Illinois Department of Transportation

POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[ORGANIZATION] FEDERAL FUNDS
GRANT POLICY MANUAL

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to establish the policies and procedures for [ORGANIZATION]'s federal funds grant program, which is designed to support transportation-related projects at universities across Illinois. ███ [ORGANIZATION]'s mission and the ████████████████████████████████████. The objectives are:

- ██ ████████████████████████
- ███
- ██

1.2 Scope of the Manual

This manual applies to all universities within Illinois that seek federal funding for transportation-related projects. Eligible projects must:

- ██
- ██ ██████████████
- ██ ██████████████████

1.3 Long Range Transportation Plan – State and Federal Requirements

The State of Illinois adheres to both state and federal requirements in developing and maintaining a long-range transportation plan. ███ ███ ██ █████████████████████████████
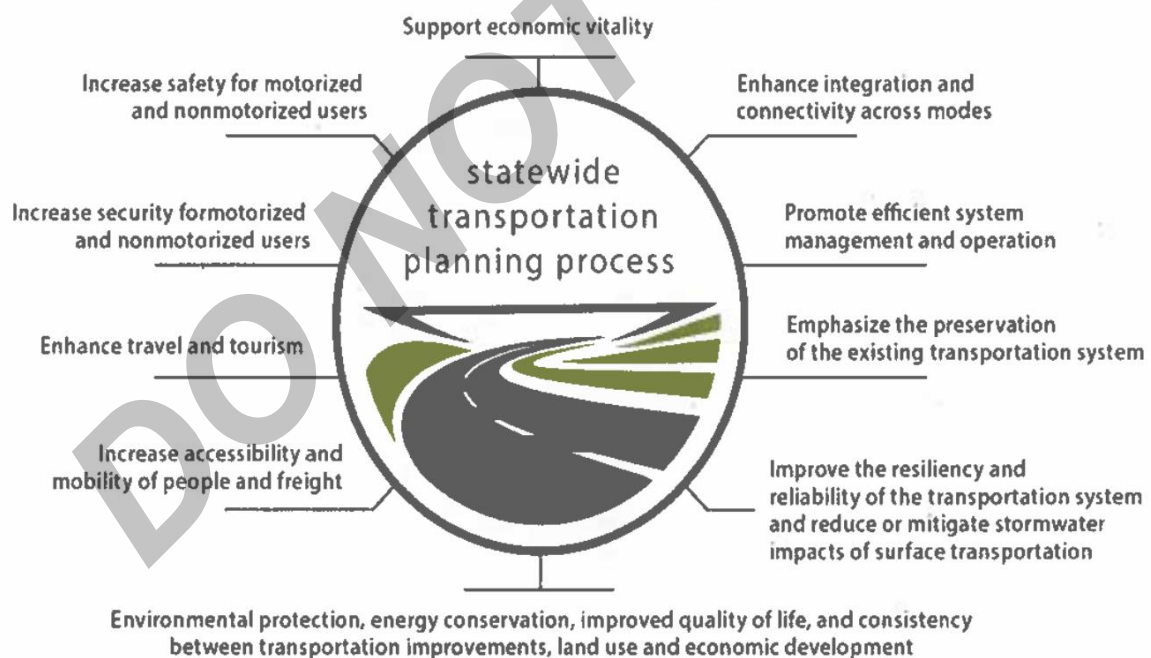
1. **Support Economic Vitality:** Enhance the state's economic competitiveness through efficient, safe, and reliable transportation.
2. **Increase Safety for all Users:** Improve safety for both motorized and nonmotorized users.
3. **Enhance Integration and Connectivity:** Promote connectivity between different modes of transportation to streamline travel and commerce.
4. **Promote Efficient System Management and Operation:** Utilize technology and innovation to optimize the performance of transportation systems.
5. **Emphasize Preservation of the Transportation System:** Focus on maintaining and improving the existing infrastructure.

6. **Improve Resiliency and Reliability:** Strengthen the transportation infrastructure to withstand environmental impacts and improve stormwater management.
7. **Increase Security:** Enhance the security measures for all users of transportation systems.
8. **Enhance Travel and Tourism:** Develop transportation facilities that bolster travel and tourism within the state.
9. **Increase Accessibility and Mobility:** Ensure that transportation services are accessible to all, enhancing the mobility of people and freight.
10. **Environmental Protection and Sustainability:** Focus on environmental protection, energy conservation, reducing emissions, promoting the use of green technologies, and aligning transportation improvements with land use and economic development to enhance quality of life.

The state's long-range transportation plan outlines specific goals, objectives, and investments over an extended period, ███ ███████████████

1.4 Overview of [ORGANIZATION] and its Mission

The [ORGANIZATION] is the primary agency responsible for the development, maintenance, and management of Illinois' transportation infrastructure. [ORGANIZATION]'s ██████████████████ ██ ██

- **Safety:** Ensuring the safety of all transportation users through comprehensive planning, construction, and maintenance practices.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Utilizing resources efficiently to maximize the benefits of transportation investments.
- **Efficiency:** Enhancing the movement of people and goods to support economic growth and quality of life.
- **Sustainability:** Implementing environmentally responsible practices in all transportation projects and operations.

The federal funds grant program is a vital component of [ORGANIZATION]'s efforts to advance these goals, particularly through collaboration with academic institutions that contribute to research, innovation, and education in transportation.

1.5 Importance of Transparency in Federal Funding

Transparency in federal funding is critical to maintaining public trust, ensuring accountability, and achieving the effective use of resources. This manual provides a transparent framework for the management of federal funds, emphasizing the following principles:

- **Accountability:** Clear guidelines and procedures ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities in managing federal funds.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** By providing comprehensive information on the application and evaluation processes, universities can prepare strong proposals aligned with IDOT's objectives.
- **Prevention of Fraud and Abuse:** Transparent processes help prevent misuse of funds, ensuring that federal resources are directed towards projects that deliver tangible benefits.
- **Public Trust:** Openness about how funds are allocated and used fosters trust among the public, stakeholders, and funding recipients.

2.0 Grant Application Guidelines

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for ███s federal funds grant program, universities must adhere to specific academic, operational, and financial criteria. These guidelines ensure that projects align with ██████ mission and the State of Illinois' long-range transportation plan.

2.1.1 Types of Eligible Institutions (Universities)

1. ██
████████
2. ██
██████████████████████████████
3. ██
██████████

2.1.2 Scope of Eligible Projects

Eligible projects must align with ██████ mission and the State's long-range transportation plan. The scope includes:

1. **Research and Development Initiatives**: Projects aimed at improving transportation infrastructure, safety, and efficiency. Examples include studies on traffic management, innovative construction materials, and sustainable transportation systems.
2. **Education and Workforce Development Programs**: Initiatives designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of transportation professionals. This can include training programs, seminars, and certification courses.
3. **Pilot Projects and Technology Demonstrations**: Implementation of innovative transportation technologies and strategies. Projects might involve testing new traffic control devices, autonomous vehicle technologies, or advanced public transportation systems.

In addition to the above, the following activities are specifically eligible for funding:

1. **Planning Studies:** Comprehensive analyses aimed at planning future transportation projects or improvements. These studies help ensure that all proposed infrastructure developments are well-researched and based on robust data.
2. **Data Purchase, Collection, and/or Analysis:** Funding to acquire, gather, or analyze data crucial for transportation planning and decision-making. This may include traffic data, environmental impact data, or economic feasibility studies.
3. **Program Development Activities:** Initiatives to develop new programs that address specific transportation needs, such as congestion management or safety enhancement programs.
4. **Performance Management Activities:** Projects focused on evaluating and improving the performance of transportation systems, including the development of metrics and benchmarks for ongoing assessment.
5. **Coordination/Outreach Activities:** Efforts to enhance communication and collaboration between various stakeholders in transportation projects, such as local governments, community groups, and other relevant organizations.
6. **Software:** Development or purchase of software solutions that support transportation planning and operations, such as geographic information systems (GIS) or simulation software.
7. **Multi-Modal Planning:** Includes a range of transportation modes to create a cohesive strategy:
    a. **Highways:** Planning related to highway system enhancements or expansions.
    b. **Active Transportation:** Projects promoting non-motorized transportation modes like biking and walking.
    c. **Rail (Passenger & Freight):** Planning for passenger and freight rail systems to improve efficiency and connectivity.
    d. **Transit:** Enhancements to public transit systems to increase accessibility and service quality.
    e. **Air & Water:** Planning projects that tie air and water transport into the broader surface transportation network. This can involve the integration of ports and airports with road and rail systems.
    o. **Considerations for Possible Reduced Federal Amount:** Some projects, particularly those involving less critical enhancements, might receive a reduced level of federal funding and should plan their budget accordingly.

Utilization of Funds:
In addition to funding the above activities, the grant funds can be utilized in several practical ways to support and enhance project execution:

1. **Support Internal Agency Staff:** Funds can be used to support salaries and expenses related to internal staff who are directly involved in executing eligible projects.
2. **Hire a Consultant for Assistance:** Engaging external expertise to supplement the project team for specialized tasks or to enhance project outcomes (*subject to federal guidelines on procurement and contracting*).
3. **Purchase Data:** Acquisition of necessary transportation, demographic, or environmental data to inform project planning and outcomes.
4. **Purchase Equipment:** Acquisition of hardware or other equipment necessary to support the implementation or management of transportation projects.
5. **Purchase Management Software:** Investment in software tools that assist in the design, analysis, and management of transportation projects.

Projects should have clear objectives and measurable outcomes that contribute to the advancement of transportation systems in Illinois.

2.1.3 Relation to Long Range Transportation Goals
Projects must clearly demonstrate a connection to the State's long-range transportation goals, which focus on:

- **Enhancing Quality of Life**: ███████████████████████████████████
████████████
- **Promoting Economic Prosperity**: ███████████████████████████████
█████████████████
- **Environmental Stewardship**: ████████████████████████████████████
████████████████████████████
- Supporting economic development and job creation.

2.2 Application Requirements

The application process requires a comprehensive set of documents and adherence to specific guidelines. This ensures that all applications are evaluated consistently and fairly.

2.2.1 Step-by-Step Application Process
1. ██
██
████████████████
2. ██
██████████████████████
3. ██
██████████████████████████████████
4. ██
██████████
5. ██
██
██████
6. **Selection**: ██
████████████████████████

2.2.2 Required Documentation

- **Cover Letter:** A formal request for funding.
- **Project Description**: A detailed explanation of the project, including objectives, methodologies, and expected outcomes. ██
████████████████████████
- **Budget Outline**: A comprehensive budget breakdown, including all projected expenses and funding sources. This should detail how the funds will be utilized effectively.
- **Timeline**: A project timeline outlining key milestones and deadlines. This ensures the project progresses in a timely manner and meets all targets.

- ██ ███
- ██ ████████████████████████
- ██ ██████████████████████
- ██ ████████
- ██ █████████████████████████
- ██ ████████████████████████████████
- ██ ████████████████████
- ██ █████████
- ██ ████████

2.2.3 Deadlines and Timelines

- **RFA Release**: ██████████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████
- **Pre-Application Meeting:** ███████████████████████ ████████████████████████
- **Proposal Submission Deadline**: ███████████████████████ ██
- **Evaluation and Selection Period**: ██████████████████ ████████████████████████████
- **Notification of Award:** ██████████████████████████████ ██████

2.3 Submission Process

To maintain transparency and efficiency, IDOT has established a clear submission process, ensuring that all proposals are reviewed fairly and timely.

2.3.1 Submission Portal

- **Online Submission**: ████████████████████████████████████ ███ ██████████
- **Submission Deadlines**: █████████████████████████████████ ████. ███

2.3.2 Application Details

Applicants seeking federal funds must provide comprehensive details about their projects through the online application system, which includes the following components:

A. **Basic Project Information:**
   i. **Costs:** █████████████████████
   ii. **Scope:** ███████████████████████████
   iii. **Source of Matching Funds:** ███████████████████████ ████████████████████
   iv. **Timeframe:** ████████████████████████████

B. **Project Alignment and Impact:**
1. **IDOT Long Range Transportation Plan:** How the project supports or implements goals outlined in the plan.
2. **Asset Management:** Integration with IDOT's asset management strategies to enhance infrastructure longevity and performance. The key components here include:
   a. **Development of Tools and Data Collection:** ███████████ ██████████████████ ████████
   b. **Prioritization of Improvements:** ███████████████████ ██████
   c. **Modeling Future Asset Condition:** █████████████████████████
   d. **Identifying Improvement Strategies:** ██████████████ ██████████████
   e. **Extending Asset Life:** ███████████████████ ██████████████████████ ████████████

3. **Performance-Based Project Selection:** ██████████████████ ███████████████
4. **Community Impact:** ████████████████████████ █████████████

Evaluation and Selection
- **Criteria-Based Evaluation**: IDOT evaluates proposals based on predefined criteria, ensuring a fair and transparent selection process.
- **Notification of Results**: Successful applicants are notified promptly, with details of the award and next steps. Unsuccessful applicants receive constructive feedback.

3.0 Project Evaluation Criteria

3.1 Review Process

The evaluation process for federal funds grant requests from universities is designed to ensure thorough and fair consideration of each proposal. This process involves several key stages, each of which is crucial for assessing the feasibility, impact, and alignment of proposed projects with state and federal priorities.

3.1.1. Initial Screening and Compliance Check

1. **Eligibility Verification**: ███ ███ ███ ████████████████████████████████

2. **Compliance with Federal and State Regulations**: ████████████████████ ███ ████████████████████████ ███ ███ █████████████

3.1.2 Detailed Review Steps

1. **Technical Review**: ███████████████████████████████████████ ███ ████████████████████

2. **Financial Review**: ███████████████████████████████████████ ███ ███████████████████████████████

3. **Impact Analysis**: ███████████████████████████████████████ ███ ██████████████████████

4. **Risk Assessment**: ███ ███ ████████████████

3.1.3 Panel Review and Recommendations

1. **Expert Panel Review**: ████████████████████████████████████ ███ ██████████████████████

2. **Scoring and Ranking**: ████████████████████████████████████ ███ ██████████████

3. **Recommendations**: ██████████████████████████████████████ ███ ████████████████

3.1.4 Final Approval

1. **Review of Panel Recommendations**: █████████████████████████ ███ ████████████

2. **Final Decision**: ███ ███ █████████████

3.2 Project Prioritization Criteria

The prioritization of projects within the IDOT federal funds grant program is critical to aligning investments with the strategic goals of the State of Illinois and ensuring effective use of federal funds. Projects are evaluated and prioritized based on several key criteria that support IDOT's mission and the long-range transportation plan:

1. **Alignment with State Transportation Priorities:** IDOT prioritizes evaluates grant requests based on their alignment with the state's long-range transportation plan outline in section 1.3. The state's long-range transportation plan outlines specific goals, objectives, and investments over an extended ██ ████████████████████████████████████

2. **Asset Management:** IDOT prioritizes project that seek to maximize the lifespan and performance of transportation infrastructure through the incorporation or enhancement of effective asset management outlined in 232 subsection B.2.

3. **Performance-Based Program Development:** IDOT places a high premium on projects that are designed around performance-based objectives, recognizing the importance of measurable and sustainable outcomes. Such projects are critical for the strategic enhancement of the state's transportation network, emphasizing efficiency (Reducing travel time, increasing throughput, or optimizing resource use), safety (Decreasing accident rates, enhancing pedestrian safety, or implementing advanced safety technologies), and service delivery (Improving user satisfaction, accessibility, and reliability of transportation services.). In that case, projects submitted for funding consideration should incorporate a robust framework for performance measurement and improvement, including:
   a. **Data-Driven Evaluation:** ████████████████████████████████████ ██ ██
   b. **Technology and Tools:** ████████████████████████████████████ ██ ████████████████████████████
   c. **Coordination Efforts:** ████████████████████████████████████ ██ ████████████████████████████████████

4. **Regional Focus:** Projects that address regional transportation needs in Illinois and promote a cohesive approach to solving area-specific challenges are prioritized. ██████████████ ██ ██

5. **Support for Disadvantaged/Economically Distressed Communities:** Projects that specifically aim to benefit disadvantaged or economically distressed communities are given special consideration in the IDOT grant evaluation process. Recognizing the vital role of transportation in promoting access to essential services and economic opportunities, IDOT prioritizes these projects to help ensure that all areas of the state, regardless of their economic status, have access to safe, reliable, and efficient transportation options. To identify which communities qualify as disadvantaged or economically distressed, the following designations are utilized:
   a. **DCEO "Underserved Area":** ██████████████████████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ████████████████████████████
   b. **IEPA "Environmental Justice Area":** ████████████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██

██

    d. **Eligibility for 100% Funding:** ████████████████████████

██

██

████████████████

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of federal funds grant requests from universities is based on several criteria:

1. **Alignment with State Transportation Priorities**: ████████████████████████
████████████

2. **Technical Merit**: ████████████████████████████
████████████████

3. **Potential Impact**: ████████████████████████████
████████████████

4. **Potential Risks**: ████████████████████████████████
████████

5. **Budget and Timeline**: ████████████████████████████
████████████

6. **Expected Outcomes**: ████████████████████████████
████████

3.4 Tracking and Reporting

To ensure transparency and accountability, IDOT requires universities with approved grants to submit regular financial and performance reports. ████████████████████████
██
████████████

1. **Financial Reporting**: ████████████████████████████
██
████████████

2. **Performance Reporting**: ████████████████████████████
██
██
██
████████████████

3.5 Annual Budget

IDOT's annual budget includes funding for federal funds grant programs. The budget is developed in accordance with federal regulations and the state's long-range transportation plan. The budget outlines projected allocations for each grant program and ensures that funds are allocated efficiently and effectively to support the state's transportation needs.

1. **Projected Allocations**: ████████████████████████████
██
████████

2. **Efficiency and Effectiveness**: ████████████████████
██
██

3.6 Project Feasibility and Sustainability

To ensure the successful execution and long-term benefits of transportation projects, IDOT emphasizes the evaluation of project feasibility and sustainability. This involves a detailed assessment of the technical, financial, operational, and environmental aspects of proposed projects.

1. **Technical Feasibility**: ████████████████████████
██
██
██
████████████████████████

2. **Financial Feasibility**: Financial feasibility is critical to ensure that projects can be completed within budget and that funding is used efficiently. ████████████████████████████ ██ ██ ████████████████████████████

3. **Operational Feasibility**: The operational feasibility assessment ensures that the project can be effectively managed and maintained over its lifecycle. ████████████ ██ ██

4. **Sustainability**: Projects must demonstrate a clear plan for sustaining their benefits beyond the grant period. ████████████████████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ████████████████████████████

3.7 Scoring Matrix and Weightage

IDOT uses a detailed scoring matrix to evaluate projects based on specific criteria that align with the state's long-range transportation plan (LRTP) goals. This matrix ensures that projects are assessed comprehensively and fairly, considering various dimensions of feasibility and impact.

1. **Alignment with LRTP Goals (30%)**: ████████████████████ ██ ██ ████████████████████████████████

2. **Sustainability (20%)**: ██████████████████████████████ ██ ██ ████████████████████████████████████

3. **Innovation (15%)**: ████████████████████████████████ ██ ██ ██████████████████████

4. **Community Impact (15%)**: ██████████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ██████████

5. **Technical Feasibility (10%)**: ████████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██████████████████████████████

The scoring matrix allows IDOT to comprehensively evaluate the sustainability of transportation projects across economic, environmental, and social dimensions, as well as technical and financial feasibility. Projects that score highly on these criteria are more likely to receive funding and support from IDOT.

3.8 Indicators for Environmental Impact

IDOT uses a variety of indicators to measure the environmental impact of transportation projects. These indicators help assess the project's contribution to sustainability and its alignment with environmental goals.

1. **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**: ███████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████

2. **Eutrophication Potential (EP)**: ██████████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████

3. **Acidification Potential (AP)**: ██ █████████████████

4. **Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP)**: ███████████████████████████████████ █████████████████

5. **Photochemical Ozone Creation Potential (POCP)**: █████████████████████████ █████████████

6. **Particulate Matter (PM) Emissions**: █████████████████████████████ ██████████████

7. **Water Pollution**: ███ █████████████████

8. **Land Use and Habitat Fragmentation**: ████████████████████████████ ██████████████████████████████████

By using these indicators, IDOT can comprehensively evaluate the environmental impact of transportation projects and make informed decisions to minimize their negative effects on the environment.

3.9 Selection Committee: Roles and Responsibilities

The Selection Committee is integral to the fair and transparent evaluation of grant requests for federal funds. The committee's roles and responsibilities are designed to ensure a thorough, unbiased, and systematic review process that aligns with state and federal regulations.

1. **Maintain Confidentiality:** ███ ███ ███ ██████████████████

2. **Establish Screening Criteria:** █████████████████████████████████████ ███ ███ ███ ███████████████████████████████████████

3. **Shortlist Candidates:** ███ ███ ███ ████████████████████████████

4. **Provide Recommendations:** ███ ███ ███ ████████████████████

5. **Ensure Fair and Equitable Process:** ██████████████████████████████ ███ ███ ████████████████████

6. **Maintain Objectivity:** ███ ███ ███ ███████████████████████████
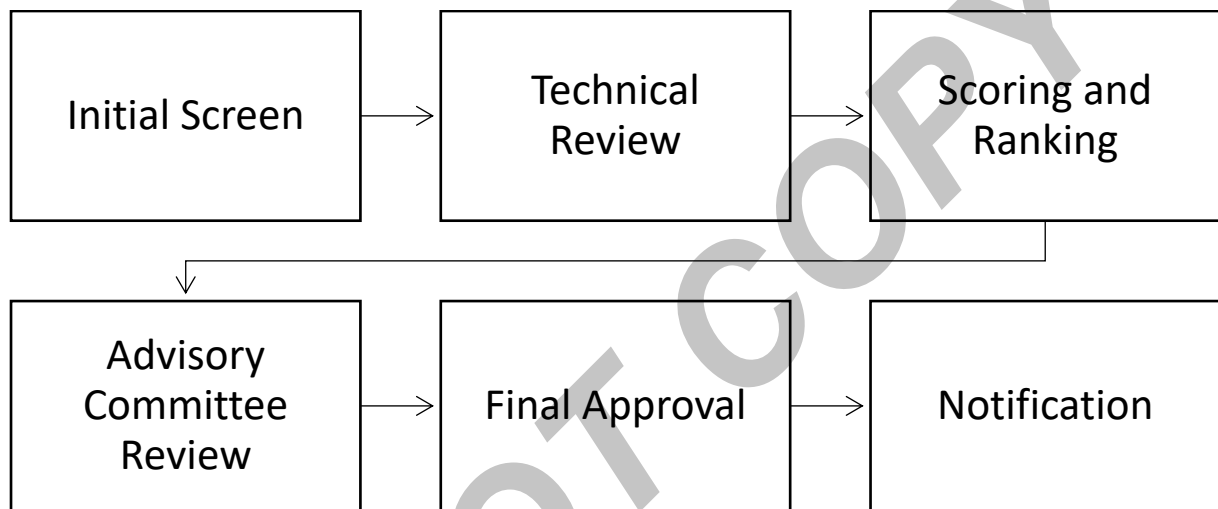
4.0 Funding Approval

The funding approval process for IDOT's Federal Funds Grant Program is designed to be transparent, objective, and aligned with the department's mission and the state's long-range transportation plan. This section outlines the decision-making process, communication protocols, and steps following approval.

4.1 Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process for funding approval involves a comprehensive evaluation of each proposal, considering multiple criteria to ensure that the selected projects align with IDOT's objectives and priorities. The process is structured as follows:

4.1.1 Flowchart

```
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │      │                 │      │                 │
│  Initial Screen │ ───▶ │   Technical     │ ───▶ │  Scoring and    │
│                 │      │    Review       │      │    Ranking      │
│                 │      │                 │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
                                                            │
         ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│   Advisory      │      │                 │      │                 │
│   Committee     │ ───▶ │ Final Approval  │ ───▶ │  Notification   │
│    Review       │      │                 │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
```

Step No.	Phase	Description	Stakeholders Involved
1	Initial Screening	Proposals are reviewed to ensure they meet the basic eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2 of this manual.	███████████
2	Technical Review	Eligible proposals undergo a thorough technical review by a panel of subject matter experts from IDOT and external transportation professionals. The panel evaluates the proposals based on specific criteria.	████████ ████ ████████ ██████
3	Scoring and Ranking	Each proposal is scored based on the evaluation criteria, and a ranking is established.	████████
4	Advisory Committee Review	The top-ranked proposals are presented to IDOT's Advisory Committee on Transportation Research and Innovation, which provides recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation.	████████ █████
5	Final Approval	The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with IDOT's executive leadership, makes the final funding decisions based on the Advisory Committee's recommendations, available budget, and alignment with IDOT's strategic priorities.	██████ ██████████ █████ ████
6	Notification	Universities are notified of the funding decisions, and successful applicants proceed to the next steps.	███████

4.1.2 Notification of Decision
Upon completion of the decision-making process, IDOT will promptly notify all applicants of the funding decisions. Successful applicants will receive a formal award letter outlining the approved project scope, budget, and any specific terms and conditions.

4.2 Steps Following Approval
Once a project has been approved for funding, the subsequent steps are organized to ensure effective management and compliance with IDOT's requirements. This section outlines the procedures from the receipt of award letters through to the project closeout.

1. **Award Notification and Program Management:**
   a. **Award Letters:** ███ ████████████████████████████
   b. **Documentation Submission:** ████████████████████████ ███ ███ █████████████████████

2. **Grant Agreement Execution:**
   a. **Initiation:** ███████████████████████████████████████ ███ █████████
   b. **Duration:** ██████████████████████████████████████ ███ ██████████████████
   c. **Engineering Agreement:** ██████████████████████████ ███
   d. **Invoice Submission:** ████████████████████████████████ ██

3. **Project Initiation:**
   a. **Commencement:** Following the execution of the grant agreement, the recipient university may begin the project activities as outlined in the approved proposal, adhering to the agreed-upon timeline and milestones.

4. **Progress Monitoring:**
   a. **Regular Reports:** █████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████████
   b. **Site Visits:** ████████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████
   c. **Compliance and Adjustments:** ███████████████████████ ████████████████████████████████████

5. **Disbursement of Funds:**
   a. **Payment Schedule:** ████████████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████████
   b. **Performance-Based Payments:** ████████████████████████ ██████████████████████████

6. **Project Closeout:**
   a. **Final Reporting:** █████████████████████████████████ ███ █████████
   b. **Final Review and Closeout:** ████████████████████████ ███ ███ ██████████

4.3 Communication Protocols

IDOT recognizes the importance of clear and timely communication throughout the funding approval process. The following communication protocols will be followed:

1. **Application Submission**: ███████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████
2. **Acknowledgment of Receipt**: ██ ████████████
3. **Status Updates**: ██ ██████████████████████████████
4. **Notification of Decision**: ███████████████████████████████████████ █████████████████████████████████
5. **Feedback and Debriefing**: ███ ████████████
6. **Project Monitoring**: ██ ███████████████████████████████████████ ████████████████████████

Note to Readers:

Thank you for exploring this sample of our work. In order to maintain the brevity of our online showcase, we've provided only a selection from this piece.

Should you be interested in viewing the complete work or wish to delve deeper into our portfolio, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're more than happy to provide extended samples upon request.

Thank you,
The Write Direction Team