

Alert



The **Alert** newsletter provides monthly updates on transportation and air quality planning activities within the Delaware Valley.

June 2024

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

United States Federal Highway Administration Solicits Applications for Second Round of Charging Grants

On May 30, the United States Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) officially opened round two of the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program. The CFI Program was established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to fund charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (EVs), as well as certain other types of alternative fuel infrastructure, with the express goal of having 500,000 EV chargers nationwide by 2030. The CFI Program offers two categories of grants: Corridor Grants, which fund infrastructure along federally designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFCs), and Community Grants, which fund publicly accessible infrastructure not on an AFC.

The IIJA allocated \$2.5 billion to the CFI Program over five fiscal years, and the recently released [notice of funding opportunity](#) (NOFO) makes approximately \$1.3 billion available in this round. Up to \$800 million will be awarded to newly submitted round two applications while approximately \$500 million dollars is allocated to reconsider applications submitted during the first round that were rated as “highly recommended” or “recommended”, but not selected for funding. This includes DVRPC’s application that requested \$9.8 million to install 146 Level 2 charging ports at 73 stations and four ports at two Level 3 stations in 21 municipalities across the four suburban counties in Pennsylvania which was not funded despite being highly rated.

In the highly competitive first round, [47 projects](#), totaling \$622.57 million, were funded. In our region, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection was awarded \$10 million to build charging stations for residents of multi-family housing in low and moderate-income neighborhoods, underserved communities, and rural areas, with an emphasis on areas near transit stations to encourage the use of electric rideshare services.

Applications for funding are evaluated in accordance with the CFI Program’s goals which go beyond making EV chargers more convenient. The program emphasizes equity and aims to promote workforce development, increase economic opportunity, and make cleaner vehicles more accessible and affordable in communities that are already overburdened by pollution. In addition to electric vehicles, the program can also be used to expand fueling infrastructure for hydrogen, propane, and natural gas.

The CFI Program complements other IIJA initiatives intended to reduce transportation emissions such as the \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. In contrast with the competitive nature of the CFI Program, NEVI funds are distributed to all states via a formula, but in order to use them, each state must have an FHWA-approved plan to build out their AFCs to be “EV Ready.” Making an AFC “EV Ready” entails ensuring that at least every 50 miles along the corridor there is a fast-charging station equipped with at least four 150 kW charging ports within one mile of the corridor. The CFI Corridor Grants provide further financial assistance to make AFCs “EV Ready.”

Applications for this round of the CFI Program are due on August 28, 2024.



Save the Date

Monday

June 24, 2024, at 5pm

**Public Comment Period
for Draft PA TIP and LRP
Amendments**

Comment Period Ends

For more information visit:
www.dvrpc.org/tip/draft/

Wednesday

August 28, 2024

**FHWA Charging and
Fueling Infrastructure
Discretionary Grant
Program Round 2**

Applications Due

For more information visit:
[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/
environment/cfi/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/)

Urban Forestry

United States Department of Agriculture Awards over \$1 Billion to Support Urban Forestry Programs

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently [awarded](#) over \$1 billion as part of the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program to urban forestry initiatives across the country, including several in the DVRPC region. The 385 awardees from all 50 states were chosen with an emphasis on advancing environmental equity in disadvantaged communities by promoting tree cover that helps cities and towns become more resilient to extreme heat and other effects of climate change.

The City of Philadelphia received \$12 million to help implement the [Philly Tree Plan](#), a 10-year strategic plan published in 2023. A major goal of the Tree Plan is to have at least 30 percent tree cover in every neighborhood. Today, 20 percent of Philadelphia is covered by tree canopy, but the unequal distribution of trees means some neighborhoods have under 5 percent tree cover while others have 45 percent or more. The \$12 million from the federal government will go a long way to further the plan's implementation which is currently allocated \$2 million per year from the City's budget.

In New Jersey, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) [announced](#) its awards at an Arbor Day tree planting event hosted by the New Jersey Forest Service at Farnham Park in Camden. In total, \$8.7 million was distributed to overburdened communities across the state. This includes Camden and Trenton, which were each awarded \$850,000 from the State to fund tree planting and maintenance as well as planning. Additionally, Camden directly [received](#) \$3 million for its initiative to "plant trees along major commercial and high-velocity roadways, install trees at in-development public housing complexes prior to residents moving in, plant new and maintain existing trees within the Camden Business Improvement District, and plant trees at several in-development parks."

This round of federal funding, which was made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, comes amidst increasing recognition of the numerous environmental and societal benefits of well-maintained trees in urban areas. Notably, trees help combat what is known as the heat island effect in which concentrations of built structures absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than the surrounding natural landscape causing more densely developed area to become hotter than their surroundings. Trees can also benefit their environs by improving neighborhood appeal, absorbing carbon dioxide, filtering particulate matter, and mitigating stormwater runoff.

Air Quality

Canadian Government Warns of Above Average Wildfire Risk Leading to Concerns for Regional Air Quality

Officials from the Canadian Government have warned of above average wildfire conditions across much of the country this summer. The forecasts use the [Canadian Forest Fire Weather Index](#), a model which considers meteorological conditions such as wind, temperature, and humidity to evaluate the risk for fires. Given the events of last June when smoke from Canadian wildfires resulted in some of the worst air pollution ever recorded in the Philadelphia region, some have wondered how this wildfire season might impact local air quality. While the movement of smoke, especially from western Canada, is difficult to predict due to the distances and terrain involved, Paul Pastelok, a long-range forecaster who works for AccuWeather, said in an interview with the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) that the Northeast is unlikely to see a repeat of last year, although he thinks "we will see some in the middle of the summer." On the brighter side, AccuWeather is predicting below-average wildfire activity in the western United States as a result of easing drought conditions. However, wildfires are only expected to become more frequent and intense in the long term due to climate change. According to a 2022 report from the [United Nations Environment Program](#), the number of extreme fires is expected to increase 30 percent by 2050 and 50 percent by 2100.



DVRPC, 8th Floor
190 N Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520
215.592.1800 | [dvrpc.org](#) | [airqualitypartnership.org](#)

Connect With Us! [✉](#) [f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [v](#) [y](#)

DVRPC | Connecting People, Places & Prosperity in Greater Philadelphia | DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination mandates in all activities. For more information about DVRPC's Title VI Program or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, visit [www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI](#), call (215) 592-1800, or email [public_affairs@dvrpc.org](#).