from eligible recipients for eligible activities will be considered for funding. Due to funding limitations, proposers that are selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested. In those cases, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the proposed projects are still viable stand-alone projects that can be completed with the amount awarded.

iii. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Pre-Award Authority

The FTA will issue specific guidance to recipients regarding pre-award authority at the time of selection. The FTA does not provide pre-award authority for discretionary funds until projects are selected and even then, there are Federal requirements that must be met before costs are incurred. Funds under this NOFO cannot be used to reimburse applicants for otherwise eligible expenses incurred prior to FTA award of a Grant Agreement until FTA has issued pre-award authority for selected projects through a notification in the **Federal Register**, or unless FTA has issued a "Letter of No Prejudice" for the project before the expenses are incurred. For more information about FTA's policy on pre-award authority, please see the FY 2017 Apportionment Notice published on January 19, 2017.

b. Grant Requirements

If selected, awardees will apply for a grant through FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). Recipients of Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program funding in urban areas are subject to the grant requirements of section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Grant program, including those of FTA Circular 9030.1E. Recipients of Bus and Bus Infrastructure Program funding in rural areas are subject to the grant requirements of section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program, including those of FTA Circular 9040.1G. All recipients must follow the Grants Management Requirements of FTA Circular 5010.1E, and the labor protections of 49 U.S.C. 5333(b). All discretionary grants, regardless of award amount, will be subject to the congressional notification and release process. Technical assistance regarding

these requirements is available from each FTA regional office.

c. Buy America

The FTA requires that all capital procurements meet FTA's Buy America requirements, which require that all iron, steel, or manufactured products be produced in the U.S. These requirements help create and protect manufacturing jobs in the U.S. The Bus Infrastructure Program will have a significant economic impact toward meeting the objectives of the Buy America law. The FAST Act amended the Buy America requirements to provide for a phased increase in the domestic content for rolling stock. For FY 2016 and FY 2017, the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States must be more than 60 percent of the cost of all components. For FY 2018 and FY 2019, the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States must be more than 65 percent of the cost of all components. For FY 2020 and beyond, the cost of components and subcomponents produced in the United States must be more than 70 percent of the cost of all components. There is no change to the requirement that final assembly of rolling stock must occur in the United States. FTA issued final guidance on the implementation of the phased increase in domestic content on September 1, 2016. Any proposal that will require a waiver must identify the items for which a waiver will be sought in the application.

d. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

FTA requires that its recipients receiving planning, capital and/or operating assistance that will award prime contracts exceeding \$250,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year comply with the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program regulations at 49 CFR part 26. Applicants should expect to include any funds awarded, excluding those to be used for vehicle procurements, in setting their overall DBE goal. Note, however, that projects including vehicle procurements remain subject to the DBE program regulations. The rule requires that, prior to bidding on any FTA-assisted vehicle procurement, entities that manufacture vehicles, perform post-production alterations or retrofitting must submit a DBE Program plan and goal methodology to FTA. Further, to the extent that a vehicle remanufacturer is responding to a solicitation for new or remanufactured vehicles with a vehicle to which the remanufacturer has provided post-production alterations or retro-fitting (e.g., replacing major

components such as engine to provide a “like new” vehicle), the vehicle remanufacturer is considered a transit vehicle manufacturer and must also comply with the DBE regulations.

FTA will then issue a transit vehicle manufacturer (TVM) concurrence/certification letter. Grant recipients must verify each entity’s compliance with these requirements before accepting its bid. A list of compliant, certified TVMs is posted on FTA’s Web page at <https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/eligible-tvms-list>. Please note, that this list is nonexclusive and recipients must contact FTA before accepting bids from entities not listed on this web-posting. Recipients may also establish project specific DBE goals for vehicle procurements. The FTA will provide additional guidance as grants are awarded. For more information on DBE requirements, please contact Janelle Hinton, Office of Civil Rights, 202–366–9259, email: janelle.hinton@dot.gov.

e. Planning

FTA encourages proposers to notify the appropriate State Departments of Transportation and MPOs in areas likely to be served by the project funds made available under this program. Selected projects must be incorporated into the long-range plans and transportation improvement programs of states and metropolitan areas before they are eligible for FTA funding.

f. Standard Assurances

The applicant assures that it will comply with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, directives, FTA circulars, and other federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA grant. The applicant acknowledges that it is under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement issued for its project with FTA. The applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies, and administrative practices might be modified from time to time and may affect the implementation of the project. The applicant agrees that the most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise. The applicant must submit the Certifications and Assurances before receiving a grant if it does not have current certifications on file.

g. Reporting

Post-award reporting requirements include the electronic submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone

Reports in FTA’s electronic grants management system.

H. Technical Assistance and Other Program Information

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” FTA will consider applications for funding only from eligible recipients for eligible projects listed in Section C. Complete applications must be submitted through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 p.m. EDT on August 25, 2017. For issues with GRANTS.GOV please contact GRANTS.GOV by phone at 1–800–518–4726 or by email at support@grants.gov. Contact information for FTA’s regional offices can be found on FTA’s Web site at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/regional-offices>.

I. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice please contact the Bus Infrastructure Program manager, Mark Bathrick, via email at mark.bathrick@dot.gov, or by phone at 202–366–9955. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 1–800–877–8339. In addition, FTA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on FTA’s Web site at <http://transit.dot.gov/busprogram>. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to contact FTA directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions. FTA staff may also conduct briefings on the discretionary grants selection and award process upon request.

Matthew J. Welbes,
Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 2017–15043 Filed 7–17–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Solicitation of Nominations for Appointment to the National Research Advisory Council

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is seeking nominations of qualified candidates to be considered for membership on the National Research Advisory Council (Council). The Council provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) and the Under Secretary for Health (USH), and makes recommendations on the nature and scope of research and

development sponsored and/or conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to include: (1) The policies and projects of the Office of Research and Development (ORD); (2) the focus of research on the high priority health care needs of Veterans; (3) the balance of basic, applied, and outcomes research; (4) the scientific merit review process; (5) the appropriate mechanisms by which ORD can leverage its resources to enhance the research financial base; (6) the rapid response to changing health care needs, while maintaining the stability of the research infrastructure; and (7) the protection of human subjects of research.

DATES: Nominations for membership on the Council must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on August 15, 2017. Packages received after this time will not be considered for the current membership cycle.

ADDRESSES: All nominations should be mailed to Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., (10P9), Washington, DC 20420, emailed (recommended) to Melissa.Cooper@va.gov, or faxed to (202) 495–6196.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Cooper, Designated Federal Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., (10P), Washington, DC 20420, Telephone (202) 461–6044. (This is not a toll free number.) A copy of the Council’s charter and list of the current membership can be obtained by contacting Mrs. Cooper or by accessing the Web site: <https://www.va.gov/ADVISORY/NRAC.asp>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council advises the Secretary and the USH on all matters related to the research and development program, and conducts analyses and develops reports or other materials as necessary. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the Council is encouraged to review deliberations of other committees or entities, and may incorporate or otherwise use the results of deliberations of such entities. As a part of its function, the Council may accept for consideration suggestions for research and development from Congress, VA and non-VA scientists, Veterans and their representatives, and the general public.

The Council meets at least four times annually, which may include a site visit to a VA field location. In accordance with Federal Travel Regulation, members will receive travel expense reimbursement and per diem for any