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**Glenda Wiles**

**From:** Sheryl Wood <swood@mtcounties.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 14, 2019 2:37 PM  
**To:** Sheryl Wood  
**Subject:** BUILD Grants Available  
**Attachments:** BUILD Discretionary Grants.pdf; Hill County BUILD Grant letter.pdf

MAR 15 2019  
Ravalli County Commissioners

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**Importance:** High

Members,

Hill County asked us to notify you of the recently announced BUILD Grants, which are \$1.5 billion in discretionary grant funding to 91 projects in 49 states and the District of Columbia. The grants are made through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Grants program and support road, rail, transit, and port infrastructure projects across the country.

Attached is the press release announcing the grants and Hill County's grant letter. The website for information on the BUILD Grant program is: <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>

Here is some additional information from Howard Hill of the U.S. Department of Transportation:

- The purchase of equipment such as belly dumps and graders may be eligible for reimbursement from BUILD funding, but the DOT determines eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
- Work by local forces to crush and place gravel on rural roads is not eligible for BUILD reimbursement, but the value of the labor is allowable as an in-kind contribution.
- They are unsure if planning grant funds will be available in the FY 19 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFA).

Hill County has also requested that you to contact your Federal representatives to insure it is available in 2019 and 2020.

If you have any questions or need more information about the grants, please contact Hill County Commissioner Mark Peterson at: [petersonm@hillcounty.us](mailto:petersonm@hillcounty.us)

Thank you!

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## **BUILD Discretionary Grants**

### **U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao Announces \$1.5 Billion in BUILD Transportation Grants to Revitalize Infrastructure Nationwide**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today announced \$1.5 billion in discretionary grant funding to 91 projects in 49 states and the District of Columbia. The grants are made through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Grants program and support road, rail, transit, and port infrastructure projects across the country.

“BUILD transportation grants are major investments in road, rail, transit, and port projects that serve as a down payment on this administration’s commitment to America’s infrastructure,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Demand for BUILD grants far exceeded available funds, and the locally-driven nature of the applications was clear in their volume and geographic diversity. 851 eligible applications from all 50 states, as well as U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia were sent in response to the BUILD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), nearly double the applications received in 2017. Overall, applicants in 2018 requested more than \$10.9 billion in funding.

Project applications were evaluated by a team of 222 career staff in the Department and selected based on established criteria. The criteria included safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental protection, and state of good repair. Further criteria included innovation, such as projects supporting Autonomous Vehicles infrastructure, broadband service to underserved communities, as well as projects that demonstrate partnerships between the public and private sectors, and non-Federal revenue for transportation infrastructure investments. The Department prioritized rural projects that aligned with the criteria and addressed rural infrastructure needs.

The BUILD Transportation Grants re-balance a ten-year, historical underinvestment in rural communities. Rural applications more than doubled from the previous year’s TIGER applications. Underinvestment in rural infrastructure has led to a decline in the routes that connect communities in rural America. In this round, in which 59 percent of the applications were for rural projects, 62 projects were awarded to rural grant applications.

Several selected projects will contribute to America’s energy independence. The Permian Basin projects and the Port Arthur Multimodal Rail Expansion and Berth Expansion Project will both contribute to the efficient transportation of domestic energy products. Border security infrastructure is also supported through BUILD Transportation grants, with projects such as the Calexico East Port of Entry Bridge Expansion in California making bridge improvements to accommodate freight traffic and improving other transportation facilities at the border crossing.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 appropriated \$1.5 billion for BUILD Transportation grants. For this round of BUILD Transportation grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million for a single project, and no more than \$150 million can be awarded to a single state. There is a \$5 million minimum award for projects located in urban areas, and a \$1 million minimum for rural projects.

Updated: Tuesday, December 11, 2018

On January 24 the Hill County commissioners voted unanimously to pursue the BUILD grant. BUILD stands for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development. This grant had \$1.5 billion appropriated to be awarded to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for National Infrastructure Investments. No state can receive more than \$150 million; all grant requests must be between \$5 million and \$25 million. FY2018 Grant application deadline was July of 2018. We anticipate FY2019 deadlines to be similar.

The grant is available to State, County, City, and tribal governments. Grant funds are to be used for rural transportation and eligible projects include highway, bridge, or other road projects. There is \$15 million available for planning, preparation, or design of eligible projects. Planning would include environmental analysis, feasibility studies and other preconstruction activities of surface transportation projects. As the lead applicant Hill County can submit 3 applications. We will need to provide a concise description of the project, the transportation challenges that it is intended to address, and how it will address those challenges. The applications should describe the project location, including a detailed geographical description of the proposed project, a map of the project's location and connections to existing transportation infrastructure and geospatial data describing the project location. Several components will enhance applications and clarify how the project will benefit rural communities. Safety, State of Good Repair, Economic Competitiveness, Environmental Protection, Quality of life, Innovation, Partnership, and Non-Federal Revenue for Transportation Infrastructure Investment are listed as Merit Criteria for any project that we submit. Hill County will be working with all state and federal agencies on this project.

Project Readiness will be given important consideration including Technical Feasibility, Project Schedule, and Required Approvals, Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies. A 3<sup>rd</sup> section of the application is Benefit Cost Analysis. This will involve full costs of developing, constructing and maintaining a project as well as listing expected benefits.

There are a lot of issues that will need to be addressed; signage, intersections, wetlands, culverts, irrigation ditches, water, sewer, lights, RR crossings. Matching dollars, who and what? MDT, Equipment, Labor, identifying possible gravel locations. We will need to gather data on roads, Bus routes, Traffic counts, or axle counts, Elevator bushel numbers from north or south estimates (local producers may be able to help with this) in Rudyard, Havre and Chester.

We continue to verify the BUILD planning grant and project grant status for FY2019 and FY2020 and any deadlines we need to meet with applications. Our intention is to be able to submit applications once the opportunity arises.

Hill County Commissioners