RAIL

MOVING AMERICA FORWARD

FY 2021-2024 Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Grant Program NOFO Webinar

Presented by:

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

July 24, 2024

Welcome:

Office of Rail Program Development Director

Michael Longley

Presenters

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Agenda

1 **Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Grant Program Overview**

2 **NOFO Overview & How to Apply**

3 **Best Practices**
- Project Narrative
- Statement of Work, Estimated Schedule, Project Budget, and Performance Measures
  (Attach. 2 – R&E Program T&Cs, Articles 4 – 7)
- Environmental Readiness

4 **Recap & Reminders**

5 **Questions & Answers**

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FY 2021-2024 R&E Program Overview

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FY21-24 R&E – Program Overview

GRANT PURPOSE

- **Provide funding for Initiating, Restoring, or Enhancing Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation operations--grant funding is focused on Net Operating Costs**

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published in the *Federal Register* on July 15, 2024
  - Over $153.8 million available
  - Applications due by **11:59 pm Eastern Time** on **September 30, 2024**

[FY21-24 R&E NOFO]

- 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

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FY21-24 R&E – Program Overview

1. A State (including the District of Columbia);

2. A group of States;

3. An entity implementing an Interstate Rail Compact;

4. A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States;

5. A political subdivision of a State;

6. A federally recognized Indian Tribe;

7. Amtrak or another Rail Carrier that provides Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation;

8. Any Rail Carrier in partnership with at least one of the entities described in (1) through (6); and

9. Any combination of the entities described in (1) through (6)

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FY21-24 R&E – Program Overview

MAJOR CHANGES FROM FY 2018-2020 R&E NOFO

- **Substantive changes** to 49 U.S.C. 22908 resulting from IIJA Section 22304:

  o Definition of "Operating Assistance" for Routes subject to section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008

  o Grant award term limits extended to six years

  o Maximum R&E funding of projected Net Operating Costs is from 90% for the first Year of Service 1 to 30% for the sixth Year of Service

  o Funding plan requirements: must include initial capital and operating costs for the first six years of operation (and after first six years, to the extent necessary)

  o Statutory priorities include Routes selected under the Corridor Identification and Development Program and operated by Amtrak

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MAJOR CHANGES FROM FY 2018-2020 R&E NOFO

- Changes to **Definitions of Key Terms** section in the NOFO (Section A(2)):

  - Updated terms (e.g., "Operating Costs" and "Operating Assistance")

  - New terms (e.g., "Route," "Service," "Year of Service," etc.)

- Information about **award limits** for projects selected under the FY 2017-2020 R&E Program

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ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- **Enhancement activities**
  - Upgrading or modifying a Service currently offered on an Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation Route or train

- **Initiation activities**
  - Commencing Service on an Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation Route that did not previously operate Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation

- **Restoration activities**
  - Reinstating Service to an Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation Route that formerly operated Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation

Not eligible for R&E:
- ❖ *Commuter rail*
- ❖ *Capital projects such as track/ rail and station improvements*

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ELIGIBLE OPERATING COSTS

- **Routes subject to Section 209 of Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA)**
  - o **Operating Costs:** Operating Assistance associated with costs allocated to/may be allocated to a Route pursuant to Section 209 cost methodology policy approved by the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC)
  - o **Eligible Capital Costs:** capital overhaul (i.e., investment) costs for <u>Amtrak-owned equipment in service</u>: locomotives, cab cars, coaches, and food service cars.

- **Routes <u>not</u> subject to Section 209 of PRIIA**
  - o Operating Costs may include:
    - Staffing costs: train engineers, conductors, on-board service crew
    - Train propulsion: diesel fuel or electricity costs
    - Station costs: ticket sales, customer information, train dispatching services
    - Station building utility and maintenance costs
    - Lease payments on rolling stock
    - Routine planned maintenance costs of equipment and train cleaning
    - Host railroad access costs
    - Train yard operation costs
    - General and administrative costs
    - Management, marketing, sales and reservations costs

❖ *For routes not subject to sect. 209, capital costs associated with equipment are <u>not</u> eligible*

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FY21-24 R&E – Program Overview

MAXIMUM R&E FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- R&E funding may **not exceed** the following for each Year of Service

- Other eligible Federal funds can be a funding source of non-R&E share

  - No maximum Federal share limit

  - Other federal funds can be a funding source for the non-R&E share, provided it's an authorized use of those funds. FHWA's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program is one example.

- Applicants must **identify the source(s) of their non-R&E funds** and must clearly and distinctly reflect these funds as part of the total project cost *(i.e., total operating cost)*

Year of Service	R&E Funding; Percentage of Net Operating Costs
1	90%
2	80%
3	70%
4	60%
5	50%
6	30%

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FY21-24 R&E – Program Overview

AWARD LIMITS

- Maximum **six R&E** grants can be simultaneously active
  - A grant is "active" at the time of selection
  - Currently, FRA has three active R&E grants
  - Multiple R&E awards *(from different NOFOs) for <u>same</u>* Service and recipient = One R&E grant/award

- **Award selection possibilities under FY21-24 NOFO:**
  - FRA may select **up to three** Services on Routes that:
    1) Do not have a currently active R&E grant
    2) Do have a currently active R&E grant with a different applicant
  - ***And***, FRA may make **up to three selections for additional funding** for same Services on same Routes to same recipient, subject to the limitations in 49 U.S.C. 22908(e)

- ❖ *An individual Service cannot receive multiple awards under this NOFO*

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FRA Project Lifecycle & Program Framework

Project Lifecycle Stages

Development Stages | Implementation Stages

Systems Planning → Project Planning → Project Development → Final Design → Construction → Operation

Primary FRA Planning & Funding Programs

Regional & State Rail Plans

Corridor Identification and Development (ID) Program

Restoration & Enhancement Program

FSP, RCE, CRISI & Other Grant Programs
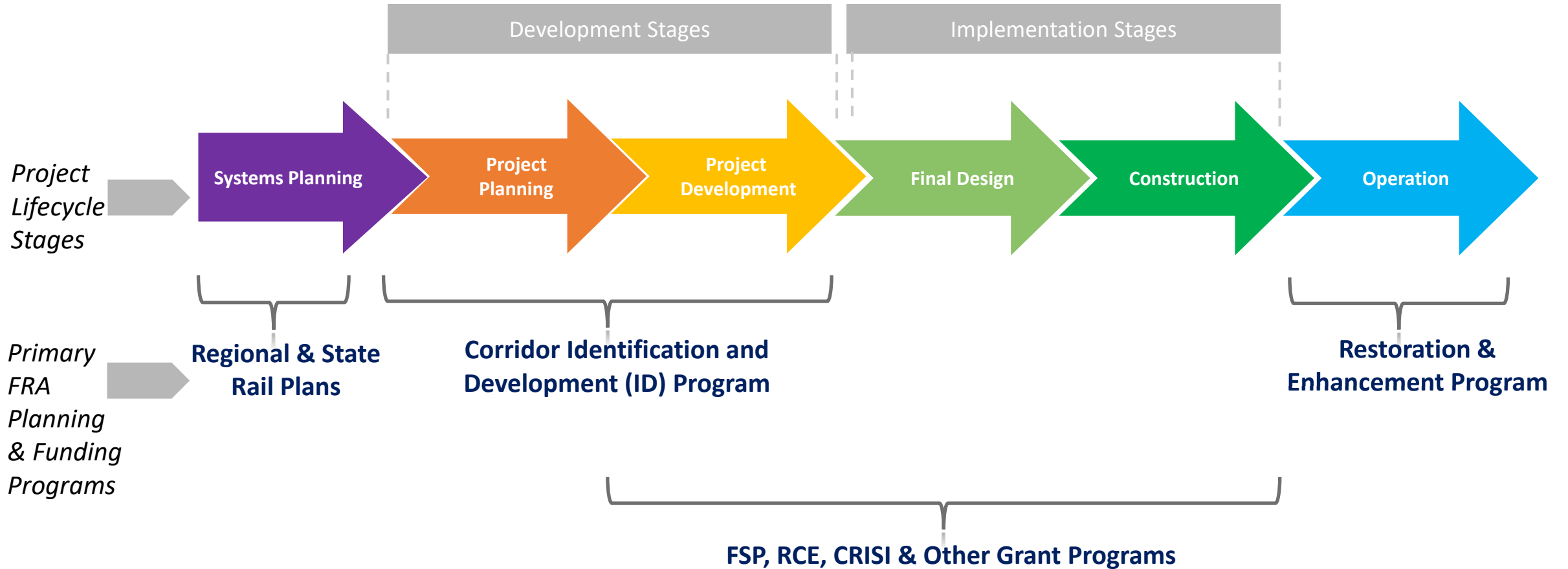
Evaluation and Selection Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project Readiness Criteria:
- Appropriate actions* necessary for Initiation, Restoration, or Enhancement of Service are complete or near complete
  - *Planning, design, any environmental reviews, negotiation of agreements, acquisition of equipment, construction, etc.*

- Funding commitment level of certainty
  - *Funds are secured with necessary approvals vs. necessary approvals are pending.*

- Plans* described in Section D(2)(b) of the NOFO are appropriate for the proposed project
  - *Capital and mobilization plan, operating plan, funding plan, and status of negotiations and agreements, including the planned first Year of Service, proposed Service start date, and subsequent Years of Service included in the proposed grant period of the proposed project, at a minimum*

Project Readiness Rubric:
- FRA will evaluate applications based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- FRA will assign a cumulative project readiness risk rating:
  - Unacceptable
  - High risk
  - Medium risk
  - Low risk

❖ *Refer to section E(1)(b) of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

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Evaluation and Selection Criteria

EXAMPLE RUBRIC: Project Readiness

MERIT CRITERIA RATINGS—PROJECT READINESS (RISK)

[For the Project Readiness Criteria described in Section E(1), 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 readiness criterion; application fails to demonstrate support, progress, or completion of appropriate Service preparation activities; or application contains one or more barriers that would prevent project delivery.	Application provides insufficient information to assess the readiness criterion; application does not demonstrate that sufficient support, progress, or completion of appropriate Service preparation activities 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 of appropriate Service preparation activities, 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 of appropriate Service preparation activities, 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:
- Statement of Work tasks, estimated project schedule, and budget are appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes

- Technical qualifications and demonstrated experience of key personnel

- Applicant's past performance
  - *Developing and delivering similar operations projects, as applicable, and previous financial contributions*

- Appropriate risk assessment and mitigation

- Legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out the project; continuing access to equipment or facilities; maintenance of the equipment or facilities

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

❖ *Refer to section E(1)(b) of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

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Evaluation and Selection Criteria

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project Benefits Criteria:

- Provide daily or daytime Service over new Routes
- Restore Service over Routes formerly operated by Amtrak
- Provide Service to regions and communities that are underserved by intercity public transportation
- Foster economic development in rural and disadvantaged communities
- Provide other non-transportation benefits
- Enhance connectivity and geographic coverage of Intercity Passenger Rail Service

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

❖ *Refer to section E(1)(b) of the NOFO for the complete rubric*

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Evaluation and Selection Criteria

ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES

- Safety

- Climate Change and Sustainability

- Equity and Justice40

- Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation

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Evaluation and Selection Criteria

PROGRAM PREFERENCES

- The proposed **R&E funding is less than the maximum funding limit for the applicable Year(s) of Service**, as specified in Section C(2) of the NOFO

- The application includes **non-R&E funding from more than one source**, such as State, local, regional governmental, and/or private sources, demonstrating broad participation by affected stakeholders

- The applicant has a funding plan that demonstrates the Intercity Passenger Rail Service will be **financially sustainable** beyond the grant period of performance

- The proposed Services are on Routes selected under the **Corridor Identification and Development Program** and operated by Amtrak

- The start of revenue Service is likely to occur **within one year** of award selection.

  - *Most Service preparation activities, particularly activities with uncertain duration or duration of more than one year, and activities necessary to resolve complex issues, have been initiated, are well underway, and have realistic near-term completion dates based on supporting explanations and/or documentation.*

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NOFO Overview & How to Apply

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What is a NOFO?

DEFINITION

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

- Announces the grant opportunity

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

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What information is in a NOFO?

KEY PARTS OF A NOFO

- Program Summary

- Key Dates

- Required Documents

- Addresses

- FRA Contact Information

- Table of Contents
  - Program Description
  - Federal Award Information
  - **Eligibility Information**
  - **Application and Submission Information**
  - **Application Review Information**
  - Federal Award Administration
  - Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

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Where is the FY21-24 R&E Program NOFO?

Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Fiscal Year 2021-2024 Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program

A Notice by the Federal Railroad Administration on 07/15/2024

PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

AGENCY:

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

ACTION:

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO or Notice), Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) #20.324.

SUMMARY:

This Notice details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for eligible projects under the Restoration & Enhancement (R&E) Grant Program for Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-2024. This Notice solicits applications for the R&E Grant Program with funds made available by the following: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and additional carryover funding from Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 and Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020. The opportunity described in this Notice is made available under Assistance Listings Number 20.324, "Restoration & Enhancement Grant Program."

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Printed version:
PDF

Publication Date:
07/15/2024

Agencies:
Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Dates:
Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time ET), September 30, 2024. Applications for funding received after 11:59 p.m. ET on September 30, 2024 will not be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications that do not adequately address the information requested may be considered incomplete.

[R&E NOFO in the Federal Register](#)

NOTE: Application deadline is **11:59 pm ET**, Monday, September 30, 2024

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Where do I start?

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

Discretionary Grant Programs

Click the link to access the NOFO

Where do I find "How to Apply" information?

Search grants on **Grants.gov:**

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

What is the Synopsis?

Summary information about the grant opportunity in **Grants.gov**:

How do I apply?

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

[SAM.gov]

- **Register early** in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM)
  - ❖ *NOTE: SAM registration can take up to 4 weeks (longer if you do not have an Employer Identification Number)*

- For Grants.gov, complete an **Authorized Organization Representative** profile and create a username and password

- Submit an application addressing all requirements outlined in the NOFO

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REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Project Narrative

- Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds
  1
  - *Include funding table that aligns w/ Project Funding by Year of Service Table in the NOFO. Specify project activities for each Year of Service—do not just list "Operations."*

  - *Instructions for applicants seeking additional funding for the same Service funded under a currently active R&E grant.*

- As part of response to Applicant Eligibility Criteria:
  - *Applicants must identify the applicant's legal authority to receive Federal financial assistance and complete activities for the operation of Intercity Passenger Rail Service – providing adequate information factors into application completeness assessment.*

Project Funding by Year of Service Table

Year of Service	Estimated Operating Costs	Estimated Revenue	Projected Net Operating Cost	R&E Funds Requested under this NOFO	Percent of Net Operating Cost requested	Non-R&E Amount/Source(s)	Eligible R&E Activities by Year of Service
Year 1 [Add start date e.g., 6/01/25]							
Year 2 [Add start date e.g., 6/01/26]							
Year 3 [Add start date]							
Year 4 [Add start date]							
Year 5 [Add start date]							
Year 6 [Add start date]							
TOTAL							

- ❖ *Note to applicants seeking additional funding for the same Service funded under a currently active R&E grant:*
  - *Add columns to identify the amount of the previous R&E award(s) and associated non-R&E funding (Section D(2)(iii) of NOFO).*

What do I include in my application?

2 **Statement of Work, Estimated Project Schedule, Project Budget, and Performance Measures**

- *Use Attachment 2: R&E Specific Terms and Conditions, Articles 4-7 templates*

3 **Capital and mobilization plan**

- *Include timeline table – follow sample format in NOFO*

4 **Operating plan**

SAMPLE TIMELINE TABLE				
Activity*	Status (*Not Started, In Progress, Complete, or Not Applicable ***)	R&E Eligible Activity planned to be part of first Year of Service? (Yes/No)	Est. Start Date (Month/Year)	Est. Completion Date (Month/Year)
Environmental Clearance			MONTH 202X	MONTH 202X
Securing Equipment				
Train Crew Hiring				
Train Crew Qualifying				
Agreement with host railroad *(preparation of draft through execution)*				
Operating agreement *(preparation of draft through execution)*				
Cost share agreement *(preparation of draft through execution)*				
Process of securing approvals for the name of the new Service, as applicable				
[Insert other activity (e.g., any necessary capital improvements, etc.)]				
[Insert other activity]				
Start of Revenue Service				

*=Applicants should include all major and notable activities, whether they are eligible or not eligible under the R&E Program, that are necessary for Revenue Service to begin. If an activity is complete at the time of application submission, indicate completion date (Month/Year).

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What do I include in my application?

5 **Status of negotiations and agreements**

6 **Environmental Compliance (NEPA) Documentation**

❖ *Note: The Applicant may include a draft document that will require development, review, and approval by FRA OR an existing completed NEPA document approved by FRA or another Federal agency that covers the proposed project scope. OR, provide description of environ. review status.*

7 **Funding plan**

- *To include various components, such as a* <u>*proposed*</u> *schedule for payment of invoices and submission of Federal reimbursement requests along with description of how the proposed schedule aligns with the applicant's fiscal year and reconciliation of expenditures*

8 **Funding commitment supporting documentation**

- *Indicate if funds are either (1) committed with* **pending formal approvals**, <u>*OR*</u> *(2) committed with* **formal approvals received**.

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What forms are required?

REQUIRED FORMS

- **SF 424** (Application for Federal Assistance) ⬅ *The official funding request*

- **SF 424A** – Budget info for Non-Construction

- **SF 424B** – Assurances for Non-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)

> ❖ *Benefit-Cost Analysis is **NOT** required*

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

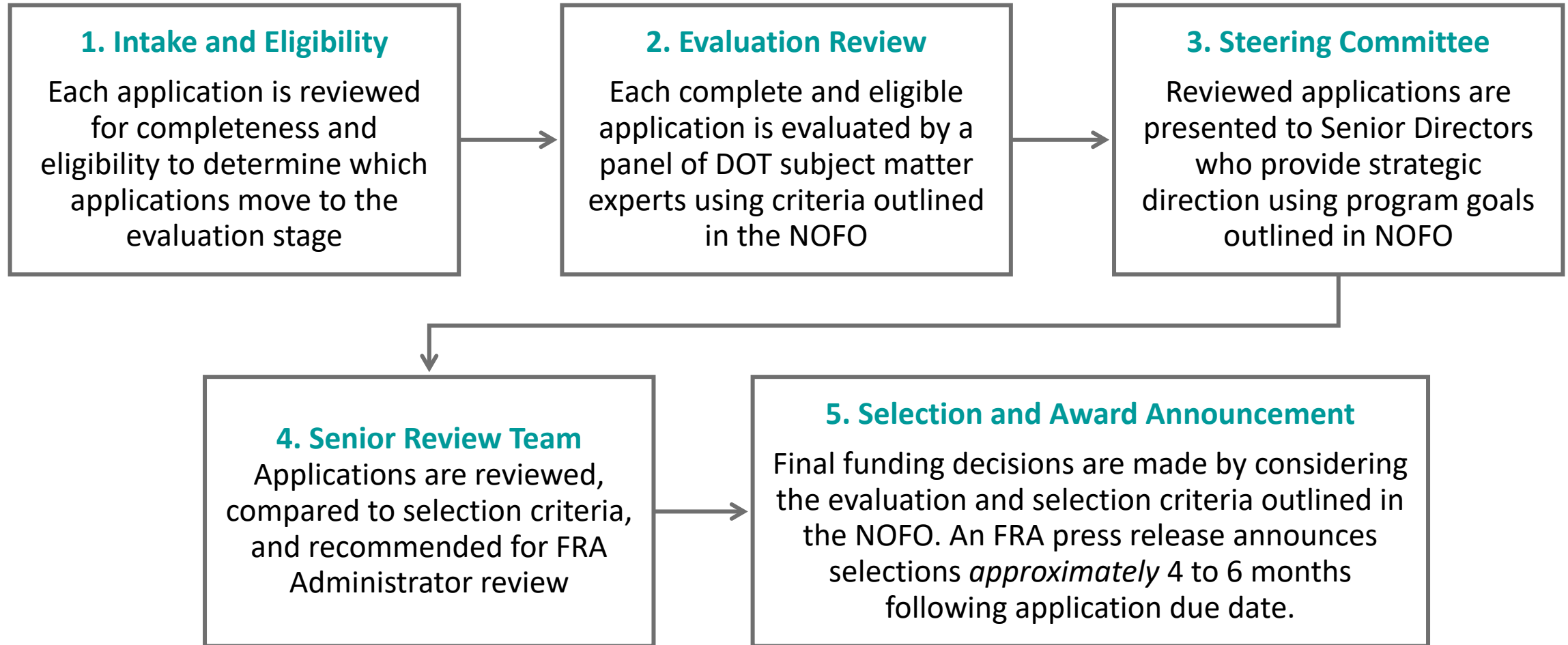|	
Agency Name:	DOT - Federal Railroad Administration
Description:	The purpose of the R&E Program is to provide grants for Initiating, Restoring, or Enhancing Intercity Rail Passenger Transportation operations.
Link to Additional Information:	FY21-24 Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program
Grantor 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

❖ Contact Grants.gov customer support for technical assistance

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Application Review and Selection Process

1. Intake and Eligibility

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

2. Evaluation Review

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

3. Steering Committee

Reviewed applications are presented to Senior Directors who provide strategic direction using program goals outlined in NOFO

4. Senior Review Team

Applications are reviewed, compared to selection criteria, and recommended for FRA Administrator review

5. Selection and Award Announcement

Final funding decisions are made by considering the evaluation and selection criteria outlined in the NOFO. An FRA press release announces selections *approximately* 4 to 6 months following application due date.

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Best Practices

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Best Practices – Helpful Hints

- Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) completely and carefully to understand the criteria for eligibility and selection, and what information each application must include

- Provide a clear project title that tells us who you are and what the project is about

- FRA has identified three primary areas where applications not selected for funding typically demonstrate deficiencies:
  - Project Narrative
  - Statement of Work (SOW), Est. Schedule, Project Budget, and Perf. Measures (Articles 4 – 7)
  - Environmental Readiness

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I. Cover Page

II. Project Summary

III. Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

IV. Applicant Eligibility

V. Project Eligibility

VI. Detailed Project Description

VII. Project Location

VIII. Evaluation & Selection Criteria

IX. Project Implementation & Management

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

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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☑ Application Snapshot

☑ Table also requests the following, IF applicable:

➢ Previously awarded R&E funding for the Service, by Year of Service

➢ A federal grant application previously submitted for any necessary capital projects **on the Route or for the Service described in the application**

➢ Any capital improvements **required to be completed before** Initiation, Restoration, or Enhancement activities under this request

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I.   Cover Page

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V.   Project Eligibility

VI.   Detailed Project Description

VII.   Project Location

VIII.   Evaluation & Selection Criteria

IX.   Project Implementation & Management

- ☑ Briefly describe the project in **4 to 6 sentences**, its anticipated benefits, and the transportation challenges the project will address

- ☑ Think of this section of the application **as your elevator pitch for the project** to the DOT Under Secretary and FRA Administrator

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

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V.   Project Eligibility

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VIII.   Evaluation & Selection Criteria

IX.   Project Implementation & Management

- ☑ Only include eligible costs
- ☑ Confirm funding amount matches SF-424, Article 4 – SOW, and Article 6 - R&E Award and Project Financial Information
- ☑ Specify each source of funds: R&E, Non-R&E, and Estimated Revenue
- ☑ Indicate public- vs. private-sector match
- ☑ Describe the non-R&E funding arrangements
- ☑ Attach funding commitment letters
- ☑ Identify if the proposed non-R&E funds will not be available until a certain date or if funds must be spent by a deadline

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

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IX. Project Implementation & Management

- ☑ Thoroughly discuss the transportation challenges and benefits
- ☑ Include data to support project benefits
- ☑ Describe how project components are related and will be sequenced
- ☑ Proposed train schedule, Route info
- ☑ Station facilities and equipment
- ☑ Identify host railroad(s), owners of rail infrastructure, operator entity, and beneficiaries
- ☑ …plus, more in the NOFO

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

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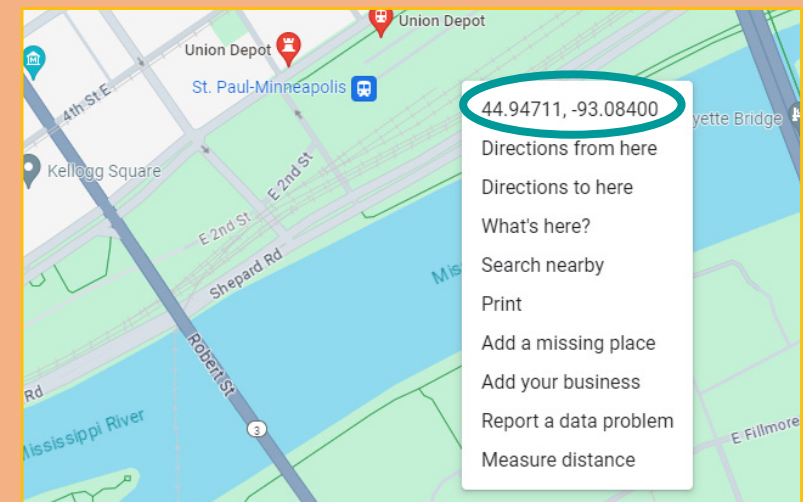
IX. Project Implementation & Management

☑ Identify start and end points of the Route for the Intercity Pass. Rail Service

☑ Include a map of the project

☑ Identify railroad info (mileposts, subdivision, etc.)

☑ Geospatial data—latitude and longitude

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Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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V. Project Eligibility

VI. Detailed Project Description

VII. Project Location

VIII. Evaluation & Selection Criteria

IX. Project Implementation & Management

☑ 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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Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I.   Cover Page

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VI.   Detailed Project Description

VII.   Project Location

VIII. Evaluation & Selection Criteria

IX.   **Project Implementation & Management**

☑ Describe expected arrangements for project contracting, contract oversight, change-order management, risk management, and conformance with Federal requirements for progress reporting, etc.

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Best Practices – Statement of Work, Schedule, Project Budget, and Perf. Measures

(Attachment 2: R&E Program-Specific Terms and Conditions, Articles 4–7)

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☑ See the [FRA Discretionary Grant Agreements](#) web page

☑ R&E SOW (Article 4)

☑ R&E Award Dates & Estimated Project Schedule
(Article 5)

☑ R&E Award and Project Financial Information
(Article 6)

☑ R&E Performance Measurement Information
(Article 7)

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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
    - ❖ *NOTE: Task 1 title should remain "Project Administration and Management"*
  - Required environmental commitments as applicable

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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.

Article 5: Award Dates and Estimated Project Schedule

- Identifies project schedule, which lists significant milestones in Project advancement.

  ❖ *NOTE: Section 5.1 - Award Dates is for the grant agreement execution stage and N/A for the application stage.*

Table 5-A: Estimated Project Schedule

Milestone	Schedule Date
[Start of first Year of Service]	[Insert Date]
[Start of Service Operations] *if different from start of first Year of Service*	[Insert Date]
[End of final Year of Service]	[Insert Date]

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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

  o Tables 6-A and 6-B are specifically for R&E

  o For R&E Program, other eligible Federal funding sources should be counted as "Non-Federal Agreement Funds" in Article 6

  ❖ *NOTE:*
    o *Section 6.6 - Pre-Award Costs is N/A for the application stage*
    o *Applicants seeking additional funding for the same Service funded under a currently active R&E grant—DO NOT include funding from previous R&E award(s)*

Table 6-A – Approved Project Budget by Year of Service

	Year of Service 1	Year of Service 2	Year of Service 3	Year of Service 4	Year of Service 5	Year of Service 6
Operating Costs						
[Task 1 subtotal]	$	$	$	$	$	$
[Task 2 subtotal]	$	$	$	$	$	$
Operating Costs (all Tasks)	$	$	$	$	$	$
						Total Project cost: $
Revenue	($)	($)	($)	($)	($)	($)
Net Operating Costs	$	$	$	$	$	$
Agreement Federal Funds: Percent of Net Operating Costs	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	30%
Agreement Federal Funds: Amounts	$ [90% net operating cost]	$ [80% net operating cost]	$ [70% net operating cost]	$ [60% net operating cost]	$ [50% net operating cost]	$ [30% net operating cost]

Table 6-B: Approved Project Budget by Source

Funding Source per Year of Service	Year of Service 1	Year of Service 2	Year of Service 3	Year of Service 4	Year of Service 5	Year of Service 6	Total
Agreement Federal Funds	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Agreement Non-Federal Funds	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Revenue	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
[Source 2]	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Operating Costs	$	$	$	$	$	$	**Total Project Cost: $**

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Best Practices – Attachment 2 (Article 7)

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, Articles 4–7

General Reminders:

- ☑ 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

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Best Practices – Environmental Readiness

Environmental Readiness

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

❖ *Note: While R&E is not a capital program, NEPA compliance is still required.*

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

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

- Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Clean Water Act (CWA)

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Environmental Readiness – Complexity Factors

More **complex projects require more time and effort** for review of environmental/cultural resources. This includes impacts to:

- *Areas outside the existing railroad right-of-way* or in previously undisturbed areas

- Section 4(f) resources such as *publicly owned parks, recreational areas, etc.*

- Impacts to *change of service* may alter community impacts

- Listed or eligible *historic properties*:
  - o Evaluations are generally required for properties over 45 years old
  - o Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Tribes is generally required for properties over 45 years old
    - *Exceptions for projects that completely fall under the Program Comment for Rail Rights-of-Way*

Environmental Readiness – Tips

☑ Provide a **clear, complete, and accurate scope of work** in your application

- More complex projects (bridge bundles, grade separations) should have more detail
- Any related projects

☑ With your grant application, **submit an approved NEPA document, if available and applicable**, from FRA, FTA, FHWA or any other federal agency

☑ If there is no previous NEPA documentation associated with the project, you are encouraged to **consider and describe the following in the grant application** to the best of your knowledge:

- Known project location and/or possible impacts to the human (e.g., historic, protected populations, EJ communities, noise and vibration) or natural (e.g., wetlands, air, species/habitat, floodplains) environment
- Anticipated permitting needs (e.g., construction, Clean Water Act Section 404) or coordination/consultation (e.g., State Historic Preservation Officer)
- Description of how work will be completed

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Environmental Readiness – NEPA

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

- **NEPA Resources:**

  - FRA & NEPA Documentation

  - FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources

NEPA Questions:

FRAenvironment@dot.gov

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Recap & Reminders

Recap & Reminders

- Always read the NOFO carefully, including footnotes

- Determine what a "successful" project will look like

- Use the application requirements checklist in the NOFO (section D(2)) as you complete your application

- Address **all** evaluation and selection criteria on which the application will be rated

  o By clearly and directly responding to the criteria, your application will be easier to read and evaluate

  o Do not bury key points!

- ❖ *FRA strongly recommends including critical letters of support with your application submission to ensure they are part of its evaluation*

BEST PRACTICES

Recap & Reminders

- Verify that all budget figures are consistent

  - Check Project Narrative (cover sheet and funding table), Article 6 - Project Budget, and various SF-424 forms
  - Numbers in columns and rows should add up properly in budget tables
  - Only include project costs that are expected to be incurred *after* grant selection
  - The SF-424 is the official funding request

- Name key partners, indicate in-place agreements, and include letters of support

- Have an objective "cold reader" — i.e., an individual unfamiliar with the grant application — review your final document before submission

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Resources

- [FY 2021-2024 R&E NOFO](#)

- [FRA's Competitive Grants Application Process](#)
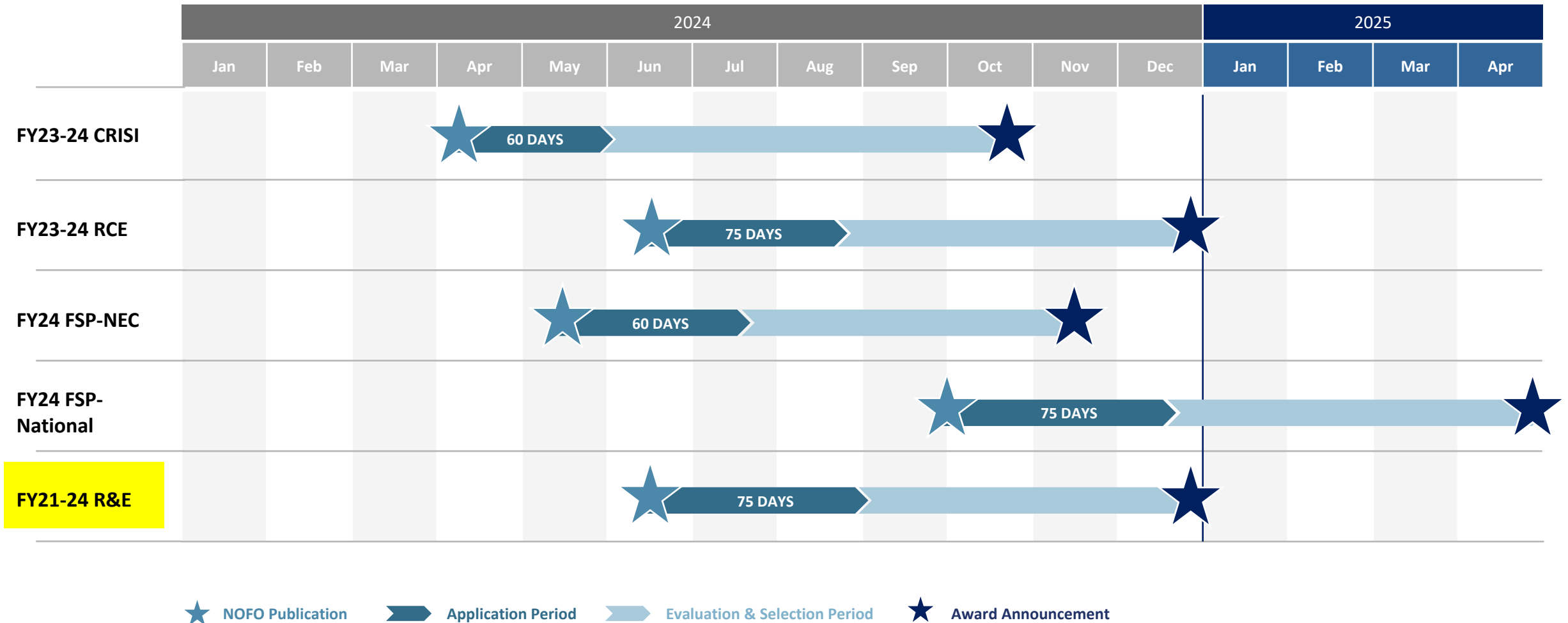
- [FRA's Discretionary Grant Agreements](#)

- [FRA & NEPA Documentation](#)

- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)

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

- [FRA Grants Webinars](#)

- [FRA Grants Videos](#)
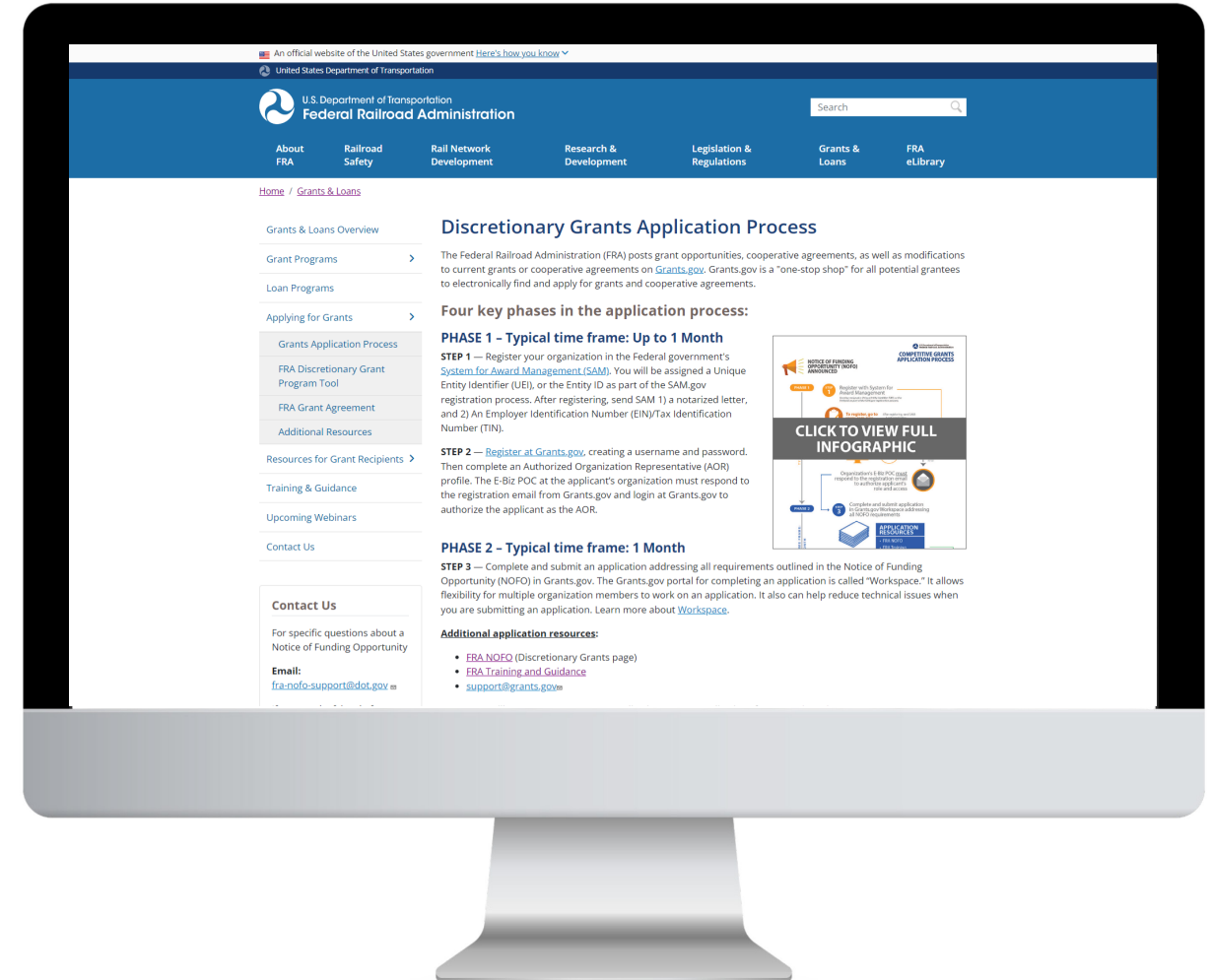
Grant Lifecycle and Approximate Time Frames

Project Selected for Award — **Obligation** — **Period of Performance Ends** — **Closed**

Pre-Obligation	Post Obligation	Closeout
6 to 18 months	Depends on Years of Service in Project	1 to 3 months

Pre-Obligation	Post Obligation	Closeout

• Terms and Conditions
• Scope, Schedule, and Budget
• Performance measures
	• Meetings with FRA
	• Quarterly Progress and Financial Reports
	• Invoicing of Eligible Expenses
	• Deliverable Reviews
	
	• Routine monitoring
	   ○ Compliance
	   ○ Financial
	   ○ Programmatic
	• Annual monitoring reviews/site visits
		• Financial reconciliation
		
		• Documentation of results, outcomes, and public benefits

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CY 2024 FRA Discretionary Grant Calendar

NOFO CYCLE STAGES ARE ESTIMATED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, AND NOT EXACT DURATIONS OR DATES. CHANGES MAY OCCUR, AND FRA WILL UPDATE ACCORDINGLY.

Contact Us

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Connect with us **USDOTFRA**

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FRA NEPA Questions:
FRAenvironment@dot.gov

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

QUESTIONS?

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