

RAIL

MOVING AMERICA FORWARD

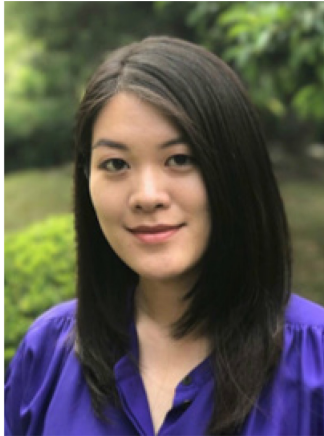


FY 2025-26 Railroad Crossing Elimination (Crossing Safety) Program NOFO Webinar

Presented by:

Jenny Zeng | Jenny Mancino | Reagan Morgan | Justin Zweifel

Presenters



Jenny Zeng
Supervisory
Transportation
Specialist

RCE Program Lead



Jenny Mancino
Transportation
Industry Analyst

*FRA Discretionary Grant
Programs*



Reagan Morgan
Transportation
Industry Analyst

*FRA Discretionary Grant
Programs*



Justin Zweifel
Supervisory
Environmental
Protection Specialist

*Environmental Project
Review Division*

Upcoming Webinars



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

CRISI Related NOFO Information:



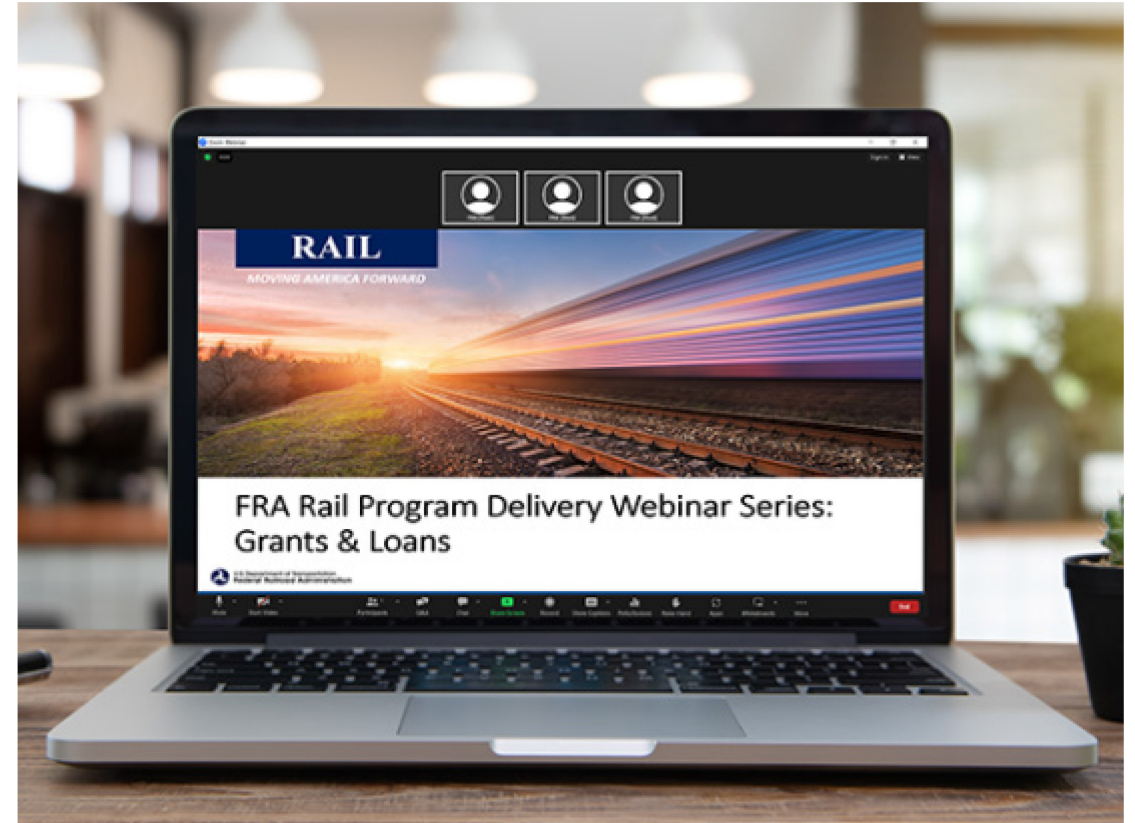
CRISI Program Webinar
05/04/26 at 1-2:30 PM ET



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



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



Agenda



1 **FY25-26 RCE Program Overview**

2 **NOFO Overview & Key Changes**

3 **Evaluation & Selection**

4 **Application Materials**

5 **Best Practices**

- Project Narrative
- Environmental Readiness
- Right-of-Way

6 **How to Apply**

7 **Recap & Reminders**

8 **Q&A**

FY25-26 RCE Program Overview

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Grant Purpose

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

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

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

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Eligible Applicants

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

FY25-26 RCE – Program Overview

Eligible Projects

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

Key Program Definitions

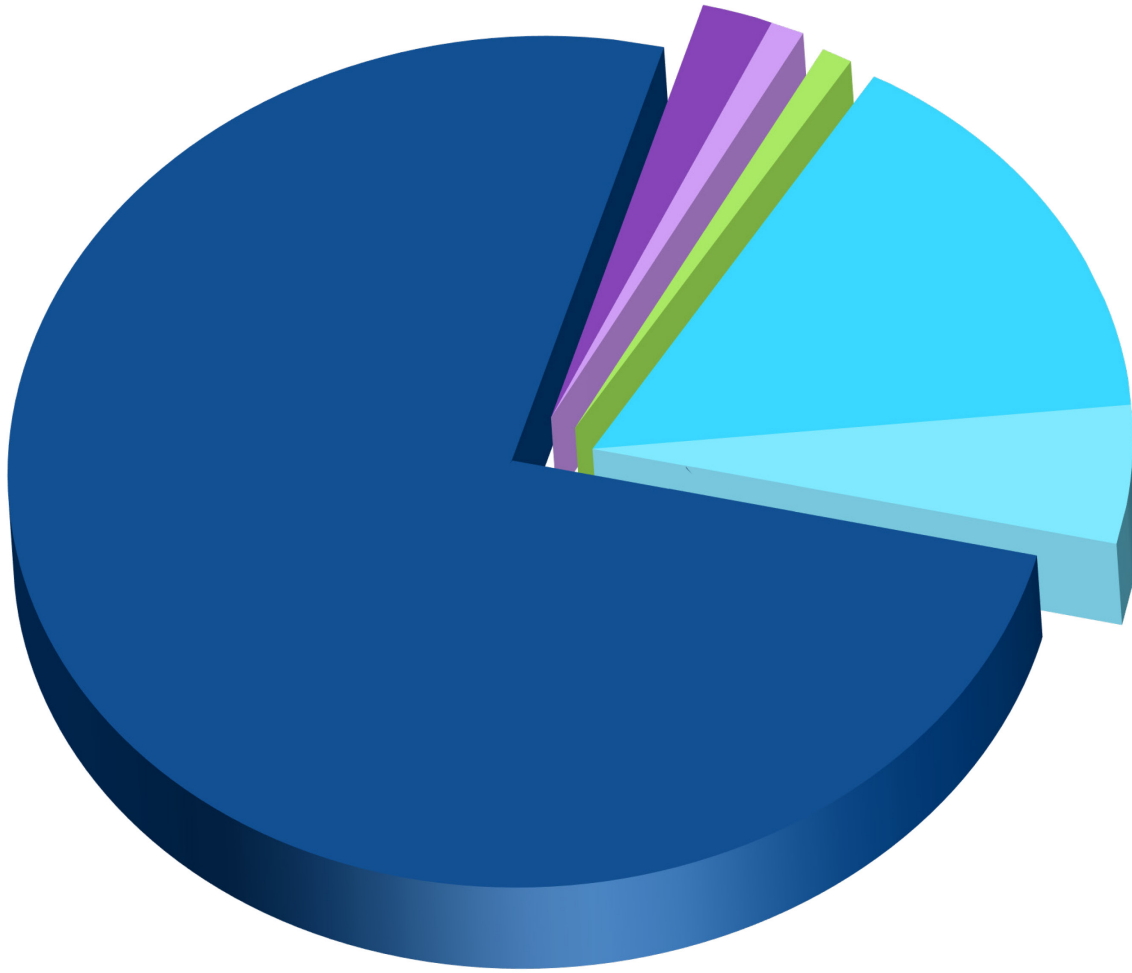
- **Grade Separation or Closure:** An underpass or overpass to eliminate level crossings between railroad and highway users at an existing highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing, or the closing of a highway-rail grade crossing to vehicular or pedestrian traffic
- **Improvement Project:** A project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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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

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

Key Program Conditions



Planning

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

Crossing Safety Information and Education Program

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

Rural and Tribal Set Aside

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

Grant Conditions

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

State Limitation

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

Non-Federal Cost Share

Requirements



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



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



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



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



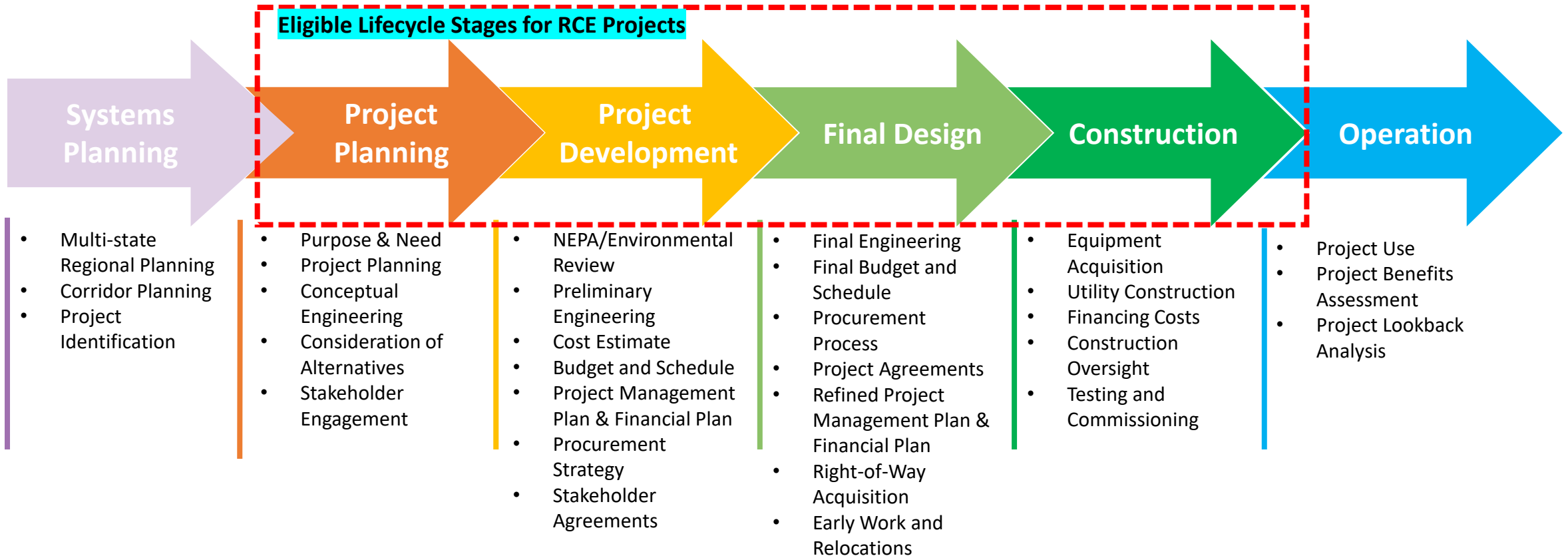
Include funding commitment letters outlining agreements as attachments or in an appendix

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

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

Role of the Project Lifecycle in Grant Funding Opportunities

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



NOFO Overview & Key Changes

What information is in a NOFO?

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

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

Key Parts of a NOFO

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

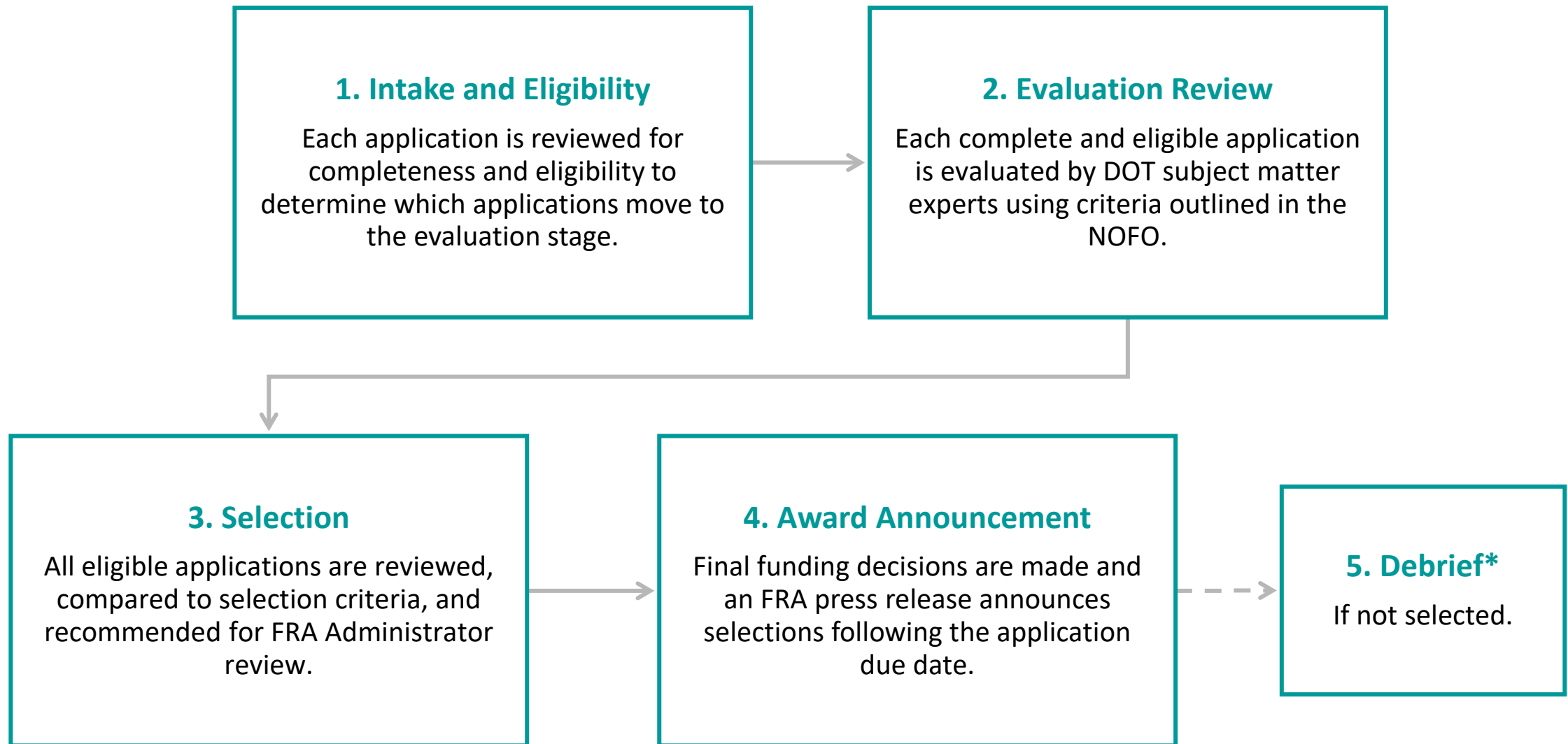
Read the NOFO thoroughly and carefully to understand the criteria for eligibility and selection and what information each application must include!

Changes from FY23-24 RCE NOFO

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

Evaluation & Selection

Application Review and Selection Process



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

Evaluation Criteria

**Project
Readiness**

**Technical
Merit**

**Project
Benefits**

Selection Preferences



Project Readiness

Project Readiness Criteria:

- Demonstrated progress and understanding of applicable environmental requirements
- Demonstrated progress on agreements (i.e. 22905 Host Infrastructure Agreements)
- Selection of appropriate Lifecycle Stage(s) with demonstrated progress toward preceding Lifecycle Stage(s)
- Coordination and commitments from project partners

Project Benefits 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



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

Technical Merit

Technical Merit Criteria:

- Qualifications of key personnel and partner organizations to complete project in proposed time frame and budget
- Deploys innovative technology, encourages innovative approaches to project delivery, and incentivizes the use of innovative financing
- Legal, financial, and technical capacity to carry out proposed project
- Demonstrates strong project readiness and ability to meet the Crossing Safety Program requirements
- Degree to which the project improves the safety and mobility of people and goods at grade crossings

Technical Merit Rubric:

- Applications will be evaluated based on responsiveness to the criteria, including an assessment of supporting justifications
- Assigned a cumulative technical merit rating:

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Responsive	Highly Responsive
--------------	------------	------------	-------------------



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

Project Benefits

Project Benefits Criteria:

- Improves safety at Highway-Rail or Pathway-Rail Grade Crossings
 - Proposes to grade separate, eliminate, or close one or more Highway-Rail or Pathway-Rail Grade Crossings
 - Improves the mobility of both people and goods
 - Reduces emissions, protects the environment, and provides community benefit (including noise reduction)
 - Improves access to emergency services and communities
 - Provides economic benefit
- Addresses Additional Considerations:
 - Uses innovative technologies, innovative design and construction techniques, or construction materials that reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Uses contracting incentives that employ local labor, to the extent permissible under Federal law
 - Improves the mobility of multiple modes of transportation, including ingress and egress from freight facilities; or users of nonvehicular modes of transportation, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation



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

Selection Preferences

FRA will give preference to eligible projects that:

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

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



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

Program Messaging

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

Blocked Crossings

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

Family Friendly

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

Transportation Infrastructure

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

Economic Competitiveness

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

Innovation Agenda

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

Note: FRA Buy America

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

System/Group	Components
Steel used in manufacture of locomotive deck, floor, shell and crashworthiness elements	Side frame structure
	End structure
	Floor structure
	Roof structure
	Integrated cab structure
	Carbody steel (side frame)
	Carbody steel (carbody skin)
	Deck
Main transformers	Transformers
	Inverters
	Contactors
	Rectifiers
	Brake choppers
	Filter inductors



For FRA-funded Projects – 100% of the steel, iron, construction materials, and manufactured goods used in the project **must** be produced in the United States



FRA Buy America applies to materials purchased with FRA funds and with non-Federal funds



Consider FRA Buy America requirements in project planning, design, and budget



Include FRA Buy America requirements in all procurement documents and obtain any necessary certifications to document compliance



Waivers are granted only in limited circumstances and can result in significant delay

Buy America: <https://railroads.dot.gov/legislation-regulations/buy-america/buy-america>

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

Application Materials

What do I include in my application?

Required Documents



SF 424 Form

This form is your official funding request.



Project Narrative

- I. Cover Page
- 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

Optional Supplemental Information



Grade Crossing Table



Environmental Compliance Documentation

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



Draft Use/Ownership Agreement (if applicable)

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

Benefit-Cost Analysis is **NOT** required

SF 424 Estimated Funding (\$)

SF 424

18. Estimated Funding (\$):	
* a. Federal	RCE 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 Narrative Cover Page

Project Title		
Applicant Name		
Amount of RCE Program funding requested under this NOFO ¹	18.a.	
Total amount of proposed non-Federal cost share	18.b+ c+ d	%
Amount of non-RCE 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>		

Reminder: The SF 424 is your official request. For application inconsistencies, FRA will defer to the SF 424.

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 approximately 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. Express 01/31/2025

**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 of 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"/>

OMB number: 2040-0008
Expiration Date: 06/30/2028

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
 - I. Statement of Work
 - II. Environmental Information, if applicable
 - III. Grade Crossing Information
 - I. Safety Benefit Data
 - IV. Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Information and Education Programs
- VII. Project Location
- VIII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria
 - I. Project Readiness
 - II. Technical Merit
 - III. Project Benefits
- IX. Project Implementation and Management

- ✓ Follow the instructions for each element
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Adhere to 25-page limit (the Cover Page and tables do not count against the limit)

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Cover Page

- ✓ Follow the exact format
- ✓ Round up to the nearest dollar
- ✓ Fillable pdf



Refer to the [FRA Website](#) for the **optional** fillable Cover Page PDF

Project Title		
Applicant Name		
Amount of RCE Program funding requested under this NOFO ¹		
Total amount of proposed non-Federal cost share		%
Amount of non-RCE 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

Cover Page

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"/> Project Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Project Development
Current Lifecycle Stage and its anticipated completion date	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Design <input type="checkbox"/> Right-of-Way Acquisition ² <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Capital <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	
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? ⁴ <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? ⁵ <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]



Refer to the [FRA Website](#) for the **optional** fillable Cover Page PDF

Best Practices – Project Narrative

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 cost share
 - ✓ 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



Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Program

FY 2023-2024 SELECTIONS: Project Summaries

Alaska – Parks Highway MP 169 Grade Separation (Up to \$29,803,280)

State of Alaska

The proposed project was selected for Final Design and Construction and includes activities for a grade separation on Alaska's Parks Highway in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska. This project will replace an existing at-grade crossing with a grade-separated crossing. The project aligns with the selection criteria by enhancing safety, as this project will improve safety and traffic flow, decrease traffic delays and vehicle emissions, and reduce maintenance costs at the crossing. Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities will contribute the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for projects in Rural Areas, and specifically for counties with 20 or fewer residents per square mile.

Arizona – Yuma County Elimination of 3 UPRR Crossings (Up to \$640,000)

County of Yuma

The proposed project was selected for Project Planning and includes activities to examine the feasibility of grade-separating three crossings in Yuma County, Arizona. The project will explore viable solutions and develop design concepts for eliminating these crossings over the Union Pacific track at Avenue 9E, Fortuna Road, and County 29E. The project aligns with the selection criteria by enhancing safety, as the project will eliminate at-grade crossings, increase reliability of emergency responders, and improve mobility. Yuma County, the City of Yuma, and the Town of Wellton will contribute the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for Planning projects and the statutory set-aside for projects in Rural Areas.

Arizona – Hualapai Tribal Diamond Creek Road Grade Separation Project (Up to \$22,989,751)

Hualapai Tribal Council

The proposed project was selected for Final Design and Construction and includes activities to create a grade-separated overpass and install anti-intrusion fencing along the rail corridor within the traditional lands of the Hualapai in Peach Springs, Arizona for the Hualapai Tribal Council. The project aligns with the selection criteria by resulting in one or more grade-separated crossings, as the project will construct a grade-separated overpass/bridge structure and install fencing to improve safety in an area with a history of accidents. The Hualapai Tribal Council and BNSF will contribute the 20 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for projects on Tribal Lands and the statutory set-aside for projects in counties with 20 or fewer residents per square mile.

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Grant Funds, Sources, and Use of Project Funds

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

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Funding Tables

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

Lifecycle Stage	Project Component/Task	Crossings Federal	Other Federal	Applicant Cost Share	Other Federal Cost Share	Total
N/A	Project Administration and Management	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$5,000,000
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	\$0	\$8,000,000	\$2,000,000 (in-kind)	\$0	\$10,000,000
Construction	Grade Crossing Separation of GX ID 222222A	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$12,000,000
	Grade crossing Safety Improvements at GX ID 222333B	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$35,000,000
Total		\$20,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$

Project Component/Task	Crossings Federal	Other Federal	Applicant Cost Share	Other Federal Cost Share	Total
Project Administration and Management	\$40,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$50,000
Safety Information and Education Program 1	\$80,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$100,000
Safety Information and Education Program 2	\$80,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$100,000
Total	\$200,000	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$250,000

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ Explain how applicant meets eligibility criteria outlined in Section 3(a)
- ✓ Include citations to enabling legislation, if applicable

Project Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ Explain how the proposed project meets the project eligibility criteria outlined in Section(d)



Best Practices – Project Narrative

Detailed Project Description

- ✓ Thoroughly discuss the transportation challenges and benefits
- ✓ Include data to support project benefits
- ✓ Describe how project components are related and will be sequenced
- ✓ Provide Statement of Work
- ✓ Include environmental information
- ✓ Include photographs or diagrams
- ✓ Identify all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries
- ✓ Grade crossing information



Best Practices – Project Narrative

Grade Crossing Information

- ✓ Cite specific [USDOT National Grade Crossing Inventory](#) information (including number) for each grade crossing
- ✓ Include latitude and longitude coordinates for each grade crossing location
- ✓ Indicate the railroad owner of the infrastructure and crossing
- ✓ Identify the primary railroad operator and roadway at the crossing

USDOT 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)
	<i>(ex: Grade separation-overpass)</i>				
	<i>(ex: Safety improvements-- gates and lights)</i>				

Best Practices – Project Narrative

Safety Benefit Data

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



Best Practices – Project Narrative

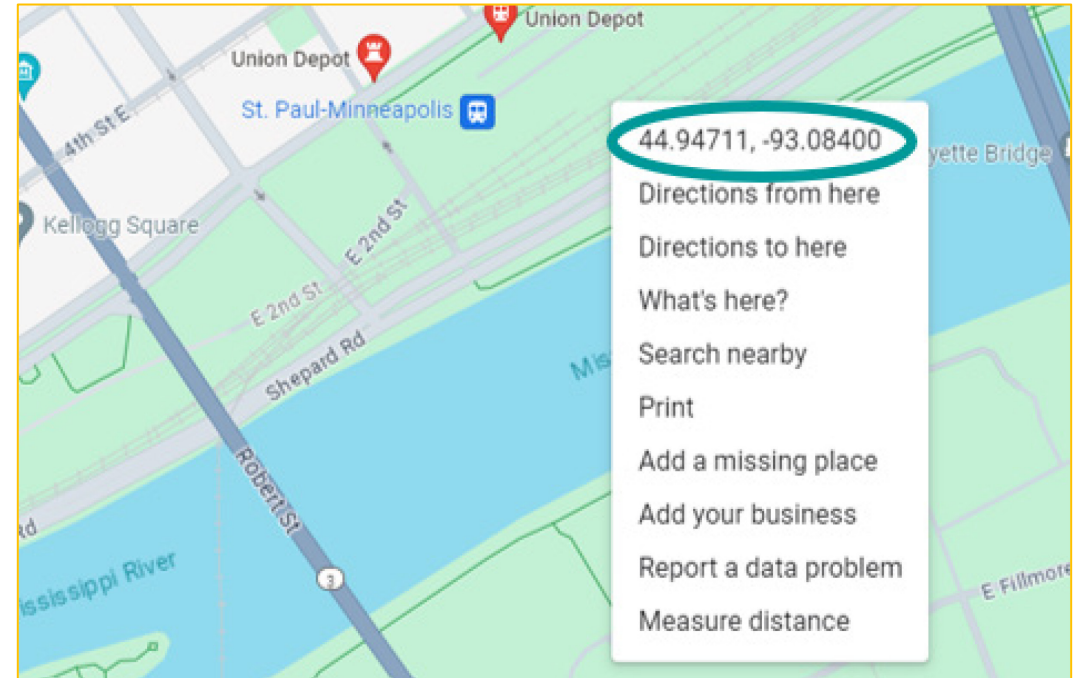
Project Location

- ✓ Identify cities, counties, and states where project is located
- ✓ Include a map of the project
- ✓ Identify railroad mileposts
- ✓ Identify Congressional District
- ✓ Geospatial data—longitude and latitude (at least 5 decimal places)

**If applying for:*

Highway-Rail GX Safety Information and Education Programs

- ✓ Demonstrate how activities promote further awareness of grade crossing safety
- ✓ Describe how project will be based on existing best practices
- ✓ Identify how the project will be implemented with coordination with stakeholders



[FRA Rail Network](#)

Best Practices – Project Narrative

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
- ✓ Think of this as your make-or-break section
 - ❖ Dedicate the majority of your 25 pages to this section

Evaluation Criteria

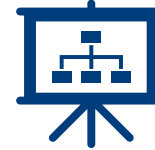


Selection
Preferences

Best Practices – Project Narrative

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 – Additional Info

Blocked Crossing Table

US DOT Grade Crossing Inventory #	Number of Blocked Crossing Incidents in the Past 12 Months	Average Duration of Blocked Crossings (in minutes)	Frequency of Blocked Crossing (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)	Railroad Owner	Number of Reports Submitted to the FRA Blocked Crossing Portal	Source(s) of Blocked Crossing Data (e.g., FRA Blocked Crossing Portal, police reports, railroad)	Direct Impact(s) to Community (e.g., delayed school buses, emergency services, safety risks, traffic delays)



Refer to the [FRA Website](#) for the **optional** Blocked Crossing Table

Program Eligibility Issues

Common issues in previous rounds

Minimum Request Amount

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

Matching Funds

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

Scope

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

SF 424 Federal Request

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

Grade Crossing

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

Roadwork

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

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

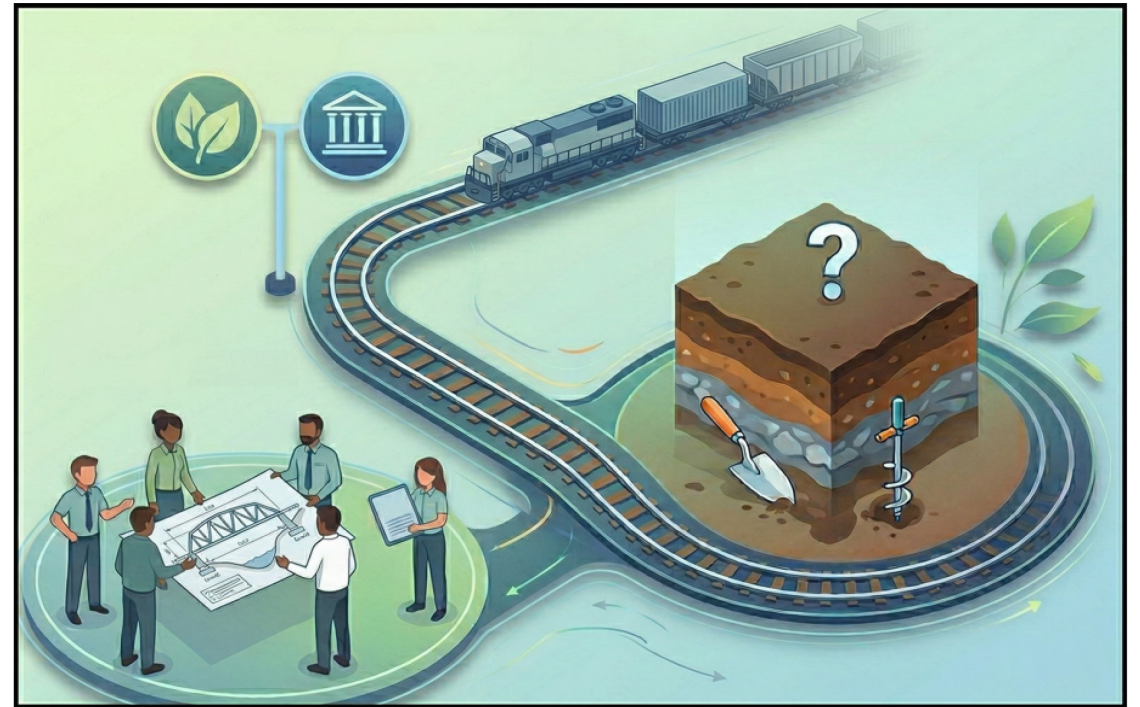


Note: Complex projects often require more time and effort for environmental review

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



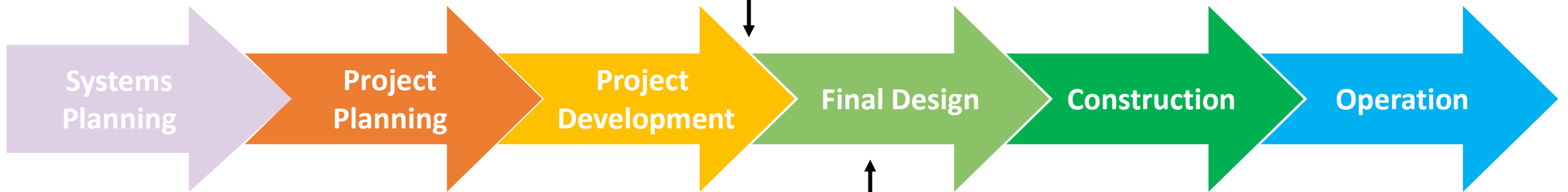
Best Practices – Right-of-Way Acquisition

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.

How to Apply

How do I apply?

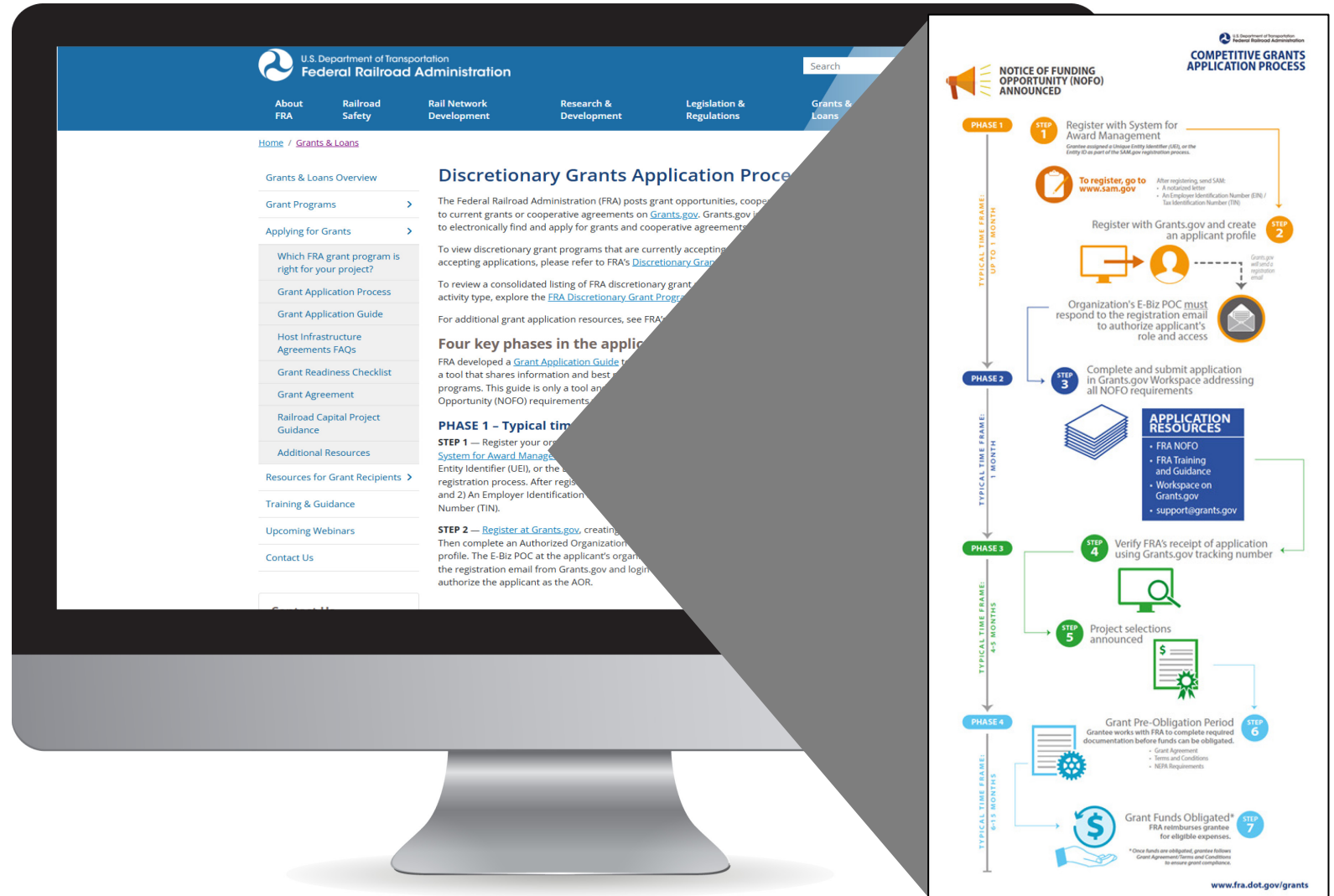
Key Steps

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- 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](https://www.grants.gov), complete an Authorized Organization Representative profile and create a username and password
- Submit an application addressing all requirements outlined in the NOFO

Grant Application Process

A step-by-step process for applying:

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



Where is the FY25-26 RCE Program NOFO?

Find the NOFO at:

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

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

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Search

About FRA | Railroad Safety | Rail Network Development | Research & Development | Legislation & Regulations | Grants & Loans | FRA eLibrary

Home / Grants & Loans

Grants & Loans Overview

Grant Programs >

Applying for Grants >

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eligible Recipients:

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

[Grants & Loans Training/Guidance](#)

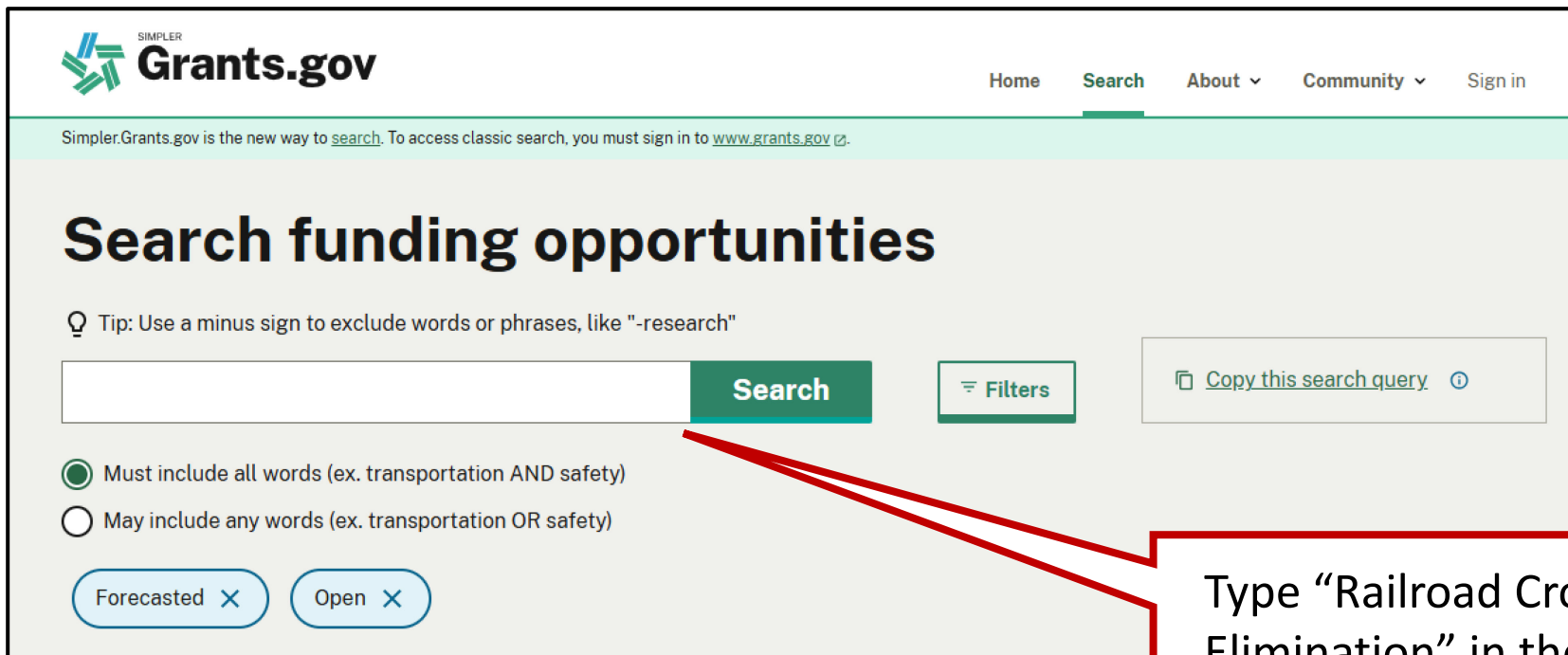
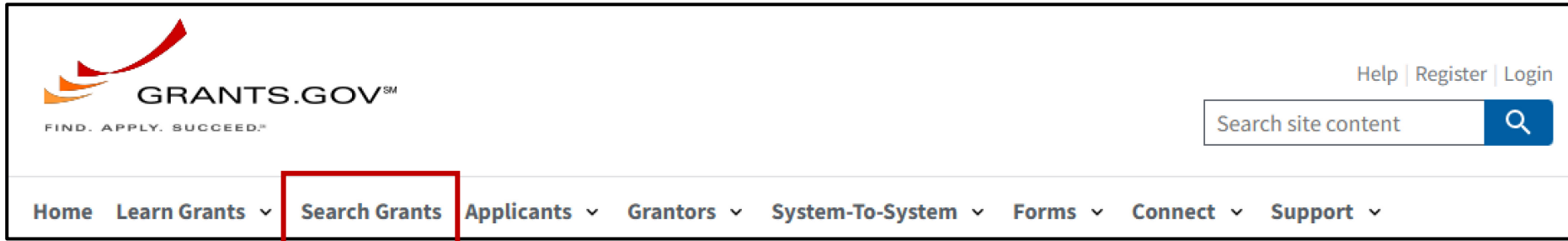
[Equivalent Labor Protections](#)

Contact Us

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

Where do I find “How to Apply” information?

Search grants on **Grants.gov**:



What is the synopsis?

Summary information about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov:

GRANTS.GOV™
FIND. APPLY. SUCCEED.™

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

VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

FR-RCE-26-001
FY25-26 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program
Department of Transportation
DOT - Federal Railroad Administration

[View similar opportunities](#)

[Apply](#) [Subscribe](#)

SYNOPSIS | [VERSION HISTORY](#) | [RELATED DOCUMENTS](#) | [PACKAGE](#)

General Information

Document Type:	Grants Notice	Version:	Synopsis 6
Funding Opportunity Number:	FR-RCE-26-001	Posted Date:	Apr 24, 2026
Funding Opportunity Title:	FY25-26 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program	Last Updated Date:	Apr 24, 2026
Opportunity Category:	Discretionary	Original Closing Date for Applications:	May 22, 2026 No Explanation
Opportunity Category Explanation:		Current Closing Date for Applications:	Jun 08, 2026 No Explanation
Funding Instrument Type:	Grant	Archive Date:	Jul 08, 2026
Category of Funding Activity:	Transportation	Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$ 1,146,528,000
Category Explanation:		Award Ceiling:	\$1,146,528,000
Expected Number of Awards:	120	Award Floor:	\$0
Assistance Listings:	20.327 -- Railroad Crossing Elimination		
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:	Yes		

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.
support@grants.gov

Recap & Reminders

Optional Documentation to Support Application



Hyperlinks encouraged if document is exceedingly long



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



Letters of Support from Host Infrastructure Owners



Project Schedules



Documentation of financial commitments

Best Practices & Helpful Hints

- ☑ Don't skimp on the evaluation and selection criteria

- ☑ Repeat yourself if necessary

- ☑ Reviewers key in on

- ☑ Project Readiness

- ☑ Project Benefits

- ☑ Technical Merit

- ☑ Plain language is key

- ☑ Your reviewers are not all economists and engineers – benefits in non-economic terms and project implementation in non engineering terms

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

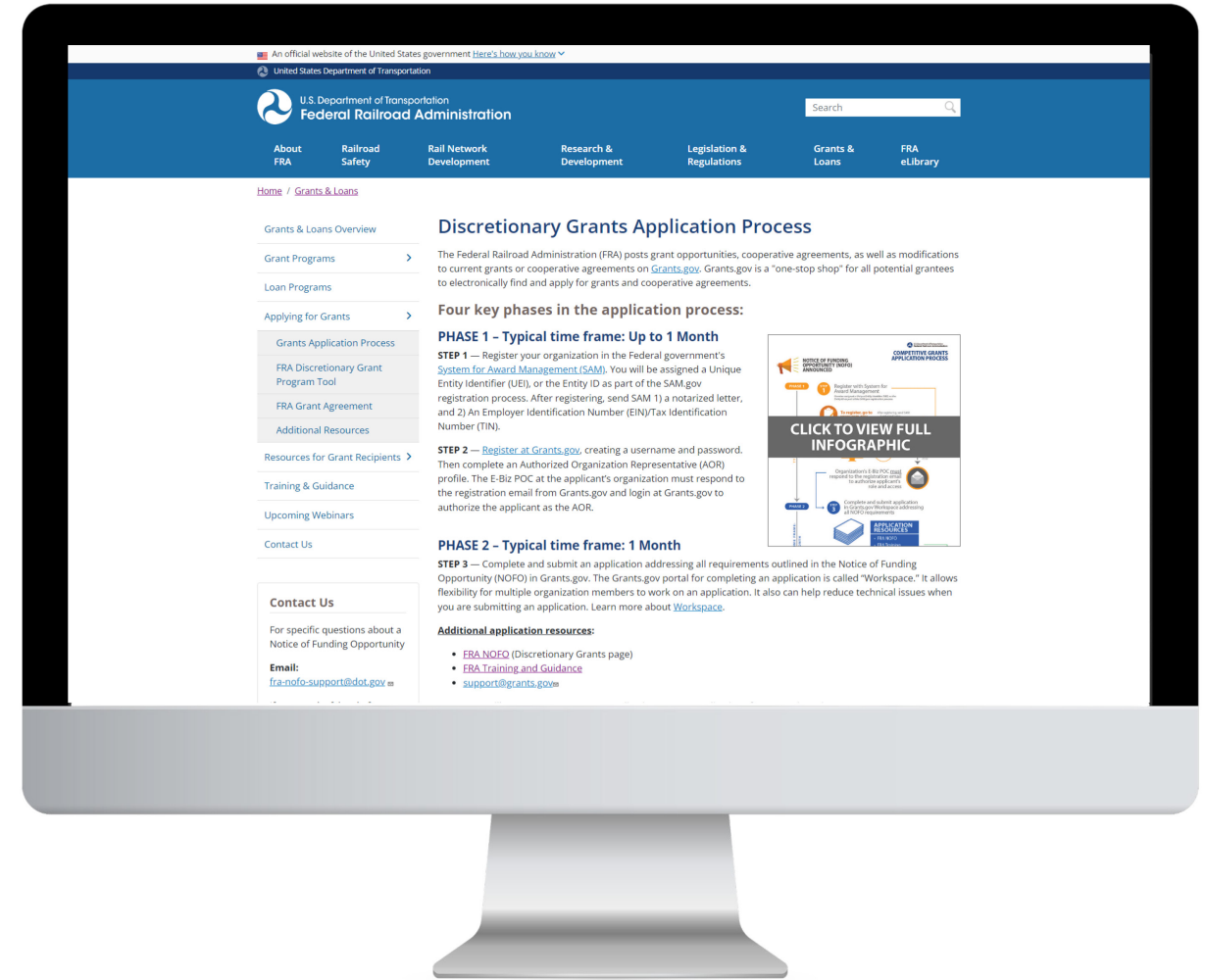
- ☑ Use FRA terminology – “speak FRA”



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

Resources

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



Contact Us

Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590



Connect with us at [USDOTFRA](#)



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

RCE Grant Program:

Jenny Zeng

Jenny.Zeng@dot.gov

Reagan Morgan

Reagan.Morgan@dot.gov

Jenny Mancino

Jenny.Mancino@dot.gov

Doug Gascon

Doug.Gascon@dot.gov

NOFO Questions:

FRA-NOFO-Support@dot.gov

Environmental Readiness:

Justin Zweifel

Justin.Zweifel@dot.gov

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

QUESTIONS?