



## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Office of the Secretary of Transportation

[Docket No.: DOT-OST-2024-0127]

### Solicitation of Proposals for Annual Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation

#### Impact Awards

**AGENCY:** Office of the Secretary of Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Notice; Solicitation of Proposals for Annual Awards.

**SUMMARY:** The annual Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Awards (the awards) seek to raise awareness among transportation stakeholders about human trafficking and increase training and prevention to combat the crime. The awards are a component of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking initiative. Additional information regarding the Department's counter-trafficking activities can be found at [www.transportation.gov/stophumantrafficking](http://www.transportation.gov/stophumantrafficking).

The awards serve as an incentive for transportation stakeholders to creatively develop impactful and innovative counter-trafficking tools, initiatives, campaigns, and technologies that can help stop these heinous crimes, and as a platform to publicize and share the success of those efforts. The awards are open to individuals and entities, including non-governmental organizations, transportation industry associations, research institutions, and state and local government entities and organizations. Entrants compete for three cash awards: up to \$100,000 for first place, up to \$50,000 for second place, and up to \$25,000 for third place. These prizes are to be awarded to the individual(s) or entities selected for creating the most impactful and innovative counter-trafficking initiative or technology. DOT seeks to incentivize individuals and entities to think creatively in developing innovative solutions to combat human trafficking in the transportation industry, and to share those innovations with the broader community.

**DATES:** Submissions will be accepted from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*] through 11:59pm EST on [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*] using the following Microsoft Forms link: <https://forms.office.com/g/eK20xQ50P2>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For more information and to register your intent to compete individually or as part of a team, visit [www.transportation.gov/stophumantrafficking](http://www.transportation.gov/stophumantrafficking), email [trafficking@dot.gov](mailto:trafficking@dot.gov), or contact the Office of International Transportation and Trade at (202) 366-4398 on weekdays between 9:00am and 5:00pm EST.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Awards Approving Official:* The U.S. Secretary of Transportation (Secretary).

*Subject of Awards Competition:* The Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Awards recognize impactful, innovative, and shareable approaches to combating human trafficking in the transportation industry that can be replicated by others.

**PROBLEM**

As many as 27.6 million men, women, and children worldwide are held against their will and trafficked into forced labor and commercial sex. Transportation figures prominently in human trafficking enterprises when traffickers move victims, which uniquely positions the industry to combat the crime.

**CHALLENGE**

The Department is looking for the best innovators to develop original, impactful, unique, and shareable human trafficking tools, initiatives, campaigns, and technologies that can help stop

these heinous crimes in the transportation industry.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible to participate in the Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Awards competition, private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States, and individuals must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. There is no charge to enter the competition. Past entrants who did not win first place are encouraged to reapply. Submissions proposing solutions for sectors that have not yet been awarded a cash prize, such as transit, intercity rail, freight rail, maritime, rideshare, taxi, private car service, pipelines, and state DOTs are also encouraged to apply.

## **RULES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS**

The following additional rules apply:

1. Entrants shall submit a project to the competition in accordance with the rules promulgated by the Department in this Notice;
2. Entrants must indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Federal Government from and against all third-party claims, actions, or proceedings of any kind and from any and all damages, liabilities, costs, and expenses relating to or arising from participant's submission or any breach or alleged breach of any of the representations, warranties, and covenants of participant hereunder. Entrants are financially responsible for claims made by a third party;
3. Entrants may not be a Federal entity, Federal employee acting within the scope of their employment, or a family member of a Federal Employee;
4. Entrants may not be an employee or family member of an employee of the U.S. Department of Transportation;

5. Prior first place awardees are not eligible to reenter for a substantially similar project;
6. The competition is subject to all applicable Federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes the entrants' full and unconditional agreement to these rules and to the Secretary's decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to this competition;
7. Entries must be original, be the work of the entrant, and must not violate any rights of other parties. All entries remain the property of the entrant. Each entrant represents and warrants that:
  - The entrant is the sole author, creator, and owner of the submission;
  - The entry is not the subject of any actual or threatened litigation or claim;
  - The entry does not and will not violate or infringe upon the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, publicity rights, or other legal rights of any third party; and
  - The entry does not and will not contain any harmful computer code (sometimes referred to as "malware," "viruses," or "worms").
8. Any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in preparation of the submission must be disclosed in the proposal. If AI tools were used, indicate what AI tool(s) were used, the approximate percentage of the proposal that was generated or assisted by AI, and briefly describe the purpose (e.g., language enhancement, content generation) of such use. Entrants remain fully responsible for verifying the accuracy, originality, and ethical integrity of all content, including AI-generated portions. The Department reserves the right to reject any proposals that may have used AI in an unethical or illegal manner.
9. By submitting an entry in this competition, entrants agree to assume any and all risks and waive any claims against the Federal Government and its related entities

(except in the case of willful misconduct) for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from their participation in this competition, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise; provided, however, that by registering or submitting an entry, entrants do not waive claims against the Department arising out of the unauthorized use or disclosure by the agency of the intellectual property, trade secrets, or confidential information of the entrant;

10. The Secretary or the Secretary's designees have the right to request additional supporting documentation regarding the proposal from the entrants;
11. Each entrant grants to the Department, as well as other Federal agencies with which it partners, the right to use names, likenesses, proposal materials, photographs, voices, opinions, and hometowns and states for the Department's promotional purposes in any media, in perpetuity, worldwide, without further payment or consideration;
12. If selected for an award, the entrant grants the Department and any parties acting on their behalf, a royalty-free, non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide license to publicize entrant's name. Such authority includes posting or linking to the entry on Department websites, including the Competition Website, and partner websites, and inclusion of the entry in any other media, worldwide;
13. Entrants that are Federal grant recipients may not use Federal funds to develop submissions or to fund efforts in support of a submission;
14. Federal contractors may not use Federal funds from a contract to develop submissions or to fund efforts in support of a submission; and
15. The submission period begins on [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]. Submissions must be sent by 11:59pm EST on [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL*

*REGISTER*]. The timeliness of submissions will be determined by the time stamp of the Microsoft Form submission. Competition administrators assume no responsibility for lost or untimely submissions for any reason.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Applicants must submit entries using the following Microsoft Forms link:

<https://forms.office.com/g/eK20xQ50P2>. Please contact [trafficking@dot.gov](mailto:trafficking@dot.gov) between the weekday hours of 9:00am and 5:30pm EST for any submission issues involving Microsoft Forms.

*Expression of Interest: While not required, entrants are strongly encouraged to send brief expressions of interest to DOT prior to submitting entries. The expressions of interest should be sent by [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to [trafficking@dot.gov](mailto:trafficking@dot.gov), and include the following elements: (1) Name and title of entrant(s); (2) Telephone and email address; and (3) A synopsis of the proposal, limited to no more than two pages.*

Please ensure your submission package includes **EACH** of the following elements:

## **GENERAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **1. ENTITY**

List the name of the entity or organization(s) or the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) submitting a proposal.

### **2. POINT OF CONTACT**

Provide the name, title, phone, email, website URL, and mailing address for a single

individual to serve as the proposal/project point of contact.

**3. TYPE**

What type of entity are you? Authority, association, operator, NGO, research institution, individual, or other? If other, please specify. Is your organization national, state, local, or tribal?

**4. MODE(S)**

Which transportation mode(s) does the proposal/project focus on? Options include aviation, bus (commercial), bus (school), bus (transit), highways and roadways, maritime and ports, pipelines, rail (passenger), rail (freight), transit, trucking, rideshare, taxi, and private car service.

**5. ACCESS**

Will the outputs of the proposal/project remain free for beneficiaries?

**6. ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT**

A statement of eligibility by private entities indicating that they are incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States, or a statement of eligibility by individuals indicating that they are citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

**BACKGROUND & PARTNERS**

**7. BACKGROUND**

Provide a brief background regarding the submitting organization(s) or individual(s) with an emphasis on: A) counter-trafficking expertise, and B) expertise relevant to your proposal/project. Where applicable, include the number and type of stakeholders served,

the number and type of participants trained, etc.

**8. PARTNERS**

If applicable, provide a brief background for each partner who will be engaged in the proposal/project development and/or implementation with an emphasis on: A) their counter-trafficking expertise, and B) their expertise relevant to your proposal/project.

Where applicable, include the number and type of stakeholders served, the number and type of participants trained, etc. Partnerships necessary for proposal/project development and/or implementation must be secured **prior** to submission.

**PROJECT/PROPOSAL OVERVIEW**

**9. TITLE**

State the title of your proposal/project.

**10. SUMMARY (1-2 SENTENCES)**

A high-level summary of the proposal/project including all deliverable(s) and whether it will focus on labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or both.

**11. FOCUS AREA(S)**

Proposals may address one or more of the following DOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking elements of a comprehensive approach to counter-trafficking. Please indicate which of the following elements the concept addresses:

- Leadership and Funding
- Policies and Reporting
- Partnerships
- Training and Awareness
- Research, Data, and Information-Sharing

- Victim and Survivor Support

## 12. ANTICIPATED BENEFICIARIES

Identify the anticipated beneficiaries.

## **PROPOSAL/PROJECT DETAILS**

## 13. DESCRIPTION

Provide a comprehensive overview of the proposal/project. Ensure that each deliverable is supported by a description of how it will be developed and implemented. If supporting statistics are included, ensure the citations reference the original source (official or peer reviewed).

## 14. TRANSPORTATION INTERSECTION

- Describe how the concept relates to the issue of human trafficking in the transportation industry.
- Describe how the concept presents a logical workable solution and approach to addressing human trafficking in the transportation industry.

## 15. ORIGINALITY

- Indicate whether the concept is unique or a variation of an existing idea.
- If unique, clearly describe its unique merits.

## 16. APPLICABILITY

- Identify whether the concept is local, regional, or national in focus.
- If not national, identify whether the submission can be scaled nationally.

## 17. SURVIVOR-INFORMED

- Describe how the concept integrates principles of a trauma-informed, victim-

centered approach.

- Detail how survivors of human trafficking were consulted in the development of the concept, what recommendations they made, and to what extent their recommendations were adopted. Describe how survivor input will inform its implementation.
- If the concept involves reporting, indicate which survivor-informed and trauma-informed source individuals will be directed to report to.

## **18. PRACTICALITY**

- In your submission, clearly outline anticipated resources, and each cost to be incurred by executing the concept.
- Describe how the concept will be implemented in a way that requires a finite amount of resources (e.g., fixed costs, low or no marginal costs, and a clear path to implementation and scale beyond an initial investment).

## **19. LOGIC MODEL**

Ensure the logic model flowchart of the submission addresses all of the following areas for designing and managing your proposal/project:

- Inputs (e.g., funding, staff, expertise, research and data, materials, technology)
- Activities (e.g., internal policies, partnering, training, public awareness campaigns, data tracking, evaluation)
- Outputs (e.g., partnerships, materials disseminated, campaigns, participants trained, publications, tips reported, online engagement, survey results)
- Outcomes (e.g., increased engagement, policies, reporting, coordination, interventions, service referrals, survivor support)

## **20. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**

If an emerging technology is an element of your proposal/project, precisely describe how the technology will function (e.g., automation, detection, integration, analytics, detection, modelling, etc.). Describe the state of readiness and reliability of the technology.

## 21. DATA COLLECTION

If the concept involves collecting tips, describe how the proposal/project will: A) protect Personally Identifiable Information, and B) avoid duplicative reporting.

## 22. MEASUREMENT

Describe how the impact of your project will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## 23. IMPACT

- Describe how your concept is anticipated to make a significant impact and/or contribution to the fight against human trafficking in the transportation industry.
- Describe the anticipated breadth and depth of the impact of your proposal.
- Describe how many and precisely what type of stakeholders are expected to be reached through the proposed efforts.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 24. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support from subject matter experts or industry are encouraged for all proposals and **required** for all partnerships necessary for implementation. Letters of support should address the technical merit of the concept, originality, impact, practicality, measurability and/or applicability. For submissions inclusive of letters of support, provide an itemized list with the name, title, and organization providing each letter.

## **25. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (NO PAGE LIMIT)**

Any supporting documents may include paper(s) and/or technologies, programs, video/audio files, and other related materials, describing the proposal/project and addressing the selection criteria. As applicable, this can include a description of success of a previous or substantially similar proposal and/or documentation of impact. DOT may request additional information, including supporting documentation, more detailed contact information, releases of liability, and statements of authenticity to guarantee the originality of the work. Failure to respond in a timely manner may result in disqualification.

### **INITIAL SCREENING**

The Office of International Transportation and Trade's Counter-Trafficking Initiative (CTI) will initially review proposals to determine whether all required submission elements are included, and to determine compliance with eligibility requirements.

### **EVALUATION**

After the Initial Screening, CTI, with input from the relevant Operating Administrations, will judge entries based on the following factors: technical merit, originality, impact, practicality, measurability, and applicability. The Secretary will make the final selection. The Department reserves the right to not award the prize if the selecting official believes that no submission demonstrates sufficient potential for substantive transformative impact.

### **EVALUATION FACTORS**

#### **TECHNICAL MERIT**

- Alignment of the submission with the DOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking's comprehensive approach to counter-trafficking.
- Whether the submission development and implementation will be informed by both counter-trafficking and transportation expertise.
- The concept relates to the issue of human trafficking in the transportation industry.
- The proposal presents a logical and workable solution and approach to addressing human trafficking in the transportation industry.
- The proposal specifies how it will integrate a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach.
- The proposal addresses how survivors of human trafficking were consulted in the development of the concept, what recommendations they made, to what extent their recommendations were adopted, and how their input will inform its implementation.
- If emerging technology is an element of the proposal/project, the submission describes precisely how the technology will function (e.g., automation, detection, integration, analytics, detection, modelling, etc.) and the state of readiness and reliability of that technology.
- If the concept involves reporting, the submission specifies whether individuals will be directed to report to a survivor-informed and trauma-informed source.
- If the concept involves collecting tips, the submission addresses how the proposal/project will: A) protect Personally Identifiable Information, and B) avoid duplicative reporting.

## **ORIGINALITY**

- The proposal identifies whether the concept is unique or a variation of an existing idea. If unique, the submission clearly describes its unique merits.

#### **IMPACT/MEASURABILITY**

- The outputs of the proposal/project remain free for beneficiaries.
- The proposal will make a significant impact on and/or contribution to the fight against human trafficking in the transportation industry.
- The proposal clearly describes the breadth of impact.
- The submission clearly outlines how the proposal will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- The proposal specifies how many and what type of stakeholders are expected to be reached.
- The proposal describes how it will result in measurable improvements.

#### **PRACTICALITY**

- If partners are necessary for implementation, the submission includes letters of recommendation (or support) from those partners.
- The submission clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries of the concept.
- The budget clearly outlines anticipated resources and each cost to be incurred in executing the concept.
- The proposal can be implemented in a way that requires a finite amount of resources and identifies whether the submission has fixed costs, low or no marginal costs, and a clear path to implementation and scale beyond an initial investment.

#### **APPLICABILITY**

- The submission identifies whether the concept is local, regional, or national, and if not national, whether it can be scaled nationally.

## **AWARDS**

Up to three winning entries may be announced. Award winners will receive up to a \$100,000 cash prize for first place, up to \$50,000 for second place, and up to \$25,000 for third place. A plaque with the first-place winner(s) name and the date of the award will be on display at the U.S.

Department of Transportation, and a display copy of the plaque(s) will be sent to the winner.

Two additional plaques will be awarded to recognize the second and third place runners up. At the Department's discretion, DOT may pay for invitational travel expenses to Washington, D.C. for up to two individuals or representatives of the first-place winner and runners up, should selectees be invited to present their submission(s) for DOT officials.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 3719 (America COMPETES Act).

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 20, 2026.

Daniel J. Edwards

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs

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