



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of Highways Project Implementation / Bureau of Local Roads & Streets
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Room 205 / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

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April 13, 2023

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CIRCULAR LETTER 2023-13

Cathy Johnson
COUNTY CLERK
VERMILION CO. IL.

**WILDLIFE CROSSING DISCRETIONARY GRANT PILOT PROGRAM
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022
(FFY2022) & FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2023 (FFY2023)**

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS / METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS / TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS / CONSULTING ENGINEERS

PURPOSE & INTRODUCTION:

On April 4th, 2023, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program (WCPP), which is a new discretionary grant program for Federal Fiscal Years FFY2022 and FFY2023. This Program was authorized and established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Overall, the new WCPP is a \$350M pilot program aimed at protecting wildlife, seeks to reduce the number of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVC), and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. Nationwide it has been found that there are over 1,000,000 WVC annually. These collisions present a serious danger to wildlife and human safety, and results in tens of thousands serious injuries and hundreds of fatalities on U.S. Roadways.

WCPP grants are available for all project activities, including but not limited to research, planning, design, and construction. Importantly, the total amount of funding that is available in this NOFO is up to \$111,850,000, which covers FFY2022 and FFY2023. There is no minimum or maximum award size, but it is anticipated that awards may range from \$200,000 to \$20 Million, although awards may be made outside this range.

It is anticipated that 60% or more of the available funds will be made available for projects in rural areas (defined in 23 U.S.C 101(a)(25), and refers to all areas of a State that are not urban areas. The link to the map of Federal Highway Administration Authority (FHWA) Urban Areas can be found via the following link: [FHWA Adjusted Urban Area - FHWA HEPGIS Maps \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.gov/epgis/maps)

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Applicants will find detailed program information, eligibility requirements, key provisions, and application via the following link: [WVCC Grant Opportunity | GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov). The Application Checklist, and the WCPP NOFO can be found under the "Related Documents" tab.

The following summary is provided herewith only as an overview, as the NOFO contains all required information:

WILDLIFE CROSSING DISCRETIONARY GRANT PILOT PROGRAM:

<p>Purpose & Goals:</p>	<p>To support projects that seek to reduce the number of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions, and in carrying out that purpose, improve habitat connectivity.</p> <p>The primary goals of the WCPP are to save lives, prevent serious injuries, and protect motorists and wildlife. The reduction of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions, and improvement of terrestrial and aquatic habitat connectivity are the primary merit criteria that will be used in reviewing applications, and each of the primary merit criteria are of equal importance.</p>
<p>Eligible Entities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unit of local government • An Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) • A State DOT • A regional transportation authority • A special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function • An Indian Tribe • A Federal Land Management Agency (FMLA)
<p>Eligible Projects:</p>	<p>Both non-construction and construction projects may be eligible for award under the WCPP, which include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <p><u>Examples of Non-Construction Projects include, but are not limited to the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on safety innovations to reduce WVCs • Research and monitoring on the effectiveness of WVC mitigation • Development of mapping tools to document WVCs • Analysis of impacts of WVCs and best practices to reduce WVCs • Planning studies to identify terrestrial and aquatic wildlife migration corridors and roadway barriers to habitat that lead to WVCs • Tracking wildlife and mapping WVCs • Outreach activities to educate the public on the hazards of WVCs

	<p><u>Examples of Construction projects include, but are not limited to the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and pre-construction of an underpass or overpass for wildlife passage • Environmental permitting and right-of-way acquisition to construct a wildlife crossing structure • Adaptation or replacement of a culvert or bridge structure to accommodate connectivity for terrestrial species that are experiencing WVCs • Construction of a wildlife overpass or underpass and fencing • Preservation or restoration of habitat necessary to secure the effectiveness of a crossing project • Construction of multiple crossing structures in an area to connect habitat for terrestrial or aquatic species
<p>Expected Range of Awards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minimum or maximum award size • Anticipated award may range from \$200,000 to \$20M
<p>Key Provisions:</p>	<p>Key provisions, extracted from the NOFO, include, but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the grant recipient is any Eligible Entity other than an Indian Tribe or an FLMA, then, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 171(f)(2)(A)(ii), IDOT must administer the grant • As the WCPP is a pilot program, the FHWA intends to use to have identified practices and projects that most effectively reduce WVC and improve wildlife connectivity. Before establishing the grant agreement, the FHWA and IDOT will work with grant recipients to determine the most appropriate indicators and metrics to assess project benefits for inclusion in the agreements • The FHWA expects to obligate FY 2022 funds before FY 2023 funds. FY 2022 funds must be obligated by September 20, 2025; and FY 2023 funds must be obligated by September 30, 2026 • Cost Sharing or Matching – grants may not exceed 80% of the total eligible activity costs, unless an exception as detailed in Section C (2) of the NOFO is granted
<p>FFY 2022 & FFY 2023 Funding:</p>	<p>\$111,850,000 in total (approximately \$53.7 M for FFY2022; and approximately \$58.12 M for FFY 2023 – subject to adjustment)</p>

April 13, 2023

INFORMATION WEBINARS:

At present there are no informational webinars scheduled, but as this is a pilot program applicants are strongly encouraged to monitor the following website for further information: [Wildlife Crossings Program | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#).

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Applications from eligible entities must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST on August 1, 2023.

Applications must submit their applications through www.Grants.gov.

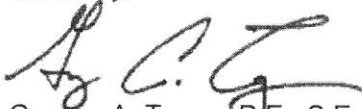
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, INFORMATION & COURTESY COORDINATION:

For further information regarding this notice, please contact the USDOT Office via the following email: wildlifecrossings@dot.gov.

Additional resources, including updates, the NOFO and the application checklist can be found at: [Wildlife Crossings Program | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#).

If you have any questions on the Circular Letter; and as a courtesy to foster good communication, as well as enable the Department to be able to provide administrative support if selected, please contact Stephane B. Seck-Birhame, Local Program Development Engineer at (217) 782-3972 or Bablibile.Seck@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,



George A. Tapas, P.E., S.E
Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

cc: David Snyder, FHWA Illinois Division Administrator
Jon-Paul Kohler, FHWA Illinois Division
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Jerry Crabtree, Township Officials of Illinois
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Steven Travia, IDOT, Director, Office of Highway Project Implementation