

RAIL

MOVING AMERICA FORWARD



FY 2024 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program (FSP-National) NOFO Webinar

Presented by:

Sergio Coronado • Caitlyn Mitchell • Nataka Neely • Laura Shick



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

October 10, 2024



Welcome:

Office of Rail Program
Development Director
Michael Longley

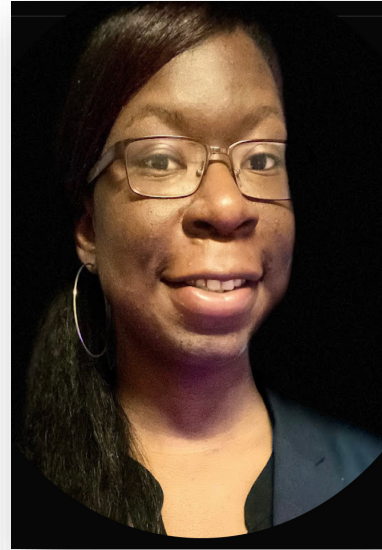
FRA Presenters



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Agenda

- 1 Program Overview
- 2 How to Apply
- 3 Best Practices
 - Project Narrative
 - Statement of Work (Attachment 2: Project-Specific Terms and Conditions, Articles 4-7)
 - Benefit-Cost Analysis
 - Environmental Readiness
- 4 Q & A

FY24 Fed-State Partnership Program Overview— National

Program Purpose & Funding Overview

Purpose

- 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).

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published on the FRA website on September 30, 2024
 - **Approximately \$1.06 billion available** in FY 2024 supplemental advance and annual appropriations
 - Applications due by **11:59 pm ET on December 16, 2024**
- Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. There are no exceptions.



[FY24 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program for Projects Not Located on the Northeast Corridor \(FSP-National\) NOFO](#)

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
- Any combination of the above

Program Eligibility

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.*

Program Eligibility

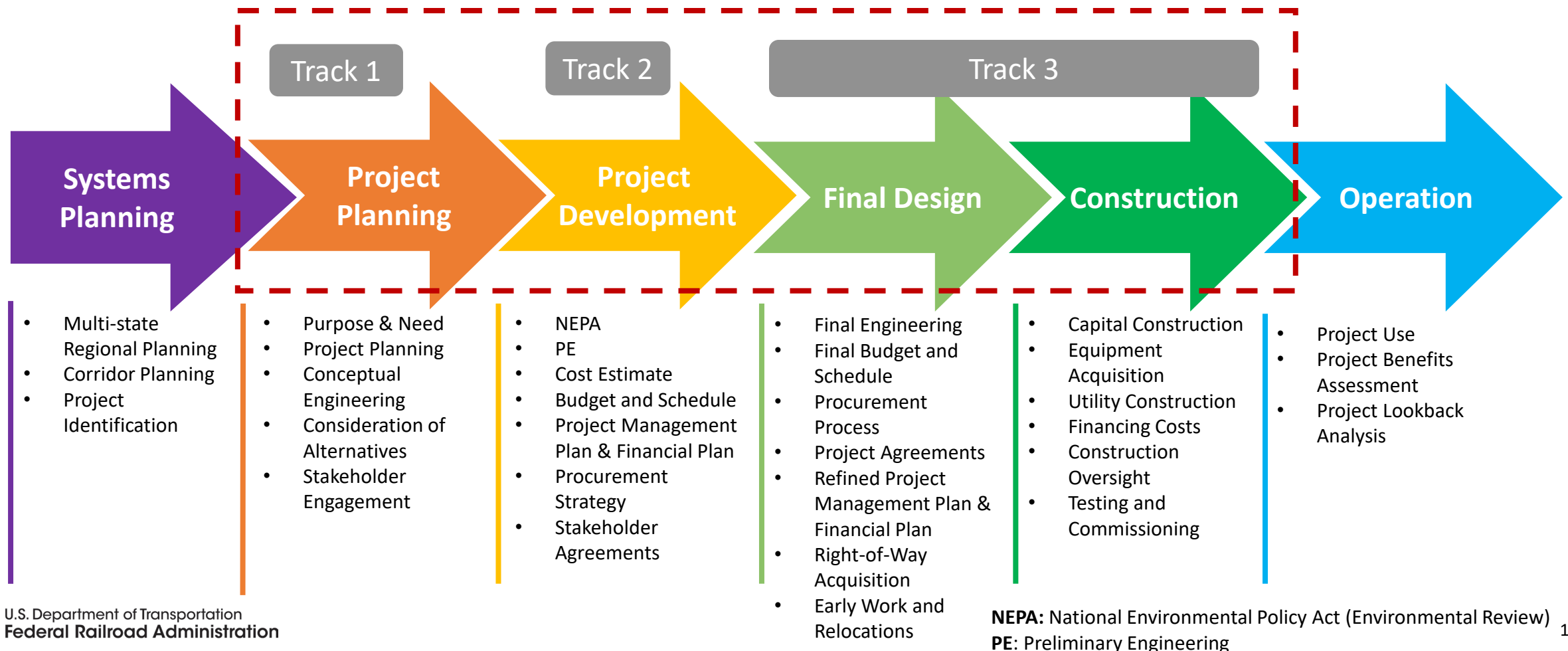
Non-Federal Match Requirements

Requirements

- Federal share of total costs for a project **shall not exceed 80%**
- A **minimum 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
- Identify the source(s) of matching funds and clearly reflect these funds 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

Role of the Project Lifecycle in Grant Funding Opportunities

- 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



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

Corridor Identification and Development Program (CID)

- **Intercity passenger rail planning and development program** that will help guide development throughout the country and create a pipeline of intercity passenger rail projects ready for Implementation as authorized in 49 U.S.C. 25101(a).

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 was issued for NEC projects earlier this year.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project Readiness Criteria:

- Demonstrated progress on agreements
 - Host Infrastructure Agreements – 22905 Agreements
- Financial Readiness
 - Availability of match at time of application
- Coordination and commitments from project partners
 - CID coordination and documentation
- Demonstrated progress and understanding of applicable environmental requirements
- Selection of appropriate of Lifecycle Stage(s) with demonstrated progress toward preceding Lifecycle Stage(s)

Project Readiness Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria
- Assigned a project readiness risk rating
 - Unacceptable
 - High risk
 - Medium risk
 - Low risk

❖ *Refer to section E.1.ii.A 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 limited or no information necessary to assess the project readiness criteria; application does not demonstrate support, progress, or completion of required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites; or application contains one or more significant barriers that would prevent project delivery.	Application provides insufficient information to assess the project readiness criteria; application does not demonstrate sufficient support, progress, or completion of required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites but indicates risk to advancing the project without foreseeable delays; or application contains a barrier that would likely prevent project delivery in any of these areas.	Application provides sufficient information to assess the project readiness criteria; demonstrates support, progress, or completion on one or more required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites, but indicates some risk 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 thorough and complete information and evidence to assess the project readiness criteria, and demonstrates strong support, progress, or completion on required Lifecycle Stage(s) pre-requisites, and indicates minimal risk to advancing the project in a timely manner; 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
- Deployment of innovative technology, project delivery methods and use of innovative 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.ii.B of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project Benefits Criteria:

- Effects on system and service performance
 - As measured by FRA's metrics & minimum standards for IPR rule
- 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
- Anticipated positive economic and employment impacts in areas near stations, historic districts or other opportunity zones
- Service of historically unconnected or under-connected communities.

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.ii.C 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*

Selection Preferences and Program Messaging

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*)

Final Design and/or Construction

- FRA is interested in supporting projects that are seeking funding for **Final Design and/or Construction** directly improve passenger service frequency, reliability, and financial performance and **develop a foundation for future expansion of intercity passenger rail** by reducing the State of Good Repair backlog.

Long Distance Set-Aside

- Minimum of \$6,277,500 for projects that benefit (in whole or in part) a long-distance route

Other Requirements & Restrictions

- **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 solely Commuter Rail Passenger Transportation (*under 49 U.S.C. 24405(f)*)
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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

FRA Buy America

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

The screenshot shows the Federal Railroad Administration website. The header includes the U.S. Department of Transportation logo and navigation links for About FRA, Railroad Safety, Rail Network Development, Research & Development, Legislation & Regulations, Grants & Loans, and FRA eLibrary. A search bar is also present. The main content area displays the title 'Buy America Sample Component List (List for illustration purposes only)' and provides metadata: Document Series: Policy and Guidance; Author: Federal Railroad Administration Chief Counsel; Subject: Buy America; Keywords: Buy America, Components. A link to the PDF document is provided. The document preview shows a table with two columns: 'System/Group' and 'Components'.

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 information is in 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
- 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 is the FY24 Partnership Program NOFO?

FRA Website:

- railroads.dot.gov/federal-state-partnership-intercity-passenger

Grants.Gov (Under Related Documents):

- grants.gov/search-results-detail/356598

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 "Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Grant Program". It features an overview, a list of grant programs, and a sidebar with "Related Links" such as "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Information from FRA" and "Grants & Loans Training/Guidance". A red box highlights a key announcement: "Applications are due no later than 11:59 pm ET on December 16, 2024. See the FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (PDE) for more information." Other highlighted text includes "Register for the FY 2024 FSP Grant Program (National) NOFO Webinar on October 10, 2024, from 2:00-3:00 pm ET." and "Register for the FY24 FSP-National NOFO Q&A Office Hours Webinar on Thursday, October 17, 2024 from 2-2:30 pm ET." The page also mentions funding for projects not located on the Northeast Corridor (FSP-National) and projects located on the Northeast Corridor (FSP-NEC).

Where do I find “How to Apply” information?

Search Grants tab on **Grants.gov**:

GRANTS.GOV
FIND. APPLY. SUCCEED.™

Help | Register | Login

Search site content

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

SEARCH GRANTS

[Search Tips](#) [Export Results](#)

BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA:

Keyword(s):

Opportunity Number:

Assistance Listings:

SORT BY: Relevance (Descending)

DATE RANGE: All Available

Opportunity Number	Opportunity Title	Agency	Opportunity Status	Posted Date	Close Date
FR-FSP-24-003	FY24 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program	DOT-FRA	Posted	09/30/2024	12/16/2024

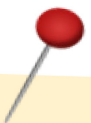
Assistance Listing # 20.326

Click the **Opportunity Number** to see 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
- Corridor ID Documentation (if applicable)
- Statement of Work (Articles 4-7)
 - Scope, Schedule, Budget and Performance Measures
- Environmental Compliance (NEPA) 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*
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- 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 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:

Additional Information

Agency Name: DOT - Federal Railroad Administration

Description: This program funds capital projects that reduce the state of good repair backlog, improve performance, or expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service.

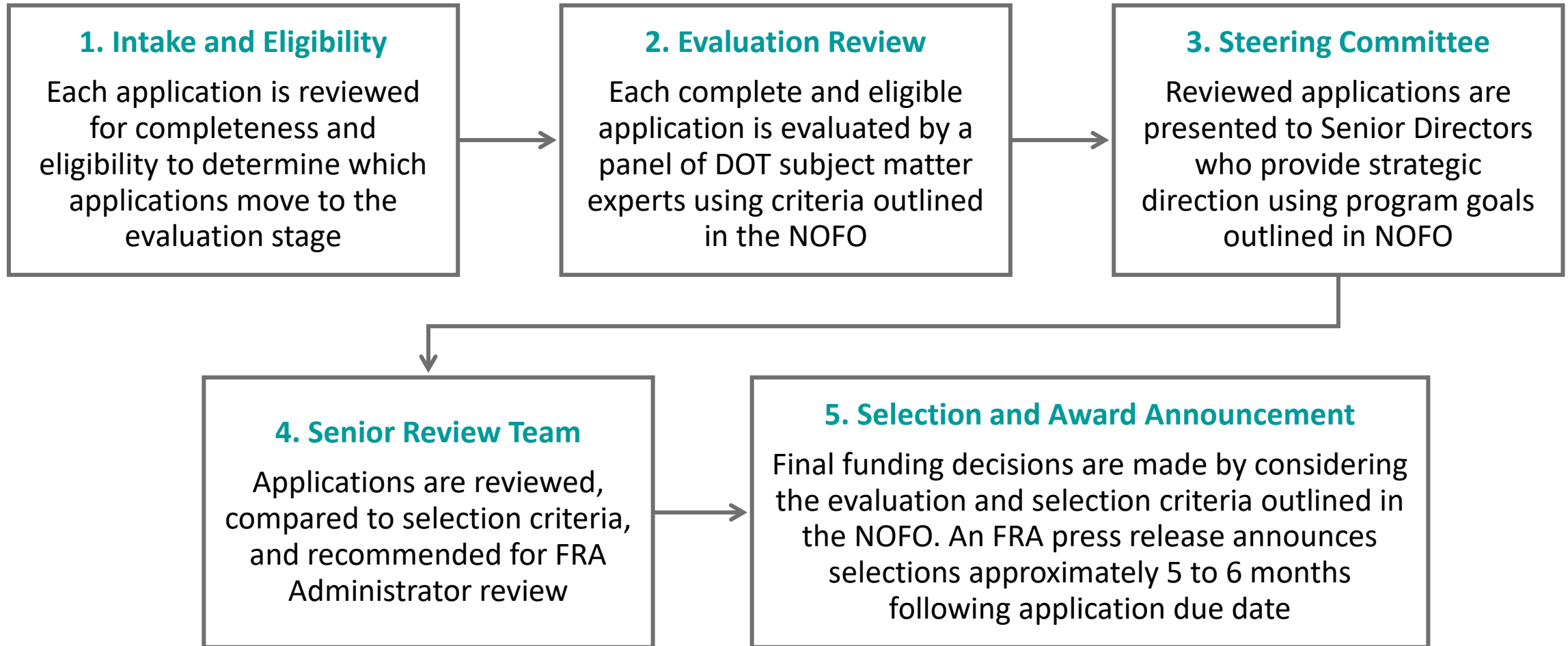
Link to Additional Information: [FY24 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program](#)

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.

[Grants.gov Customer Support](#)

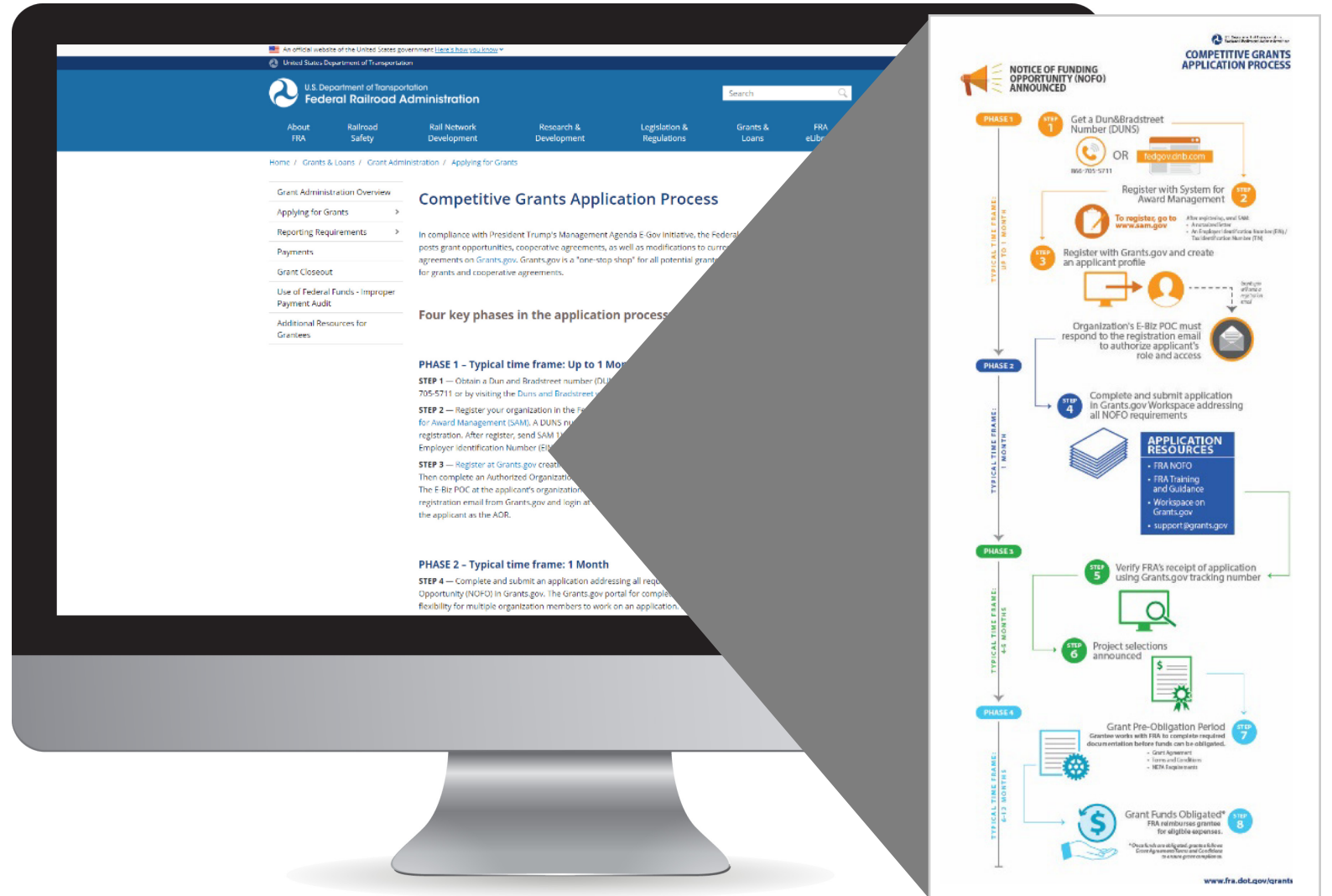
Application Review and Selection Process



Grant Application Process

A step-by-step process for applying:

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



Best Practices

Best Practices & Helpful Hints

- ✓ 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
 - Attachment 2: Project-Specific Terms and Conditions, Articles 4-7
 - Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)
 - Environmental Readiness



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Funding Opportunity for projects located off the Northeast Corridor for the Fiscal Year 2024 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program

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

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO or notice).

SUMMARY: This notice (FSP-National) details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for projects not located on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) under the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP Program) for FY 2024. This notice solicits applications for FSP Program funds made available by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, and Division J of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The opportunity described in this notice is made available under Assistance Listings Number 20.326, "Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail."

DATES: Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, December 16, 2024. Applications that are incomplete or received after 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on December 16, 2024 will not be considered for funding. See Section D of this notice for additional information on the application process.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted via www.Grants.gov. Only applicants who comply with all submission requirements described in this notice and submit applications through www.Grants.gov will be eligible for award. For any supporting application materials

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. Corridor Identification
- VII. Detailed Project Description
- VIII. Project Location
- IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- X. Project Implementation and 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 – Cover Page does not count against 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, lead applicant, project cost, lifecycle stage, intercity route benefitting, infrastructure owner
- ☑ Route information and LOI/PFA Requests

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- ☑ Briefly describe the project in **4 to 6 sentences** 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

Best Practices – Project Funding (Table 1)

- ✔ Project budgets should show how different funding sources will contribute to each task and Lifecycle Stage
- ✔ Identify other Federal funds (including Amtrak) and associated non-Federal share amount/source
- ✔ Demonstrate availability of non-Federal funds. Evidence may include:
 - Board Resolution
 - Funding commitment letter signed by a State
 - Budget Document
- ✔ Be sure to highlight the section demonstrating that funds have been committed to the proposed project.

Task #	Task Name/Project Component and Lifecycle Stage	Cost	Percentage of Total Cost	Source of Funds and Citation, as applicable
1				
2				
Total Project Cost				
Federal FSP funding requested in this application				
Non-Federal funding		Cash: In-Kind:		
Non-Federal Funding (State)		Cash: In-Kind:		
Non-Federal Funding (Private Sector)		Cash: In-Kind:		
Non-Federal Federal Funding (Local)		Cash: In-Kind:		
Other Federal funding committed and pending (e.g., Federal Transit Administration, congressionally directed/earmark, other FRA grant program funds—including previous FSP grants, etc.)		Committed Amount: Pending Amount:		
Note: If there are multiple sources of other Federal funding, please break funding down by each source. ¹				
Other non-Federal funding				

Best Practices – Project Funding (Table 2)

Table 2 is required only if seeking a Phased Funding Agreement

- ☑ Applicants should enter the request as reflected by their anticipated cost schedule
- ☑ FRA will determine actual obligation schedule based on availability of funding

Lifecycle Stage	Initial Obligation Request (FY 2024)	FY 2025 Obligation Request	FY 2026 Obligation Request	Total FSP Request
Final Design	\$	\$	\$	\$
Construction	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total FSP Request	\$	\$	\$	\$

Best Practices – Project Narrative

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CID Sponsor:

- ☑ Explain the status of your corridor (e.g., completed Step 1, beginning Step 2)
- ☑ Explain how the project is consistent with planning efforts under CID
- ☑ Demonstrate the following:
 - Support of participant stakeholders
 - Support of governance structure
 - Institutional capacity
 - Funding for implementation and operations
 - Benefit for the Corridor.

Not CID Sponsor:

- ☑ A letter of support from the Corridor Sponsor is encouraged.

Best Practices – Project Narrative

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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
- ☑ Use Table 3 in this section to demonstrate project outcomes
- ☑ Include photographs or diagrams
- ☑ Identify all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries

Best Practices – Detailed Project Description (Table 3)

- ☑ Table 3 is a template applicants can use to organize project outcomes
- ☑ Provide the requested data to the maximum extent practicable
- ☑ Appropriate rounding or best estimates are acceptable
- ☑ Where data is not available, applicants may provide a qualitative explanation of the anticipated impact of the project

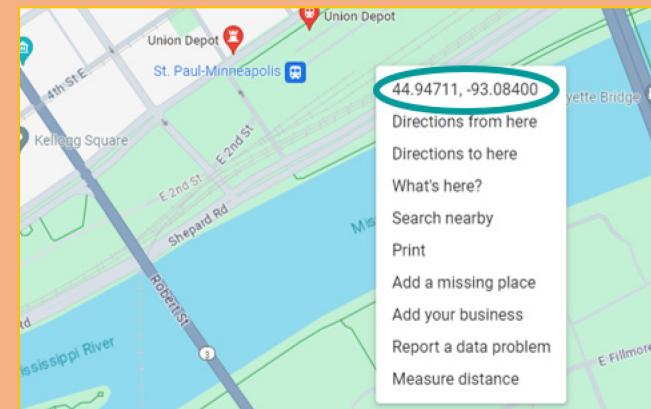
Ridership in the Project Area						
	No Build Scenario		Build Scenario			
Total Annual Ridership						
Annual Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) Ridership						
Annual Commuter Passenger Rail (CR) Ridership (if applicable)						
Train Counts in the Project Area						
	No Build Scenario		Build Scenario			
Total Weekly Trains						
Weekly Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) Trains						
Weekly Commuter Rail (CR) Trains (if applicable)						
Weekly Freight Trains (if applicable)						
Operating Speeds in the Length of Track Improvement Area						
	No Build, IPR	Build, IPR	No Build, CR	Build, CR	No Build, Freight	Build, Freight
Average Operating Speed (mph)						
Highest Maximum Authorized Speed (mph)						
Lowest Maximum Authorized Speed (mph)						
Average Scheduled Travel Time (Time/Trip)						

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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

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- IV. Applicant Eligibility Criteria
- V. Project Eligibility Criteria
- VI. Corridor Identification
- VII. Detailed Project Description
- VIII. Project Location
- IX. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- X. Project Implementation and Management**

- ✓ 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—

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

Best Practices – Attachment 2

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

- ☑ Use templates for the
- Statement Of Work (SOW- Article 4)
 - Award Dates & Estimated Project Schedule (Article 5)
 - Award and Project Financial Information (Article 6)
 - Performance Measurement Information (Article 7)
- ☑ **All four Articles (4-7) are required to meet eligibility standards**

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FRA Discretionary Grant Agreements

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.

FRA Grant Agreements – Effective December 11, 2023

The new FRA Grant Agreement consists of three parts:

- [Attachment 1: Standard Terms and Conditions – February 15, 2024](#)
- [Attachment 2: Project-Specific Terms and Conditions - December 11, 2023](#)
 - [Article 4 Statement of Work](#)
 - [Article 5 Award Dates and Estimated Project Schedule](#)
 - [Article 6 Award and Project Financial Information](#)
 - [Article 7 Performance Measurement Information](#)
- [Terms and Conditions Exhibits – December 11, 2023](#)

Restoration & Enhancement Program Only:

- [Attachment 2: Restoration & Enhancement Grant Program Project Specific Terms and Conditions - July 15, 2024](#)
 - [Article 4 R&E Statement of Work](#)
 - [Article 5 R&E Award Dates and Estimated Project Schedule](#)
 - [Article 6 R&E Award and Project Financial Information](#)
 - [Article 7 R&E Performance Measurement Information](#)

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 – Attachment 2

- ☑ 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 – Purpose

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

BCA – Overview of Steps

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

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 CO₂ 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 analysis for construction should present a *single* project
 - One *application* can contain multiple projects
 - 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 more than 30 years of operation
 - Projects with useful life beyond 30 years will have residual value (stations in particular) → Use GAAP straight line depreciation

BCA – Scope of Analysis

- 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

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 marginal 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 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



BCA – Modal Diversion

- Modal diversion is a marginal choice; *ONLY* count marginal effects
- New/induced users value the project less than existing users (Follow USDOT'S [BCA Guidance](#))
- Lost revenue from passengers changing to other modes is a transfer, NOT a benefit (Follow USDOT'S [BCA Guidance](#))

Example

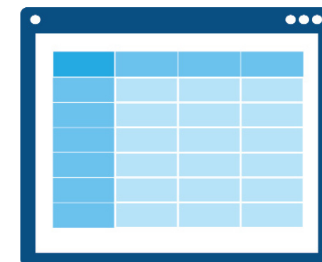
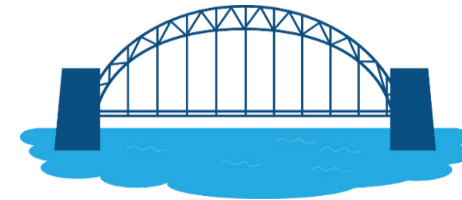
Avoided rail-to-truck diversion could result in...

- Increased pavement damage
- Increased harmful emissions
- Increased congestion on highways
- Decreased safety



BCA – Final Advice

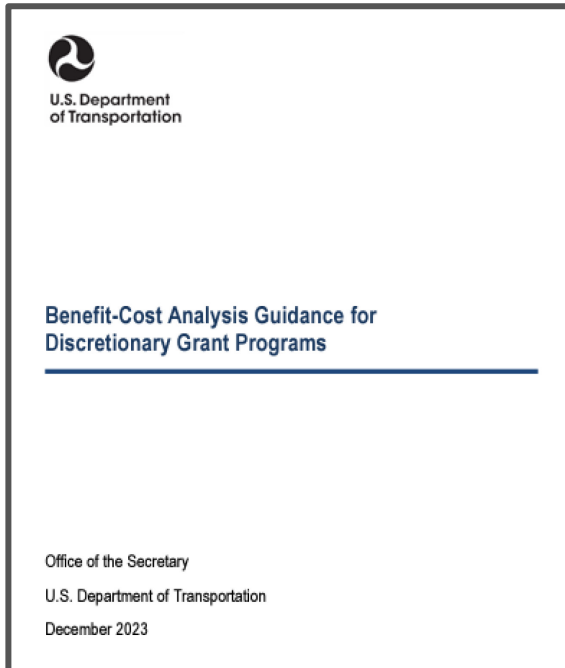
- ✓ **Document your assumptions in as much detail as possible.**
- ✓ If your application contains multiple projects, analyze benefits and costs of each project *separately*.
- ✓ If your BCA includes modal diversion, include YOUR freight and/or passenger traffic counts.
- ✓ Include the specific Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for each grade crossing project.
- ✓ If your BCA includes modal diversion, include YOUR passenger counts and AADT.
- ✓ ***You must include an unlocked Excel spreadsheet that clearly shows your calculations and discounting.***



BCA – Guidance/Online Resources

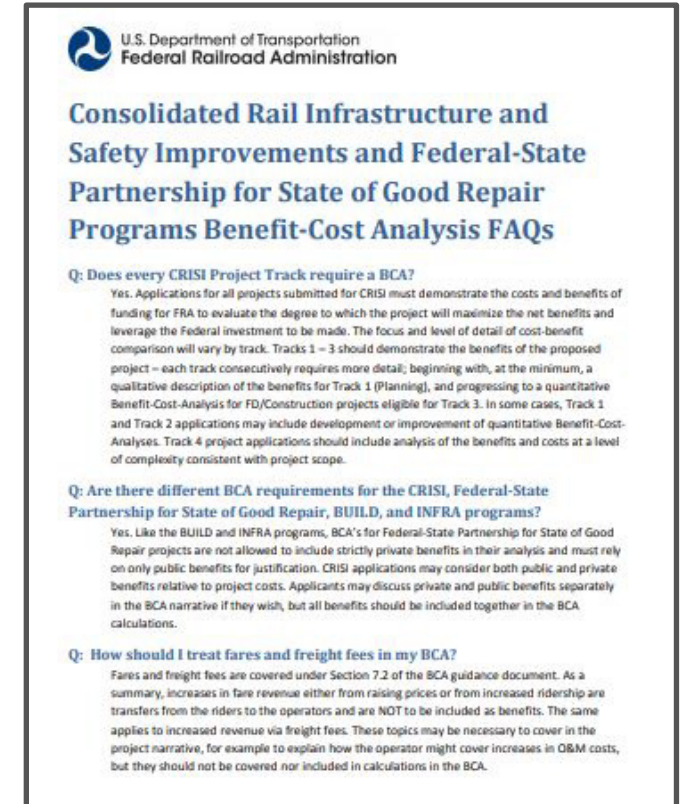
DOT Resources

- [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



Best Practices— Environmental Readiness

Environmental Readiness

Environmental review is required for all FRA grant-funded projects

Requirements include:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
 - "Umbrella law" governing environmental review
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106
 - Historic buildings & structures, and archaeological resources
- Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act
 - Parks, recreational areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7
 - Species and habitat
- 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 grant 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 obligation of any grant.**
 - For obligation of Track 1 and 2 grants: A simple administrative CE documented by FRA as part of the grant agreement.
 - For obligation of Track 3 grants: FRA must approve or adopt a NEPA decision document (CE Worksheet, EA/FONSI, or EIS/ROD) that covers the environmental impacts of construction and operation of the project.
- FRA may be able to **adopt environmental documents** prepared by/for other Federal agencies.
- If an approved NEPA document for your project exists but the **scope has changed** or several years have passed, preparation of a NEPA Re-Evaluation or Supplemental or new NEPA document, as appropriate, will be necessary depending on the nature and extent of the changes.

Environmental Readiness – Track 1 or 2

Apply if...

Track 1 or 2



- You're seeking grant funding to pay for **development of a NEPA document** and conducting associated environmental analyses.
 - Post-selection, FRA coordinates with grantees to formally determine the NEPA Class of Action (CoA) and NEPA document required.

There are 3 types of NEPA CoA:

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

And then...

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

- Project description
- Location (include maps, photos)
 - Include construction footprint, as well as construction access and equipment staging locations
- ROW acquisition
- Construction methodology(ies)
- 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, USCG)
- Anticipated coordination/consultation with resource and/or regulatory agencies (e.g., SHPO, USFWS, NMFS)

Environmental Readiness – Track 1 or 2

Track 1 or 2



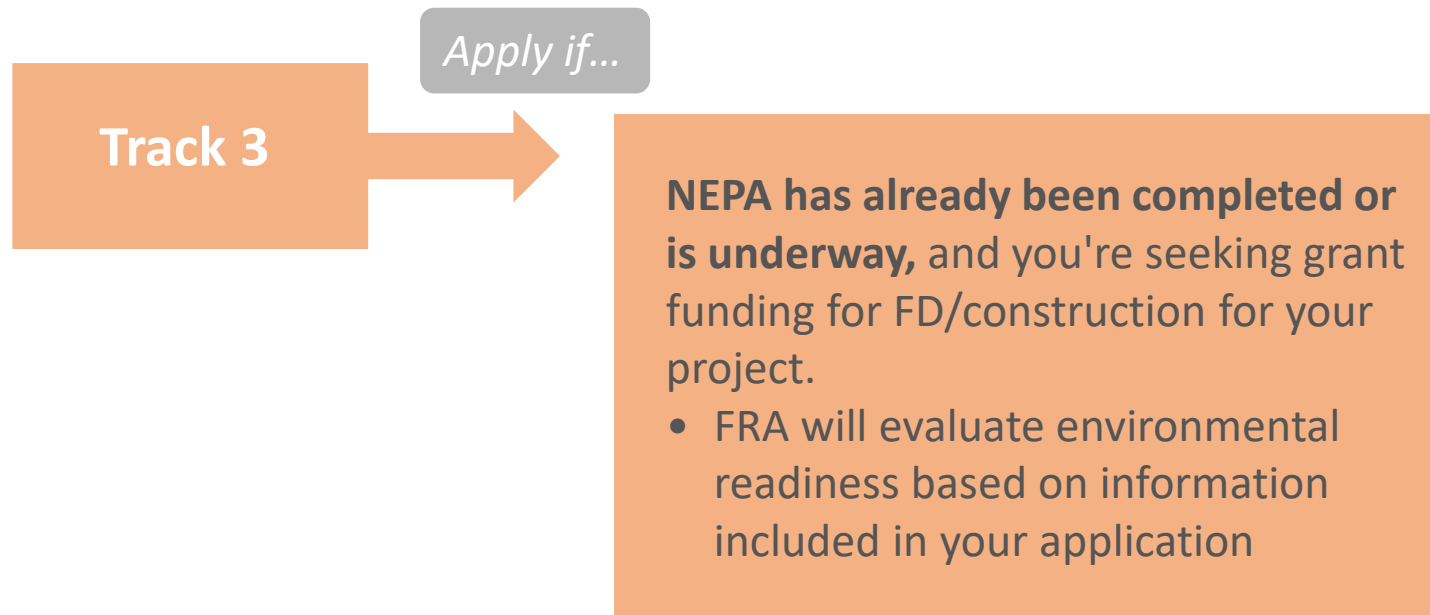
Also consider providing:

- A draft FRA [Categorical Exclusion \(CE\) worksheet](#) with your grant application, *OR*
- Identify the anticipated CE category(-ies) that your 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



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

Environmental Readiness – NEPA Resources

- FRA Environmental Webpage

<https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/environment>

- FRA NEPA Procedures

<https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/fra-legislation-regulations>

- 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

https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/get-involved/Citizens_Guide_Dec07.pdf

- AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence Practitioner's Handbook

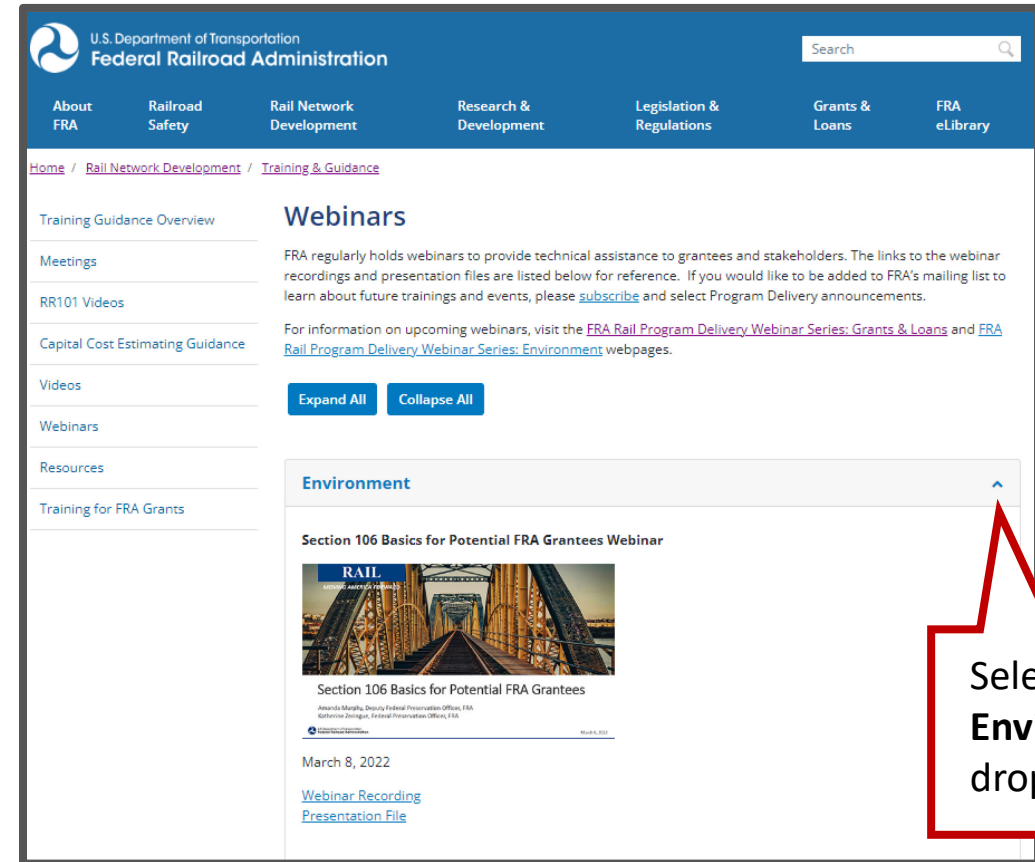
<https://environment.transportation.org/resources/practitioners-handbooks/>

Environmental Readiness – NHPA Section 106 Resources

- FRA Historic Preservation Webpage
<https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/historic-preservation/historic-preservation>
- Section 106 Regulations (36 CFR Part 800)
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2021-title36-vol3/pdf/CFR-2021-title36-vol3-part800.pdf>
- Section 106 Review Process
<https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/2018-05/Section%20106%20Review%20Process.Handout.2017.jpg>
- A Citizen's Guide to Section 106 Review
<https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-04/CitizenGuide2015v4-spreads%20layout.pdf>
- Section 106 and Infrastructure Projects
<https://www.achp.gov/section-106-and-Infrastructure-Projects>
- Section 106 Program Comment for Rail ROW
<https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/environment/final-section-106-program-comment-rail-rights-way>

FRA NEPA/Section 106 Webinars

- There are several recorded webinars on FRA's website regarding our NEPA/Section 106 review requirements and processes
- [Training & Guidance | Webinars | dot.gov](#)



The screenshot shows the FRA website's "Webinars" page. The page is titled "Webinars" and includes a search bar at the top right. The main content area features a "Webinars" section with a description of FRA's webinar offerings and a list of upcoming webinars. A red callout box points to a drop-down menu labeled "Environment" in the "Environment" section, with the text "Select the Environment drop-down".

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Webinars


FRA regularly holds webinars to provide technical assistance to grantees and stakeholders. The links to the webinar recordings and presentation files are listed below for reference. If you would like to be added to FRA's mailing list to learn about future trainings and events, please [subscribe](#) and select Program Delivery announcements.

For information on upcoming webinars, visit the [FRA Rail Program Delivery Webinar Series: Grants & Loans](#) and [FRA Rail Program Delivery Webinar Series: Environment](#) webpages.

[Expand All](#) [Collapse All](#)

Environment

Section 106 Basics for Potential FRA Grantees Webinar



Section 106 Basics for Potential FRA Grantees

March 8, 2022

[Webinar Recording](#)
[Presentation File](#)

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
 - **Be clear and direct** in responding to criteria
 - Make your application easy to read and evaluate
 - Don't bury key points!

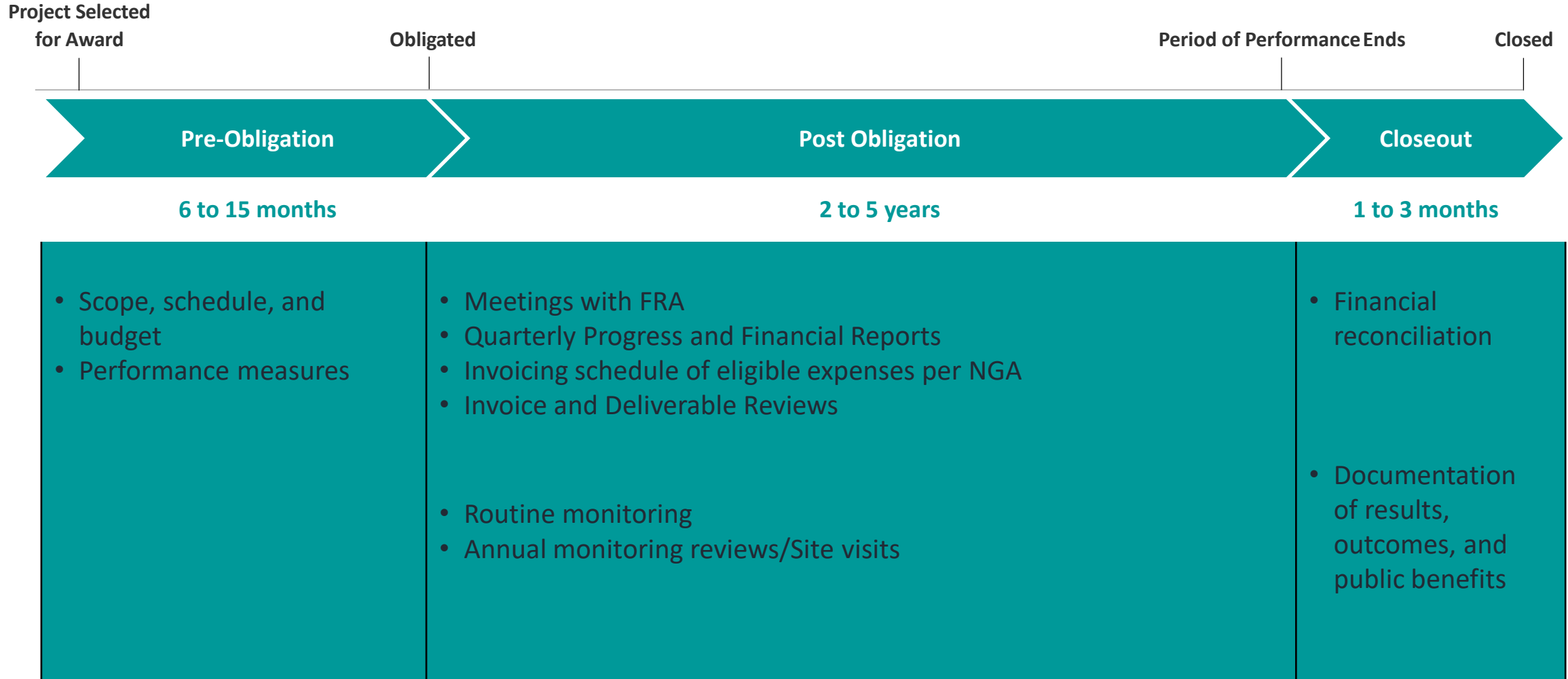


*Submit your application **on time!** Late applications **will not be reviewed.***

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 from infrastructure owners**
 - **What's the status of conversations/negotiations – don't leave us wondering the worst case scenario**
- 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



Upcoming Fed-State Webinars

FRA will host two FSP-National Virtual Office Hours Q&A Sessions:

- **Session #1:** Major Capital Projects
 - Thursday, October 17, 2024
 - 2-2:30 pm ET

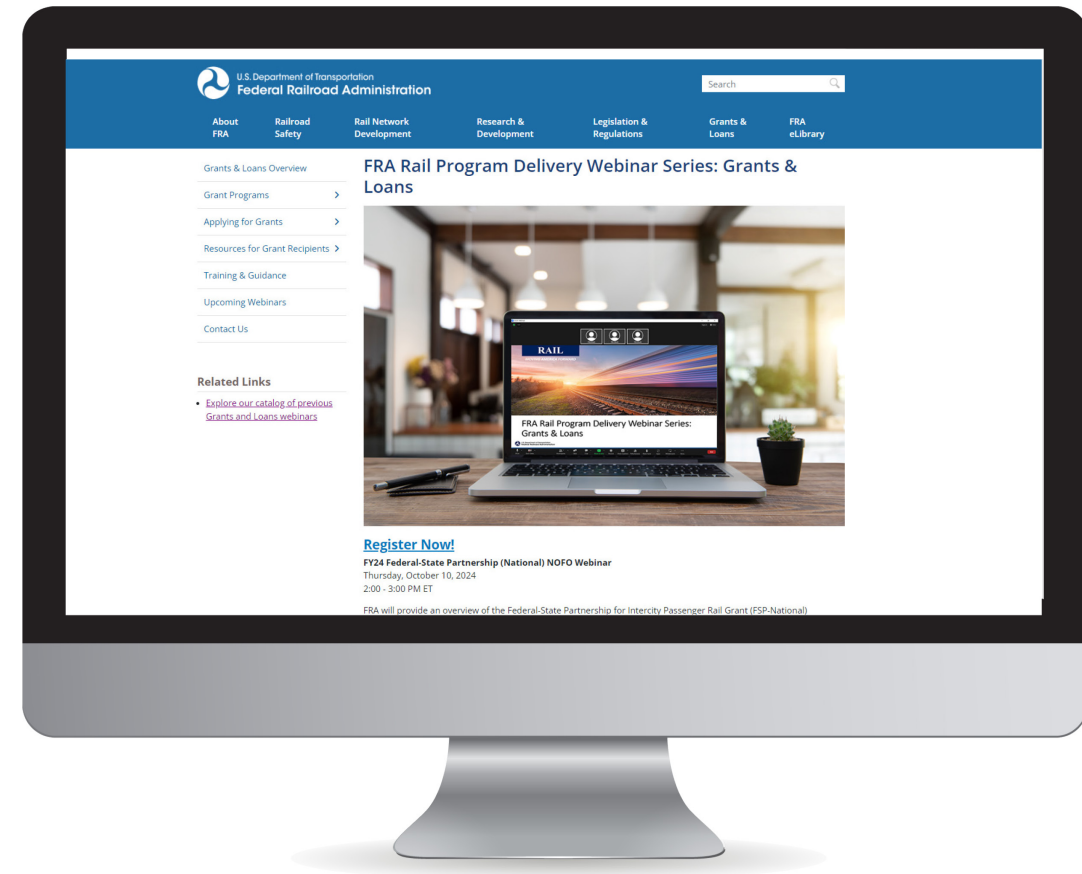
Registration:

usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_82MsTDEmScO-XPbj8b22Wg#/registration

- **Session #2:** Best Practices
 - Thursday, October 24, 2024
 - 2-2:30 pm ET

Registration:

usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_KgzuaQnMQyOsRaE46UpURA#/registration



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Connect with us [USDOTFRA](#)

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