FY 2022 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program (FSP-National) NOFO Webinar

Presented by:
Bryan Rodda • Doug Gascon • Sergio Coronado • Michael Johnson • Laura Shick
FRA Presenters

Bryan Rodda
Lead Community Planner, Amtrak Asset Line Planning and Oversight Division

Doug Gascon
Chief, Rail Program Policy and Performance Division

Sergio Coronado
Transportation Industry Analyst, Rail Program Policy and Performance Division

Michael Johnson
Industry Economist, Railroad Industry Economics Division

Laura Shick
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Review Division
Agenda

1. Partnership Program Overview
2. How to Apply
3. Best Practices
   - Project Narrative
   - Statement of Work
   - Benefit-Cost Analysis
   - Environmental Readiness
4. Q & A
Fed-State Partnership
Program Overview—National
The Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program (FSP) funds capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve performance, expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service, or enhance rail safety. This Notice is for projects not located on the Northeast Corridor (FSP-National).

Published in the Federal Register on December 7, 2022
- $2.283 billion available in FY 2022 supplemental advance and annual appropriations
- Applications due by 5 pm ET on March 7, 2023
- Concurrent applications and resubmissions are allowed
- Indicate other program(s) you may have applied to (e.g., CRISI, RAISE)
**Program Changes Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)**

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<th>Federal-State Partnership Program Changes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Eligibilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adds “Federally recognized Indian Tribe” as an eligible applicant</td>
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<td>• Allows projects to expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service</td>
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<td>• Allows projects on privately owned railroad lines used by intercity passenger rail</td>
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<td><strong>Modified Selection Preferences</strong></td>
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<td>Adds preferences for projects:</td>
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<td>• That improve the financial performance, reliability, service frequency, or address the state of good repair of an Amtrak route</td>
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<td>• That are identified in, and consistent with, a corridor inventory prepared under the Corridor Identification and Development Program (once available)</td>
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<td>Removes preference for 50 percent or greater non-Federal match</td>
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<td><strong>Phased Funding Agreements</strong></td>
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<td>• New tool available allowing the Secretary to enter into a <strong>multi-year funding agreement</strong> for a project under certain circumstances</td>
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<td><strong>National / NEC Funding Splits</strong></td>
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<td>• <strong>Supplemental Advance Appropriations:</strong> At least 33 percent ($12 billion) for projects not located on the NEC</td>
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<td>• <strong>Annual Appropriations:</strong> not less than 45 percent for awards to non-NEC projects and not less than 45 percent for NEC projects, with 10 percent that can be awarded to either geography</td>
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Program Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- States *(incl. the District of Columbia)*
- Groups of States
- Interstate Compacts
- Public agencies or publicly chartered authorities established by one or more States
- Political subdivisions of States
- Amtrak, acting on its own behalf or under a cooperative agreement with one or more States
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe *(New in BIL)*
- Any combination of the above

**Selection preference:** Projects for which Amtrak is *not* the sole applicant

**Ineligible entities** *(e.g., private sector firms)*: May be included as a *partner* on an application submitted by one or more eligible applicants
Eligible Projects

- A project to replace, rehabilitate, or repair infrastructure, equipment, or a facility used for providing intercity passenger rail service to bring such assets into a state of good repair
- A project to improve intercity passenger rail service performance, including reduced trip times, increased train frequencies, higher operating speeds, improved reliability, expanded capacity, reduced congestion, electrification, and other improvements, as determined by the Secretary
- A project to expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service
- A group of related projects described above
- The planning, environmental studies, and final design for a project or group of projects described above

Capital Project: Acquiring, constructing, improving, or inspecting rail equipment, track and track structures, or a rail facility...including acquiring rights-of-way.

Major Capital Project: Project with a capital cost estimate of $500 million or greater and with at least $100 million in Federal assistance received or requested under the FSP program.
• The consecutive stages of a capital project as it is developed and implemented that include Systems Planning, Project Planning, Project Development, Final Design, Construction, and Operation.

**Development Stages**
- Systems Planning
- Project Planning
- Project Development

**Implementation Stages**
- Final Design
- Construction
- Operation

**Fed-State Partnership / Other Federal Funding Programs**
- Regional Rail Plans & State Rail Plans
- Corridor ID Program
- Restoration & Enhancement Program
Key Program Definitions

Commuter Rail Passenger Transportation (CR)

- **Short-haul rail passenger transportation in metropolitan and suburban areas** usually having reduced fare, multiple rides, and commuter tickets, and morning and evening peak period operations, consistent with 49 U.S.C. 24102(3); the term does not include rapid transit operations in an urban area that are not connected to the general railroad system of transportation.

Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation (IPR)

- **Rail passenger transportation, except commuter rail passenger transportation.** See 49 U.S.C. 24911(a)(2). In this NOFO, “Intercity Passenger Rail Service” and “Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation” are equivalent terms to “Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation.”

Northeast Corridor (NEC)

- The **main rail line between Boston, MA, and the District of Columbia**, and branch lines to Harrisburg, PA, Springfield, MA, and Spuyten Duyvil, NY.
- The FSP-National NOFO is **for projects not located on the NEC**. A separate FSP NOFO will be issued for NEC projects.
Program Eligibility

Non-Federal Match Requirements

Requirements
• Federal share of total costs for a project shall not exceed 80 percent
• A minimum 20 percent (20%) non-Federal share is required. Applications failing to demonstrate sufficient non-Federal match are ineligible.
• If Amtrak is an applicant, Amtrak may use ticket and other revenues generated from its operations and other non-Federal sources to satisfy the non-Federal share requirements

Process
• Identify the source(s) of matching and other funds and clearly and distinctly reflect these funds in project budget
• Cash and in-kind contributions are permitted, consistent with 2 CFR Part 200
• Include funding commitment letters outlining funding agreements as attachments or in an appendix
Program Evaluation & Selection Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

• **Technical Merit**: Quality of statement of work and application materials; readiness and completion of Capital Project Lifecycle prerequisites; applicant past performance, technical capacity, and financial contributions; private-sector participation; qualifications and experience of key personnel and organizations; and consistency with planning documents.

• **Project Benefits**: Benefit-cost analysis; effects on system and service performance (incl. as measured by FRA’s metrics & minimum standards for IPR rule); effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, trip time, and resilience; improved modal integration; ability to meet current or anticipated demand; anticipated positive economic and employment impacts in areas near stations, historic districts or other opportunity zones; and whether project services historically unconnected or under-connected communities.

Selection Preferences

• Amtrak is not sole applicant

• Improves the financial performance, reliability, service frequency, or address the state of good repair of an Amtrak route

• **Identified in, and consistent with, a corridor inventory** prepared under FRA’s Corridor Identification and Development Program *(to be implemented in future FSP-National NOFOs)*
Program Evaluation & Selection Criteria

Key Departmental Objectives

DOT will assess the project’s ability to meet one or more of these objectives. Such considerations can include, but are not limited to, the extent to which an application promotes:

**Safety**
Improves safety at highway-rail grade crossings, reduces incidences of rail-related trespassing, and upgrades infrastructure to achieve a higher level of safety.

**Equitable economic growth and job creation**
Invests in vital infrastructure assets and provides opportunities for families to achieve economic security through rail industry employment.

**Climate Change and Sustainability**
Reduces emissions, promotes energy efficiency, increases resiliency, and recycles or redevelops existing infrastructure.

**Equity and Barriers to Opportunity**
Includes a plan to incorporate small businesses as part of project completion and take account of a community engagement efforts designed to reach impacted communities and how community feedback is considered in decision making.

**Transformation of our nation’s transportation infrastructure**
Adds capacity to congested corridors, builds new connections or attracts new users to passenger rail, and ensures assets will be improved to a state of good repair.
FRA Buy America

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

For FRA-funded Projects - 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

FRA encourages applicants who might seek a waiver to develop and submit a domestic sourcing plan as part of their application

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

https://railroads.dot.gov/legislation-regulations/buy-america/buy-america
FRA Buy America – Domestic Sourcing Plan

The domestic sourcing plan should include:

- Detail on the extent to which the systems covered by the waiver are to be imported and the extent to which such systems can be sourced domestically.

- Explanation of how the recipient anticipates making use of domestic sources for maintenance and replacement of initially imported goods and materials used in the project.

- Explanation of the number of domestic jobs, temporary and permanent, that will be generated by the project and outline a plan to transition any foreign labor responsibilities to domestic jobs.
• **Pre-award costs** incurred prior to selection, without an FRA NEPA determination, or without prior FRA written approval are unallowable

• FRA is prohibited from providing Partnership Program grants for Commuter Rail Passenger Transportation *under 49 U.S.C. 24405(f)*
  
  o FRA’s **primary intent in the FSP program is to make reasonable investments in Intercity Passenger Rail transportation**. Such projects **may be located on shared corridors** where Commuter Rail Passenger Transportation and/or freight rail also benefit.

  o When applying for a shared benefit project, clearly demonstrate how the proposed project **directly benefits IPR** and that the project would be a reasonable investment in IPR, independent and separate from consideration of the proposed project’s benefits to other transportation purposes.

  o FRA has provided grants in the FSP program to commuter or local transit agencies when those agencies have demonstrated their projects have reasonable intercity passenger rail benefits
NOFO Overview & How to Apply
What is a NOFO?

Key Parts of a NOFO

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
- Addresses
- FRA Contact Information

- Table of Contents
  - Program Description
  - Federal Award Information
  - Eligibility Information
  - Application and Submission Information
  - Application Review Information
  - Federal Award Administration Information
  - Federal Awarding Agency Contacts
  - Other Information
Where do I start?

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

- [https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs](https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs/competitive-discretionary-grant-programs)

Click the link to access the NOFO
Where is the FY22 Partnership Program NOFO?

**NOFO in the Federal Register**
Where do I find “How to Apply” information?

Search Grants tab on Grants.gov:

Click the Opportunity Number to see the Synopsis
Summary information about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov:

What is the Synopsis?
How do I apply?

Key Steps

• Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier

• **Register early** in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM)

• 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

**NOTE:**

• **SAM registration** can take up to 2 weeks (longer if you do not have an Employer Identification Number)

• FRA does not control or have the authority to expedite SAM renewal requests

• GSA reported that as of December 6, 2022, the **average time to complete a manual review** otherwise known as Entity Validation is **thirteen (13) business days**.
What do I include in my application?

Required Documents

• Project Narrative

• Statement of Work
  o Scope, Schedule, Budget and Performance Measures

• Environmental Compliance (NEPA) Documentation
  o Note: May include a draft document that requires 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

• Benefit-Cost Analysis

• Draft Use/Ownership Agreement (if applicable)
  o Note: FRA requires 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)
  - 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:
Application Review and Selection Process

1. Intake and Eligibility
Each application is reviewed for completeness and eligibility to determine which applications move to the evaluation stage.

2. Evaluation
Each complete and eligible application is evaluated by a panel of DOT subject matter experts using criteria outlined in the NOFO.

3. Selection
Final funding decisions are made by taking into account the evaluation and selection criteria outlined in the NOFO.

4. Announcement
FRA press release announces selections approximately 7 to 9 months following application due date.
Grant Application Process

FRA’s Competitive Grants Application Process webpage
Best Practices
Read the NOFO completely and carefully to understand the criteria for eligibility and selection, and what information each application must include.

FRA has identified several focus areas where applications that are not selected often demonstrate deficiencies:

- Project Narrative
- Statement of Work (SOW)
- Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)
- Environmental Readiness
Best Practices—Project Narrative
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I. Cover Page
II. Project Summary
III. Project Funding
IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria
V. Project Eligibility Criteria
VI. Detailed Project Description
VII. Project Location
VIII. Grade Crossing Information, if applicable
IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

☑ 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 – Cover Page does not count against limit
Indicate if an application for the project has been submitted previously to another Federal grant program—including the program and year, lead applicant, project cost, lifecycle stage, intercity route benefitting, infrastructure owner.
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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X. Project Implementation and Management

XI. Environmental Readiness

☑️ Only include eligible costs
☑️ Specify each source of non-Federal match
☑️ 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
Best Practices – Project Narrative

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X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

- 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
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

- Identify cities, counties, and states where project is located
- Include a map of the project
- Identify railroad mileposts
- For grade crossing projects, include the U.S. DOT National Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory number
- Geospatial data—longitude and latitude
Best Practices – Project Narrative

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X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

☑ Cite specific DOT National Grade Crossing Inventory information, including:
  • Railroad that owns infrastructure
  • Primary railroad operator
  • DOT crossing inventory number
  • Roadway at the crossing
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

- 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.
## Project Narrative Outline

| I. | Cover Page |
| II. | Project Summary |
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| VIII. | Grade Crossing Information |
| IX. | Evaluation and Selection Criteria |
| X. | Project Implementation and Management |
| XI. | Environmental Readiness |

- 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.
- FD projects applying for funding must resolve remaining uncertainties or risks associated with changes to the design and scope of the Capital Project.
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I.     Cover Page
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V. Project Eligibility Criteria
VI. Detailed Project Description
VII. Project Location
VIII. Grade Crossing Information
IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
X. Project Implementation and Management
XI. Environmental Readiness

*For more information on the NEPA process, see relevant webinars on FRA’s Webinars webpage.

☑️ For Track 1/Track 2 Grant Applications:

- Provide draft NEPA document, if possible
- Identify any planning or environmental analyses done to date
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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V. Project Eligibility Criteria
VI. Detailed Project Description
VII. Project Location
VIII. Grade Crossing Information
IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
X. Project Implementation and Management

XI. Environmental Readiness

*For more information on the NEPA process, see relevant webinars on FRA’s Webinars webpage.

For Track 3 FD/Construction Grant Application:

- Provide copy of or weblink to completed NEPA document
- Identify environmental permits or approvals that may be needed from others besides FRA
- Provide status, expected completion date, and/or copy of permits or approvals
Best Practices—
Statement of Work
Best Practices – Statement of Work

- See FRA’s Statements of Work webpage: https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/grant-administration/statements-work

- Use templates for the
  - SOW (Attachment 2)
  - Schedule (Attachment 3)
  - Budget (Attachment 4)
  - Performance Measures (Attachment 5)
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
Best Practices – Statement of Work

- Capital Cost Estimating Guidance:
- Utilize FRA’s Standard Cost Categories as a way to organize the scope of work and budget
  - [https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/mp-33-scc-worksheets](https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/mp-33-scc-worksheets)
- Ensure consistency among the project narrative, statement of work, benefit-cost analysis, and other application materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Cost Category</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Without Contingency (200)</th>
<th>Allocated Contingency (100000)</th>
<th>TOTAL (30000)</th>
<th>Unit Cost (10000)</th>
<th>Percent of Contracts Cost</th>
<th>Percent of Total Project Cost</th>
<th>YOE Dollars</th>
<th>Total (30000) (Non-Inflation Adjusted)</th>
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<td>105</td>
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<td>1,340,000</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>1,710,100</td>
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Best Practices—Benefit-Cost Analysis
Why Do a Benefit-Cost Analysis?

- BCA encourages applicants to focus and refine project scopes and outcomes
- BCA is a method to enable comparison across diverse project types and magnitudes
- Part of Fed-State Partnership selection criteria:
  - Secretary shall “take into account the cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project”
  - Other FRA programs (CRISI) and Departmental programs (RAISE and FASTLANE/INFRA) have similar provisions
Specify your project’s base case, alternate case, and timeline

SHOW how your alternate case will result in specific effects (i.e., project benefits)

Break down benefits and costs into the smallest sub-elements possible

Assign monetary values to sub-elements using USDOT’s BCA Guidance

Calculate results and discount to base year
• 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
  o An analysis for construction should present a single project
  o One application can contain multiple projects
  o Multiple projects need multiple analyses
  o Avoided costs of alternatives not taken are NOT benefits
• The timeline must be appropriate for the proposed project
  o Match the useful life of the project, but not more than 30 years of operation
  o Projects with useful life beyond 30 years will have residual value (stations in particular) → Use GAAP straight line depreciation
• Examine *ONLY* the differences between the base case and alternate case (i.e., the marginal effects)

• Planned future projects are *irrelevant*

• 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 and weight restrictions before shutting down completely

• Growth rates will not suddenly double unless a fundamental change occurs
BCA – Benefits & Costs

• The marginal effects of the alternate case are the project benefits
  o Marginal effects are sometimes undesirable, shown as negative dollar amounts

• The total costs of the project are all costs associated with implementing the project

• Total **NET** operations & maintenance costs should be included *as benefits*:
  o Net O&M for new infrastructure and equipment will be a negative dollar amount
  o Changes in net O&M costs for existing infrastructure can be positive or negative, but are always included in the numerator
  o **Residual value** for remaining useful life is a benefit, NOT subtracted from costs
Break down marginal effects into the smallest possible sub-elements
• This is where 90% of your “thought work” occurs
• Provide documentation for inputs and growth rates

Example
Replacing a bridge might result in...
• Removal of slow orders, improving through 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
Modal diversion is a marginal choice; *ONLY* count marginal effects

New users value the project less than existing users (Follow the 50% rule in USDOT’S *BCA Guidance*)

Lost revenue from passengers changing to other modes is a *transfer*, NOT a *benefit* (Follow USDOT’S *BCA Guidance*)

**Example**

Avoided rail-to-truck diversion could result in...

- Increased pavement damage
- Increased harmful emissions
- Increased congestion on highways
- Decreased safety
☑ Document your assumptions in as much detail as possible.

☑ If your application contains multiple projects, analyze benefits and costs of each project separately.

☑ If your BCA includes modal diversion, include YOUR freight and/or passenger traffic counts.

☑ Include the specific AADT for each grade crossing project. State DOTs often fail to send updates.

☑ You must include an unlocked Excel spreadsheet that clearly shows your calculations and discounting.
• Follow USDOT’s BCA Guidance, available at:

• For rail-specific examples on how to apply the BCA Guidance, refer to FRA’s BCA FAQ available at:

BCA – Guidance/Online Resources
Best Practices—Environmental Readiness
Environmental review is required for all FRA grant-funded projects

Requirements include:

• National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
• National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106
• Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act
• Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7
• Environmental Justice
• Wetlands and navigable waterways
• Others, as applicable
Environmental Readiness – Fundamentals

What to Know Before You Begin...

• The amount/kinds of environmental information and documentation you're typically expected to provide as part of your application depends on which track of the FSP-National program (1, 2, or 3) you're applying under.

• Environmental review must be completed and approved by FRA prior to construction.

• FRA may be able to adopt environmental documents prepared by/for other Federal agencies.
You're seeking grant funding to pay for development of a NEPA document and conducting associated environmental impact analyses.

- Post-selection, FRA coordinates with grantees to formally determine the NEPA Class of Action and NEPA document required

**3 Options:**
1. Categorical Exclusion (CE) Worksheet
2. Environmental Assessment (EA)
3. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

With your application, provide as much project information/existing documentation as possible, i.e.:

- Project description
- Location (include maps, photos)
- Any planning or environmental analyses done to date
- Any prior or anticipated public/stakeholder/agency outreach or coordination
- Anticipated environmental impacts
- Anticipated local/State/Federal permits or other approvals (e.g., USACE)
- Anticipated coordination/consultation with resource and/or regulatory agencies (e.g., SHPO, USFWS)
Environmental Readiness – Track 1 or 2

Also consider providing:
• A draft Categorical Exclusion (CE) worksheet with your grant application, OR
• Identify the anticipated CE category(-ies) that the project may fall under (see FRA’s CEs: 23 CFR 771.116)
• If your project does not fit clearly within a CE category, an EA or EIS may be necessary depending on the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Need general technical assistance regarding our environmental review and documentation requirements? Contact our experts at FRAenvironment@dot.gov
Environmental Readiness – Track 3

Apply if...

NEPA has already been completed or is underway, and you're seeking grant funding for FD/construction for your project.
- FRA will evaluate environmental readiness based on information included in your application

And then...

With your application:
- Include a copy of approved NEPA document and/or weblink (or anticipated completion date). Identify:
  - Type of NEPA document (CE, EA, EIS)
  - Lead Federal agency
  - Date of Federal NEPA approval
- Identify if any permits or approvals may be required from agencies besides FRA
- Identify any substantive changes to the proposed project scope and/or to the environmental setting/conditions since date of prior NEPA approval
  - FRA may determine a NEPA re-evaluation or supplemental environmental analyses are necessary

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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Environmental Readiness – NEPA Resources

• FRA Environmental Webpage
  https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/environment

• FRA NEPA Procedures

• FRA Categorical Exclusion (CE) Worksheet
  https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/categorical-exclusion-worksheet-0

• FRA CE Companion Guide
  https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fra-categorical-exclusion-companion-guide
Environmental Readiness – NEPA Resources

• Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Website
  https://ceq.doe.gov

• A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA

• AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence Practitioner’s Handbook
  https://environment.transportation.org/resources/practitioners-handbooks/
Environmental Readiness – NHPA Section 106 Resources

• Section 106 Regulations (36 CFR Part 800)

• Section 106 Review Process

• A Citizen’s Guide to Section 106 Review

• Section 106 and Infrastructure Projects
  https://www.achp.gov/section-106-and-Infrastructure-Projects

• Section 106 Program Comment for Rail ROW
• There are several recorded webinars on FRA's website regarding our NEPA/Section 106 review requirements and processes

• [Training & Guidance | Webinars | dot.gov]
Recap & Reminders
Recap & Reminders

• Always read the NOFO carefully
• Determine what a successful project looks like
• Ensure you submit all required documents
• Address all the evaluation and selection criteria on which you will be rated
  o Be clear and direct in responding to criteria
  o Make your application easy to read and evaluate
  o Don’t bury key points!

Submit your application on time! Late applications will not be reviewed.
Recap & Reminders

• **Verify funding and budget amounts** for consistency!
  - Ensure amounts match in different parts of your application package (e.g., cover sheet, SOW, Project Narrative, SF-424)
  - 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

• 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
Grant Lifecycle and Approximate Time Frames

**Project Selected for Award**

- **Pre-Obligation**: 6 to 15 months
- **Post Obligation**: 2 to 5 years
- **Closeout**: 1 to 3 months

**Grant Agreement (NGA):**
- Scope, schedule, and budget
- Performance measures

**Terms and Conditions**

**NEPA Requirements**

**Grant Administration**
- Meetings with FRA
- Quarterly Progress and Financial Reports
- Invoicing schedule of eligible expenses per NGA
- Invoice and Deliverable Reviews

**Monitoring**
- Routine monitoring
- Annual monitoring reviews/Site visits

**Final Invoice**
- Financial reconciliation

**Final Performance Report**
- Documentation of results, outcomes, and public benefits
Upcoming Fed-State Webinars

• FRA will host three FSP Information Sessions in January and February 2023:
  o **Session #1**: Eligibility, Host Infrastructure Agreements and Relationship with Corridor ID
  o **Session #2**: Major Capital Projects
  o **Session #3**: Project Narrative and Statements of Work

• Date and registration information will be available soon—look for information on FRA’s Grants & Loans webinar landing page

FRA anticipates a January 2023 Northeast Corridor-focused FSP webinar; information will be provided following publication of the FSP-NEC NOFO.
QUESTIONS?
Contact Us
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

FRA-NOFO-Support@dot.gov

Partnership Program: Bryan Rodda
Bryan.Rodda@dot.gov

Application Process: Doug Gascon
Douglas.Gascon@dot.gov

Benefit-Cost Analysis: Michael Johnson
Michael.Johnson1@dot.gov

Environmental Readiness: Laura Shick
Laura.Shick@dot.gov
FRAenvironment@dot.gov

FRA Competitive Discretionary Grant Programs
Webpage  https://www.fra.dot.gov/grants