

RAIL

MOVING AMERICA FORWARD



FY25-26 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program NOFO Webinar

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Agenda



- 1 **FY25-26 CRISI Program Overview**
- 2 **How to Apply**
- 3 **Project Narrative**
- 4 **BCA**
- 5 **Environmental Readiness**
- 6 **Right-of-Way Acquisition**
- 7 **Q&A**

FY25-26 CRISI Program Overview

CRISI – Program Overview

Grant Purpose

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

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Published on the FRA Website on April 20, 2026
 - Approximately **\$2.039 billion** available
 - Applications due by **11:59 p.m. ET** on June 22, 2026
- Please read the NOFO carefully and follow all instructions for completing and submitting your application
- Applications that are incomplete or received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for funding. There are no exceptions.

CRISI – Program Overview

Changes from FY 23-24 CRISI NOFO

- Shortened Application window (60 days)
- NOFO located directly on our website and on grants.gov
 - <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/fy-2025-2026-nofo-crisi>
 - <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/361966>
- Streamlined NOFO and application requirements
 - [Relocates definitions of Key Terms to FRA's website](#)
 - Removes requirement for Articles 4-7 on FRA's Grant Terms and Conditions; combines elements into the Project Narrative
 - Updates organization of the NOFO and references to comply with 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix I
 - Removes the use of project tracks to reduce redundancy with lifecycle stages
- New Cover Page and Improved Functionality
- Removes references to rescinded Executive Orders
- New/Expanded Selection Preferences
- Updates NOFO to align with new Executive Orders

FY25-26 CRISI – Program Overview

Eligible Applicants

- **State(s)** *(including the District of Columbia)*
- An **Interstate Compact**
- **Public Agency or Publicly Chartered Authority**
- **Political Subdivision of a State** *(Local Governments)*
- **Amtrak** or Other Intercity Passenger Rail Carrier
- **Class II or III Railroads**
 - Association(s) representing a Class II or III Railroad
 - **Holding Companies** of Class II or III Railroads
- Rail Carrier or Equipment Manufacturer *(in partnership with Public Entity(ies))*
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe
- The Transportation Research Board (TRB) *(with any entity with which it contracts in the development of rail-related research, including cooperative research programs)*
- **University**
- A Non-Profit Labor Organization *(representing a class or craft of employees of rail carriers or rail carrier contractors)*

FY25-26 CRISI – Program Overview

Eligible Projects

- Wide Range of Rail Capital Projects
 - Congestion mitigation
 - Ridership growth facilitation
 - Enhancements to multimodal connections
 - Improvements to short-line or regional railroad infrastructure
- Railroad Safety Technology
- Track, Station, and Equipment Improvements for Intercity Passenger Rail
- Grade Crossing Improvements
- Rail Line Relocation and Improvement
- Regional and Corridor Service Planning and corresponding Environmental Analyses
- Safety Programs and Institutes
- Research
- Workforce Development and Training
- Measures that prevent trespassing
- Preparation of emergency plans for hazardous materials that are transported by rail
- Rehab or procurement of locomotives, provided that such activities result in a significant reduction of emissions

FY25-26 CRISI – Program Overview

Funding Set-Asides



\$532M For projects located in Rural Areas

Annual Appropriations Considerations

Approximately \$140 million with special provisions

- **New Eligibilities:**
 - Holding Companies of Class II or III Railroads
 - Project Planning activities of otherwise eligible Capital Projects
- Removal of the preference for projects where the proposed Federal share of total project costs does not exceed 50 percent

FY25-26 CRISI – Program Overview

Non-Federal Match 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



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



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

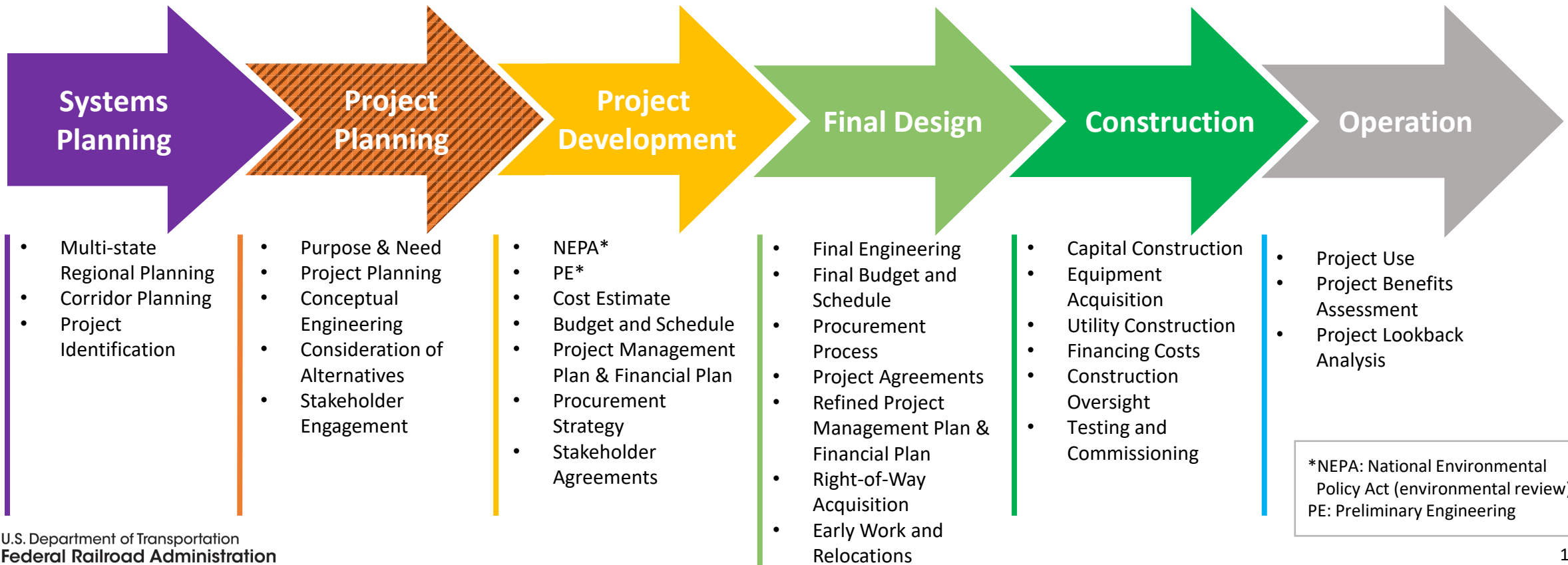


Include funding commitment letters outlining agreements as attachments or in an appendix

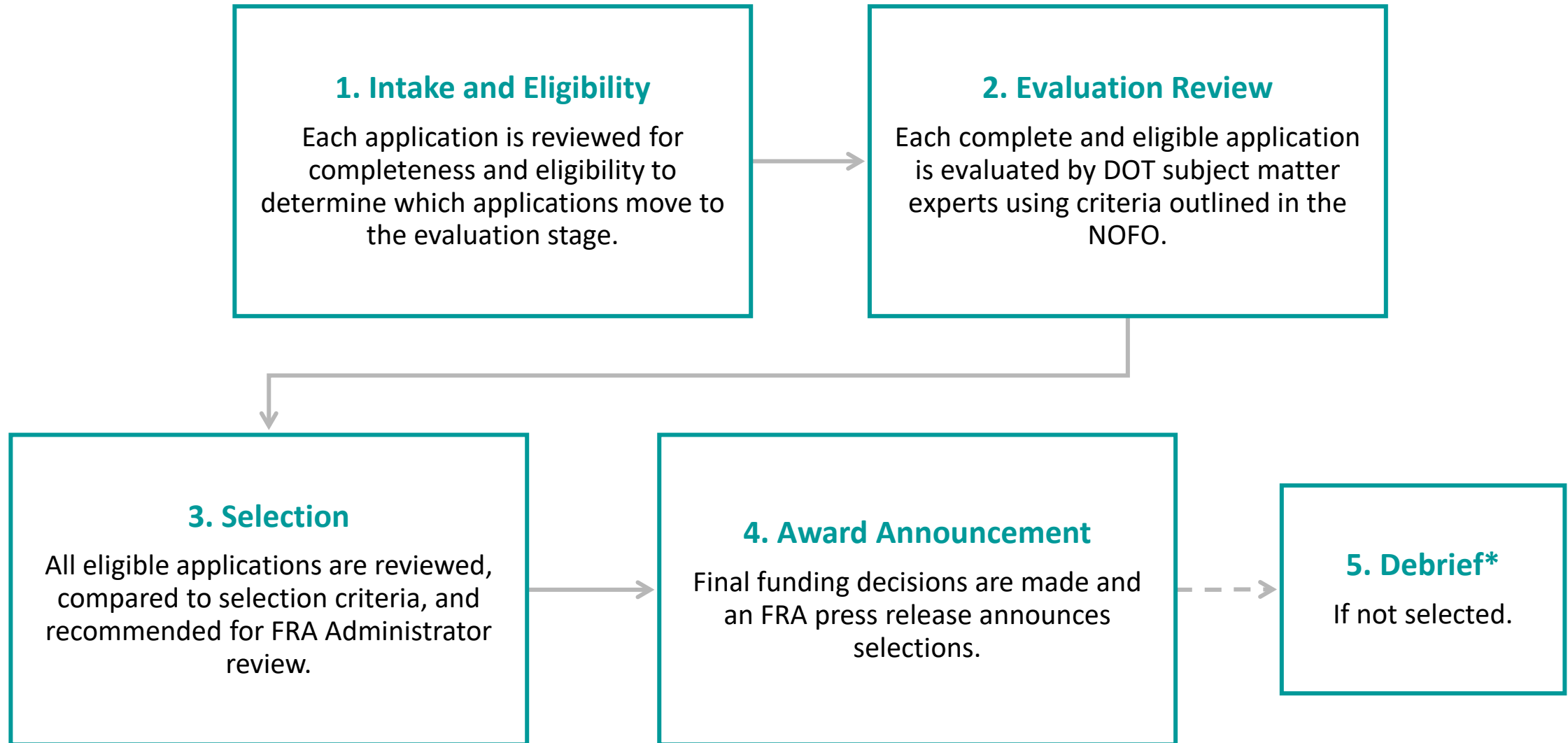
Role of the Project Lifecycle in Grant Funding Opportunities

🔍 Reference: Section III, Proj. Lifecycle Overview, p. 4

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



Application Review and Selection Process



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

Evaluation Criteria

**Project
Readiness**

**Technical
Merit**

**Project
Benefits**

Selection Preferences



- FD/Construction Projects
- Short line railroad Infrastructure and equipment, other safety and technology projects
- Federal share less than 50 percent
- Maximize net benefits

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Example Rubric: Project Readiness

Merit Criteria Ratings – Project Readiness

For the Project Readiness Criteria described in Section 6(b)(i), 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; application 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; application 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 by risk or responsiveness:

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.*
- ❖ *For the full rubrics, see: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/crisi-evaluation-rubrics>*

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Project Readiness

Project Readiness Criteria:

- Demonstrated progress and understanding of applicable environmental requirements
- Demonstrated progress on agreements
 - Including host railroad agreement
 - Financial agreement (availability of match at time of application)
- Selection of appropriate Lifecycle Stage(s) with demonstrated progress toward preceding Lifecycle Stage(s)
- Coordination and commitments from project partners

Project Readiness Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative project readiness risk rating

Unacceptable	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
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Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Technical Merit

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
- Innovative use of technology, project delivery, and 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



Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Project Benefits

Project Benefits Criteria:

- The Benefit-Cost Analysis and project benefits of the proposed project
- Effects on system and service performance
- 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

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



Refer to the FRA Website for the complete rubric

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

FRA Selection Preferences

- Projects including the Final Design and Construction lifecycle stages according to FRA's [Railroad Capital Project Guidance](#).
- Projects for short line railroad infrastructure and equipment, safety projects or other projects that may not be addressed by other FRA grant programs.
- The proposed Federal share of total project costs does not exceed 50 percent.
- The net benefits of the grant funds will be maximized considering the Benefit-Cost Analysis

Program Messaging

Project Types

- Projects that improve short-line or regional railroad infrastructure to 286,000-pound railcar standards
- Projects that improve the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure, particularly infrastructure with high cost of failure, such as bridges.

Energy Infrastructure and Innovation

- Projects that align with the Administration's focus on America's domestic energy infrastructure
- Projects that Advance the Department's Innovation Agenda to usher in the golden age of transportation through American innovation

American Families

- Applicants are encouraged to include otherwise eligible components in their proposed intercity passenger rail station projects that focus on enhancing the experience for traveling families, including adding mother's rooms, expanded waiting areas, adding new family restrooms, creating children's play areas, and other projects improving overall travel for families in U.S. intercity passenger rail stations.

FRA Buy America

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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Search

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Buy America Sample Component List (List for illustration purposes only)

Document Series: Policy and Guidance
Author: Federal Railroad Administration Chief Counsel
Subject: Buy America
Keywords: Buy America, Components

[FRA Buy America Sample Component List.pdf](#)

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 Converters 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>

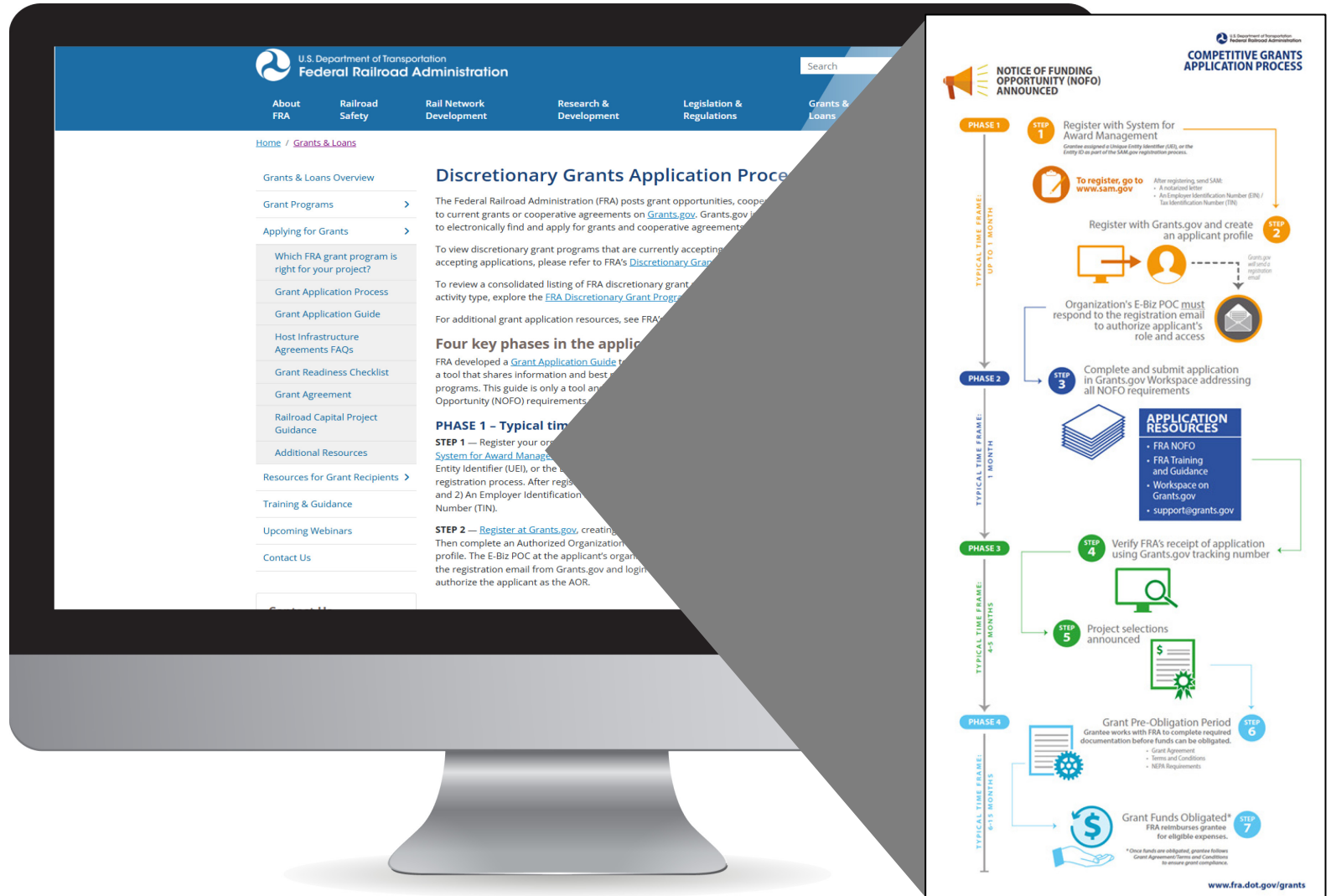
Component List: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/buy-america-sample-component-list-list-illustration-purposes-only>

How to Apply

Grant Application Process

A step-by-step process for applying

FRA's Discretionary Grants Application Process



What do I include in my application?

Required Documents



SF-424 Form

This form is your official funding request.



Project Narrative

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



Benefit-Cost Analysis

Applicants must submit BCAs as an appendix to the project narrative for each submitted application. A qualitative assessment of expected benefits and costs of a proposed infrastructure project may be sufficient.

Optional Supplemental Information



Environmental Compliance Documentation

Note: May include a draft document that requires development, review, and approval by FRA or an existing completed NEPA document approved by FRA or another Federal agency that covers the proposed project scope



Draft Use/Ownership Agreement (if applicable)

Note: FRA requires a written agreement exist between the applicant and the railroad regarding use and ownership consistent with 49 U.S.C. 22905(c)(1) for projects using rights-of-way owned by a railroad



Grade Crossing Table (if applicable)

SF424 Estimated Funding (\$)

SF 424

Narrative Cover Page

18. Estimated Funding (\$):	
* a. Federal	CRISI Funding Request Amount
* b. Applicant	Applicant Cost Share
* c. State	
* d. Local	
* e. Other	Other Federal Funding (specify in Narrative)
* f. Program Income	
* g. TOTAL	Make sure this matches Cover Page and Narrative

Project Title		
Applicant Name		
Amount of CRISI Program funding requested under this NOFO ¹	18.a.	
Total amount of proposed non-Federal cost share	18.b+c+d	%
Amount of non-CRISI Federal funding (if applicable) including pending awards	18.e.	
Total Project Cost	\$ 0.00	18.g.
Source(s) of proposed non-Federal cost share and other Federal funding (<i>provide funding amount by source</i>)		
Was a Federal grant application previously submitted for this Project? <i>If yes – please specify the program; funding year; and project title of the previous application. Identify any differences between the applications.</i>		



Additional Forms

Applicants are encouraged to submit the following additional documents and forms:

- SF 424B or 424D – Assurances for Non-Construction OR for Construction
- FRA’s Additional Assurances and Certifications (FRA F 30)
- If possible, also helpful:
 - FRA’s Applicant Financial Capability Questionnaire (FRA F 251)
 - SF LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities *(only required if reportable Lobbying activities exist)*

Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement: A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2130-0615. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 25 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: Information Collection Clearance Officer (RAD-20), Federal Railroad Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, Washington, DC 20590.

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration**

Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters, Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying

PART A: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions (Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 180)

(1) The grantee certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have transacted business with the Federal Government in the past three years.

(2) Where the grantee shall attach:

PART B: Certification Regarding Budget Information - Construction Programs

(NOTE: Certain Federal assistance programs require additional computations to arrive at the Federal share of project costs eligible for participation. If such is the case, you will be notified.)

COST CLASSIFICATION	a. Total Cost	b. Costs Not Allowable for Participation	c. Total Allowable Costs (Columns a-b)
1. Administrative and legal expenses	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
2. Land, structures, rights-of-way, appraisals, etc.	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
3. Relocation expenses and payments	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
4. Architectural and engineering fees	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
5. Other architectural and engineering fees	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
6. Project inspection fees	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
7. Site work	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
8. Demolition and removal	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
9. Construction	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
10. Equipment	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
11. Miscellaneous	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
12. SUBTOTAL (sum of lines 1-11)	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
13. Contingencies	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
14. SUBTOTAL	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
15. Project (program) income	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
16. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (subtract #15 from #14)	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
FEDERAL FUNDING			
17. Federal assistance requested, calculate as follows: (Consult Federal agency for Federal percentage share.) Enter the resulting Federal share.		Enter eligible costs from line 16c. Multiply X <input type="text"/> %	\$ <input type="text"/>

FRA F 30

Best Practices

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
 - Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)
 - SF-424



I. BASIC INFORMATION	
SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF KEY INFORMATION	
Topic	Description
Federal Agency Name	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Funding Opportunity Title	The Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program
Announcement Type	This is the notice for the Fiscal Year 2025 and 2026 funding for the CRISI Program
Funding Opportunity No.	FR-CRS-26-001
Assistance Listing No.	20.337 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements
Funding Details	The total funding available for awards under this NOFO is up to \$2,039,246,480
Key Dates	Applications Due: no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT, June 22, 2026
Executive Summary	The CRISI Program assists in funding eligible projects for the purpose of investing in a wide range of projects within the United States to improve railroad safety, efficiency, and reliability; mitigate congestion at both intercity passenger rail and freight rail chokepoints to support more efficient travel and goods movement; and enhance multi-modal connections. See Section 3(a) for eligible recipients.
Agency Contact Information	Email: Deborah.Kobrin@dot.gov ; Reagan.Morgan@dot.gov ; Lauren.Kobayashi@dot.gov

a. Special Funding Set-Asides
Of the \$2,039,246,480¹ available award amount, certain funding amounts are set aside for the following purposes under this NOFO:

- Rural Set-Aside:** At least \$532,500,000, or 25 percent, of the total amount appropriated of the CRISI Program funds will be made available for projects located in Rural Areas as required in [49 U.S.C. § 22907\(g\)](#). A project's rural designation is based on whether all or the majority (greater than 50%) of the project's location, based on geospatial data provided (see [Section 4\(a\)\(VII\)](#)), is in a Rural Area, as defined in FRA's Key Terms.² If FRA elects to fund a component of the project, then FRA will evaluate whether that component is in a Rural Area.

¹ The funding in this NOFO is made available by the FY 2026 Appropriation, FY 2025 Appropriation, the FY 2025 and 2026 Advance Appropriations provided in Division J, Title II of HJA. Should additional CRISI Program funds become available after the release of this NOFO, FRA may elect to award such additional funds to applications received under this NOFO. Any awards made under this NOFO are subject to the availability of appropriated funds. In addition to the \$2,039,246,480 in CRISI funding made available in this NOFO, \$66,005,000 in CRISI funds will be separately made available for Special Transportation Circumstances grants, \$87,426,000 is for Congressionally Directed Community Project Funding, and \$24,748,520 in CRISI funds will be set aside for award and program oversight conducted by FRA.
² For all defined terms in this NOFO, please see <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/definitions-key-terms-discretionary-grant-programs>.

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 Criteria
- V. Project Eligibility Criteria
- VI. Detailed Project Description
- VII. Project Location
- VIII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
- IX. Project Implementation and Management

- ☑ Structure your project narrative in accordance with the outline specified in the NOFO
- ☑ Include all elements identified in the outline, especially evaluation and selection criteria
- ☑ Follow the instructions for each element
- ☑ Adhere to 25-page limit – the cover page and tables do not count against limit

Best Practices – Project Narrative

I. Cover Page

- ☑ Include all required elements
- ☑ Round up to the nearest dollar
- ☑ Fillable pdf



Optional fillable PDF: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/crisi-fy-2025-2026-fillable-cover-page>

Project Title		
Applicant Name		
Amount of CRISI Program funding requested under this NOFO ¹		
Total amount of proposed non-Federal cost share		%
Amount of non-CRISI Federal funding (if applicable) including pending awards		
Total Project Cost	\$ 0.00	
Source(s) of proposed non-Federal cost share and other Federal funding (<i>provide funding amount by source</i>)		
Was a Federal grant application previously submitted for this Project? <i>If yes – please specify the program; funding year; and project title of the previous application. Identify any differences between the applications.</i>		
City(ies) where the project is located		
County(ies) where the project is located		
State(s) where the project is located		
Congressional district(s) where the project is located		

Best Practices – Project Narrative

What percent of funding is spent in a Rural Area?	%
Amount (if any) of funding request eligible for set-aside funds	Amount:
	Set-Aside(s):
Lifecycle Stage(s) proposed to be funded by this NOFO	<input type="checkbox"/> Systems Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project Development
	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Design <input type="checkbox"/> Right-of-Way Acquisition ² <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Capital
Current Lifecycle Stage and its anticipated completion date	<input type="checkbox"/> Systems Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project Development <input type="checkbox"/> Final Design <input type="checkbox"/> Right-of-Way Acquisition <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Capital Anticipated Date of Completion:
Is the project located on real property owned by someone other than the applicant? <i>If yes – list real property owners and the nature of the property interest.</i>	[Select One ▼]
Host railroad/infrastructure owner(s) of project assets	

I. Cover Page

Other impacted railroad(s) (including tenants)	
If the applicant is a commuter railroad: list the intercity passenger and/or freight railroad service(s) utilizing the proposed project.	
Has the applicant executed an agreement with the host railroad regarding use of the railroad right-of-way where the project will be located consistent with <u>49 U.S.C. 22905(c)</u> ³ (if applicable)?	[Select One ▼]
Is the project currently programmed in any medium- or long-range planning document? <i>If yes – specify planning document.</i>	[Select One ▼]
Is the project located on a potential corridor selected for the Corridor Identification and Development Program? <i>If yes – specify the corridor(s).</i>	[Select One ▼]
Is the project expected to need a waiver under FRA's domestic preference requirements? ⁶	[Select One ▼]



Best Practices – Project Narrative

II. Project Summary

- ✓ Briefly describe the project in **4 to 6 sentences** and the transportation challenges the project will address
- ✓ Key Elements
 - ✓ Lifecycle stage (Current and Requested)
 - ✓ Funding request and match
 - ✓ Location
 - ✓ Scope of work
- ✓ Think of this section of the application as **your elevator pitch for the project** to the DOT Secretary and FRA Administrator

FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program: Project Summaries

Total Rural: \$1,083,047,379 (minimum \$657,393,500)

Trespass Set-Aside:
\$32,792,587 selected (\$32,724,132 minimum)

California – Capitol Corridor Right-of-Way Safety Improvement Program (Up to \$20,000,000) *Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA)*

The proposed project was selected for Final Design and Construction and includes installation of security fencing along the Capitol Corridor route in northern California at three identified priority locations: Oakland to Fremont, Richmond to Emeryville, and Fairfield to Suisun City. The project will prevent pedestrians from trespassing on the railroad right-of-way and deter individuals from intentionally entering the path of oncoming trains. The project aligns with selection criteria by reducing trespassing issues as it is expected to reduce unauthorized access to the right-of-way and associated incidents by 20 percent along the corridor, including in two counties listed under the National Strategy to Prevent Trespassing: Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The CCJPA is providing the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for trespassing prevention measures.

California – Development of a Passenger Railroad Trespassing Mitigation Toolbox, Addressing Built Environment and Human Factors Based on California Railroad Data (Up to \$3,893,166) *The Regents of the University of California, U.C. San Diego*

The proposed project was selected for research on trespassing accidents on passenger railroads to better understand the environment, track structure, station areas, and rail-highway crossing attributes related to areas of high trespassing activity along six rail lines in California. The project will review historical trespassing accidents on the following railroad services: Coaster, Pacific Surfliner, San Joaquins, Altamont Corridor Express, Caltrain, and the Capitol Corridor to develop a toolkit to understand how, where, and why trespassing occurs and to propose preventative measures. The project aligns with the selection criteria by enhancing safety as the project addresses the prevention and reduction of railroad trespassing. The U.C. San Diego will contribute the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for trespassing prevention measures.

Florida – Railroad Trespassing Enforcement Project (Up to \$100,000) *City of Jacksonville*

The proposed project was selected for trespass enforcement activities along track owned by CSX, Norfolk Southern, Florida East Coast Railroad, and St. Johns Terminal Railroad in Jacksonville, Florida. This project will deploy up to four law enforcement officers at identified hotspot locations to investigate and report trespassing-property checks at rail grade crossings and main rail yards, locate safety hazards on railroad property, provide referral services for citizens encountered, issue warnings and citations to trespassers, and educate people on the dangers of trespassing on railroads. The project aligns with the selection criteria by enhancing safety as the project will reduce trespass-related incidents including injuries and fatalities. The City of Jacksonville will contribute the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for trespassing prevention measures.

Best Practices – Project Narrative

III. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

- ✓ Only include eligible costs
- ✓ Confirm funding amount matches SF-424
- ✓ Specify each source of non-Federal match and provide details about in-kind match
- ✓ Indicate public- vs. private-sector match
- ✓ Attach funding commitment letters
- ✓ Identify if the proposed match will not be available until a certain date or if funds must be secured or spent by a deadline
- ✓ Project budgets should show how different funding sources will contribute to each task and Lifecycle Stage

Best Practices – Project Narrative

III. Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds

Table 2: Completed example project funding overview table for Capital Projects. This example table is meant to be for illustrative purposes only.

Lifecycle Stage	Project Component/ Task	CRISI Federal	Other Federal	Applicant Cost-Share	Other Federal Cost-Share	Total
N/A	Project Administration and Management	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	N/A	\$5,000,000
Systems Planning	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Planning	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Project Development	Environmental Review	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Preliminary Engineering	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Design	Final Design	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$0	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000 (in-kind, non-CRISI match)	
Construction	Track Replacement	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	
	Yard Improvements	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	
Total		\$20,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$2,000,000	

Table 4: Completed example project funding overview table for non-Capital Projects. This example table is meant to be for illustrative purposes only.

Project Component	CRISI Request	Non-CRISI Federal Funds	CRISI Cost-Share	Non-CRISI Federal Cost-Share (including in-kind)	Total
Project Administration and Management	\$40,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$50,000
Training Round 1	\$80,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$100,000
Training Round 2	\$80,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$100,000
Total	\$200,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$250,000



<https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/crisi-funding-table-templates-and-examples>



Best Practices – Project Narrative


VI. Detailed Project Description

- ✓ Statement of Work including project components and tasks and a proposed schedule
- ✓ Environmental Information, if applicable
- ✓ Grade Crossing Information, if applicable
- ✓ Thoroughly discuss the transportation challenges and benefits
- ✓ Include data to support project benefits
- ✓ Include photographs or diagrams
- ✓ Identify all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries

- ✓ Project type specific information, if applicable

- ✓ Grade Crossing

US DOT Grade Crossing Inventory #	Proposed Improvement	Rail Operator(s)	Railroad Owner	Latitude Coordinates (at least five decimal places of precision)	Longitude Coordinates (at least five decimal places of precision)

 <https://railroads.dot.gov/e-library/fra-grade-crossing-table-template-excel>

- ✓ PTC
- ✓ Trespassing Prevention
- ✓ Locomotive
- ✓ Community Emergency Plans

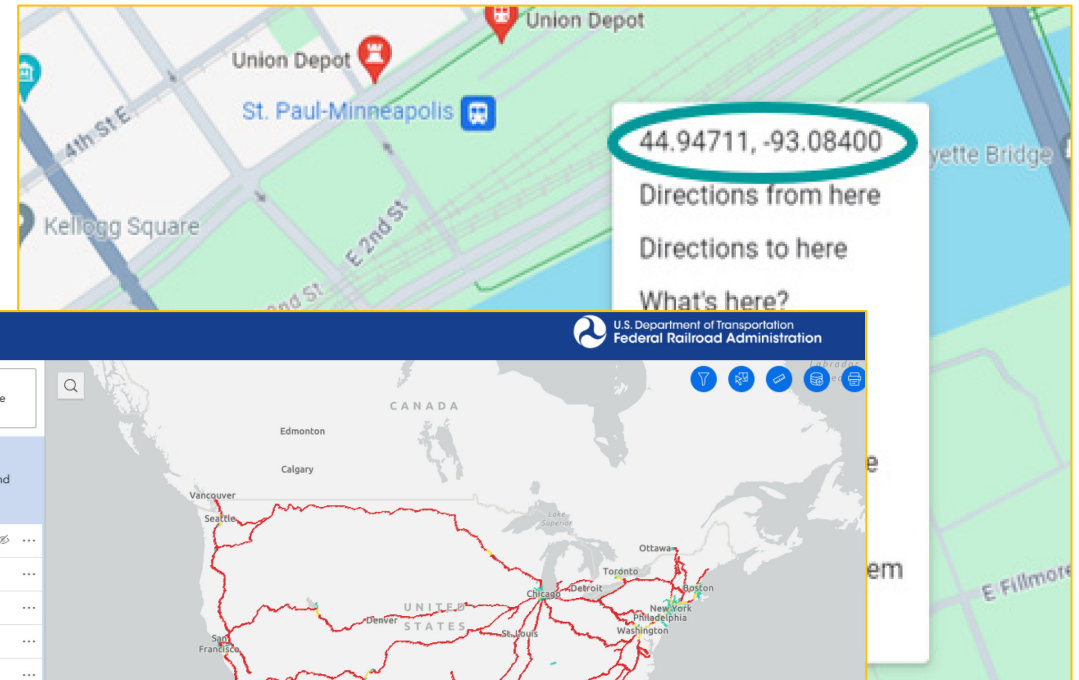
Best Practices – Project Narrative

VII. Project Location

- ✓ Identify cities, counties, and states where project is located
- ✓ Include a map of the project
- ✓ Identify railroad mileposts
- ✓ Geospatial data—longitude and latitude



[FRA Rail Network](#)



FRA Rail Network
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Map Layer Basemap Gallery Legend

STRACNET
FRA Mileposts - FRA Rail Mileposts
NTAD Amtrak Stations
NTAD Rail Yards
Railroad Grade Crossings
FreightStations
North American Rail Network Main Lines
Class I Freight Railroads
Passenger Rail

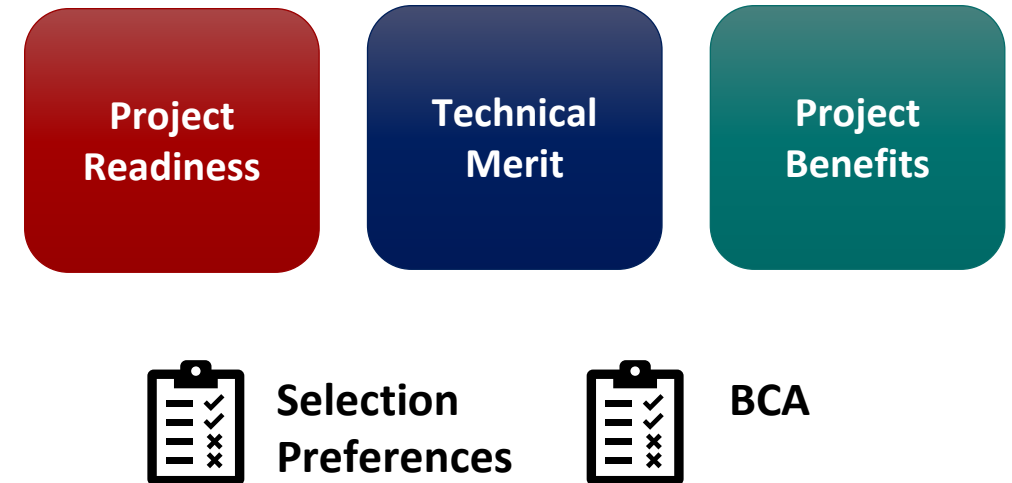
ancillary	milepost	railroad	source	subdivision
part_1	7	AMTK	ATIP:actual	FREMONT SECONDARY
part_1	8	AMTK	ATIP:actual	FREMONT SECONDARY
part_1	5	AMTK	ATIP:actual	FREMONT SECONDARY

Best Practices – Project Narrative

VIII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

- ☑ Include a separate section in the project narrative focused on how the project meets each of the evaluation and selection criteria
- ☑ Applicants are welcome to respond to the Evaluation and Selection criteria prompts from the NOFO as a Question and Answer
- ☑ **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 but don’t copy and paste your BCA
 - ☑ Not all reviewers are Economists

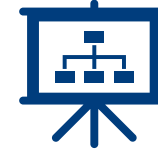
Evaluation Criteria



Best Practices – Project Narrative

IX. 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
 - ✓ Conformance with Federal requirements for progress reporting



- ✓ Project Arrangement and Org Charts



- ✓ Significant Project Milestones



- ✓ Risk Register and Project Management Plans

Best Practices – Benefit-Cost Analysis

BCA – Purpose

Why Do a Benefit-Cost Analysis?

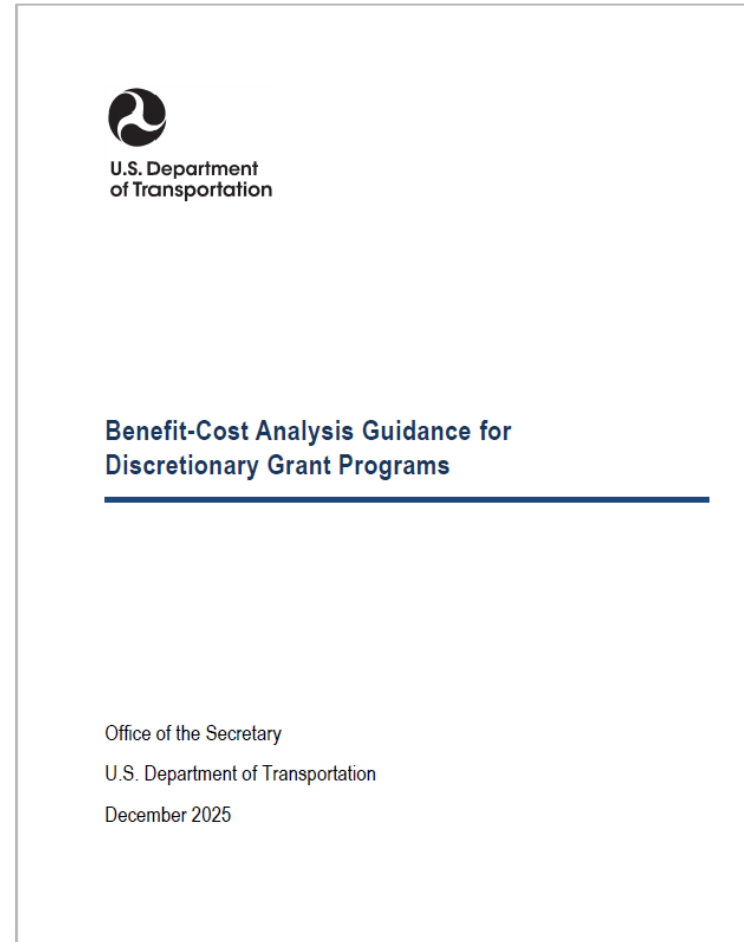
- BCA encourages applicants to **focus and refine project scopes and outcomes**
- BCA is a method to enable **comparison** across diverse project types and magnitudes
- Part of CRISI selection criteria:
 - The Secretary **shall** “select projects that will maximize the net benefits of the funds appropriated for use under this section, considering the cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project”

BCA – Overview of Steps

- 1 Specify your project's **baseline, build case, and timeline**
- 2 SHOW how your **build case** will result in specific **outcomes** (i.e., **project benefits**) – tie outcomes to specific project elements
- 3 Break down benefits and costs into the smallest sub-elements possible and make a **direct connection** between project elements and impacts
- 4 Assign monetary values to sub-elements using USDOT's [BCA Guidance](#)
- 5 Calculate results and **discount to base year**

The 2026 update to the DOT BCA Guidance includes:

- Updated parameter and monetization values in Appendix A



BCA – Baseline, Build Case, and Timeline

- The **baseline** reflects the status quo—i.e., the world without the project
- The **build case** reflects the world with the project
- The **timeline** must be appropriate for the proposed project
 - The operations, or benefits, period should match the useful life of the project, but should not exceed 30 years
 - Project elements with useful lives beyond 30 years (e.g., bridges, stations) will have **residual value** → Use GAAP straight line depreciation

BCA – Scope of Analysis

- The **scope** of estimated costs and benefits must **match**
 - Don't claim benefits from an entire project, but only count costs from the grant-funded or other, lesser portion
- Scope should cover a project that has **independent utility**, meaning it is expected to produce the claimed benefits without other investments
 - Meaning, you may need to incorporate costs for related investments necessary to achieve the claimed benefits
- Project elements with independent utility should be individually evaluated, **each with their own BCA**
 - The individual elements can be submitted as a **combined project**; evaluators will examine both the independent elements and the full project
 - E.g., one BCA for each grade crossing; but, submitted together as a single project with a final BCA result

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 – Modal Diversion

- Think about modal diversion in terms of benefits to existing and **additional** users
- Users diverting from other modes are new, **additional users** to rail
- For additional users, internal benefits such as reduced travel time count for **half** because those users lose the benefits they received from other modes (e.g., the comfort, privacy, and access of auto travel)
- However, **external benefits** (e.g., congestion, emissions, noise, and the external component of safety) are realized in full
- This concept is known as the **Rule of Half** (see USDOT BCA Guidance for more information)



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 **capital 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

Ensure **cost escalation** (i.e., inflation adjustment) is accurate for future year construction (see [USDOT BCA Template](#) costs tab to check your answer)



BCA – Inputs and Sources

- Break down marginal effects into the smallest possible sub-elements; make a **direct connection** between the project element and the impacts
- Provide documentation for inputs and **growth rates** (if you have a **Travel Demand Model**, submit it as an attachment if you are able to!!!)

Example of direct connection between project elements and impacts

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 & idling emissions)
- Decreased delays at nearby sidings along the corridor (travel time savings & idling emissions)
- Reduced O&M costs

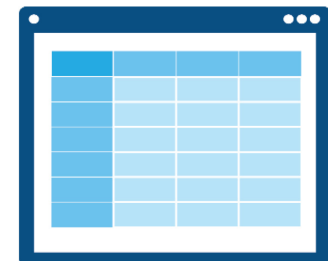
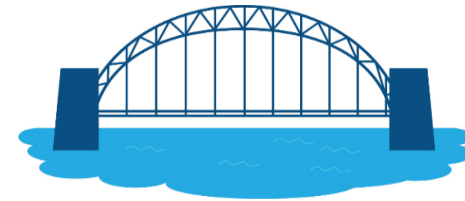


BCA – Non-Capital Projects

- Systems Planning, Project Planning, and Project Development projects will be rated on a positive/negative scale
 - The applicant must submit a detailed **qualitative discussion**.
 - You may submit a quantitative analysis as supplemental information
 - The applicant will still need to cite all their sources including reports, data tools, etc.
- The applicant's qualitative discussion must address and include the following items:
 - **Proposed benefits and costs for the project if it reaches construction**
 - **A direct connection between project elements and impacts** (see previous slide)
 - No-Build vs Build
 - Project Location
 - Project Schedule, including the projected construction start date and projected operations start date

BCA – Final Advice

- ✓ Document your assumptions in as much detail as possible (include references and links)
- ✓ If your application contains multiple projects, analyze benefits and costs of each project **separately**
- ✓ If your BCA includes **modal diversion or growth rates**, include detailed sources supporting freight and/or passenger traffic counts and Average Annualized Daily Traffic (AADT)
- ✓ Check your **inflation adjustments** and **discounting**
- ✓ See USDOT BCA Guidance or **reach out to FRA** with any questions during your analysis
- ✓ ***You must include an unlocked Excel spreadsheet that clearly shows your calculations and discounting and a BCA Narrative (technical memo/ discussion) that describes the analysis including any unquantified benefits***



BCA – Guidance/Online Resources

DOT Resources

- [DOT BCA Guidance](#)
- [DOT BCA Template](#)

FRA Resources

- [GXAPS](#)



Best Practices – Environmental Readiness

Environmental review is required for all FRA grant-funded projects



NEPA

Examples of laws, regulations, and executive orders under NEPA:

- National Historic Preservation Act
- Section 4(f) of USDOT Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Farmland Protection Policy Act
- Coastal Zone Mgmt Act
- CERCLA (contaminated sites)
- ... and more

Project Planning & Project Development Applications

If applying for
**Project Planning or
Project Development (NEPA)**

Consider

Providing as much project detail
as possible

Demonstrate readiness by including:



Project Scope



Location



Right-of-Way (ROW)



Planning/Analysis



Environmental Resources



Stakeholders



Agency Coordination



Permits/Approvals



Schedule



Construction

Environmental Review Process

Environmental readiness – NEPA can begin once FRA has enough project information to assess environmental impacts within statutory timeframes

Class of Action – determines how compliance with NEPA is carried out and documented:

- **Categorical Exclusion (CE)** – minimal impacts, streamlined review
- **Environmental Assessment (EA)** – uncertain level of impacts, concise public document that includes sufficient evidence and analysis
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** – anticipated significant impacts, requires detailed analysis



Note: Complex projects often require more time and effort for environmental review

Application Considerations

Also consider identifying:

- **Categorical Exclusions** – see 23 CFR 771.116
- **Section 106 Exemptions** (Rail ROW Program Comment) – see Exempted Activities List
- **Anticipated Ground Disturbance** – for surveys, PE/NEPA
- **Environmental/Cultural Staffing** – internal or consultant









Final Design & Construction Applications


If applying for
Final Design (FD) or
Construction

Consider

Project complexity and
whether NEPA is
complete or underway

Demonstrate readiness by including:

-  **Approved NEPA Document** (*Note type, agency, & dates*)
-  **Supporting Materials** (*Analysis & consultation*)
-  **Required Permits** (*From other agencies*)
-  **Mitigation Commitments** (*Avoid, minimize, offset*)
-  **Project Changes** (*Updates since NEPA approval*)
-  **Property Acquisitions** (*Current status*)

 **REMINDER:** NEPA *must* be complete before an FD or Construction grant can be obligated.

Resources

Helpful Information Available on FRA's Website

- [FRA & NEPA Documentation](#)
- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)
 - *This web page provides links to recorded webinars, trainings, and other resources to assist in preparing NEPA documents for rail projects*

Email: FRAenvironment@dot.gov



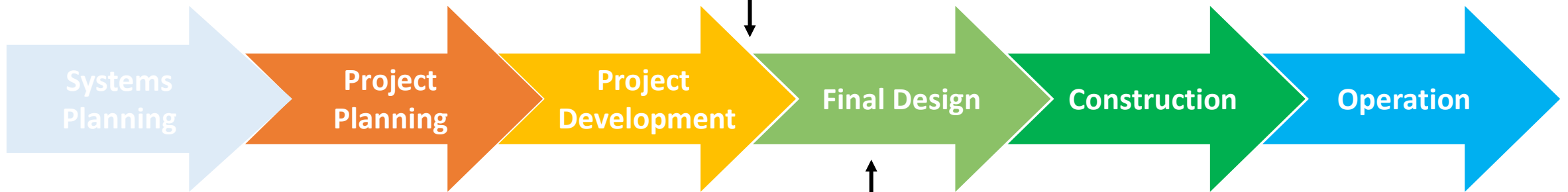
Best Practices – Right-of-Way Acquisition

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended, and its implementing regulations, 49 CFR part 24, apply to projects funded in whole or in part through FRA's Federal financial assistance programs.

- Any project that receives Federal funding at any phase of project development or implementation is subject to the Uniform Act.
- Any property acquisition or relocation in **anticipation of Federal funding must comply with the Uniform Act even if there is no Federal funding or match used in the acquisition or relocation itself.** Violations of the Uniform Act may jeopardize eligibility for reimbursement or use of the property in the project.
- FRA considers your application submittal for Federal funding to demonstrate that you anticipate using Federal funding in the project.

ROW Acquisition – Lifecycle Stages

**Consistent with 23 CFR 771.113 –
ROW acquisition may not be initiated
until NEPA has been approved**



ROW acquisition is a FD activity

Subject to the Uniform Act



All right-of-way (ROW) acquired must be in accordance with the Uniform Act



To avoid delays and other risks to project, ensure that all planned property acquisitions are described in your application and acquired consistent with the Uniform Act **even if acquisition occurs prior to grant selection and award.**



FRA will only fund ROW acquisition if paired with construction funding.

Recap & Reminders

Optional Documentation to Support Application



Hyperlinks encouraged if document is exceedingly long



Detailed Cost Estimates if available

Especially helpful for applicants applying for FD/Construction lifecycle



Letters of Support from Host Infrastructure Owners



Project Management Plans



Project Schedules



Documentation of financial commitments

Best Practices & Helpful Hints

- ☑ Never skimp on the evaluation and selection criteria
 - ☑ Repeat yourself if necessary
 - ☑ Reviewers key in on
 - ☑ Project Readiness
 - ☑ Project Benefits
 - ☑ Technical Merit

- ☑ Plain Language and Layman's terms are key
 - ☑ Your reviewers are not all economists and engineers – benefits in non-economic terms and project implementation in non-engineering terms

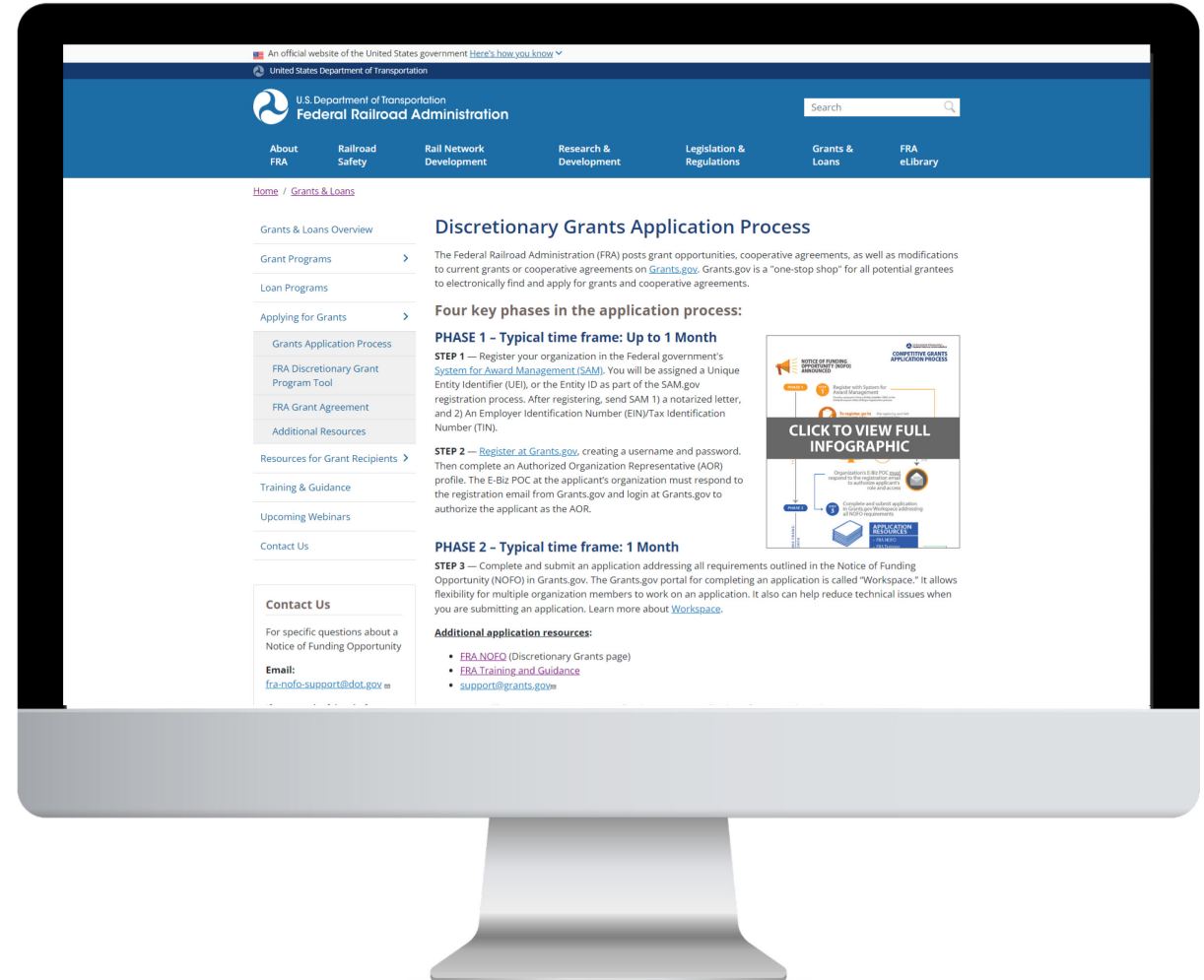
- ☑ [Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Guidance](#)

- ☑ Use FRA terminology – “speak FRA”



Resources

- [CRISI FY 2025-26 NOFO](#)
- [FRA's Competitive Grants Application Process](#)
- [FRA's Discretionary Grant Agreements](#)
- [USDOT's BCA Guidance](#)
- [FRA's BCA Guidance](#)
- [FRA & NEPA Documentation](#)
- [FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources](#)
- [FRA Guidance on Development and Implementation of Railroad Capital Projects](#)
- [FRA Grants Webinars](#)
- [FRA Grants Videos](#)





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Federal Railroad Administration

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*Learn more about FRA Competitive Discretionary Grant Programs
at railroads.dot.gov/grants*