



# RAIL

*MOVING AMERICA FORWARD*

## FY23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program NOFO Webinar

**Presented by:**

Deborah Kobrin • Lauren Kobayashi • Doug Gascon • Nataka Neely • Jamie Larkin



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration

April 9, 2024





# Welcome:

Office of Rail Program  
Development Director  
Michael Longley

# Presenters



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Supervisory  
Transportation  
Specialist (CRISI  
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Transportation  
Industry Analyst  
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Chief, Rail Program  
Policy and  
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**Nataka Neely**  
Economist



**Jamie Larkin**  
Environmental  
Protection  
Specialist

# Agenda

- 1 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program Overview**
- 2 How to Apply**
- 3 Best Practices**
  - Project Narrative
  - Statement of Work
    - Project Lifecycle
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis
  - Environmental Readiness
- 4 Question & Answers**



# FY23-24 CRISI Program Overview

# CRISI – Program Overview

## GRANT PURPOSE

- To fund projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and/or reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail systems

## Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2024
  - Over \$2.48 billion available
  - Applications due by **11:59 p.m. ET** on May 28, 2024
- Please read the NOFO carefully and follow all instructions for completing and submitting your application
- Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. There are no exceptions.



# FY23-24 CRISI – Program Overview

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- A State (including the District of Columbia) or group of States
- An Interstate Compact
- Public agencies or publicly chartered authorities established by one or more States
- A political subdivision of a State
- Amtrak or other intercity passenger rail carrier
- Class II or III railroads, including any holding company of a Class II or III railroad, and associations that represent a Class II or III railroad
- Any rail carrier or equipment manufacturer in partnership with at least one state entity, public agency, and/or local government
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe
- The Transportation Research Board (TRB) together with any entity with which it contracts in the development of rail-related research, including cooperative research programs
- A university transportation center engaged in rail-related research
- A non-profit labor organization representing a class or craft of employees of rail carriers or rail carrier contractors

# FY23-24 CRISI – Program Overview

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Wide Range of Rail Capital Projects
  - Congestion mitigation
  - Ridership growth facilitation
  - Enhancements to multimodal connections
  - Improvements to short-line or regional railroad infrastructure
- Railroad Safety Technology
- Track, Station, and Equipment Improvements for Intercity Passenger Rail
- Grade Crossing Improvements
- Rail Line Relocation and Improvement
- Regional and Corridor Service Planning and corresponding Environmental Analyses
- Safety Programs and Institutes
- Research
- Workforce Development and Training
- Measures that prevent trespassing
- Preparation of emergency plans for hazardous materials that are transported by rail
- Rehab or procurement of locomotives, provided that such activities result in a significant reduction of emissions\*

- **New in FY 23-24: Project Planning activities** for otherwise eligible capital projects



## FY23-24 CRISI – Set-Asides



**\$150M** Set-aside for capital projects to support new intercity passenger rail service routes including alignments for existing routes

**\$32M** Set-aside for capital and engineering solutions targeting trespassing

**\$5M** For workforce development and training activities

**\$7M** For certain activities related to the Deployment of Magnetic Levitation Transportation Projects (*\$5M CRISI, \$2M non-CRISI*)

**At least 25% of funds—\$657,393,500—is reserved for rural projects**

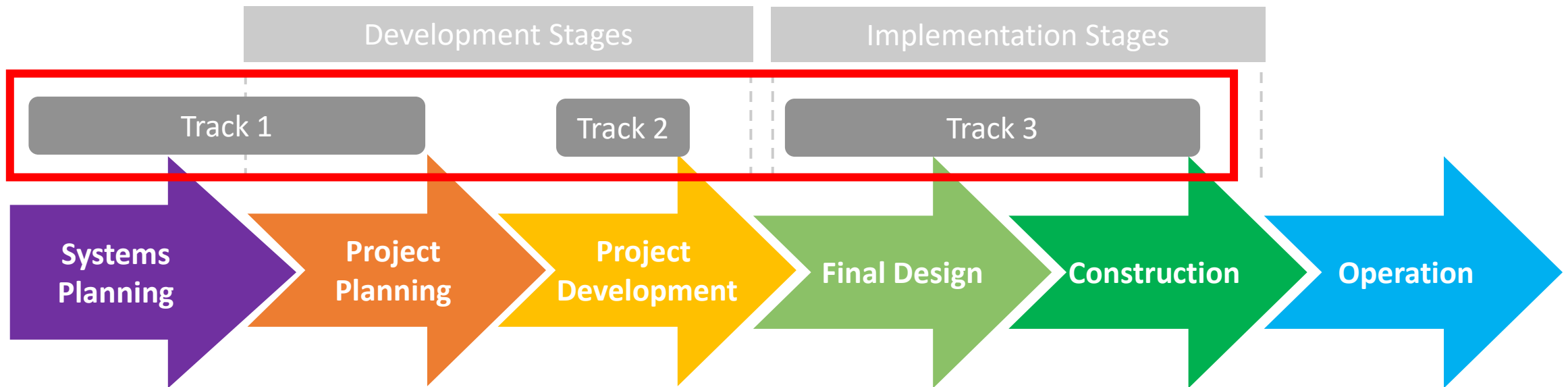
# FY23-24 CRISI – Program Overview

## NON-FEDERAL MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- Federal share of total costs **shall not exceed 80 percent**.
- 20 percent minimum non-Federal match for CRISI-funded projects may consist of **public sector (e.g., state or local) and/or private sector funding**. FRA will not consider any Federal financial assistance, nor any non-Federal funds already expended (or otherwise encumbered), toward the matching requirement, unless compliant with 2 CFR part 200.
- Applicants must **identify the source(s)** of their matching and other funds, and must clearly and distinctly reflect these funds as part of the total project cost.
- **In-kind contributions**, including the donation of services, materials, and equipment, may be credited as a project cost, in a uniform manner consistent with 2 CFR 200.306.



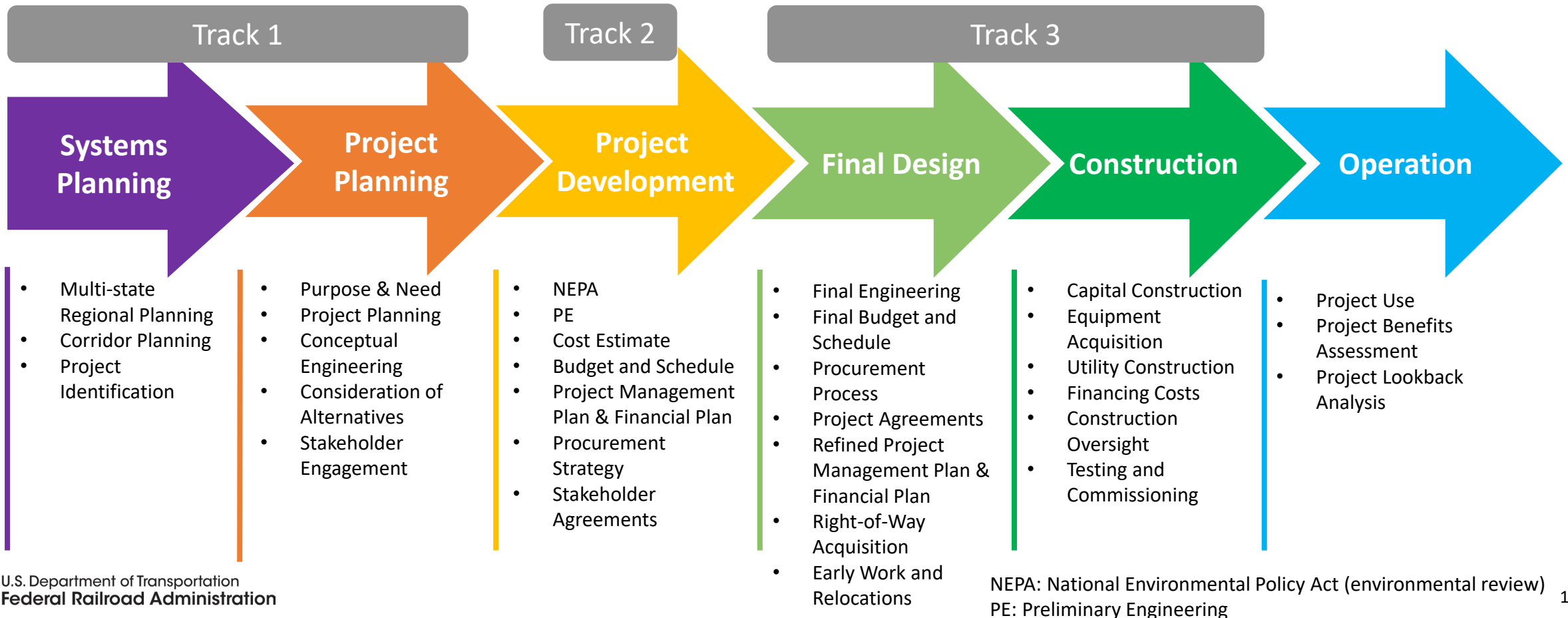
- The capital project lifecycle has **six stages**, beginning with Systems Planning and ending with project completion and Operation
- Even if no FRA funds are used for a proposed project, **FRA encourages Project Sponsors to follow the Project Lifecycle** and seek technical assistance from FRA early in the development of a project
- The Project Lifecycle stages ensure development of the appropriate studies and documents and enhance eligibility for future FRA funding



# Role of the Project Lifecycle in Grant Funding Opportunities

 Reference: Section III, Proj. Lifecycle Overview, p. 4

- Consider the status of activities identified in each lifecycle stage when selecting a track
- FRA will consider the **readiness** of a project when evaluating a project for grant funding



# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Project Readiness Criteria:

- Demonstrated progress and understanding of applicable environmental requirements
- Demonstrated progress on agreements
  - Including host railroad agreement
  - Financial agreement (availability of match at time of application)
- Selection of appropriate of Lifecycle Stage(s) with demonstrated progress toward preceding Lifecycle Stage(s)
- Coordination and commitments from project partners

### Project Readiness Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative project readiness risk rating
  - Unacceptable
  - High risk
  - Medium risk
  - Low risk

❖ *Refer to section E.1.B.i of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

## Example Rubric: Project Readiness

### Merit Criteria Ratings—Project Readiness

For the Project Readiness Criteria described in section E(2)(a), FRA will evaluate the application's responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications, and assign a cumulative Project Readiness risk rating.

Unacceptable	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk
Application provides <b>limited or no information</b> necessary to assess the project readiness criteria; application does not demonstrate support, progress, or completion of required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites; or application <b>contains one or more significant barriers that would prevent project delivery.</b>	Application provides <b>insufficient information</b> to assess the project readiness criteria; application does not demonstrate sufficient support, progress, or completion of required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites but <b>indicates risk to advancing the project without foreseeable delays;</b> or application contains a barrier that would likely prevent project delivery in any of these areas.	Application provides <b>sufficient information</b> to assess the project readiness criteria; demonstrates support, progress, or completion on one or more required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites, but <b>indicates some risk</b> to advancing the project in a timely manner; and the application does not contain a barrier that would likely prevent project delivery in any of these areas.	Application provides <b>thorough and complete information and evidence</b> to assess the project readiness criteria, and demonstrates strong support, progress, or completion on required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites, and <b>indicates minimal risk to advancing the project in a timely manner;</b> and application does not contain a barrier that would likely prevent project delivery in any of these areas.

Each Evaluation Criteria section has its own Rubric that follows a similar rating categorization:

**Low Risk:** *“thorough and complete information and evidence...minimal risk to advancing the project”*

**High Risk:** *“insufficient information to assess the project...indicates risk and foreseeable delays”*

❖ *Ensure that you provide sufficient and verifiable data and justifications for your project.*



# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Technical Merit Criteria:

- Quality of statement of work and application materials
- Qualifications of key personnel and partner organizations to complete project in proposed time frame and budget
- Applicant past performance, technical capacity, and financial contributions
- Private-sector participation
- Innovative use of technology, project delivery, and financing
- Consistency with planning documents

### Technical Merit Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative technical merit risk rating:
  - Unacceptable
  - Acceptable
  - Responsive
  - Highly Responsive

❖ *Refer to section E.1.B.ii of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Project Benefits Criteria:

- The Benefit-Cost Analysis and project benefits of the proposed project
- Effects on system and service performance
- Effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, trip or transit time, and resilience
- Efficiencies from improved integration with other modes
- Ability to meet existing or anticipated demand

### Project Benefits Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative project benefits risk rating:
  - Unacceptable
  - Acceptable
  - Responsive
  - Highly Responsive

❖ *Refer to section E.1.B.iii of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

## ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES

- Safety
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Equity and Justice40
- Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation

### **Administration Priorities Rubric:**

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to **one or more priorities**, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative Administrative Priorities rating:
  - Unacceptable
  - Acceptable
  - Responsive
  - Highly Responsive

❖ *Refer to section E.1.C.ii of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

# Evaluation and Selection Criteria

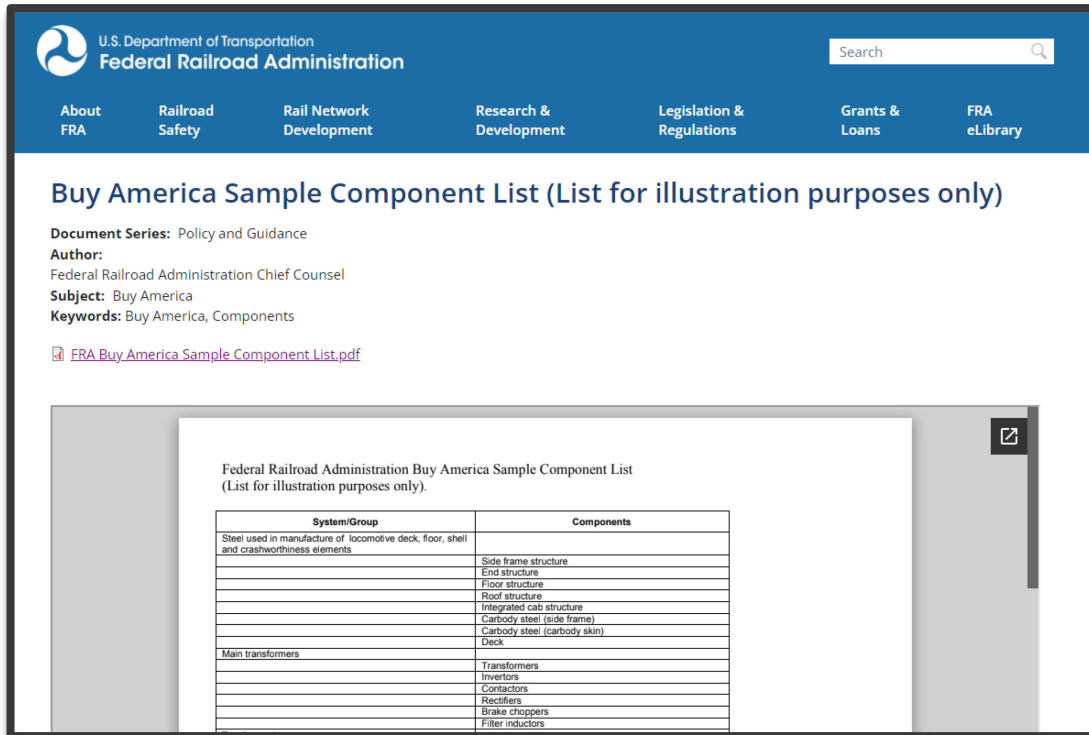
## PROGRAM PREFERENCE

- Projects that may not be addressed by other FRA grant programs: short line railroad infrastructure and equipment; safety projects; technology, workforce development, and congestion relief projects addressing freight and passenger rail chokepoints; and intercity passenger rail state of good repair projects
- Projects for which the Federal share of total project costs is 50 percent or less, maximized net benefits, and projects targeting trespassing in areas with documented casualties



# FRA Buy America

FRA Buy America includes **new** requirements enacted by the **Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act**



The screenshot shows the FRA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are several menu items: About FRA, Railroad Safety, Rail Network Development, Research & Development, Legislation & Regulations, Grants & Loans, and FRA eLibrary. The main content area is titled "Buy America Sample Component List (List for illustration purposes only)". Below the title, there is a "Document Series" section with the following information: "Policy and Guidance", "Author: Federal Railroad Administration Chief Counsel", "Subject: Buy America", and "Keywords: Buy America, Components". A link to the PDF document is provided: "FRA Buy America Sample Component List.pdf". The PDF content is displayed in a preview window, showing a table with the following structure:

System/Group	Components
Steel used in manufacture of locomotive deck, floor, shell and crashworthiness elements	Side frame structure
	End structure
	Floor structure
	Roof structure
	Integrated cab structure
	Carbody steel (side frame)
	Carbody steel (carbody skin)
	Deck
Main transformers	Transformers
	Inverters
	Contactors
	Rectifiers
	Brake choppers
	Filter inductors



For FRA-funded Projects – 100% of the steel, iron, construction materials, and manufactured goods used in the project **must** be produced in the United States



FRA Buy America applies to materials purchased with FRA funds and with non-Federal funds



Consider FRA Buy America requirements in project planning, design, and budget



Include FRA Buy America requirements in all procurement documents and obtain any necessary certifications to document compliance



*Waivers are granted only in limited circumstances and can result in significant delay*

Buy America: <https://railroads.dot.gov/legislation-regulations/buy-america/buy-america>

Component List: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/buy-america-sample-component-list-list-illustration-purposes-only>

# NOFO Overview & How to Apply

# What is a NOFO?

## DEFINITION

### A **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**:

- Announces the grant opportunity
- Contains details about the application requirements and procedures to request Federal funding for eligible projects

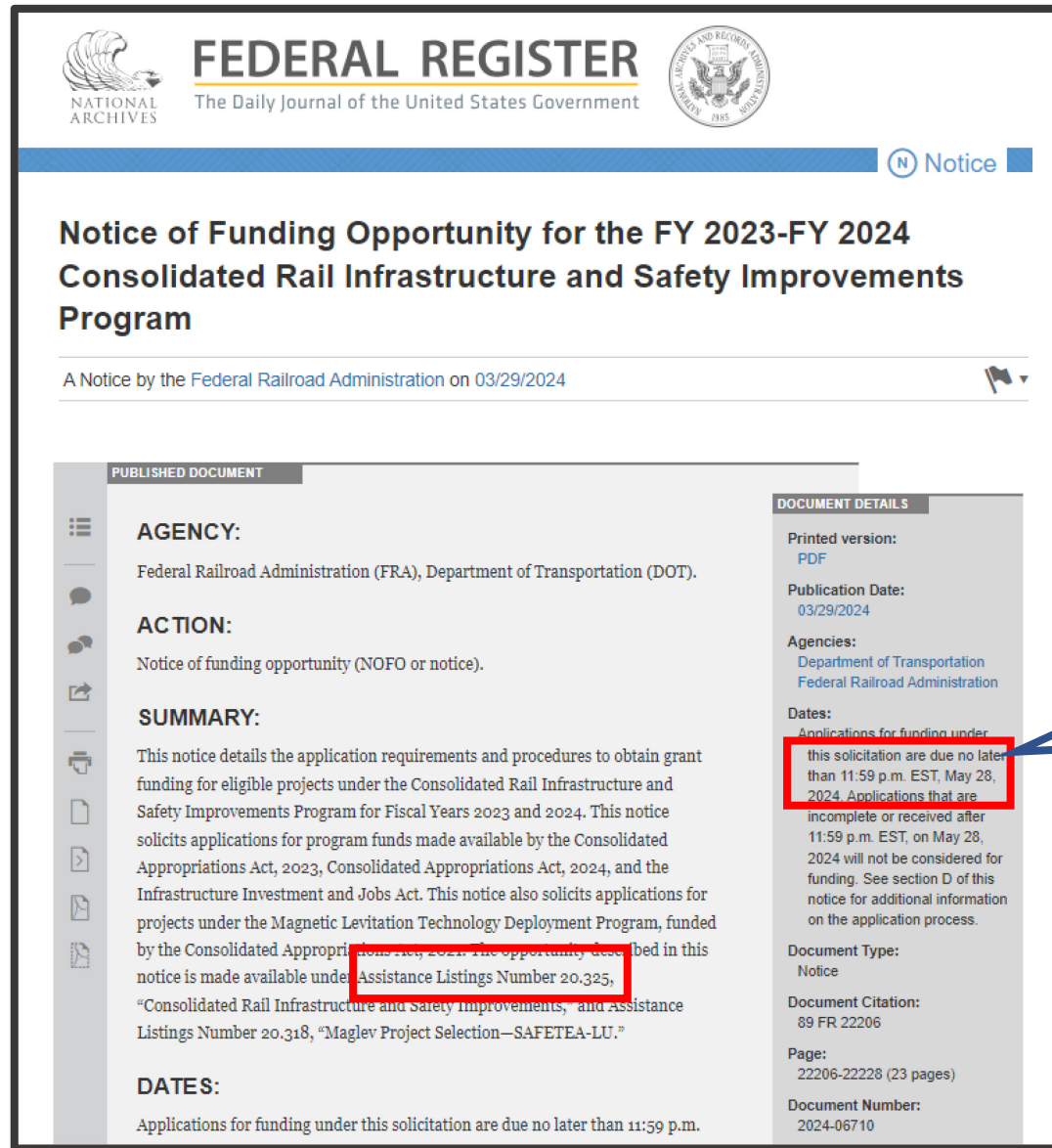
# What information is in a NOFO?

## KEY PARTS OF A NOFO

- Program Summary
- Key Dates
- Required Documents
- Addresses
- FRA Contact Information
- Table of Contents
  - Program Description
  - Federal Award Information
  - **Eligibility Information**
  - **Application and Submission Information**
  - **Application Review Information**
  - Federal Award Administration
  - Federal Awarding Agency Contacts



# Where is the FY23-24 CRISI Program NOFO?



**FEDERAL REGISTER**  
The Daily Journal of the United States Government

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Notice

## Notice of Funding Opportunity for the FY 2023-FY 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program

A Notice by the Federal Railroad Administration on 03/29/2024

**PUBLISHED DOCUMENT**

**AGENCY:**  
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:**  
Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO or notice).

**SUMMARY:**  
This notice details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for eligible projects under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. This notice solicits applications for program funds made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This notice also solicits applications for projects under the Magnetic Levitation Technology Deployment Program, funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024. The opportunity described in this notice is made available under Assistance Listings Number 20.325, "Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements," and Assistance Listings Number 20.318, "Maglev Project Selection—SAFETEA-LU."

**DATES:**  
Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 p.m.

**DOCUMENT DETAILS**

Printed version:  
PDF

Publication Date:  
03/29/2024

Agencies:  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration

Dates:  
Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, May 28, 2024. Applications that are incomplete or received after 11:59 p.m. EST, on May 28, 2024 will not be considered for funding. See section D of this notice for additional information on the application process.

Document Type:  
Notice

Document Citation:  
89 FR 22206

Page:  
22206-22228 (23 pages)

Document Number:  
2024-06710

**NOTE:** Application deadline is **11:59 p.m. EST, Tuesday, May 28, 2024**

# Where do I start?

Check the FRA **Discretionary Competitive Grant Program** webpage

- <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs>

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration

Search

About FRA | Railroad Safety | Rail Network Development | Research & Development | Legislation & Regulations | Grants & Loans | FRA eLibrary

Grants & Loans Overview

Grant Programs >

- Discretionary Grant Programs
- Directed Grant Programs
- Closed Grant Programs
- Legacy and Inactive Grant Programs
- Research and Development Funding

Loan Programs

## Discretionary Grant Programs

### Accepting Applications

**[Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) Program](#)**

The CRISI program is making available \$2,478,391,050 in funding for capital projects that improve passenger and freight rail transportation systems in terms of safety, efficiency, or reliability. Applications are due 4:00 p.m. ET, May 28, 2024. See the **[FY 2023-2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)** for more information.

- [Register for the April 9, 2024, FY23-24 CRISI Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) Webinar](#)
- [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements \(CRISI\) and Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Programs Benefit-Cost Analysis FAQs](#)

Click the link to access the NOFO

# Where do I find “How to Apply” information?

Search grants on **Grants.gov**:

**GRANTS.GOV™**  
FIND. APPLY. SUCCEED.™

Help | Register | Login

Home Learn Grants Search Grants Applicants Grantors System-To-System Forms Connect Support

## SEARCH GRANTS

[Search Tips](#)

**BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA:**

Keyword(s):

Opportunity Number:

CFDA:

Search

SORT BY: Relevance (Descending)

DATE RANGE: All Available

Opportunity Number	Opportunity Title	Agency	Opportunity Status	Posted Date	Close Date
<a href="#">FR-CRS-24-001</a>	Y23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program	DOT-FRA	Posted	04/02/2024	05/28/2024

**OPPORTUNITY STATUS:**

Forecasted (0)

Posted (1)

Click the **Opportunity Number** to see the Synopsis

# What is the Synopsis?

Summary information about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov:

The screenshot shows the Grants.gov interface for viewing a grant opportunity. The page title is "VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY" and the grant ID is "FR-CRS-24-001". The grant title is "FY23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program" and the agency is "Department of Transportation, DOT - Federal Railroad Administration". There are "Apply" and "Subscribe" buttons on the right. Below the title, there are four buttons: "SYNOPSIS", "VERSION HISTORY", "RELATED DOCUMENTS", and "PACKAGE". The "SYNOPSIS" button is highlighted with a red box. Below these buttons is the "General Information" section, which contains the following details:

<b>Document Type:</b> Grants Notice	<b>Version:</b> Synopsis 1
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b> FR-CRS-24-001	<b>Posted Date:</b> Apr 02, 2024
<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b> FY23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program	<b>Last Updated Date:</b> Apr 02, 2024
<b>Opportunity Category:</b> Discretionary	<b>Original Closing Date for Applications:</b> May 28, 2024 No Explanation
<b>Opportunity Category Explanation:</b>	<b>Current Closing Date for Applications:</b> May 28, 2024 No Explanation
<b>Funding Instrument Type:</b> Grant	<b>Archive Date:</b> Jun 27, 2024
<b>Category of Funding Activity:</b> Transportation	<b>Estimated Total Program Funding:</b>
<b>Category Explanation:</b>	<b>Award Ceiling:</b> \$2,385,440,210
	<b>Award Floor:</b> \$0



# How do I apply?

## KEY STEPS

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- **Register early** in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM)
  - ❖ *NOTE: SAM registration can take up to 4 weeks (longer if you do not have an Employer Identification Number)*
- For Grants.gov, complete an **Authorized Organization Representative** profile and create a username and password
- Submit an application addressing all requirements outlined in the NOFO

# What do I include in my application?

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Project Narrative
- Statement of Work (Terms and Conditions, Articles 2-7)
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Environmental Compliance (NEPA) Documentation
  - ❖ *Note: The Applicant may include a draft document that will require development, review, and approval by FRA, or an existing completed NEPA document approved by FRA or another Federal agency that covers the proposed project scope*
- Draft Use/Ownership Agreement *(if applicable)*
  - ❖ *Note: FRA requires that a written agreement exist between the applicant and the railroad regarding use and ownership consistent with 49 U.S.C. 22905(c)(1) for projects using rights-of-way owned by a railroad that is not the applicant*

# What forms are required?

## REQUIRED FORMS

- **SF424** (Application for Federal Assistance) ← *The official funding request*
  - *Either*: SF 424A or 424C – Budget info for Non-Construction OR Construction
  - *Either*: SF 424B or 424D – Assurances for Non-Construction OR for Construction
- FRA's Additional Assurances and Certifications (**FRA F 30**)
- FRA's Applicant Financial Capability Questionnaire (**FRA F 251**)
- **SF LLL**: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required if reportable lobbying activities exist)

# Where do I find additional information and help?

Find **Additional Information** about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov at the bottom of the Synopsis page:

## Additional Information

**Agency Name:** DOT - Federal Railroad Administration

**Description:** This program funds projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail.

**Link to Additional Information:** [FY23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant Program](#)

**Grantor Contact Information:** If you have difficulty accessing the full announcement electronically, please contact:

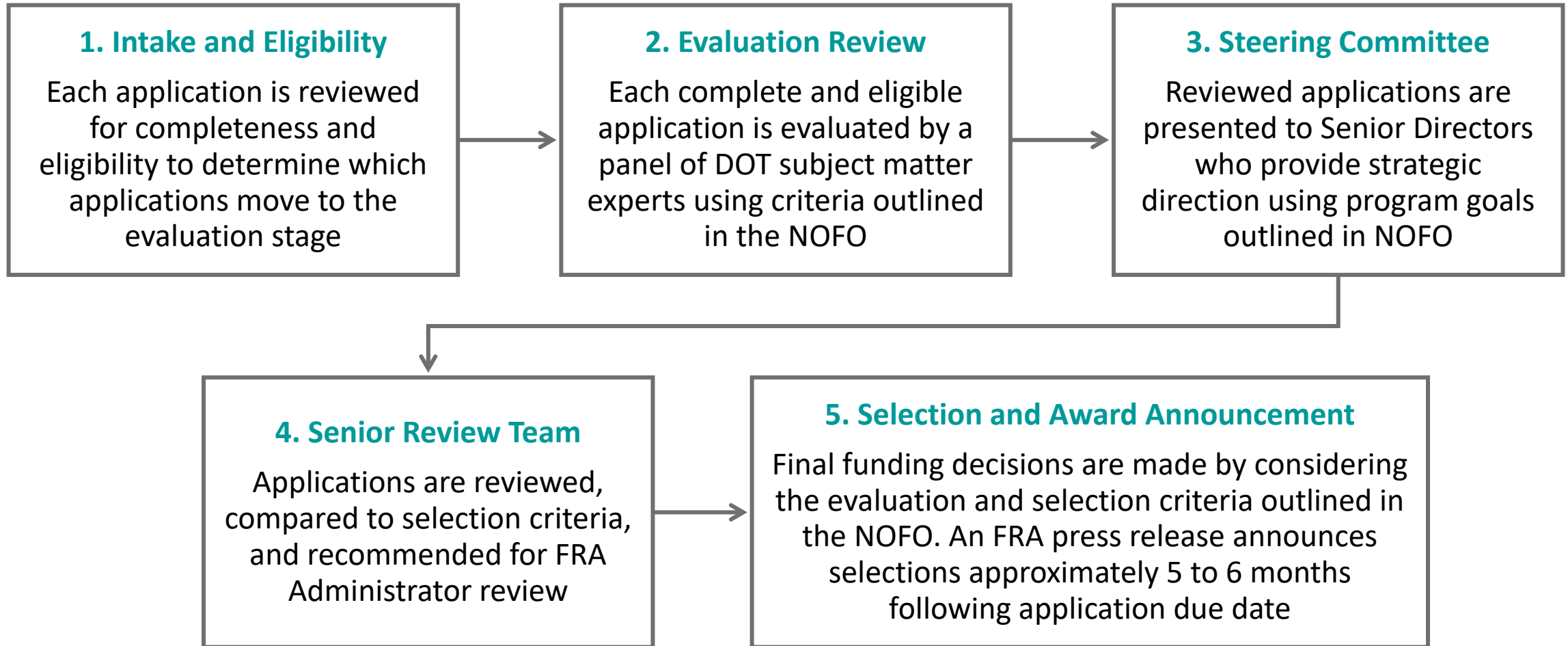
Grants.gov Contact Center

Phone Number: 1-800-518-4726 Hours of operation are 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The contact center is closed on federal holidays.

[support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

[Grants.gov Customer Support](#)

# Application Review and Selection Process

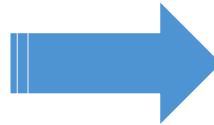


# Best Practices



# Best Practices – Helpful Hints

- Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) completely and carefully to understand the criteria for eligibility and selection, and what information each application must include
- Provide a clear project title that tells us who you are and what the project is about
- FRA has identified three primary areas where applications not selected for funding typically demonstrate deficiencies:
  - Project Narrative
  - Statement of Work (SOW)
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)



The screenshot shows the Federal Register page for a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the FY 2023-FY 2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program. The page is published by the Federal Railroad Administration on 03/29/2024. The document details include:

- AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).
- ACTION:** Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO or notice).
- SUMMARY:** This notice details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for eligible projects under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. This notice solicits applications for program funds made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This notice also solicits applications for projects under the Magnetic Levitation Technology Deployment Program, funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The opportunity described in this notice is made available under Assistance Listings Number 20.325, "Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements," and Assistance Listings Number 20.318, "Maglev Project Selection—SAFETEA-LU."
- DATES:** Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 p.m.

Document Details:

- Printed version: PDF
- Publication Date: 03/29/2024
- Agencies: Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration
- Dates: Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, May 28, 2024. Applications that are incomplete or received after 11:59 p.m. EST, on May 28, 2024 will not be considered for funding. See section D of this notice for additional information on the application process.
- Document Type: Notice
- Document Citation: 89 FR 22206
- Page: 22206-22228 (23 pages)
- Document Number: 2024-06710

# Best Practices – Project Narrative

# Best Practices – Project Narrative

## Project Narrative Outline

- I. Cover Page
- II. Project Summary
- III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds
- IV. Applicant Eligibility
- V. Project Eligibility
- VI. Detailed Project Description
- VII. Project Location
- VIII. Evaluation & Selection Criteria
- IX. Project Implementation & Management

- ✓ Structure your project narrative in accordance with the outline specified in the NOFO
- ✓ Include all elements identified in the outline
- ✓ Follow the instructions for each element
- ✓ Adhere to 25-page limit

# Best Practices – Project Narrative

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- ✓ Application Snapshot
- ✓ Note revised table
- ✓ Indicate if an application for the project has been submitted previously to another Federal grant program – include the program and year

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- ☑ Briefly describe the project in **4 to 6 sentences**, its anticipated benefits, and the transportation challenges the project will address
- ☑ Think of this section of the application **as your elevator pitch for the project** to the DOT Secretary and FRA Administrator

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- ✓ Only include eligible costs
- ✓ Confirm funding amount matches SF-424 and Statement of Work
- ✓ Specify each source of non-Federal match and provide details about in-kind match
- ✓ Indicate public- vs. private-sector match
- ✓ Describe the non-Federal funding arrangements
- ✓ Attach funding commitment letters
- ✓ Identify if the proposed match will not be available until a certain date or if funds must be spent by a deadline



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- ✓ Thoroughly discuss the transportation challenges and benefits
- ✓ Include data to support project benefits
- ✓ Describe how project components are related and will be sequenced
- ✓ Include photographs or diagrams
- ✓ Identify all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries
- ✓ Grade crossing information

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- ☑ Identify cities, counties, and states where project is located
- ☑ Include a map of the project
- ☑ Identify railroad mileposts
- ☑ Geospatial data—longitude and latitude

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- ☑ Include a separate section in the project narrative focused on how the project meets each of the evaluation and selection criteria
- ☑ **DO NOT** rely solely on the contents of the “detailed project description” section to satisfy this requirement—it is OK to repeat key points in this section
- ☑ Quantify benefits whenever possible

# Best Practices – Project Narrative

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- ☑ Highlight applicant's past experiences managing and overseeing similar projects, including FRA- or DOT-funded projects
- ☑ Describe expected arrangements for project contracting, contract oversight, change-order management, risk management, and conformance with Federal requirements for progress reporting

# Best Practices – Statement of Work

(Attachment 2: Project-Specific  
Terms and Conditions, Articles 4-7)

# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 4-7)

- ☑ See the [FRA Discretionary Grant Agreements](#) web page
- ☑ SOW (Article 4)
- ☑ Award Dates & Estimated Project Schedule (Article 5)
- ☑ Award and Project Financial Information (Article 6)
- ☑ Performance Measurement Information (Article 7)

The screenshot shows the Federal Railroad Administration website. The header includes the U.S. Department of Transportation logo and the text "U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration". A search bar is located in the top right. The navigation menu includes: About FRA, Railroad Safety, Rail Network Development, Research & Development, Legislation & Regulations, Grants & Loans, and FRA eLibrary. The main content area is titled "FRA Discretionary Grant Agreements" and includes the following text: "Effective December 11, 2023, FRA has updated the structure of grant agreements used for FRA awards of federal financial assistance. If you have questions about FRA grant agreements, please contact your FRA Project Manager." Below this, there is a section titled "FRA Grant Agreements – Effective December 11, 2023" which states "The new FRA Grant Agreement consists of three parts:" and lists three bullet points: "Attachment 1: Standard Terms and Conditions – February 15, 2024", "Attachment 2: Project-Specific Terms and Conditions – December 11, 2023", and "Terms and Conditions Exhibits – December 11, 2023". There is also a section for "Previous FRA Grant Agreements" with four bullet points listing various grant examples and their dates. The page footer indicates "Last updated: Thursday, February 15, 2024".



# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 4-5)

## Article 4: Statement of Work

- Identifies:
  - General Project Description: concise description of the Project funded under the agreement
  - Project Location: specific and detailed, including maps and GPS location, as applicable
  - Project Scope: lists standard FRA project tasks and deliverables defined by project lifecycle stage
  - Required environmental commitments as applicable

## Article 5: Award Dates and Estimated Project Schedule

- Identifies award dates and project schedule, which lists significant milestones in Project advancement

**Table 5-A: Estimated Project Schedule**

Milestone	Schedule Date
[Preliminary Engineering Completion]	[Insert Date]
[NEPA Completion]	[Insert Date]
[Final Design Completion]	[Insert Date]
[Construction Substantial Completion]	[Insert Date]

# Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Articles 6-7)

## Article 6: Award and Project Financial Information

- Outlines the award amount, obligation, funding source and availability, project budget, and other relevant financial information for the project
  - There are several budget tables provided in Article 6; ensure the appropriate table is used based on the project

## Article 7: Performance Measurement Information

- Performance measures enable FRA to assess the Recipient’s progress in achieving grant program goals and objectives
- The Recipient will report on these performance measures in accordance with the frequency and duration specified (in Table 7-A)
- FRA develops the initial draft based on FRA’s framework for measuring performance for certain projects as well as the information the Applicant provided in the grant application

Table 7-A: Performance Measurement Table

Goal	Objective	Performance Measure	Description of Measure	Measurement	Reporting
Goal 1				Pre-Project (Baseline) Performance as of:	Frequency:
				Expected Post-Project Performance:	Duration:
Goal 2				Pre-Project (Baseline) Performance as of:	Frequency:
				Expected Post-Project Performance:	Duration:

# Best Practices – Statement of Work

- ☑ Organize the scope of work into discrete and logically sequenced tasks
- ☑ Provide appropriate timing for tasks
- ☑ Identify the deliverables required to communicate progress and completion of tasks to FRA
- ☑ Check the budget to ensure numbers are consistent with cost information submitted in forms and other areas of the application



NOT INTENDED FOR EXECUTION WITHOUT MODIFICATION

## ARTICLE 4: STATEMENT OF WORK

### 4.1 General Project Description

*Instructions: Provide a concise description of the Project funded under this Agreement. Section 4.1 should state the objective of the Project and the benefits that that the Project is intended to achieve. Project objectives and benefits inform—and should be consistent with—the Performance Measures in Article 7 of this Attachment 2, Performance Measurement Information.*

### 4.2 Project Location

*Instructions: Provide information related to the geographic scope of the Project and identify important, related intercity corridors or service. The Project location should be specific and detailed, including GPS location(s) and mileposts, where possible. Planning projects should identify the study area and provide a map identifying, at a minimum, the major markets intended to be served.*

### 4.3 Project Scope

*Instructions: In this Section, divide the Project scope into discrete and delineable tasks. If the Project funded under this Agreement is part of a larger effort, describe that larger effort, but link tasks specifically to the FRA-funded portion of the Project. Clearly define the work to be performed in each task and be sure tasks are linked to deliverables and incorporated into the Project Schedule. Use the instructions below to develop this Section.*

The Recipient will notify FRA in writing of any requested changes in Project Scope and will not proceed with the changed scope unless approved by FRA in writing. If approved, changes to Project Scope may require additional environmental review or an amendment to this Agreement.

# Best Practices – Benefit-Cost Analysis

# BCA – Overview of Steps

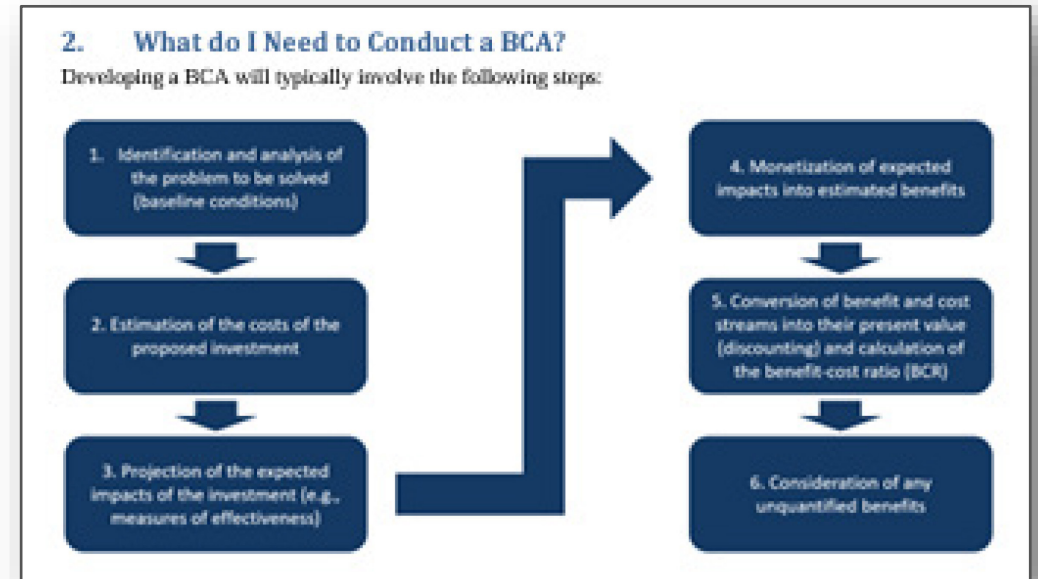
## Tracks 2 & 3

- Specify your project's **base case**, **alternate case**, and **timeline**
- Show how your project's **alternate case** will result in specific effects (i.e., **project benefits**)
- Break down those effects into the smallest sub-elements possible
- Assign values to the effects using USDOT's [BCA Guidance](#)
- Calculate results and discount to base year

❖ **NOTE:** Tracks 1 & 4 (regional planning, research, safety programs, non-CRISI trespassing projects) must document project benefits. Any subjective estimates of benefits and costs should be quantified whenever possible, and applicants should provide appropriate evidence to support their subjective estimates. At a minimum, qualitatively describe the project benefits. (See Section D of NOFO.)

## The 2024 update to the DOT BCA Guidance includes:

- Revised discount rates in accordance with updates to OMB Circular A-94
- Revised values for the social cost of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Other new and updated monetization values
  - Includes commuter, intercity passenger, and freight rail per-hour operating and social costs
- Simplified measure of emission costs per vehicle mile traveled





## BCA – Scope of Analysis

- The **base case** reflects the status quo — i.e., the world as it exists today
- The **alternate case** (i.e., “build scenario”) is the proposed project
  - An application for final design or construction should present a *single* project
  - Multiple projects need multiple analyses
  - Avoided costs of alternatives not taken are NOT benefits
- The **timeline** must be appropriate for the proposed project
  - Match the useful life of the project, but not longer than 30 years
  - Projects with useful life beyond 30 years will have residual value (stations in particular) → Calculate with straight line depreciation

## BCA – Scope of Analysis

- Examine *ONLY* the differences between the **base case** and **alternate case**
- These differences should reflect realistic projections

### Examples:

- Intercity passengers will likely change modes if their station is unavailable, while commuters are more likely to divert to another nearby station
- Host railroads will impose speed/weight restrictions before shutting down completely
- Rolling stock will have residual value at the end of its useful life



# BCA – Benefits & Costs

## PROJECT BENEFITS

The *marginal* effects of the alternate case

- Marginal effects are sometimes undesirable consequences, which should be shown as negative dollar amounts
- **Reductions to existing O&M costs** are regarded as project benefits

❖ *Residual value for remaining useful life is a benefit, NOT subtracted from costs*

## PROJECT COSTS

The total cost of constructing the project *as well as operating and maintaining (O&M) it for the full timeline*

- O&M costs on new equipment and infrastructure are **costs**



# BCA – Development

- Break down effects into the smallest possible sub-elements
- Provide documentation for inputs and growth rates

## Example:

Replacing a bridge might result in...

- Removal of slow orders, improving travel speed (travel time savings)
- Reduced wait time at the approaches (travel time savings and emissions)
- Decreased delays at nearby sidings along the corridor (travel time savings and emissions)
- Reduced O&M costs



## BCA – Modal Diversion

- Modal diversion is a marginal choice; *ONLY* count marginal benefits
- New/induced users value the service less than existing users (follow USDOT'S [BCA Guidance](#))
- Avoided rail-to-highway diversion benefits could involve:
  - Increased pavement and bridge damage
  - Increased harmful emissions
  - Increased congestion on highways
  - Decreased safety
- Avoiding passenger revenue losses are **transfers**, NOT **benefits**

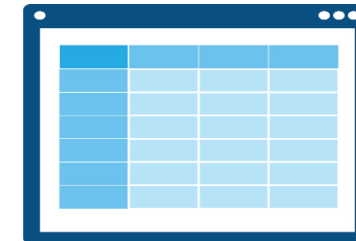
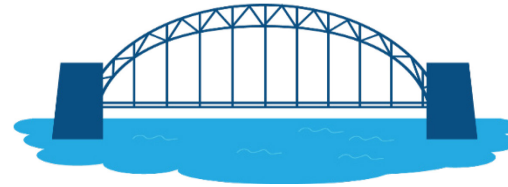




# BCA – Guidelines Recap

## For FY23-24 CRISI grant applications:

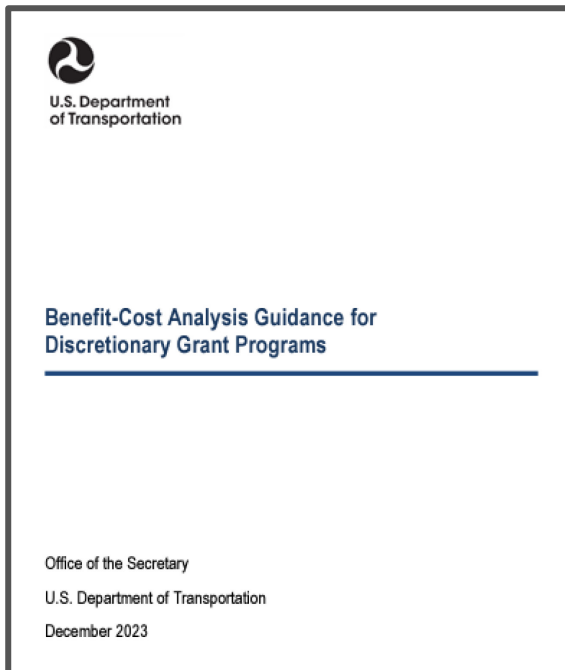
- ☑ Document your assumptions in as much detail as possible
- ☑ If the project has separable elements, report benefits and costs of each sub-project separately
- ☑ If your BCA includes modal diversion, include YOUR passenger counts and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
- ☑ ***You must include an unlocked Excel spreadsheet that clearly shows your calculations and discounting***



# BCA – Guidance/Online Resources

## DOT Resources

- [BCA Guidance](#)
- [DOT BCA Template](#)
- [DOT BCA Template Webinar Recording \(Item #7\)](#)



## FRA Resources

- For rail-specific examples on how to apply the *BCA Guidance*, refer to [FRA's BCA FAQ](#)
- FRA BCA Template
- ❖ *Coming soon: FRA New BCA Template Video*

The image is a screenshot of a document from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration. The title is "Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements and Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Programs Benefit-Cost Analysis FAQs". It contains three questions and answers:

- Q: Does every CRISI Project Track require a BCA?**  
Yes. Applications for all projects submitted for CRISI must demonstrate the costs and benefits of funding for FRA to evaluate the degree to which the project will maximize the net benefits and leverage the Federal investment to be made. The focus and level of detail of cost-benefit comparison will vary by track. Tracks 1 – 3 should demonstrate the benefits of the proposed project – each track consecutively requires more detail; beginning with, at the minimum, a qualitative description of the benefits for Track 1 (Planning), and progressing to a quantitative Benefit-Cost-Analysis for FD/Construction projects eligible for Track 3. In some cases, Track 1 and Track 2 applications may include development or improvement of quantitative Benefit-Cost-Analyses. Track 4 project applications should include analysis of the benefits and costs at a level of complexity consistent with project scope.
- Q: Are there different BCA requirements for the CRISI, Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair, BUILD, and INFRA programs?**  
Yes. Like the BUILD and INFRA programs, BCA's for Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair projects are not allowed to include strictly private benefits in their analysis and must rely on only public benefits for justification. CRISI applications may consider both public and private benefits relative to project costs. Applicants may discuss private and public benefits separately in the BCA narrative if they wish, but all benefits should be included together in the BCA calculations.
- Q: How should I treat fares and freight fees in my BCA?**  
Fares and freight fees are covered under Section 7.2 of the BCA guidance document. As a summary, increases in fare revenue either from raising prices or from increased ridership are transfers from the riders to the operators and are NOT to be included as benefits. The same applies to increased revenue via freight fees. These topics may be necessary to cover in the project narrative, for example to explain how the operator might cover increases in O&M costs, but they should not be covered nor included in calculations in the BCA.



# Best Practices – Environmental Readiness

# Environmental Readiness

**Environmental review** is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for all FRA grant-funded projects to document and substantiate our agency's decision to implement the project.

Environmental review work also includes compliance with other Federal laws and Executive Orders, including:

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Clean Water Act (CWA)

The level and depth of environmental and cultural resource review varies depending on the impacts of each project.

# Environmental Readiness – Complexity Factors

More **complex projects require more time and effort** for review of environmental/cultural resources.

This includes impacts to:

- Areas outside the existing railroad right-of-way or in previously undisturbed areas
- Waters/wetlands or protected species and/or their habitat (including staging, clearing, and bridge work)
- Section 4(f) resources such as publicly owned parks, recreational areas, etc.
- Listed or eligible historic properties:
  - Evaluations are generally required for properties over 45 years old
  - Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Tribes is generally required for properties over 45 years old
    - Exceptions for projects that completely fall under the [Program Comment for Rail Rights-of-Way](#)



## Environmental Readiness – Tips

- ✓ Provide a **clear, complete, and accurate scope of work** in your application
  - More complex projects (bridge bundles, grade separations) should have more detail
- ✓ With your CRISI grant application, **submit an approved NEPA document, if available and applicable**, from FRA, FTA, FHWA or any other federal agency
- ✓ If there is no previous NEPA documentation associated with the project, you are encouraged to **consider and describe the following in the grant application** to the best of your knowledge:
  - Known project location and/or possible impacts to the human (e.g., historic, protected populations, noise and vibration) or natural (e.g., wetlands, air, species/habitat, floodplains) environment
  - Anticipated permitting needs (e.g., construction, [Clean Water Act Section 404](#)) or coordination/consultation (e.g., State Historic Preservation Officer)

# Environmental Readiness – NEPA

- Rely on FRA’s experience and expertise to determine the type of NEPA review and level of documentation and coordination appropriate for your project — **contact our experts!**

Email: [FRAenvironment@dot.gov](mailto:FRAenvironment@dot.gov)

## Helpful Information Available on FRA’s Website

- [FRA & NEPA Documentation](#)
- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)
  - *This web page provides links to recorded webinars, trainings, and other resources to assist in preparing NEPA documents for rail projects*



# Recap & Reminders

# Recap & Reminders

- Always read the NOFO carefully
- Determine what a "successful" project will look like
- Use the application requirements checklist in the NOFO (Section D, part 2) as you complete your application
- Address all of the evaluation and selection criteria on which you will be rated
  - By clearly and directly responding to the criteria, your application will be easier to read and evaluate
  - Don't bury key points!





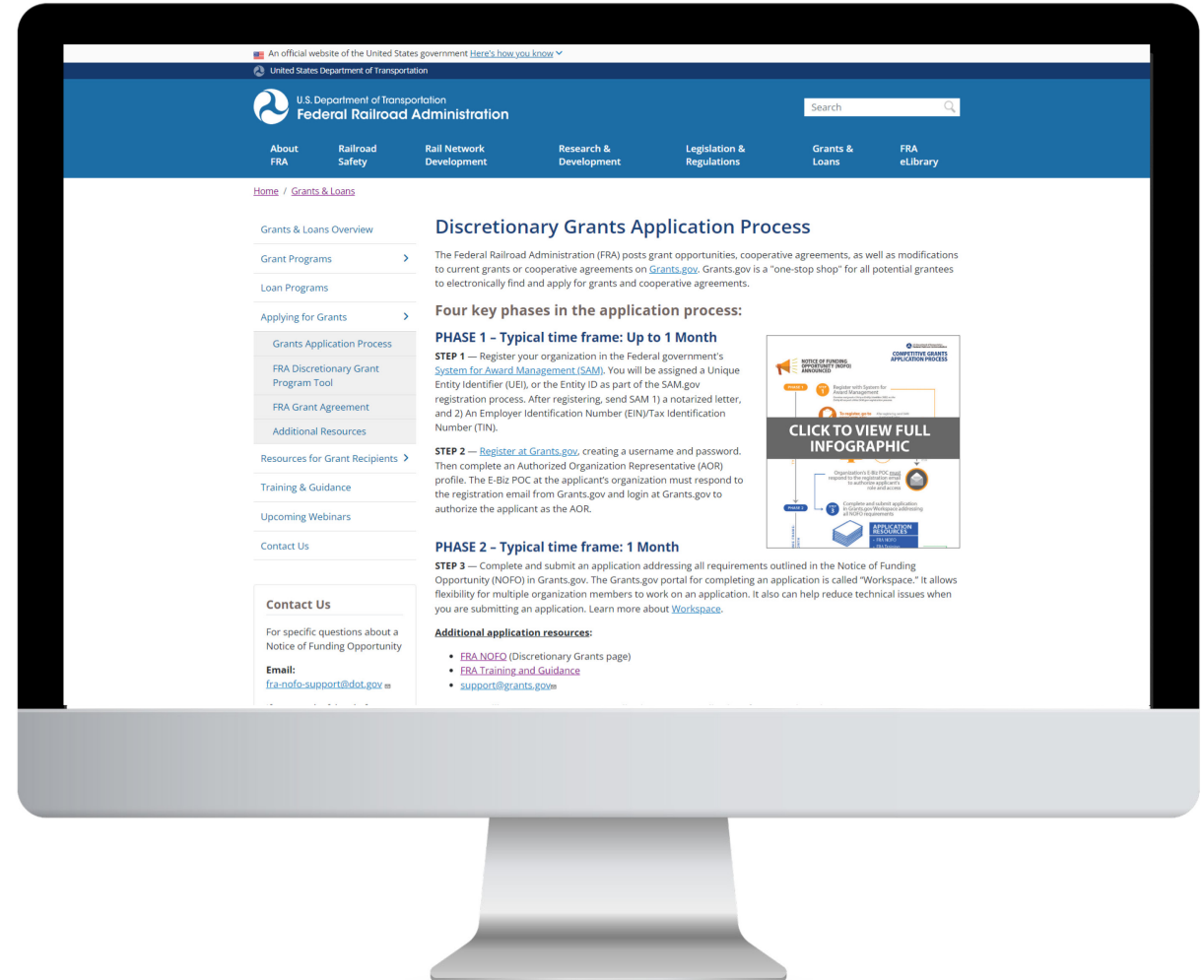
## Recap & Reminders

- Verify that all budget figures match corresponding figures cited in different parts of your application package – such as the Cover Sheet, SOW, Project Narrative, and various forms
  - Numbers in columns and rows should add up properly in budget tables
  - Only include project costs that are expected to be incurred *after* grant selection
  - The SF-424 is the official funding request
- Name key partners, indicate in-place agreements, and include letters of support
- Have an objective “cold reader” — i.e., an individual unfamiliar with the grant application — review your final document before submission

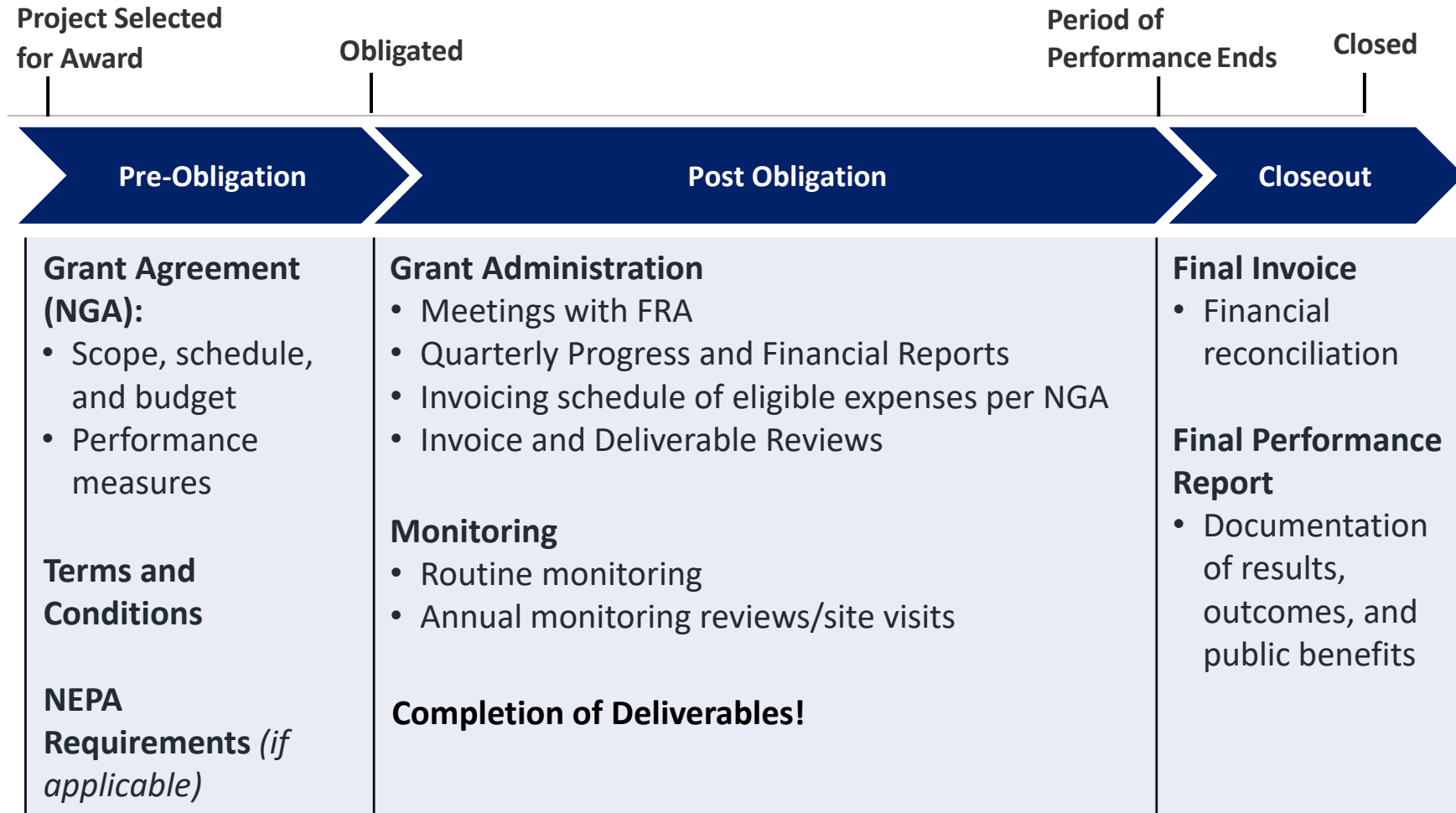


# Resources

- [CRISI FY 2023-2024 NOFO](#)
- [FRA's Competitive Grants Application Process](#)
- [FRA's Discretionary Grant Agreements](#)
- [USDOT's BCA Guidance](#)
- [FRA's BCA Guidance](#)
- [FRA & NEPA Documentation](#)
- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)
- [FRA Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Projects](#)
- [FRA Locomotive Emissions Comparison Tool](#)
- [FRA Grants Webinars](#)
- [FRA Grants Videos](#)



# Grant Lifecycle





# QUESTIONS?

# Contact Us

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Washington, DC 20590



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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration

***To learn more about FRA Competitive Discretionary Grant  
Programs, visit: <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants>***