On Wednesday, Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) released his long-awaited legislative proposal to raise the nation’s debt ceiling. McCarthy’s proposal comes after giving a speech at the New York Stock Exchange earlier in the week acknowledging the drastic consequences of defaulting on the national debt and calling on President Biden to resume negotiations on debt ceiling legislation. The proposed legislation would increase the debt limit by $1.5 trillion or until the end of March 2024, whichever comes first. It would also include a variety of additional provisions supported by many Republicans, such as cutting discretionary spending to fiscal year (FY) 2022 levels and capping future spending. These provisions would limit future budgets of research agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and National Science Foundation (NSF) in a time of rapidly rising research costs. McCarthy’s current proposal will not be enacted into law due to Democratic control of the Senate and White House. However, it may force President Biden back to the negotiating table as the nation continues to creep closer to default without congressional intervention.

Contact Jackson Clark, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC, at jackson@lewis-burke.com with any questions or comments related to the Update’s content.

Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunity: DOT Releases NOFO for Center of Excellence on New Mobility and Automated Vehicles

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a new notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) titled “Center of Excellence (COE) on New Mobility and Automated Vehicles.” The Center of Excellence on New Mobility and Automated Vehicles was created in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which directed DOT to “establish a Center of Excellence to collect, conduct, and fund research on the impacts of new mobility and highly automated vehicles on land use, urban design, transportation, real estate, equity, and municipal budgets.” IIJA indicates that DOT may enter into partnerships with higher education institutions and public or private research entities in establishing the Center. The NOFO broadens eligibility to parties that may include, but are not limited to, federally funded research and development centers, and national laboratories and their partnering organizations.

DOT’s goal for the Center is to develop an understanding of how new mobility and automated vehicles may impact the evolving transportation system when deployed at scale. The Center would collect, fund, and conduct research on how behaviors of emergent new technologies aggregate over time with increased market penetration and geographic scale, including system-level impacts on:

- Land use, real estate, and urban design;
• Transportation system optimization, including:
  • System-level efficiencies;
  • Travel demand and associated energy use;
  • System resilience, security, and reliability;
  • Commercial and freight operational models; and
  • Mode switching and transfers.
• Equitable access to mobility and job participation; and
• Municipal budgets and cost-effective allocation of public resources.

DOT expects to make one award at a total funding level of $1,500,000 per year. The performance period would be a 24-month base period with three 12-month option periods. The total potential period of performance if all option periods are exercised is 60 months.

DOT is hosting a webinar regarding the NOFO on April 17, 2023. The deadline for applications is June 6, 2023.

Funding Opportunity: EDA Previews Regional Tech Hubs Program
On April 14, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) a fact sheet that previews the highly-anticipated Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs) program and begins to address some key questions related to the program’s timing, structure, and eligibility criteria. Tech Hubs were authorized through the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (CHIPS+) at $10 billion through 2027 and were funded at $500 million in fiscal year (FY) 2023. Tech Hubs intend to invest in emerging technology clusters to support U.S. competitiveness and security, spur quality jobs and economic growth, and support public-private collaborations centered around innovation. Specifically, as the fact sheet notes, “successful proposals will demonstrate a region’s capabilities in, and focus on, its primary technological strength, and its potential for Tech Hubs investments to enable the region to become the global leader in that critical technology area within a decade.”

The fact sheet outlines two distinct phases for the program:

• **Phase 1: Designating Tech Hubs**
  o **Expected timing:** Solicitation to launch in late April/early May with a two-month application window.
  o **Overview:** As required under CHIPS+, EDA plans to designate at least 20 Tech Hubs across the country. Also, through Phase 1, EDA plans to set aside approximately $15 million of their allocated funding to make “a commensurate amount of strategy development awards.” Designated Tech Hubs will be announced by the end of Summer 2023 and invited to apply for Phase 2.

• **Phase 2: Supporting Implementation**
  o **Expected timing:** Application window to open following initial designation announcement in Summer 2023.
  o **Overview:** EDA plans to grant their remaining available funding to at least 5 “implementation awards.” The fact sheet does not make clear the length and scale of implementation awards, but notes that, contingent upon future appropriations, EDA will invest in additional Hubs and may continue to invest in awarded Hubs to allow them to continue to scale.

UMN Washington Update
Prepared by Lewis-Burke Associates LLC
April 20, 2023
The fact sheet also notes that only eligible consortia can apply and while EDA will define a Hub’s geography as a “single Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA),” consortia “may include assets or members outside of that MSA” that benefit the Hub, including rural communities. Applicants will also be required to develop extensive diversity and inclusion strategies. Additional details will become available when the full solicitation is released in the weeks ahead. EDA is currently implementing feedback on program design based on stakeholder engagement, including responses to the recent Request for Information (RFI).

**Funding Opportunity: HRSA Announces Funding Opportunities focused on Maternal Health Disparities**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has announced three funding opportunities dedicated to maternal health and the reduction of maternal health disparities in support of President Biden’s third White House Proclamation on Black Maternal Health Week.

The Maternal Health Research Collaborative for Minority Serving Institutions (MH-RC-MSI) seeks to “establish a multi-institutional research network that is comprised of and supports minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to build their capacity to conduct research addressing disparities in maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity, and maternal health outcomes and to find community-based solutions to address these disparities and advance health equity,” and is based on two funding opportunities:

- The **MH-RC-MSI Research Centers (RCs)**, which would fund MSIs to carry out quantitative and/or qualitative research related to maternal health to elucidate the causes of maternal health disparities and find community-based solutions to address such disparities and improve health outcomes; and
- The **MH-RC-MSI Coordinating Center**, which would fund an MSI to provide the necessary technical assistance to RCs to ensure the optimal public health impact.

The ultimate goal of the Research Collaborative is the submission of at least one grant funding proposal (per RC) to sustain the work done under the collaborative beyond the funding period.

**Eligibility:** Only public and private institutions of higher education and non-profits engaged in maternal and child health research or services are eligible to apply. MSIs are strongly encouraged to apply, and non-MSI applicants are expected to partner with an MSI in their application.

**Award Information:** HRSA intends to fund sixteen MH-RC-MSI RCs at $450,000 over five years for a total funding of $7,200,000, as well as one MH-RC-MSI Coordinating Center at $2,230,000 annually over five years for total funding of $11,150,000. Applications for both MH-RC-MSI funding opportunities are due by June 12, 2023.

Furthermore, HRSA also announced the **State Maternal Health Innovation (MHI)** program, which would support state-led action to reduce maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity (SMM), as well as “addressing maternal health disparities through quality services, a skilled workforce, enhanced data quality and capacity, and innovative programming.” The fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding for MHI includes support for the program to expand to new states that wish to improve maternal health with the goal of establishing state-led Maternal Health Task Forces (MHTF) tasked with reviewing state-specific data and driving evidence-based interventions that will improve maternal health outcomes.
Eligibility: Any domestic public or private entity is eligible to apply.

Award Information: HRSA intends to fund up to 23 awards for the State MHI program, with approximately $1,000,000 per award. The State MHI applications are due by June 2, 2023.