



RAIL

MOVING AMERICA FORWARD

FY 2025-26 Railroad Crossing Elimination (Crossing Safety) Program GoRail Webinar

Presented by:

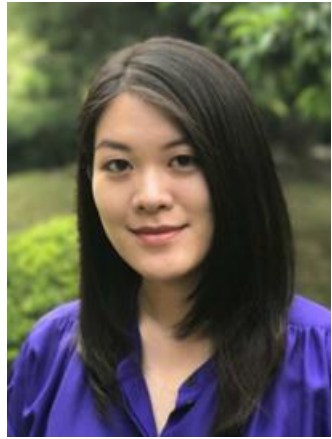
Jenny Zeng | Jenny Mancino | Reagan Morgan



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

May 6, 2026

Presenters



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Upcoming Webinars



RCE Open Office Hours
05/11/26 at 2-3 PM ET



RCE Program Webinar
Rewatch recording on our website

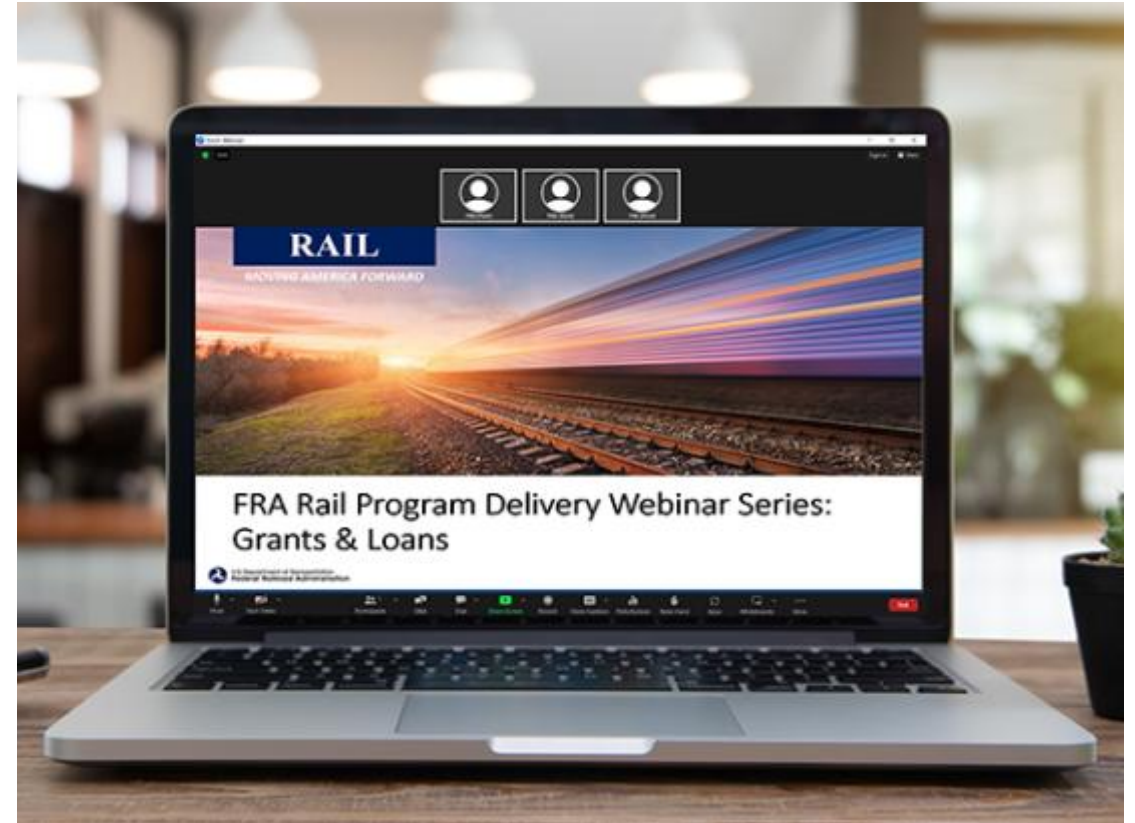
CRISI Related Information:



CRISI Open Office Hours
05/13/26 at 2-3 PM ET



[FRA's Rail Program Delivery Webinar Series:
Grants and Loans](#)



Agenda



- 1 **FY25-26 RCE Program Overview**
- 2 **NOFO Overview & Key Changes**
- 3 **Application Materials**
- 4 **Evaluation & Selection**
- 5 **How to Apply**
- 6 **Recap & Reminders**
- 7 **Q&A**

FY25-26 RCE Program Overview

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Grant Purpose

- To fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects, including but not limited to elimination projects, that **improve safety and mobility of people and goods**

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published on FRA's website on April 24, 2026
 - \$1,146,528,000 available
 - Double year of FY25 and FY26 funds available
 - Applications due by **11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 8, 2026 – 45 DAY APPLICATION WINDOW**
 - Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding--there are no exceptions

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Eligible Applicants

- States, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories and possessions
- Political subdivision of a State
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe
- A unit of local government or a group of local governments
- A public port authority
- A metropolitan planning organization
- A group of the entities described above

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Eligible Projects

- Grade separation or closure, including through-use of a bridge, embankment, tunnel or combination thereof
- Track relocation
- Improvement or installation of protective devices, signals, signs, or other measures to improve safety, **provided that such activities are related to** a separation or relocation project
- Other means to improve the safety and mobility of people and goods at highway-rail grade crossings (including technological solutions)
- A group of related projects described above, that would collectively improve the mobility of people and goods
- The planning, environmental review, and design of an eligible project type

Key Program Definitions

- **Grade Separation or Closure:** An underpass or overpass to eliminate level crossings between railroad and highway users at an existing highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing, or the closing of a highway-rail grade crossing to vehicular or pedestrian traffic
- **Improvement Project:** A project related to an existing highway or pathway-rail crossing, including:
 - Installation, repair, or improvement of crossings, grade separations, railroad crossing signals, gates, bells, audible warning devices and related technologies
 - Highway traffic signalization, lighting, crossing approach signage, and roadway improvements such as medians or other barriers
 - Pathway improvements such as bollards, railroad crossing panels and surfaces, other safety engineering improvements, or highway-rail programs to reduce risk

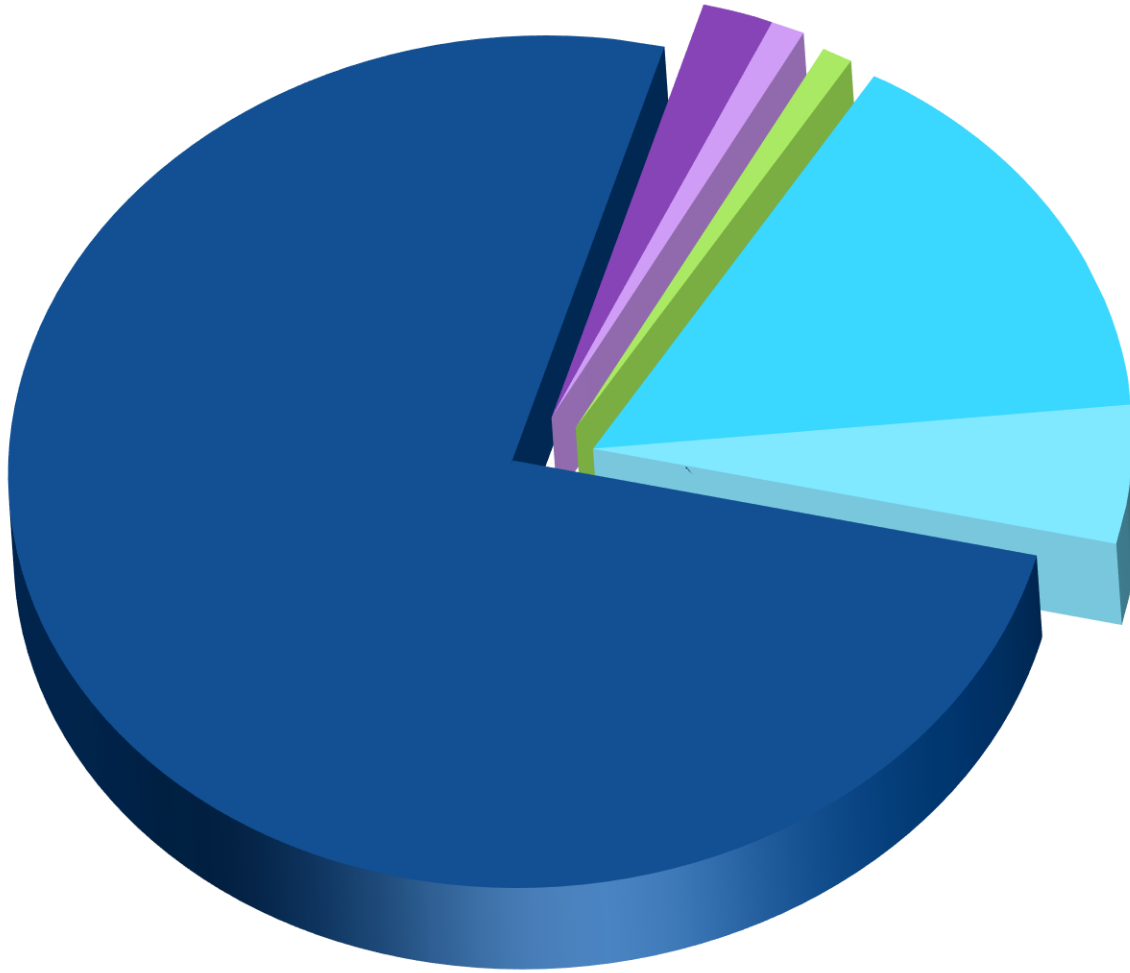
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Key Term	Definition	Corridor Identification and Development	Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grants	Federal State Partnership Grants	Federal State Partnership Grants	Interstate Rail Compact	Railroad Crossing Rehabilitation	Recreation and Pathways	Rail Research and Development Center of Excellence	Railroad State Safety Participation	Special Transportation Circumstances
Apprentice Inspector	An inspector candidate employed by the state participant who has at least the basic knowledge and ability to enter or be enrolled in an OJT program but does not meet the federal regulation-prescribed, discipline-specific inspector requirements, including railroad experience.								X		
Benefit-Cost Analysis or BCA	A systematic, data-driven, and transparent analysis comparing monetized project benefits and costs, using a no-build baseline and properly discounted present values. A BCA requires concise documentation of the assumptions and methodology used to produce the analysis in sufficient detail and transparency to allow the analysis to be reproduced and for sensitivity of results evaluated by FRA. This includes a description of the baseline, data sources used for project outcomes, and values of key input parameters; the basis of modeling including spreadsheets, technical memos, etc.; and presentation of the calculations used. Refer to the updated Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs prior to preparing a BCA. In addition, please also refer to the BCA FAQs on FRA's website for rail specific examples of how to apply the BCA Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs to FRA applications.	X	X								
Capital Cost Estimate	An estimate of the cost to implement the Capital Project. Calculation of the estimate must account for risk to the cost elements and the schedule to complete the project. Implementation includes Project Development through completion of Construction.		X								
Capital Cost Estimate	The aggregate estimated cost for all Lifecycle Stages in year-of-expenditure dollars that accounts for inflation and appropriate contingency amounts either calculated by the Project Sponsor or the NREC Commission.			X							
Capital Project	A project for acquiring, constructing, improving, or inspecting rail equipment, track and track structures, or a rail facility, including expenses incidental to the acquisition or construction including pre-construction activities (such as designing, engineering, location surveying, mapping, acquiring rights-of-way) and related relocation costs, environmental studies, and all work necessary for FRA to approve the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); highway-rail grade crossing improvements; communication and signalization improvements; and rehabilitating, remanufacturing, or overhauling rail rolling stock and rail facilities.	X	X	X		X				X	
Capital Renewal	The repair, replacement, or modernization of basic infrastructure assets along a corridor section that is executed in accordance with a defined scope, schedule, and budget. Basic infrastructure assets include rails, ties, ballast, communication systems, signaling systems, electric traction power systems, and undergrade bridges.			X							



Key Terms now located on [FRA's grants and loans website](#)

Key Program Conditions



Planning

- At least 3% of total funding (\$36,000,000) is reserved for planning projects
 - At least 25% of these funds (\$9,000,000) is reserved for planning projects in rural areas or on Tribal lands.

Crossing Safety Information and Education Program

- 0.25% of total funding (\$3,000,000) reserved for highway-rail grade crossing safety information and education.

Rural and Tribal Set Aside

- At least 20% of total funding (\$229,305,600) is reserved for projects located in rural areas or on Tribal lands.
 - At least 5% of these funds (\$11,465,280) is reserved for projects in counties with 20 or fewer residents per square mile

Grant Conditions

- Minimum 20% Non-Federal cost share
- No grant awarded shall be smaller than \$1 million, except for planning grants

State Limitation

- No more than 20% of total funding (\$229,305,600) in any fiscal year may be awarded to projects in a single State.

Non-Federal Cost Share

Requirements



Federal cost share of total costs for a project **shall not exceed 80%**



A **minimum 20% non-Federal cost share** is required. Applications failing to demonstrate sufficient non-Federal cost share are **ineligible**.



Source(s) of matching funds must be identified and clearly reflected in project budget tables



Cash and in-kind contributions are permitted, consistent with 2 CFR Part 200



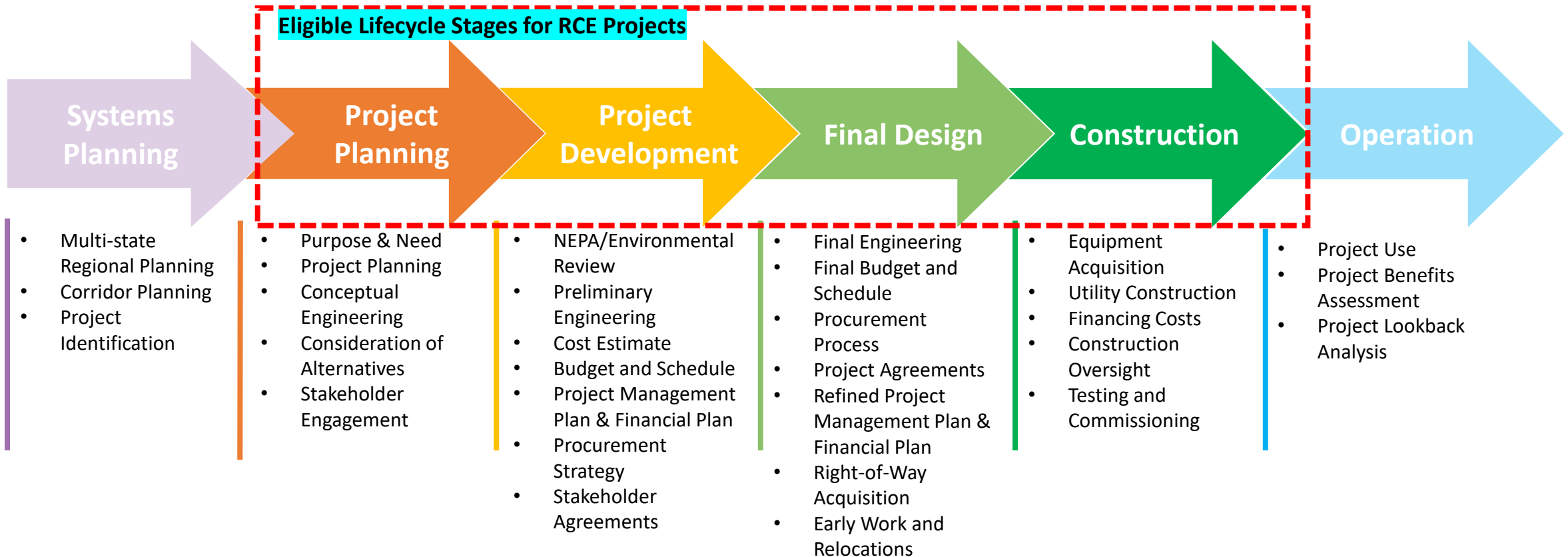
Include funding commitment letters outlining agreements as attachments or in an appendix

Per statute, applicants may count preliminary engineering costs as part of total project costs eligible as non-federal share for reimbursement if such costs were **incurred before project selection for award and no earlier than Nov. 15, 2021**. These costs must also comply with 2 CFR part 200 and RCE requirements

- NOTE: Please mention these costs, if any, in your Project Narrative

Role of the Project Lifecycle in Grant Funding Opportunities

- Consider the status of activities identified in each lifecycle stage
- Project tracks have been removed to eliminate unnecessary redundancy
- FRA will consider the **readiness** of a project when evaluating a project for grant funding



A Brief Word on the CRISI Program

CRISI – Program Overview

Grant Purpose

- The CRISI Program funds projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail systems.

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published on the FRA Website on April 20, 2026
 - Approximately **\$2.039 billion** available
 - Applications due by **11:59 p.m. ET** on June 22, 2026
- 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.

Key Differences Between RCE and CRISI

	Railroad Crossing Elimination (Crossing Safety/RCE)	Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)
Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)	BCA <u>not</u> required, although applicants must provide sufficient qualitative information on project benefits	BCA is <u>required</u>
Commuter Rail Projects	Commuter rail passenger transportation projects are <u>eligible</u>	No sole-benefit commuter rail projects
Eligible Applicants	Certain public entities– see NOFO	Wide range of applicants
Pathway-Rail Grade Crossing Projects	Eligible	Not eligible
Minimum Funding Request	Minimum \$1 million funding request unless a planning-only project	No minimum funding request amount

RCE NOFO Overview & Key Changes

What information is in 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

Key Parts of a NOFO

- Table of Contents
 - Program Description
 - **Eligibility Information**
 - **Application Contents and Format**
 - **Submission Requirements and Deadlines**
 - **Application Review Information**
 - Award Notices
 - Post Award Requirements and Administration
- Program Summary
- Key Dates
- Required Documents
- Addresses
- FRA Contact Information

Read the NOFO thoroughly and carefully to understand the criteria for eligibility and selection and what information each application must include!

Changes from FY23-24 RCE NOFO

1. Shortened application window (45 days)
2. NOFO located directly on our website and on grants.gov
 - <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy25-26-NOFO-RCE-crossing-safety>
 - <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/362049>
3. Streamlined NOFO and application requirements
 - [Relocates definitions of Key Terms to FRA's website](#)
 - Removes requirement for Articles 4-7 on FRA's Grant Terms and Conditions; combines elements into Project Narrative
 - Includes updated budget table
4. New Cover Page and improved functionality
 - Link to an optional fillable Cover Page PDF
5. New/Expanded Selection Preferences
6. Updates NOFO to align with new Executive Orders

Application Materials

What do I include in my application?

Required Documents



SF 424 Form

This form is your official funding request.



Project Narrative

- I. Cover Page ([optional fillable PDF](#))
- II. Project Summary
- III. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds ([Budget Tables](#))
- IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria
- V. Project Eligibility Criteria
- VI. Detailed Project Description (*Scope and Schedule*)
- VII. Project Location
- VIII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- IX. Project Implementation and Management

Optional Supplemental Information



[Grade Crossing Table](#)



Environmental Compliance Documentation

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



Draft Use/Ownership Agreement (if applicable)

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

Benefit-Cost Analysis is **NOT** required

Safety Data

Safety Benefit Data

- ✓ Safety is an FRA **top** priority
- ✓ Grade Crossings
 - ✓ FRA will analyze data for each grade crossing for each grade crossing's incident history for the past five years (2020-2024)
 - ✓ "5 year incident history"
- ✓ Qualitative and quantitative description of how proposed project will significantly increase overall safety of the system and/or riders.
- ✓ [FRA Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Accident/Incident Data \(Form 57\)](#)



Program Eligibility Issues

Common issues in previous rounds

Minimum Request Amount

- Projects requesting less than \$1,000,000 **must consist solely** of Planning activities
 - Applications requesting funding for a combination of Planning and Project Development activities must exceed \$1,000,000

Matching Funds

- Applicants do not provide a sufficient match/cost share. Note: FRA will not round up a 19.5% match

Scope

- The proposed project has previously received federal funding for a similar or the same scope of work, but applicant does not clarify how proposed work relates to the existing federally funded scope

SF 424 Federal Request

- The Federal amount (18a.) should be the RCE funding request and should not include other non-RCE Federal funding

Grade Crossing

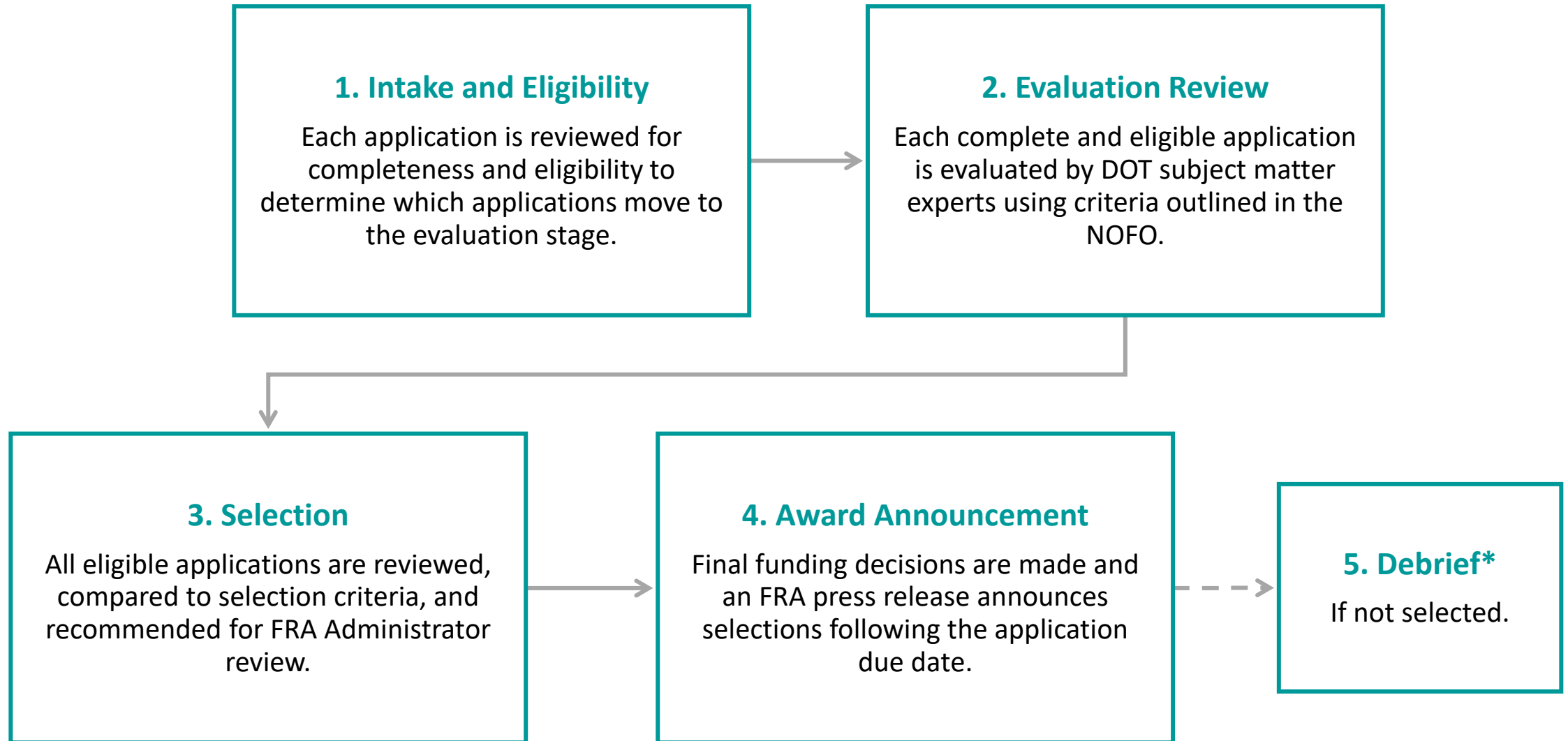
- Grade crossing in question must be **open** and not already separated

Roadwork

- If extensive roadwork is necessary, include a justification for how roadwork elements are directly related to safety at the grade crossing and identify those roadwork costs in the budget table

Evaluation & Selection

Application Review and Selection Process



**To request a debrief, email: FRA-NOFO-Support@dot.gov*

Evaluation Criteria

**Project
Readiness**

**Technical
Merit**

**Project
Benefits**

Selection Preferences



Refer to the [FRA Website](#) for the complete rubric

Selection Preferences

FRA will give preference to eligible projects that:

- Result in one or more grade-separated crossings
- Close grade crossings through Track Relocation
- Result in corridor-wide grade crossing improvements*
- Include the Final Design and Construction lifecycle stages
- Existing Crossing Safety Program projects that have completed or will complete an earlier lifecycle stage from a prior round of the Crossing Safety Program

**NOTE: FRA considers corridor-wide grade crossing improvement projects that directly improve a series of linked, consecutive grade crossings.*

Program Messaging

 *Reference: Section 6(c) of the NOFO for complete information*

Blocked Crossings

- Projects that result in a reduction or elimination of blocked crossings. Describe blocked crossing challenges and metrics and demonstrate how the project will address community mobility and safety issues

Family Friendly

- Projects that align with the Administration's focus on the American family and ensuring safe and efficient travel for American families

Transportation Infrastructure

- Improvement of the condition and safety of transportation infrastructure at grade crossings with high impact to the safe movement of people and goods

Economic Competitiveness

- Projects that promote economic competitiveness by advancing the Nation's domestic energy sector

Innovation Agenda

- Projects that Advance the Department's Innovation Agenda to usher in the golden age of transportation through American innovation

How to Apply

Grant Application Process

A step-by-step process for applying:

- railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/discretionary-grants-application-process



Where is the FY25-26 RCE Program NOFO?

Find the NOFO at:

- [FRA Discretionary Competitive Grant Programs](#)
- [Railroad Crossing Elimination Program](#)

NOTE: Application deadline is **11:59 pm** ET on Monday, June 8, 2026.

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▼

United States Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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Applying for Grants >

Crossing Safety Program / Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Program

Overview: This program provides funding for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods. Applications must be submitted no later than June 8, 2026 by 11:59 PM ET. See the [FY 2025-2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) for more information.

- To view presentation materials from previous Crossing Safety Program (RCE) webinars, visit FRA's [Webinars webpage](#), Crossing Safety Program (RCE) drop-down.

Legislative Authority: This program was authorized in Section 22305 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (49 U.S.C. § 22909). Funding under this NOFO was made available by the FY 2025 and 2026 Advance Appropriations in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Div. J, Tit VIII, Pub. L. No. 117-58 (November 15, 2021).

Funding Available for Award Under FY2025-2026 NOFO: \$1,146,528,000

Eligible Projects: Projects eligible for funding under this grant program include, but are not limited to:

- Grade separation or closure, including through the use of a bridge, embankment, tunnel, or combination thereof;
- Track relocation;
- Improvement or installation of protective devices, signals, signs, or other;
- Measures to improve safety related to a separation, closure, or track relocation project;
- Other means to improve safety if related to the mobility of people and goods at highway-rail grade crossings (including technological solutions);
- The planning, environmental review, and design of an eligible project type.

Eligible Recipients:

[Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Information from FRA](#)

[Grants & Loans Training/Guidance](#)

[Equivalent Labor Protections](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Recap & Reminders

Optional Documentation to Support Application



Hyperlinks
encouraged if
document is
exceedingly long



Detailed Cost
Estimates if
available
*Especially helpful for
applicants applying for
FD/Construction
lifecycle*



Letters
of Support
from Host
Infrastructure
Owners



Project
Schedules



Documentation
of financial
commitments

Best Practices & Helpful Hints

- ☑ Don't skimp on the evaluation and selection criteria
 - ☑ Repeat yourself if necessary
 - ☑ Reviewers key in on
 - ☑ Project Readiness
 - ☑ Project Benefits
 - ☑ Technical Merit
- ☑ Plain language is key
 - ☑ Your reviewers are not all economists and engineers – benefits in non-economic terms and project implementation in non engineering terms

- ☑ [Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Guidance](#)

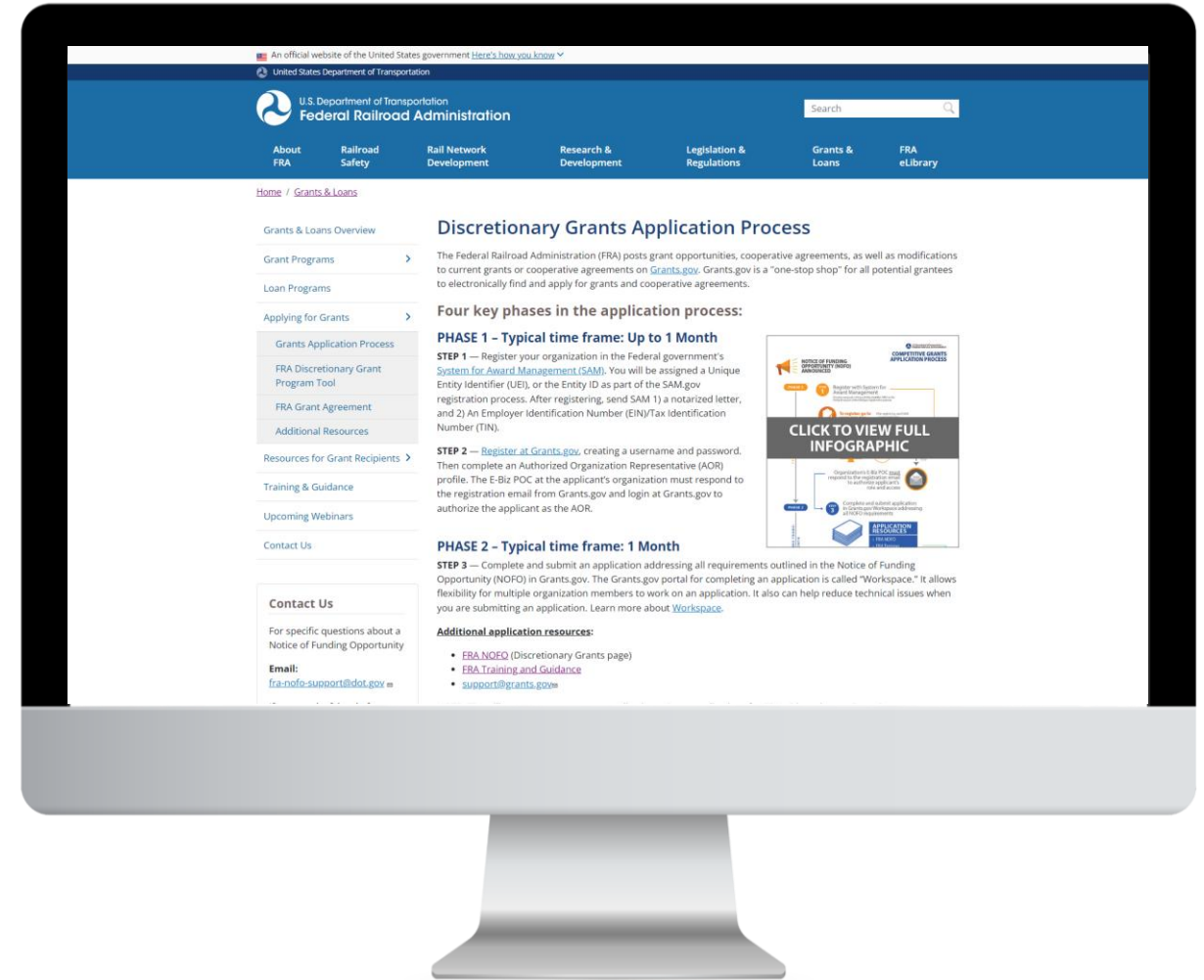
- ☑ Use FRA terminology – “speak FRA”



- ☑ Verify that all budget numbers match corresponding numbers cited in your application package

Resources

- [RCE FY 2025-2026 Webinar](#)
- [RCE FY 2025-2026 NOFO](#)
- [FRA's Competitive Grants Application Process](#)
- [FRA's Discretionary Grant Agreements](#)
- [FRA Environmental Documentation](#)
- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)
- [FRA Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Projects](#)
- [FRA Grants Webinars](#)
- [FRA Grants Videos](#)



Contact Us

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Connect with us at [USDOTFRA](#)



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NOFO Questions:

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

QUESTIONS?