

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

## Proposal – MATS MIO Technical Assistance Program

**Submitted to:**

majab@midlandmpo.org  
Midland Area Transportation Study  
220 W. Ellsworth St., Ste. 326  
Midland MI 48640

**Proposer:**

Josh Schneider  
President and CEO  
Multiply Advisors, LLC dba Guardian Grant Advisors  
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September 29, 2023  
Midland Area Transportation Study  
220 W Ellsworth St. Ste

Dear Maja,

Guardian Grant Advisors, in partnership with AECOM, is honored to submit this proposal in response to the Midland Area Transportation Study's (MATS) Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Michigan Infrastructure Office Technical Assistance Program. Our collaboration unites Guardian Grant Advisors' flexibility and extensive experience in federal grant management with AECOM's deep technical expertise. This partnership creates a comprehensive solution for MATS' diverse needs of developing a competitive grant application for two critical infrastructure projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

- **Project 1: Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Community Charging Program (BIL-11401)**  
Our proposal outlines a thorough approach to develop a federal discretionary grant application for the establishment of 6-12 charging stations within the MATS Metropolitan Planning Area. These strategically located stations will not only serve urban and rural communities but will also align with the federal government's Justice40 initiative. We aim to create a grant application that is fully reflective of the program's NOFO, emphasizing the five focus areas of Safety, Climate Change Resilience and Sustainability, Equity Community Engagement and Justice40, Workforce Development and Job Quality, and Wealth Creation.
- **Project 2: Saginaw Road Bridge over the Tittabawassee River, in Sanford, Michigan (Str. No. FHWA 7022)**  
For the Saginaw Road Bridge, we propose to develop a grant application that could be funded through either the PROTECT Formula Program (BIL-11405) or the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (BIL-11132). Our approach will include a thorough benefit-cost analysis and will emphasize resilience. The application will focus on safe and effective evacuation infrastructure, environmental impact mitigation, and access to critical destinations.

As defined in the RFP, our team is prepared to offer a full spectrum of services to aid and support in communicating and understanding grant opportunities, recommending grant strategies, interacting with state and federal agencies, forming partnerships, and drafting and submitting complete grant applications. Our services are backed by in-depth familiarity, knowledge, and expertise in transportation, environment, and community and economic development issues, with a proven track record in procuring grant funding. We are committed to adhering to the rigorous standards set forth by MDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO, and are fully equipped to meet the specified deliverables and deadlines.

Guardian Grant Advisors takes pride in managing the intricate details surrounding funding, allowing our clients to focus on the vital work of rebuilding their communities. With a track record of managing and administering over \$1,000,000,000 in federal grants, we possess the expertise required for flawless compliance and ensuring full reimbursement. Similarly, AECOM brings to the table a wealth of technical acumen and a history of delivering complex infrastructure projects successfully. Their engineering capability complements our grant management experience, providing a holistic approach to both the application and

implementation phases of the projects. We are confident that our combined strengths will offer unparalleled value to MATS and the residents of the Midland Area. We await the opportunity to collaborate with you. We understand the critical timelines associated with these projects and stand ready to initiate work immediately upon selection. This proposal, along with any cost projections, will remain valid for 91 calendar days following the submission deadline.

Sincerely,



Josh Schneider  
President and CEO  
Phone: 585-727-1199  
Email: [Josh@GuardianGrantAdvisors.com](mailto:Josh@GuardianGrantAdvisors.com)

## SECTION VI: RFP SUBMISSION

Direct Questions To: Maja Bolanowska, Director  
Midland Area Transportation Study  
[majab@midlandmpo.org](mailto:majab@midlandmpo.org)  
Submit questions by September 22, 2023  
“Federal Discretionary Grant Technical Assistance” must be in the subject line of the e-mail

Date Issued: August 18, 2023

Proposals Due: September 29, 2023 at 2:00 pm

Proposer Name: Josh Schneider

Proposal Price: \$144,360.00

\*Attach items as described in Section III of the RFP documents, including but not limited to, work plan, names, title, hourly rates, overhead factors, and any other details, including hours of effort for each member by task, and sub-task.

Submit To: Midland Area Transportation Study  
220 W Ellsworth St. Ste. 326  
Midland MI 48640  
Email with subject line “**Proposal – MATS MIO Technical Assistance Program**”  
To [majab@midlandmpo.org](mailto:majab@midlandmpo.org)

### PROPOSER READ AND COMPLETE

The undersigned certifies that he/she offers to furnish services in strict accordance with all requirements set forth in this proposal.

I hereby state that all of the information I have provided is true, accurate, and complete. I hereby state that I have the authority to submit this proposal, which will become a binding contract, if accepted by the Midland Area Transportation Study. I hereby agree to abide by all relevant ordinances, rules and regulations, including the suspension process for poor performance arising out of this contract, if awarded.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

9/28/2023

Date

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or Federal ID#:  
(Precede with “S” if Social Security #)

XLJAZX47YUZZ

## 1. Proposed Work Plan

### a. Executive Summary:

Guardian Grant Advisors is pleased to submit two competitive federal discretionary grant applications that align with the objectives and criteria of the respective funding programs. Leveraging our extensive experience in FEMA Public Assistance, grant management, and stakeholder engagement, we offer a unique blend of personalized service backed by the engineering, grant, and economic expertise of a large, reputable infrastructure firm like AECOM.

#### **Project 1: Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Community Charging Program (BL-11401)**

The first project aims to develop a network of 6-12 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations within the Midland Area Transportation Study (MATS) Metropolitan Planning Area. These strategically located stations will serve both urban and rural communities, fulfilling federal initiatives such as the Justice40. The project aligns with the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program's focus on making modern and sustainable infrastructure accessible to all drivers in publicly accessible locations, particularly in underserved and disadvantaged communities. We will conduct a thorough analysis to determine the most suitable discretionary grant program between Community Charging and Fueling Grants and Alternative Fuel Corridor Grants, both under the CFI Program.

#### **Project 2: Saginaw Road Bridge Over the Tittabawassee River (Str. No. FHWA 7022)**

The second project focuses on the Saginaw Road Bridge, with work ranging from complete bridge replacement to substructure modifications and repairs. The project is particularly crucial in light of the 2020 Midland County flood event. We will evaluate the applicability of various discretionary programs, including the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program. Both programs emphasize resilience, safety, and economic growth, aligning well with the project's objectives to ensure safe and effective evacuation infrastructure and mitigate environmental impacts.

While both projects share similarities in approach, they each present unique challenges and opportunities that warrant distinct project plans. Our methodology will be fully reflective of the chosen program's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and will include a comprehensive benefit-cost analysis. We are committed to delivering projects that not only meet but exceed the federal requirements, thereby maximizing the likelihood of grant approval.

This executive summary serves as an introduction to our detailed work plan, which will further elaborate on our strategic approach to these two pivotal infrastructure projects.

- b. To develop a federal discretionary grant application to fund the planning and implementation of a network of (approximately 6-12) charging stations located within the Midland Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Area.

#### TASK 1: ESTABLISH PROJECT TEAM AND DUTIES

1. **Coordinate with MATS Project Manager and MIO to finalize Scope of Work:** The first step is a collaborative effort with the MATS Project Manager and the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO) to finalize the Scope of Work. This foundational step ensures that all parties are aligned in their objectives and expectations. It sets the stage for a cohesive and well-executed project. The finalized Scope of Work will serve as the blueprint for all subsequent activities.
2. **Work with MATS Project Manager to identify full list of stakeholders and potential partners:** Identifying stakeholders is a critical early task that goes beyond merely listing names. We plan to work closely with the MATS Project Manager to identify all entities and individuals who can contribute to the project's success. This comprehensive list will include government organizations, community organizations, and other potential partners. The aim is to create a robust network that can offer diverse forms of support and resources.
3. **Engage key stakeholders to build relationships and leverage resources:** Once stakeholders are identified, active engagement begins. This involves initiating dialogues, building relationships, and identifying ways to leverage resources for mutual benefit. It's not just about information sharing; it's about creating a collaborative environment that enriches the project. This engagement will be ongoing throughout the project lifecycle.
4. **Project kick-off meeting (in-person):** The in-person kick-off meeting serves as the official launch of the project. It's an opportunity for all key stakeholders to meet, share insights, and align on project objectives. During this meeting, we plan to outline the project's goals, timelines, and key milestones. It serves as a forum for clarifying any ambiguities and ensuring that everyone starts on the same page.
5. **Define roles and responsibilities of project participants:** Clarity in roles and responsibilities is crucial for smooth project execution. Post the kick-off meeting, we plan to distribute a detailed roles and responsibilities matrix. This document will serve as the operational guide for all project participants, ensuring accountability and clarity in execution.
6. **Develop project timeline with deliverables and deadlines:** A well-defined timeline is essential for tracking progress and ensuring timely completion. We plan to develop a comprehensive timeline that outlines all key deliverables and their corresponding deadlines. This timeline will be shared with all stakeholders and will be updated regularly to reflect any changes or shifts in strategy.
7. **Ongoing weekly meetings (virtual):** To ensure consistent progress and address any emerging issues, we plan to conduct ongoing weekly virtual meetings. These meetings will serve as regular checkpoints to assess the status of deliverables,

discuss any challenges, and make necessary adjustments. They provide a structured platform for real-time feedback and course corrections.

## TASK 2: GRANT IDENTIFICATION / PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 1. Review equity documents (incl. preliminary engineering designs and guidance, traffic studies, environmental studies, cost estimates):** The first step in grant identification is a thorough review of all relevant equity documents. This includes preliminary engineering designs, traffic studies, environmental assessments, and cost estimates. This review will provide us with a comprehensive understanding of the project's technical specifications and social impact. It's a critical step for identifying the most suitable grants and for crafting a compelling application.
- 2. Review applicable MDOT, FHWA and AASHTO guidelines, policies and standards:** Compliance with all relevant guidelines and standards is non-negotiable. We plan to conduct a meticulous review of all guidelines, policies, and standards set forth by MDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO. This ensures that our project is not only compliant but also aligned with industry best practices. It's an essential step for risk mitigation and for enhancing the project's credibility.
- 3. Review community documents (local and regional plans, equity reports, community development objectives):** Understanding the broader community context is crucial for any successful project. We plan to review all relevant community documents, including hazard mitigation plans, equity reports, and community development objectives. This review will help us align our project with existing community needs and aspirations, making it more likely to receive both public and grant support.
- 4. Engage stakeholders to build support (local, regional, MDOT, MIO, state-level):** Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process. In this phase, we plan to focus on building broader support for the project. This involves consultations and collaborations with stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels. By securing this wide-ranging support, we enhance the project's chances of receiving grant funding.
- 5. Identify which community program focus-areas the project will address:** After engaging with stakeholders and reviewing community documents, we plan to identify the specific community program focus-areas that our project will address. This is not a mere categorization exercise; it's about ensuring that our project resonates with the community's most pressing needs and aspirations. By aligning with existing focus-areas, we strengthen our case for grant funding and community support.
- 6. Identify other potential sources of grant funding:** While our primary focus is on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant program, it's prudent to explore other funding avenues. We plan to conduct a comprehensive search for alternative grant opportunities that align with our project objectives. This multi-pronged approach not only serves as a backup but also opens the door for potential supplementary funding.
- 7. Select one or more federal infrastructure grant opportunities:** Based on our thorough research and stakeholder consultations, we plan to select the most

promising federal infrastructure grant opportunities for application. This decision will be made in collaboration with MATS and MIO, ensuring that it aligns with broader organizational and community objectives. It's a pivotal moment that sets the direction for the grant writing phase.

- 8. Obtain MATS and MIO approval on grant application selection:** Before proceeding with the grant writing phase, we plan to seek formal approval from MATS and MIO on the selected grant opportunities. This step ensures that all key stakeholders are in agreement and committed to the chosen path. It's the final go-ahead before we dive into the intricate task of grant writing.

### TASK 3: GRANT WRITING / ADMINISTRATION

- 1. Select qualified staff to complete grant application process:** The quality of our grant application hinges on the expertise of the team behind it. We plan to carefully select a team of qualified staff with proven experience in grant writing, project management, and subject matter expertise. This team will be the backbone of our grant application process, ensuring that we submit a compelling, compliant, and competitive application.
- 2. Review grant application guidelines with staff to develop and oversee an application strategy to ensure timely submittal:** Once the team is assembled, we plan to conduct a detailed review of the grant application guidelines. This is more than a review; it's a strategy session aimed at developing a comprehensive approach for crafting a winning application. A well-defined strategy ensures that all team members are aligned, and that the application is submitted in a timely manner.
- 3. Engage all stakeholders involved in the process:** Stakeholder engagement doesn't end with the planning phase; it's a continuous process that extends into the grant writing phase. We plan to keep all stakeholders informed and involved, ensuring that the application reflects a broad consensus and has the backing of key community members and organizations.
- 4. Develop and distribute grant-writing schedule:** Time management is crucial in the grant writing phase. We plan to develop a granular grant-writing schedule that outlines key milestones and deadlines. This schedule will be distributed to all team members and stakeholders, serving as the tactical plan that keeps everyone on track.
- 5. Develop grant narrative and supporting documents outlined in NOFO:** Crafting a compelling grant narrative is both an art and a science. We plan to develop a narrative that not only meets the NOFO guidelines but also tells a compelling story about the project's merits and community benefits. Supporting documents will be meticulously prepared to substantiate the narrative, providing a comprehensive and convincing application package.
- 6. Request and secure letters of support from partner agencies and elected officials:** Letters of support add credibility and weight to our grant application. We plan to reach out to partner agencies and elected officials to secure these endorsements. These letters will be strategically incorporated into the application to bolster our case for funding.

7. **Compile construction cost estimate and other project costs outlined in NOFO:** A detailed financial plan is a critical component of any grant application. We plan to compile a comprehensive construction cost estimate, along with other project costs as outlined in the NOFO. This financial blueprint will be rigorously reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness.
8. **Compile benefits (market and non-market) previously identified and develop data strategy:** Beyond costs, we plan to also compile a detailed list of project benefits, both market and non-market. This involves developing a data strategy to quantify these benefits, providing a balanced view of the project's financial feasibility and community impact.
9. **Locate, identify, research, and collect publicly available data:** Data is the backbone of a compelling grant application. We plan to locate and collect all relevant publicly available data to support our case. This involves meticulous research and may include traffic studies, environmental reports, and community surveys. Each data point will be carefully vetted for accuracy and relevance to the project.
10. **Engage stakeholders for private data sources:** Sometimes the most valuable data isn't publicly available. We plan to engage with stakeholders to access private data sources that could strengthen our application. This could include proprietary research, internal reports, or specialized data sets. By combining public and private data, we aim to present a comprehensive and compelling case for funding.
11. **Analyze data and present findings to MATS:** Data collection is only the first step; what follows is a rigorous analysis. We plan to analyze the collected data to derive actionable insights and present these findings to MATS. This step ensures that our grant application is not only data-driven but also aligned with MATS' objectives and expectations.
12. **Engage stakeholders for feedback:** Before finalizing our grant narrative, we plan to engage stakeholders for feedback on our data findings and preliminary narrative. This iterative process ensures that the application is not only technically sound but also enjoys broad-based support. It's an additional layer of validation that enhances the application's credibility.
13. **Incorporate findings into grant project narrative:** Based on the data analysis and stakeholder feedback, we plan to refine our grant project narrative. This is a critical phase where we integrate all our research, analysis, and stakeholder insights into a compelling narrative that aligns with the NOFO guidelines.
14. **Incorporate findings into additional project narrative:** Beyond the main grant narrative, we may have additional narratives or annexes to complete. We plan to incorporate our findings into these sections, ensuring a consistent and comprehensive application package.
15. **Prepare budget report and budget justifications outlined in NOFO:** A well-prepared budget is often the linchpin of a successful grant application. We plan to prepare a detailed budget report along with justifications as outlined in the NOFO. This will include a line-item breakdown and explanations for each cost, providing a transparent and credible financial plan.
16. **Compile documentation and full application:** With all elements prepared, the next step is to compile the full application package. This includes the grant

narrative, supporting documents, budget report, and any additional required materials. Each document will be carefully reviewed to ensure it meets all NOFO and organizational guidelines.

- 17. Perform internal NOFO compliance audit:** Before submission, we plan to perform an internal audit to ensure full compliance with NOFO guidelines. This serves as a final quality check, ensuring that the application meets all regulatory requirements and stands the best chance of success.
- 18. Submit draft grant application proposal to MATS and key stakeholders for review:** A draft of the complete grant application will be submitted to MATS and key stakeholders for review. This collaborative review process allows for any final adjustments and refinements, ensuring that the application is optimized for success.
- 19. Incorporate comments and edits:** Based on the feedback received, we plan to make any necessary revisions to the grant application. This could include edits to the narrative, adjustments to the budget, or the addition of new supporting documents. It's the final polishing phase before submission.
- 20. Perform final internal quality review:** After incorporating all comments and edits, we plan to perform a final internal quality review. This ensures that the application meets our high standards of excellence and is ready for submission.
- 21. Work with MATS staff to submit final grant application:** Once the application is finalized, we plan to submit the final electronic copies of the grant applications to MATS staff. In addition, we will collaborate with MATS staff for the final submission, ensuring that it is successfully uploaded to Grants.gov
- 22. Track application status in Grants.gov and prepare RFI responses:** Post-submission, we plan to actively track the application's status through Grants.gov. Should any Requests for Information (RFIs) arise, we plan to promptly prepare and submit the necessary responses. This ensures that the application remains active and competitive throughout the review process.
- 23. Develop training materials and provide logistical support to the local agency upon grant award:** Upon successful grant award, our work doesn't end. We plan to develop training materials and provide logistical support to ensure a smooth transition from planning to implementation. This ensures that the project hits the ground running, setting the stage for successful execution and community impact.

This comprehensive Proposed Work Plan is designed to guide us through each phase of the project, ensuring that we meet all objectives within the estimated 6-month timeframe. It's a roadmap for success, built on meticulous planning, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to excellence.

- c. To develop a federal discretionary grant application to fund the work for the Saginaw Road Bridge over the Tittabawassee River

#### TASK 1: ESTABLISH PROJECT TEAM AND DUTIES

1. **Coordinate with MATS Project Manager and MIO to finalize Scope of Work:** The first step in our journey is to align our vision with the MATS Project Manager and the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO). This isn't just a procedural step; it's the cornerstone upon which the entire project will be built. We plan to ensure that the finalized Scope of Work aligns seamlessly with the objectives of both the PROTECT and Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs.
2. **Identify Full List of Stakeholders and Potential Partners:** Identifying stakeholders goes beyond listing names on a sheet; it's about recognizing the entities that bring value to the project. We plan to meticulously identify stakeholders who are eligible under both grant programs, such as state and local governments and regional transportation planning organizations.
3. **Engage Key Stakeholders to Build Relationships and Leverage Resources:** Stakeholder engagement is not a one-off task but a continuous process. We plan to initiate dialogues, build relationships, and explore avenues for resource sharing, ensuring that the project benefits from diverse perspectives and resources.
4. **Project Kick-off Meeting (In-person):** This in-person meeting serves as the official launch pad for the project. It's not just a formality but a forum for open dialogue where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, ensuring that everyone is aligned and committed to the project's success.
5. **Define Roles and Responsibilities of Project Participants:** Clearly defined roles are crucial for streamlined execution. We plan to delineate responsibilities, ensuring that each team member knows their specific duties, thereby enhancing efficiency and accountability.
6. **Develop Project Timeline with Deliverables and Deadlines:** A well-defined timeline is our roadmap to success. We plan to develop a comprehensive timeline that aligns with the six-month preparation period stipulated by both grant programs, ensuring that each milestone is clearly marked.
7. **Ongoing Weekly Meetings (Virtual):** These structured sessions are designed to assess progress, address challenges, and recalibrate strategies, ensuring that the project stays on course.

#### TASK 2: GRANT IDENTIFICATION / PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. **Review Design Documents:** We plan to conduct an exhaustive review of all relevant design documents. This is a critical step to ensure that the project aligns with the PROTECT program's focus on resilience and the Rural Surface Transportation program's emphasis on safety and regional economic growth.
2. **Review Applicable MDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO Guidelines:** Compliance is non-negotiable, but we aim for more. We plan to delve into the guidelines

and policies set forth by MDOT, FHWA, and AASHTO to ensure our application is not just compliant but stands out for its quality and foresight.

3. **Review Community Documents:** Community alignment is a priority. We plan to scrutinize local and regional hazard mitigation plans, equity reports, and community development objectives to ensure our project resonates with the specific needs and aspirations of the community.
4. **Engage Stakeholders to Build Support:** Building a broad base of support is essential for the project's success. We plan to engage with stakeholders at multiple levels—local, regional, and state—to garner support, thereby adding a layer of credibility and community alignment to our application.
5. **Identify Other Potential Sources of Grant Funding:** While the focus is on the PROTECT and Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs, we plan to also explore other grant opportunities that align with the project's objectives, ensuring that we have a diversified funding strategy.
6. **Select One or More Federal Infrastructure Grant Opportunities:** Based on our comprehensive review and stakeholder engagement, we plan to identify the most suitable federal infrastructure grant opportunities. This is a critical step that sets the stage for the subsequent grant application process.
7. **Obtain MATS and MIO Approval on Grant Application Selection:** Before proceeding, we plan to seek formal approval from MATS and MIO, ensuring that the selected grant opportunities align with their objectives and expectations.

### TASK 3: GRANT WRITING / ADMINISTRATION

1. **Select Qualified Staff to Complete Grant Application Process:** The selection of staff for grant writing is a critical factor in the application's success. We plan to choose individuals who not only have proven expertise in grant writing but also have a deep understanding of the specific requirements of the PROTECT and Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs.
2. **Review Grant Application Guidelines with Staff:** Once the team is assembled, we plan to conduct a thorough review of the grant application guidelines. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and understands the nuances and expectations of the application process.
3. **Engage All Stakeholders Involved in the Process:** Stakeholder engagement continues to be a cornerstone of our approach. We plan to maintain open lines of communication with all stakeholders, ensuring that their insights and feedback are incorporated into the application.
4. **Develop and Distribute Grant-Writing Schedule:** Time management is crucial for the successful completion of the grant application. We plan to develop a detailed grant-writing schedule, ensuring that each component of the application is given the time and attention it deserves.
5. **Develop Grant Narrative and Supporting Documents:** The narrative is the soul of the grant application. We plan to craft a compelling narrative that not only meets but exceeds the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for both programs.

6. **Request and Secure Letters of Support:** Letters of support add credibility to our application. We plan to reach out to partner agencies and elected officials to secure these letters, thereby reinforcing the project's community alignment and broad base of support.
7. **Compile Construction Cost Estimate and Other Project Costs:** Financial planning is a key component of the grant application. We plan to meticulously prepare construction cost estimates and other project costs, ensuring that they align with the specific financial criteria of the PROTECT and Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs.
8. **Compile Benefits and Develop Data Strategy:** A well-defined data strategy is crucial for a compelling Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). We plan to compile both market and non-market benefits and develop a data strategy that aligns with the specific requirements of both grant programs.
9. **Locate, Identify, Research, and Collect Publicly Available Data:** Data collection is a rigorous process. We plan to identify and collect all publicly available data that can strengthen our application, ensuring that it meets the stringent data requirements of both grant programs.
10. **Engage Stakeholders to Obtain Private Data Sources:** Sometimes, the most valuable data isn't publicly available. We plan to engage stakeholders to obtain private data sources, adding another layer of depth and credibility to our application.
11. **Analyze Data and Present Findings to MATS:** Data analysis is more than number-crunching; it's about drawing meaningful insights that can enhance the project. We plan to analyze the collected data and present our findings to MATS, ensuring that they are incorporated into the final application.
12. **Engage Stakeholders for Review and Feedback:** Before finalizing the application, we plan to engage stakeholders for a review and feedback session. This ensures that the application is not only technically sound but also resonates with the community it aims to serve.
13. **Incorporate Comments and Finalize BCA:** Based on the feedback received, we plan to make the necessary adjustments and finalize the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA), ensuring that it meets the specific criteria of both grant programs.
14. **Generate BCA Report:** The finalized BCA will be compiled into a comprehensive report, ready for submission along with the grant application.
15. **Incorporate Data into Grant Narrative, Including Visualizations:** Data alone is not enough; it needs to be effectively communicated. We plan to incorporate the data and findings into the grant narrative, enhancing its impact through visualizations.
16. **Prepare Budget Report and Budget Justifications:** A well-prepared budget is crucial for the application's success. We plan to prepare a detailed budget report along with justifications, ensuring that it aligns with the financial criteria of both grant programs.
17. **Compile Documentation and Full Application:** Once all components are ready, we plan to compile them into a full application, ready for submission.

18. **Perform Internal NOFO Compliance Audit:** Compliance is non-negotiable. We plan to conduct an internal audit to ensure that the application meets all the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for both programs.
19. **Submit Draft Grant Application Proposal to MATS and Key Stakeholders for Review:** Before the final submission, we plan to share a draft with MATS and key stakeholders for review, ensuring that it meets their expectations, and any final adjustments can be made.
20. **Incorporate Comments and Edits:** Based on the feedback received, we plan to make the necessary adjustments, ensuring that the final application is both compelling and competitive.
21. **Perform Final Internal Quality Review:** Quality is our hallmark. We plan to conduct a final internal review to ensure that the application meets our stringent quality standards.
22. **Work with MATS Staff to Submit Final Grant Application:** Once the application is finalized, we plan to submit the final electronic copies of the grant applications to MATS staff. In addition, we will collaborate with MATS staff for the final submission, ensuring that it is successfully uploaded to Grants.gov.
23. **Track Application Status in Grants.gov and Prepare RFI Responses:** Post-submission, we plan to track the application's status and prepare responses to any Requests for Information (RFI), ensuring that the application process is seen through to its conclusion.
24. **Develop Training Materials and Provide Logistical Support to the Local Agency Upon Grant Award:** Upon successful grant award, we plan to develop training materials and provide logistical support to ensure a smooth transition from planning to implementation. This ensures that the project hits the ground running, setting the stage for successful execution and community impact.

In summary, our proposed work plan is meticulously designed to align with the specific requirements and objectives of the PROTECT and Rural Surface Transportation Grant Programs. We bring not just technical expertise but a deep understanding of these programs, ensuring that our application will be both compelling and competitive.

**Information Needed from MATS or Local Agency Staff:**

We anticipate requiring specific data and documents from MATS or local agency staff, including previous engineering studies and community development plans. We will also need to work with MATS staff to identify the full list of stakeholders that can provide input and source knowledge from the region. We estimate a time commitment of approximately 60 person-hours from MATS over the duration of the project. The estimated time required from local agency staff over the duration of the project is dependent on the various reports, studies and data made available to the team.

**Timeline:**

Our proposed timeline for the execution of the work under this RFP is as follows:

Project 1:

Task 1: 4 Weeks (and ongoing)

Task 2: 5 Weeks (and ongoing)

Task 3: 16 Weeks (to application submission)

Total Grant Application Timeline: 24 Weeks.

Project 2:

Task 1: 4 Weeks (and ongoing)

Task 2: 5 Weeks (and ongoing)

Task 3: 16 Weeks (to application submission)

Total Grant Application Timeline: 24 Weeks

Refer to the attached ***Fee Proposal.xlsx*** file, which includes the full timeline and work breakdown structure for this proposal.

## 2. Past Involvement with Federal grant applications

Team **Guardian/AECOM** combines the high-touch, flexible service that one expects from working with a small business with the depth of technical excellence and reach back capabilities that leading infrastructure firm commands.

### GGA

Guardian Grant Advisors has written application narratives, advised on strategy and submitted federal grant applications for:

- **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, FEMA Public Assistance,** Guardian Grant Advisors submitted project applications for over twenty (20) FEMA Public Assistance programs for MDHHS. Three of these projects included an Equity Reporting component, which detailed the State's adherence to federal equity guidelines. In order to gain Federal approval, we were required to detail the needs of the project, the eligibility of the project and document the timelines, expected outcomes and spend plans for current and ongoing status.

- **Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget, FEMA Public Assistance**

Guardian Grant Advisors has submitted federal grant applications for over twenty (20) FEMA Public Assistance programs for Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). In addition, Guardian Grant Advisors has submitted six (6) FEMA Public Assistance project applications for DTMB. All of these final application packages required detailed narrative of timelines,

expected outcomes and spend plans to help ensure ongoing project success. In addition, we had to work internally to establish approval and documentation capture processes to ensure our ability to manage and report on risk throughout the process.

- **City of South Pasadena, Florida, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP),** Guardian Grant Advisors also worked with the City of South Pasadena, Florida to submit a federal discretionary grant application for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

**Constantine Deir**, a key personnel for GGA, is a Professional Engineer specializing in Power, and has spent 8 years designing and leading electrical and communication designs in a previous role. This includes some minor experience reviewing EV Charging Station Designs.

## AECOM

GGA is leveraging AECOM's vast experience in infrastructure projects. AECOM brings technical staff that can review and assess the feasibility and efficacy of engineering specifications and plans across a multitude of sectors. As the world's premier infrastructure consulting firm with more than 50,000 employees, AECOM has the reach back capability and can utilize technical staff and expertise in all disciplines who have experience in reviewing specifications and plans for all types for work including transportation, bridges, buildings, water conveyance and water facilities.

**AECOM** has also written application narratives, advised on strategy and completed BCAs for successful projects across the country using a variety of funding sources including:

- **Detroit New Center Intermodal Facility, 2021 RAISE Application, Detroit, MI.** Wrote narrative and led BCA analysis. Project selected for funding.
- **Crowley Wind Services, Salem Wind Terminal, City of Salem, MA.** Wrote application narrative for successful PIDG application. Also wrote application for second phase, under review.
- **Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority.** Newport Pell Bridge Cable and Dehumidification Project, Newport, RI. Wrote narrative, advised on strategy and BCA. Project selected for funding.
- **LaPorte Road Revitalization, 2022 RAISE Application, Waterloo, IA.** Wrote narrative, advised on strategy and completed BCA. Project selected for funding.
- **Benchmark River and Rail Terminal: Highway/Rail Grade Crossing Safety Improvements CRISI Application, Cincinnati, OH.** Wrote narrative and provided BCA analysis. Project selected for funding.

- **IMPACT South Cook – Improving Metra, Pace and CTA Together, South Cook, FTA AIM Grant, Chicago, IL.** Provided Strategy and technical support. Grant selected for funding.
- **Street Transportation Department 35th Avenue Corridor Project, USDOT BUILD Grant, City of Phoenix, AZ.** Technical advisor. Grant selected for funding.
- **Sparrows Point Bulk Expansion Rail Modernization and Berth Rehabilitation Mid-Atlantic Multi-Modal Transportation Hub PIDG Grant,** Tradepoint Atlantic, Baltimore, MD Wrote narrative and provided BCA analysis. Project selected for funding.
- **I-95 Resiliency and Innovative Technology Improvements Project, 2019 BUILD Application, Raleigh, NC.** Completed narrative and BCA. Project selected.
- **Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Pima Road Grant Support for the 2019 Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Program, Phoenix, AZ:** Wrote the application narrative and economic assessment. Grant selected for funding.
- **GREATTER NC BUILD Grant Application, North Carolina Department of Transportation.** Wrote narrative and completed BCA. Project selected for funding.
- **INFRA Grant Application for I-95/U.S. 70 Innovative Technology and Rural Mobility Corridor Improvements, North Carolina Department of Transportation, eastern North Carolina (2017/NA/AECOM)** Wrote narrative and served as technical advisor to BCA team. Project selected for funding.
- **INFRA Grant Application Support for I-80 and I-99 Interstate Connection, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (2017/NA/AECOM)** Technical advisor to BCA team. Project selected for funding.
- **City of Atlanta, Summerhill BRT 2017 TIGER Application, GA.** (2017/NA/AECOM). Economics lead. Grant selected for funding.
- **Baltimore County, Tradepoint Atlantic Port Improvements, 2017 TIGER Application, Baltimore, MD:** (2017/NA/AECOM) Wrote narrative and led BCA analysis. Project selected for funding.
- **2016 TIGER Application for Colorado North I-25 Project, Denver, CO** (2016/NA/AECOM). Technical advisor to BCA team. Project selected for funding.
- **2016 TIGER Application for Town Branch Commons Corridor, Lexington, KY** (2016/NA/AECOM). Wrote application and led economics. Grant selected for funding.

### 3. Professional Qualifications

**Company Name:** Multiply Advisors, LLC dba Guardian Grant Advisors

**Company Address:**

801 West Big Beaver Rd.

Suite 300

Troy, MI 48084

Multiply Advisors, LLC dba Guardian Grant Advisors is a management consulting firm providing federal grant management, grant administration and grant application services to state and local entities. We are well-versed in federal grant applications, having submitted and managed over \$1B in FEMA Public Assistance project applications. We have provided extensive Technical Assistance on the implementation of federal policies.

Our company was started in 2016 (under a different name) when our relationship with the State of Michigan started as a sub-contractor working on the SIGMA software implementation. In 2020 and 2021 we were able to secure our own contracts with MDHHS and DTMB respectively and have continued to pursue a steady growth pattern.

We have a strong bias for amplifying the voice of the customer and leading with empathy, understanding the confusion surrounding compliance, reporting and the grant application process. We aim to make things easy to understand and pride ourselves in the 1-on-1 attention many of our clients need. We have developed training and chat support for entities throughout the State of Michigan through our work over the last few years to tailor our support to the unique needs of the customer.

We have selected to add AECOM to the GGA team for the MIO Technical Assistance Program, as they supplement our culture with deep technical experience and engineering expertise. AECOM had over \$13B in 2022 revenue and thousands of employees (450 of which are based in Michigan).

We have also supplemented our team with a couple of federal grant application experts from Franklin Associates. Brandy Bones is based in Birmingham, Michigan.

The following are the key personnel that will be supporting this project:

1. Constantine Deir (Guardian Grant Advisors)
2. Josh Schneider (Guardian Grant Advisors)

We have included the qualifications for all names included in the Fee Proposal below.

#### **Josh Schneider**

*Project Manager / Management Consultant*

Josh is a highly effective Project Manager with a focus on large-scale grant applications and funding. He has facilitated over \$700 million in FEMA Public Assistance grants for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and an additional \$300 million in PPE Project Grant Funding. He has developed, administered, and managed funding on over 15 projects for MDHHS with the inclusions of: Statewide COVID-19 Dissemination of

Information/Communications Programs, 3 Statewide Testing Projects, the Statewide Mobile Vaccine Project. He was also involved in the state program for Jails and COVID-19 Vaccination. Josh has in-depth experience in stakeholder's engagement throughout Michigan and for the development of NYSAAR. He also has training and Technical assistance expertise under HEI, having developed multiple ERP implementation trainings, job aids and virtual trainings for 15,000 employees.

## **Constantine Deir, PE**

### Project Manager

Constantine is an experienced Project Manager with a strong focus on FEMA Public Assistance grants, having facilitated over \$400 million in applications for the Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB). His role extends to providing technical assistance and leading internal reviews of federal and state policies across FEMA COVID-19 projects. Constantine's expertise includes coordinating all grant aspects of disaster recovery projects, managing funding deadlines, and ensuring accurate documentation and eligibility standards. Constantine also has engineering experience across tolling systems, roadway lighting, communication systems and movable bridges throughout the Greater New York City area. He was also responsible for designing electrical and communications systems for transportation-related infrastructure projects. He has assisted in the development and management of over 15 projects for MDHHS, including Statewide COVID-19 Dissemination of Information/Communications Program, 3 Statewide Testing Projects.

## **Leah Shaffer**

### Management Consultant

Leah is a seasoned Project Manager, she brings a strong track record in project implementation and grant management, including expertise in RFI responses and project coordination. She played a key role in submitting \$700 million in FEMA Public Assistance grant applications for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Her portfolio with MDHHS includes over 15 projects, ranging from statewide COVID-19 information programs to testing and vaccination initiatives that span every county in the state.

## **Nicole Boothman-Shepard**

### Federal Policy and Compliance Senior Advisor

Nicole specializes in Federal Policy and Compliance with a proven track record in disaster recovery and resilience planning. With over seven years as Rhode Island's Vulnerable Populations Coordinator and currently as Vice-Chair of the Transportation Research Board's Resilience Section, she has facilitated \$7 billion in disaster funds and advised on \$720 million flood recovery programs. Nicole has also led research for the Transportation Research Board, concentrating on best practices for federally-funded procurement, contracting, and project delivery in the wake of catastrophic events affecting critical transportation corridors. She has advised CDOT's Incident Commander and CFO on strategic, operational, and tactical delivery of flood recovery programs, focusing on Federal disaster funding, audit and political risk mitigation, data management, and project delivery strategies while evaluating proposed resiliency betterments under FHWA ER. As a Subject Matter Expert, Nicole identified and facilitated the presentation of \$750M in FEMA funded Sandy recovery on the Brooklyn Battery and Queens-Midtown Tunnels as well as MTA bridges.

## **Matt Battin**

### Federal Policy and Compliance Senior Advisor

Matt is an expert in FEMA disaster policy and project formulation. He has worked with state and local governments, as well as Private Non Profits, to substantiate damages, justify replacement, and define codes and standards necessary for restoration of community lifelines, services, and infrastructure. Matt played a key role in AECOM's program targeted to deliver transformational structural change and design to promote long-term resilience for the City of Detroit. He also developed schematic designs and cost-benefit analysis to convert soft side structures to hard side modules improving performance for California. Matt has authored several technical and policy content reports to explain program activities, cost reasonableness and compliance with federal law, regulation and policy as well as building codes and consensus standards.

## **Evan Dyer**

### Federal Policy and Compliance Senior Advisor

Evan is a seasoned professional with a multifaceted background in grant administration, temporary housing, construction management, as well as policy and procedure development. His experience spans both the sub-grantee and grantor levels, providing him with a well-rounded perspective on the intricacies of federal funding. Evan provides oversight, engineering services, and grant management services for federal funding sources for the life of the project. He was a key architect in designing the framework for pre-grant construction activities, construction oversight, milestone inspections, and other program management activities necessary for the elevation, reconstruction, and the Individual Mitigation Measures of homes through ODC Hazard Mitigation program startup. Evan supervised and monitored all construction and closeout activities, including documentation of predetermined construction milestones with photographs and reports, troubleshooting construction items with homeowner, contractor, code enforcement, and client representatives.

## **Toni A. Horst, PhD**

### Project Manager

Tony is a highly accomplished project manager with AECOM, where she has leveraged the Fund Navigator tool to conduct comprehensive reviews of the Port of New Orleans's existing and planned projects. Her work focuses on the capital needs and suitability for accessing specific Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding programs. Tony has been instrumental in crafting narratives, advising on strategy, and conducting Benefit-Cost Analyses (BCA) for a diverse range of projects. These include the Newport Pell Bridge Cable and Dehumidification Project in Rhode Island, the Benchmark River and Rail Terminal's Highway/Rail Grade Crossing Safety Improvements CRISI Application, and multiple grant applications for the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Additionally, she has led the economics for several funding-selected grants, such as the 2014 Planning TIGER Application for Long Bridge EIS in Virginia and Washington, DC, and the Economic Analysis for the TIGER II Funding Application for the Peachtree Streetcar Project in Atlanta, Georgia. Tony's multifaceted expertise in project management, funding strategy, and economic analysis positions her as a valuable asset in any complex infrastructure initiative.

## Jason P. Weiss

### Subject Matter Expert

Jason Weiss is a seasoned researcher and consultant with over 25 years of experience spanning economics, planning, engineering, and community development. He has demonstrated his expertise in coordinating benefit-cost analyses, notably for Kane County's sub-application for a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant aimed at replacing an undersized culvert to mitigate road damage and transportation impacts. Jason also conducted an in-depth study on the financial and community resilience benefits of adopting specific hazard provisions in the International Building Code and International Residential Code, along with their companion I-Codes. This study focused on reducing damage from natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. The overarching aim of his research is to provide actionable insights for community officials contemplating the adoption of these I-Codes, thereby facilitating proactive risk-reduction planning and informed decision-making.

## Carey B. Barr, PE

### Federal Policy and Compliance Technical Specialist 2

Carey Barr is an experienced consulting manager with a 12-year track record, leveraging her expertise in civil engineering and transportation planning to provide consultative services in economic and financial analysis as well as transportation project development. Her proficiency in grant writing and benefit-cost analysis (BCA) has been instrumental in securing over \$650 million in awards for her clients. Notably, Carey spearheaded the BCA for the PARTNERS project in North Carolina, aimed at enhancing a roadway corridor and incorporating electric vehicle charging stations, securing a \$25 million grant. She also coordinated the BCA for the FLOW BETTER RAISE grant application, a program designed to reconstruct or replace 28 bridges across six rural counties, which won a \$10.7 million RAISE grant. Additionally, Carey provided quality assurance and quality control support for a bus garage electrification project that successfully secured a \$15 million grant for the transition to a fully electric fleet.

## Lincoln James

### Senior Consulting Manager

Lincoln is a Senior Consulting Manager specializing in Grant Support Services for Transportation, bringing with him two decades of international experience. He has been the driving force behind multiple successful grant projects, including a turnkey application for the New Mexico Department of Transportation under the 2022 INFRA grant program. This project, which secured \$45 million in funding, involved the development of a six-mile greenfield highway facility connecting the Santa Teresa Port with Interstate 10. Another significant achievement was the US64 ITHMAS Highway Reconstruction Grant application, which garnered \$25 million for bridge replacement and shoulder widening. Lincoln's portfolio also includes other high-impact projects such as the US 76 Connector Project, awarded approximately \$54 million under the INFRA grant program, and the Passing in the Plains Project, for which he and his team conducted the Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) and secured around \$9 million in INFRA funding. His extensive experience in grant writing, project coordination, and financial analysis makes him a key asset in any transportation-related grants.

## Brandy Bones, MBA, PMP, AICP

### Vice President

Brandy with her 18 years of experience working throughout the United States was able to lead a team of 93 staff that managed hundreds of millions of dollars of federal grant funding including in Florida, Texas, California, Oregon, and North Carolina. Ms. Bones has worked with over two dozen government agencies representing over \$15 billion in funding to help them stand up infrastructure, affordable housing, economic development, and disaster recovery services to local communities and nonprofits. She coordinated with State agencies in charge of IJJA funding to ensure that localities are utilizing best practices and guidance when applying for IJJA funding administered at the state level additionally she provided grant writing services to local governments to successfully apply for IJJA funding.

## Portia Johnson, JD

### Grant Management Practice Lead

Portia Johnson is a licensed attorney with over seven years' experience managing federal funding. Ms. Johnson has utilized her legal expertise by contributing an in-house legal perspective on the design and implementation of multiple housing programs, focusing on compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. She oversees community outreach and technical assistance to rural and economically distressed communities in Louisiana needing additional capacity to apply for and manage grant opportunities funded by IJJA she also developed TA Grant Guide for localities that outline how to apply for a variety of IJJA funding including federal funding from DOT, EPA, DOE, NOAA, FEMA and HUD.

## 4. Fee Proposal

The following is our price proposal for the work included in this RFP:

Project	Hours	Total Cost
<b>Project 1:</b> Develop a federal discretionary grant application to fund the planning and implementation of a network of (approximately 6-12) charging stations located within the Midland Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Area.	509	\$71,025.00
<b>Project 2:</b> Develop a federal discretionary grant application to fund the work for the Saginaw Road Bridge over the Tittabawassee River, located in Sanford, Michigan, Str. No. FHWA 7022.	495	\$73,335.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>\$144,360.00</b>

Guardian Grant Advisors took exception to the request to provide direct and indirect rates. The Project Rates included in this proposal are based upon the Not-to-Exceed rates set during the Pre-Qualification. We have included a chart in the "Rates" tab of the attached **Fee Proposal.xlsx** file which includes both our Project Rates and the Not-to-Exceed rates included in the Pre-Qualification.

In addition, Guardian Grant Advisors made the following assumptions for each project when developing the cost proposal.

Project 1:

1. Fee proposal assumes that preliminary engineering designs and cost estimates are available for review. Engineering cost estimates are not included in this scope and fee.
2. Fee proposal assumes the availability of traffic studies, traffic data, regional traffic models, environmental impact studies, equity reports and any other reports required to assess community program focus-areas and assess grant application feasibility.
3. The gathering of additional data (not available from public or private data sources) via traffic studies or other methods are not included in this scope.
4. This scope and fee assumes flexibility between tasks and people. GGA intends to execute with the key personnel identified, however, other roles may not be filled by the named individual based upon the workload at the time of project execution.
5. All meetings, except for the project kick-off meeting, will be virtual. Travel expenses for all other meetings are not included in this fee.

Project 2:

1. Fee proposal assumes that preliminary engineering designs and cost estimates are available for the two proposed bridge alternatives. Engineering cost estimates are not included in this scope and fee.
2. Fee proposal assumes the availability of traffic studies, traffic data, regional traffic models, environmental impact studies, equity reports and any other reports required to analyze grant application feasibility.
3. Assumes that a static BCA sensitivity analysis will be performed. A dynamic BCA sensitivity analysis is not included.
4. The gathering of additional data (not available from public or private data sources) via traffic studies or other methods are not included in this scope.
5. This scope and fee assumes flexibility between tasks and people. GGA intends to execute with the key personnel identified, however, other roles may not be filled by the named individual based upon the workload at the time of project execution.
6. All meetings, except for the project kick-off meeting, will be virtual. Travel expenses for all other meetings are not included in this fee.

## 5. Authorized Negotiator

Name: Joshua Schneider  
Phone number: 585-727-1199  
E-mail address: [josh@guardiangrantadvisors.com](mailto:josh@guardiangrantadvisors.com)

Name: Constantine Deir  
Phone number: 585-957-5116  
E-mail address: [Constantine@guardiangrantadvisors.com](mailto:Constantine@guardiangrantadvisors.com)

## 6. Attachments

1. Request+for+Proposals+Addendum+#1.pdf
2. Fee Proposal.xlsx
3. Guardian Grant Advisors - MiDEAL Contract Signed.pdf