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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$645 million to Help Meet Rural Transportation and Mobility Needs

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Second year of Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program funds 18 projects for safety, accessibility and connectivity in rural areas

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced that the Biden-Harris Administration has awarded \$645.3 million from the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (Rural) to help communities around the United States complete transportation projects that will increase mobility, improve safety, and generate regional economic growth in rural areas.

Rural roads face a disproportionately high rate of fatalities, and a significant proportion of rural roads and bridges are in poor condition. Today's awards will improve the safety and reliability of movement of people and freight, as well as improve quality of life for rural residents, through investment in critical roads, bridges, and other transportation systems.

The Rural Program represents a keystone of the Administration's commitment to repairing and improving rural transportation systems. President Biden's infrastructure law made more than \$44 billion available to help rural communities repair and improve their roads, bridges, airports, ports, and transit systems.

"Rural communities face some of the toughest transportation challenges, yet are often left out of major federal investments, a pattern that we are changing that under President Biden's leadership," said **U.S.**

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "The grants we're announcing today will make transportation in rural communities better, safer, and more reliable."

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This year's selected projects include:

- **Millen, Georgia: \$12 million for the Millen Rail Crossing:** This project will implement three grade-separated rail crossings in Millen, Georgia to improve both residential and freight mobility in the area. This project will improve residents' daily access to local schools, employment centers and social services while minimizing delays, as east-west travel is currently impeded by about 10 trains a day, many of increasing length from the Port of Savannah. Intermodal freight mobility in the area will be improved as trucks cannot use the existing overpass. Additionally, the construction of these grade-separated crossings will allow for improved safety and reduce opportunities for trespassing.
- **San Juan County, New Mexico: \$59.8 million for US 64 Corridor Improvements:** This project, located entirely within the traditional lands of the Navajo Nation, will improve access for residents to travel to school, jobs, medical treatment, shopping and more. The project will widen and rehabilitate approximately 21 miles of the US 64 Corridor and replace four bridges, install fiber optic and cable, and approximately 50 corrugated metal culverts along the corridor.
- **\$360,378 for the PICK 2.0 project in the state of Oklahoma:** This project will expand microtransit services to rural and Tribal communities in Oklahoma by offering shared curb-to-curb on-demand rides. The project will have direct benefits for individuals living in rural and Tribal communities who may be transit-dependent.
- **\$27.7 million for the Northern Maine US 1 Road Improvement Project in Aroostook County, Maine:** This project will reconstruct two sections of US 1 near Frenchville. It will primarily improve access to services, including the regional hospital and university in Fort Kent. By modernizing the road segments, the project will significantly lower long-term maintenance costs and better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists on this designated U.S. Bicycle Route. The reconstructed road, with improved stormwater runoff infrastructure, will be able to withstand more frequent heavy rain events and freeze-thaw cycles, which have been degrading the pavement at an increasing rate.

More information and a full list of this year's Rural grant recipients can be found [HERE](#).

This is the second year for the Rural Program, which thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests a total of approximately \$2 billion through 2026 for projects that improve highways, bridges, and

tunnels, address highway safety, increase access to agricultural, commercial, energy, or freight facilities, and bring flexible transit services to rural and Tribal areas. The Rural Program continues to be significantly oversubscribed, with more than \$7.4 billion in requests from 174 applicants competing for the \$645 million in available funding this round.

Applications were evaluated based on multiple criteria, including project readiness, cost-effectiveness, and whether the project supported critical goals like enhancing safety, increasing mobility and reliability, improving resiliency and restoring infrastructure to a state of good repair.

Applicants for the Rural Program also benefited from a streamlined application process that reduced the burden for applicants by allowing them to submit one application for three different grant programs: Rural, the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA), and the new National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program (Mega). For more information about the Rural Program and the combined Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant funding opportunity, click [here](#). For additional resources for rural applicants, see the [Rural EV Toolkit](#), [Rural Grant Applicant Toolkit](#) and the [Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success \(ROUTES\)](#) webpage.

USDOT expects to announce the recipients of this round of INFRA and Mega funding early next year.

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