

National Railroad Partnership Program Grant Requirements

(formerly Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail)

General Information

- NOTE: The National Railroad Partnership Program or Federal-State Partnership Program has two buckets of funding: one for the Northeast Corridor (defined at 49 USC 24911(a)(3)), and one for the rest of the passenger rail network, including private passenger rail projects/operators
- Generally, the two funding opportunities are separately noticed
- This NOFO is for the national program only
- FRA's website for the program can be found here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/partnership-program>
- FRA's notice of funding opportunity may be found here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy-24-25-NOFO-FSP-national>
- Due date for applications is January 7, 2026
- Total funding for awards under the program: \$5,070,784,989
- Submit complete applications to www.Grants.gov
- Follow the directions outlined here: [Discretionary Grants Application Process](#)

FRA/DOT Tools

- DOT Definitions of Key Terms for Discretionary Grant Programs can be found here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/definitions-key-terms>
- FRA's environmental review process and requirements can be found here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/environment>
- Recommended to utilize FRA's cost estimate guidance to account for external factors and cost impacts of time, here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/training-guidance/capital-cost-estimating-guidance>
- US DOT Crossing Numbers Tool: [FRA's Crossing Inventory Lookup](#)
- Templates for the various Statements of Work required, including scope, budget, schedule, performance measures are located at <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/PO325>

Tips for First-Time Applicants

- How to Apply for Grants: A basic overview of the federal grant application process, including videos and step-by-step guides, can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>
- Workspace Overview: Grants.gov encourages all applicants to use Workspace. Instructions and details on how it works can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview>
- Applicant Registration: All applicants must register with both Grants.gov and SAM.gov before applying. Note that SAM.gov registration can take up to 10 days, so register early. Details are available here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>
- Applicant Training Videos: Grants.gov offers a library of training videos covering each step of the application process. These can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-training>
- DOT Navigator: Data & Mapping Tools: A collection of U.S. DOT tools to help applicants with data, mapping, and project planning can be found here: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dot-navigator/data-and-mapping-tools>

General Guidance for Discretionary Grants

In addition to the Project Narrative and Statements of Work, projects must include:

- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Environmental Compliance Documentation
- Draft Agreement required under 49 U.S.C 22905(c)(1), if applicable
- Corridor Identification Documentation
- [SF 424—Application for Federal Assistance](#).
- [SF 424A—Budget Information for Non-Construction](#) or [SF 424C—Budget Information for Construction](#).
- [SF 424B—Assurances for Non-Construction](#) or [SF 424D—Assurances for Construction](#).
- [FRA F 30—Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters, Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying](#)
- [FRA F 251—Applicant Financial Capability Questionnaire](#)
- [SF LLL—Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#), if applicable
- Note: A grant may be awarded for only up to 80% of the total project cost and project sponsor must provide a 20% non-federal match.
 - Other federal funds (such as funds from another grant) cannot be used for the non-federal match
 - State or local public funding, private funding, or a combination of public and private funds can serve as the non-Federal match
 - While not required, a higher non-federal match (e.g., 30%, 40%) may be helpful in winning grant
 - If the project's expected total federal cost is over \$80M, it is eligible for phased funding agreement

Eligible Projects¹

49 USC 24911(c) sets forth the eligible projects: *The following capital projects, including acquisition of real property interests, are eligible to receive grants under this section:*

1. *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.*
2. *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.*[NOTE: The September 2025 NOFO includes a footnote specifying that “a project that enhances safety including grade crossing improvement is eligible under this criterion provided the project also demonstrates an improvement to intercity passenger rail service.”]
3. *A project to expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service.*
4. *A group of related projects described in paragraphs (1) through (3).*
5. *The planning, environmental studies, and final design for a project or group of projects described in paragraphs (1) through (4).*

Eligible Applicants

49 USC 24911(a)(1) defines the entities eligible for grants under the program, including

- *a State (including the District of Columbia);*
- *a group of States;*
- *an Interstate Compact;*
- *a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States;*
- *a political subdivision of a State;*

¹ Note: italic text in this document indicates statutory text.

- Amtrak, acting on its own behalf or under a cooperative agreement with 1 or more States;
- a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or
- any combination of the entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (G).

PROJECT NARRATIVE

(NOTE: Project Narrative must not exceed 25 pages (excluding cover page, tables of contents, and supporting notation)

I. Cover Page (See Section 4(a)(I) of NOFO)

- Must list elements in table or formatted list
 - Project Title
 - Applicant(s) (both lead and joint, if applicable)
 - Federal Funding Requested under the NOFO
 - Amount of proposed Non-Federal share, including potential private sector participation for non-NEC projects (see 24911(d)(2)(B)(ii))
 - Sources of proposed Non-Federal share
 - Amount of other Federal funding, if applicable
 - Source (s) of other Federal funding, if applicable
 - Total Project Cost
 - Capital Cost Estimate
 - All costs and the value of any resources needed to complete the Project Development, Final Design, and Construction stages of a capital project.
 - Total cost by Lifecycle Stage(s) for which funding is requested under this NOFO (list each Lifecycle Stage and cost separately)
 - Is right of way acquisition (ROW) part of this funding request? (Please provide funding request associated with ROW).
 - City(ies), State(s) where the project is located
 - Congressional District(s) where the project is located
 - Geospatial data for project location(s) in decimal degrees (with at least five decimal places of precision).
 - If a track segment or corridor, provide start and end point data.
 - Current Lifecycle Stage of project at time of application
 - Anticipated completion date of current Lifecycle Stage
 - Application Lifecycle Stage(s) proposed to be funded by this NOFO
 - Existing Intercity Passenger Rail service(s) on routes not more than 750 miles benefiting from the project
 - If applicable, existing Long-Distance service(s) (routes greater than 750 miles) benefiting from the project
 - If applicable, existing Commuter Rail service(s) benefitting from the project
 - If applicable, what Corridor, as identified in [FY 2022 CID Selections](#), is benefitting from the project
 - Host Railroad/infrastructure owner(s) of project assets and property
 - Other impacted Railroad(s)
 - Tenant Railroad(s), if applicable
 - If applicable, is a [49 U.S.C. 22905](#)-compliant Railroad Agreement in place or pending?
 - LOI/PFA requested?
 - If LOI requested for Projects in Project Development, provide amount of future request of Final Design/Construction request.

- If PFA requested for Final Design and Construction:
 - (a) Provide amount of request under this NOFO for initial obligation.
 - (b) Provide amount of request under this NOFO for contingent commitment (equal to the remaining amount of the project cost).

II. Project Summary (See Section 4(a)(II) of NOFO)

- Summarize the description of the project and how it will meet one or more of the statutory goals of the program; 4-6 sentences
- Preferences for non-NEC projects (49 USC 22911(d)(2)(A)): *the Secretary shall— (A) give preference to eligible projects—*
 - *for which Amtrak is not the sole applicant;*
 - *that improve the financial performance, reliability, service frequency, or address the state of good repair of an Amtrak route; and*
 - *that are identified in, and consistent with, a corridor inventory prepared under the Corridor Identification and Development Program pursuant to section 25101 [49 USCS § 25101]; and*
- Considerations for non-NEC projects (49 USC 22911(d)(2)(B)): *the Secretary shall— (B) take into account—*
 - *the cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project, including anticipated private and public benefits relative to the costs of the proposed project, including—*
 - *effects on system and service performance, including as measured by applicable metrics set forth in [part 273 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations](#) (or successor regulations);*
 - *effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, trip or transit time, greenhouse gas emissions, and resilience;*
 - *anticipated positive economic and employment impacts, including development in areas near passenger stations, historic districts, or other opportunity zones;*
 - *efficiencies from improved connections with other modes; and*
 - *ability to meet existing or anticipated demand;*
 - *the degree to which the proposed project's business plan considers potential private sector participation in the financing, construction, or operation of the proposed project;*
 - *the applicant's past performance in developing and delivering similar projects, and previous financial contributions;*
 - *whether the applicant has, or will have—*
 - *the legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the project;*
 - *satisfactory continuing access to the equipment or facilities; and*
 - *the capability and willingness to maintain the equipment or facilities;*
 - *if applicable, the consistency of the project with planning guidance and documents set forth by the Secretary or otherwise required by law;*
 - *whether the proposed project serves historically unconnected or underconnected communities; and*
 - *any other relevant factors, as determined by the Secretary*

III. Grant Funds, Sources and Use of Project Funds (See Section 4(a)(III) of NOFO)

- Provide a project budget listing all Federal and non-Federal funding sources
 - Federal funds should include applicant is applying for, has been awarded, or intends to use
 - Funding sources should be grouped into two categories
 1. Requested FSP Program grant; and
 2. Non-Federal match for the FSP Program Identify all
- Explain the planned and committed funding from all non-federal sources for the project

- Specify whether non-Federal funds are currently available for the project, or if the applicant will need to secure the non-Federal funds upon selection
- Should submit evidence of funding sources, like board resolution, letter of support from the State, or a budget document highlighting the line item or section committing funds
- Explain whether the requested Federal funding must be obligated or spent by a certain date due to dependencies or relationships with other Federal or non-Federal funding or other factors
- Identify and describe Lifecycle Stage(s) and/or project component(s) that could be candidates for subsequent FSP Program funding
- Applicants may utilize Table 3 in the NOFO to describe project funding

IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria (See Section 4(a)(IV) of NOFO)

- Ensure the applicant is eligible to receive the grant, including:
 - (A) a State (including the District of Columbia);
 - (B) a group of States;
 - (C) an Interstate Compact;
 - (D) a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States;
 - (E) a political subdivision of a State;
 - (F) Amtrak, acting on its own behalf or under a cooperative agreement with 1 or more States; a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or
 - (G) any combination of the entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (G).
- Explain how the applicant fits into one or more of the eligibilities (and where applicable, provide enabling legislation and citations)
- If a joint application, must include signed statement from each entity and provide for a lead applicant
- Applications with Amtrak and one or more states, provide a signed cooperative agreement for the project

V. Project Eligibility Criteria (See Section 4(a)(V) of NOFO)

- Explain how project meets the eligibility criteria
- To the extent the project will involve safety improvements to a highway-grade crossing, explain the project elements, including the current crossing and how the project will improve it
 - o Include all elements of the project and especially any technological improvements
 - o Identify the challenges for the current crossing and how the project will improve them
 - Important to include current railroad operations, highway operations, bus routes, pedestrian and bicycle usage, and road safety concerns

VI. Corridor Identification Program Coordination (if applicable) (See Section 4(a)(VI) of NOFO)

- Applicants who are Corridor Identification and Development (CID) Sponsors must explain the status of the sponsor's corridor within the CID Program
- For applicants who are not CID CID Sponsors, a letter of support from the CID CID Sponsor is encouraged

VII. Detailed Project Description (See Section 4(a)(VII) of NOFO)

- The applicant must include a detailed project description that expands upon the brief project summary, including, at minimum
 - o a project schedule showing completed and expected start and end dates for project activities that

- o corresponds to each Lifecycle Stage;
- o additional background on the transportation challenges the project aims to address;
- o a summary of current and proposed railroad operations in the project area, including service frequency and identification of all railroad owners and operators including types of passenger or freight service;
- o the expected users and beneficiaries of the project;
- o proposed project outcomes and any other information the applicant deems necessary to justify the project
- Applicants should provide outcomes data consistent with Table 5 in the NOFO (to the maximum extent practicable)

VIII. Safety Benefit Data (See Section 4(a)(VIII) of NOFO)

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit safety justifications for the project that rely on standardized, objective safety metrics and data
 - o FRA Safety Data Dashboard: <https://data.transportation.gov/stories/s/FRA-Safety-Data/dakf-i7zd>.
- If a grade crossing project, FRA will evaluate a detailed history of each crossing's incident history for the past five calendar years (2020-2024)
 - o Recommended to highlight how the grade crossing project will reduce risk

IX. Project Location (See Section 4(a)(IX) of NOFO)

- Applicants must include geospatial data for the project, as well as a map of the project's location
 - o Geospatial data must be expressed in decimal degrees for latitude and longitude with at least five decimal places of precision
 - o If it is a length of track or corridor development project, provide the start and end coordinates for each corridor or segment
- All Congressional districts in which the project will take place should be provided
- Milepost, railroad, and subdivision identifiers can also be provided and accompanied by corresponding latitudes and longitudes
 - o DOT's mapping tool can be found here: <https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a>
- For grade crossing projects utilize Table 6 in the NOFO for grade crossing data
 - o DOT grade crossing inventory number, US DOT Crossing Numbers Tool: [FRA's Crossing Inventory Lookup](#)
 - o Grade crossing location using latitude and longitude coordinates, with at least five decimal places of precision
 - Pathway-rail crossings that do not have without numbers or data, applicants should provide as much locational data as possible.
 - o Describe the proposed improvement requested in the application, using "new, separated, closed or improved" (such as gate additions, lights, etc.)
 - o The operator(s) (i.e., the entity(ies) that operates on the railroad right-of-way);
 - o The property/infrastructure owner (i.e., the entity(ies) that owns the underlying property or infrastructure within the railroad right-of-way);
 - o 5-year incident history that includes any minor or major accidents, fatalities, and other relevant safety events
 - FRA crossing tool found here: <https://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/default.aspx>

X. Evaluation and Selection Criteria (See Section 4(a)(X) of NOFO)

- Statutory Project Selection Criteria:
- In selecting projects, the Secretary will consider different criteria depending upon the project being on or off

the NEC (24911(d)(1),(2)):

(A) give preference to eligible projects—

(i) for which Amtrak is not the sole applicant;

(ii) that improve the financial performance, reliability, service frequency, or address the state of good repair of an Amtrak route; and

(iii) that are identified in, and consistent with, a corridor inventory prepared under the Corridor Identification and Development Program pursuant to section 25101; and

(B) take into account—

(i) the cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project, including anticipated private and public benefits relative to the costs of the proposed project, including—

(I) effects on system and service performance, including as measured by applicable metrics set forth in part 273 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations);

(II) effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, trip or transit time, greenhouse gas emissions, and resilience;

(III) anticipated positive economic and employment impacts, including development in areas near passenger stations, historic districts, or other opportunity zones;

(IV) efficiencies from improved connections with other modes; and

(V) ability to meet existing or anticipated demand;

(ii) the degree to which the proposed project's business plan considers potential private sector participation in the financing, construction, or operation of the proposed project;

(iii) the applicant's past performance in developing and delivering similar projects, and previous financial contributions;

(iv) whether the applicant has, or will have—

(I) the legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the project;

(II) satisfactory continuing access to the equipment or facilities; and

(III) the capability and willingness to maintain the equipment or facilities;

(v) if applicable, the consistency of the project with planning guidance and documents set forth by the Secretary or otherwise required by law;

(vi) whether the proposed project serves historically unconnected or underconnected communities; and

(vii) any other relevant factors, as determined by the Secretary

- Applicants must provide a thorough discussion of how it meets the evaluation and selection criteria
- Evaluations will be made on project readiness, technical merit, and project outcomes
- Include quantifiable railroad data, such as
 - o information on typical daily, weekly, or annual train movement by operator;
 - o ridership data for passenger operations;
 - o failure or safety incidents;
 - o service delays; and primary expected project outcomes such as increased ridership, increased trains, increased speed, reduced delays, improved rail network asset condition and performance, enhanced safety, or similar outcomes and benefits

X. Project Implementation and Management (See Section 4(a)(IX) of NOFO)

- Applicants must describe proposed project implementation and project management arrangements.
- Provide descriptions of the expected arrangements for project contracting (Construction, maintenance, and operation), contract oversight and control, change-order management, risk management, and conformance to Federal requirements for progress reporting (here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/grants-loans/fra-reports>)

Other Application Items

- Project Specific Terms and Conditions – a statement of work (SOW), estimated project schedule, project budget, and performance measures for the proposed project (using [Articles 4-7 of Attachment 2: Project Specific Terms and Conditions of FRA's grant template](#))
 - o SOW should include detail describing the expected outcomes of the proposed work
 - o SOW should also describe how the applicant will monitor progress toward completing project tasks and deliverables
- Benefit-Cost Analysis –
 - o DOT benefit cost analysis guidance – <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2025-05/Benefit%20Cost%20Analysis%20Guidance%202025%20Update%20II%20%28Final%29.pdf>
 - o May utilize the benefit-cost analysis spreadsheet template, here <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/office-secretary/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-spreadsheet-template>
 - o For Grade Crossing Improvements utilize [GradeDec](#), a highway-rail grade crossing investment analysis tool, to provide grade crossing investment decision support and to assist in providing supplemental information to the benefit-cost analysis
- Environmental compliance documentation -- Applicants should explain what Federal (and, if appropriate, State, Tribal, and local) environmental compliance and permitting requirements have been completed.
 - o Describe the permits, approvals, and authorizations required for the project, their current status, and the expected timeline for completion
 - o If completed, indicate type of environmental document and date of completion
 - o If not completed, but underway, detail the type of NEPA review underway, where the project is in the NEPA process, and indicate the anticipated date of completion of all NEPA and other permits
- Draft or finalized agreement(s) -- Applicants must provide information about the status of agreements with infrastructure owners, as applicable, including under [49 U.S.C. 22905\(c\)\(1\)](#).
- Corridor ID Documentation -- For applicants who are not Corridor Sponsors, a letter of support from the Corridor Sponsor is encouraged.