

Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation awarded \$1.6 million RAISE grant

August 23, 2022



The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation has received a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant. Grants like these are focused on helping to make our transportation system safer, more accessible, and more sustainable for people across the country.

According to Department of Transportation, this is the first discretionary funding program to accept applications as directed by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The \$1.5 billion in available funding for 2022 represents a 50% increase in available funds compared to last year. The Nation will receive \$1.6 million of the \$1.5 billion that was available.

Tim Hoone, director of community development for the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation said, "these RAISE grant dollars will fund the necessary design and engineering costs of much-needed transportation improvements on and near the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation Reservation area. The Nation has made some improvements of this area through prior grants, but much more is still needed to complete the project."

RAISE projects are rigorously reviewed and selected based on merit. Projects were evaluated on statutory criteria of safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, partnership and innovation. New this year, under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 2022 RAISE applications were also evaluated on the criteria of mobility and community connectivity.

The department assessed projects for universal design and accessibility for travelers, as well as considered how proposals increase mobility for freight and supply chain efficiency. The reservation area and surrounding community is located along US Highway 101 in Smith River, a 55-mph highway that currently presents several safety and connectivity challenges to access various destinations within the vicinity.

The Connected Communities Project will address these existing challenges to create a feasible, construction-ready blueprint to transform US Highway 101 and frontage multi-use pathway into a safe and well-connected multimodal corridor that will improve the lives and prosperity of Tribal citizens, visitors and the greater community in Smith River.

Tribal Chair, Jeri Lynn Thompson was excited to hear about the news and said “safe travel for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the general public is very important to Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation. Securing this RAISE Grant is the next big step we are taking to ensure the local highway and roads in our area are safe for all travelers.”