FY19 CONSOLIDATED RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (CRISI) GRANTS

Webinar

Presented by:
Frances Bourne • Amy Houser • Nate Vomocil • Andrea Martin

September 4, 2019
Agenda

1. FY19 CRISI Program Overview
2. NOFO Overview and How to Apply
3. Best Practices
   - Project Narrative
   - Statement of Work (SOW)
   - Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)
   - Environmental Readiness
4. Recap & Reminders
5. Q & A
FY19 CRISI Program Overview
FY19 CRISI – Program Overview

Grant Purpose

• To fund projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and/or reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail systems

CRISI – Recent & Upcoming Funding Opportunities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Available Funding (M)</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY17</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>Announced awards February 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18 (PTC)</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>✔ Announced awards August and December 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>$318</td>
<td>✔ Announced awards June 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY19</td>
<td>$244</td>
<td>✔ NOFO published August 19, 2019 / Applications due October 18, 2019</td>
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Authorization & Appropriations (M)

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
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<td>Appropriation</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$68</td>
<td>$592.5</td>
<td>$255</td>
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Eligible Applicants

- State entities
- Public agencies or publicly chartered authorities
- Local governments
- Amtrak or other intercity passenger rail carrier
- Class II or III railroads
- Any rail carrier or equipment manufacturer in partnership with at least one state entity, public agency, and/or local government
- The Transportation Research Board (TRB)
- A university transportation center engaged in rail-related research
- A non-profit labor organization
FY19 CRISI – Program Overview

Eligible Project Criteria

• **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, State, Corridor Planning and Environmental Analyses**

• **Safety Programs and Institutes**

• **Research, Workforce Development, and Training**

At least 25% of funds reserved for rural projects
**Non-Federal Match Requirements**

- Federal share of total costs **shall not exceed 80 percent**
- First 20 percent of non-Federal match is **limited to cash contributions**
- In-kind contributions will be accepted beyond the first 20 percent

**Selection Preferences for Matching Funds**

- 50 percent or greater non-Federal match
- *Non-Federal shares consisting of funding from multiple sources, demonstrating broad participation and cost sharing from affected stakeholders*
FY19 CRISI – Program Overview

Evaluation Criteria

• **Technical Merit:** Readiness, private sector participation, consistency with planning documents

• **Project Benefits:** Effects on system performance, safety, integration with other modes, ability to meet demand

Selection Criteria

• **Preference** for higher matching funds from multiple sources, maximized net benefits, and private sector participation

• **Key Departmental Objectives:**
  • Supporting Economic Vitality
  • Leveraging Federal Funding
  • Preparing for Future Operations/Maintenance Costs
  • Innovative Approaches to Safety and Project Delivery
  • Accountability
NOFO Overview and How to Apply
What is 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
What information is in a NOFO?

Key Parts of a NOFO

- Program summary
- Key Dates
- Addresses
- FRA Contact Information
- Table of Contents
  - Program Description
  - Federal Award Information
  - Eligibility Information
  - Application and Submission Information
  - Application Review Information
  - Federal Award Administration Information
  - Federal Awarding Agency Contacts
Where do I start?

Check the FRA Discretionary Competitive Grant Program webpage

• [https://www.fra.dot.gov/grants](https://www.fra.dot.gov/grants)

Click on the link to access the NOFO
Where is the FY 19 CRISI Program NOFO?

Notice of Funding Opportunity for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements
A Notice by the Federal Railroad Administration on 08/19/2019

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

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

SUMMARY:
This notice details the application requirements and procedures to obtain grant funding for eligible projects under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. CRISI Program funding under this notice is provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act (2019 Appropriation). The opportunities described in this notice are made available under Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 20.325 “Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements.”

Applications for funding under this solicitation are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT, October 18, 2019. Applications received after 5:00 p.m. EDT on October 18, 2019 will not be considered for funding. Incomplete
Where do I find “How to Apply” information?

Search grants on Grants.gov:

Click on the Opportunity Number to see the Synopsis
What is the Synopsis?

Summary information about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov:
How do I Apply?

Key Steps

• Obtain a Dun and Bradstreet number (DUNS)

• **Register early** in the Federal government's System for Award Management (SAM)
  
  • **NOTE:** SAM registration can take up to 2 weeks

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

• Submit an application addressing all requirements outlined in the NOFO
What do I include in my application?

Required Documents

• Project Narrative

• Statement of Work

• Environmental Compliance Documentation

• Benefit- Cost Analysis
What forms are required?

Required Forms

• SF424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
  • *Either*: SF 424A or 424C- Budget info for Non-Construction OR Construction
  • *Either*: SF 424B or 424D – Assurances for Non-Construction OR for Construction

• FRA’s Additional Assurances and Certifications

• SF LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
**Where do I find additional information and help?**

**Additional information** about the grant opportunity in Grants.gov at the bottom of the Synopsis page:
Application Review and Selection Process

1. Intake and Eligibility

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

2. Evaluation

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

3. Selection

Final funding decisions are made by taking into account the evaluation and selection criteria outlined in the NOFO.

4. Announcement

FRA press release announces selections approximately 4 to 5 months following application due date.
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.
- FRA has identified three primary areas where applications not selected for funding typically demonstrate deficiencies:
  - Project Narrative
  - Statement of Work (SOW)
  - Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)
Best Practices — Project Narrative
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

I. Cover Page
II. Project Summary
III. Project Funding
IV. Applicant Eligibility
V. Project Eligibility
VI. Detailed Project Description
VII. Project Location
VIII. Evaluation & Selection Criteria
IX. Project Implementation & Management
X. Environmental Readiness

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

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☑ Indicate if an application for the project has been submitted previously to another Federal grant program – include the program and year
Best Practices – Project Narrative

### Project Narrative Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Cover Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Project Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Project Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Applicant Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Project Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Detailed Project Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Selection Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>Project Implementation &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Environmental Readiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Think of this section of the application as your elevator pitch for the project to the DOT Secretary and FRA Administrator.
### Best Practices – Project Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Narrative Outline</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Cover Page</td>
<td>✓ Only include eligible costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Project Summary</td>
<td>✓ Specify each source of non-Federal match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Project Funding</td>
<td>✓ Provide details about in-kind match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Applicant Eligibility</td>
<td>✓ Indicate public- vs. private-sector match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Project Eligibility</td>
<td>✓ Describe the non-Federal funding arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Detailed Project Description</td>
<td>✓ Attach funding commitment letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Project Location</td>
<td>✓ Identify if the proposed match will not be available until a certain date or if funds must be spent by a deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Evaluation &amp; Selection Criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Project Implementation &amp; Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Environmental Readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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X. Environmental Readiness

- Thoroughly discuss the transportation challenges and benefits
- Include data to support project benefits
- Describe how project components are related and will be sequenced
- Include photographs or diagrams
- Identify all host railroads, operators, and beneficiaries
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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X. Environmental Readiness

- Identify cities, counties, and states where project is located
- Include a map of the project
- Identify railroad mileposts
- For grade crossing projects, include the U.S. DOT National Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory number
Best Practices – Project Narrative

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✓ Include a separate section in the project narrative focused on how the project meets each of the evaluation and selection criteria

✓ **DO NOT** rely solely on the contents of the “detailed project description” section to satisfy this requirement — it is OK to repeat key points in this section

✓ Quantify benefits whenever possible
Best Practices – Project Narrative

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X. Environmental Readiness

- Highlight applicant’s past experiences managing and overseeing similar projects, including FRA- or DOT-funded projects
- Describe expected arrangements for project contracting, contract oversight, change-order management, risk management, and conformance with Federal requirements for progress reporting
Best Practices – Project Narrative

Project Narrative Outline

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☑️ Document environmental work, either initiated or completed
Best Practices – Statement of Work
**Best Practices – Statement of Work (SOW)**

- Utilize FRA’s Standard Cost Categories as a way to organize the scope of work and budget
- Ensure consistency among the project narrative, statement of work, benefit-cost analysis, and other application materials

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**FRA MAIN WORKSHEET**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standard Cost Category</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Without Contingency ($000)</th>
<th>Allocated Contingency ($000)</th>
<th>TOTAL ($000)</th>
<th>Unit Cost ($000)</th>
<th>Percent of Construction Cost</th>
<th>YoE Dollars Total ($000) (from Inflation Worksheet)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>52%</td>
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<td>10.920 Guideway: All grade nonexclusive (allows cross-traffic)</td>
<td>Linear Miles of Guideway</td>
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Best Practices – Scope, Schedule & Budget

- Organize the scope of work into discrete and logically sequenced tasks
- Provide appropriate timing for tasks
- Identify the deliverables required to communicate progress and completion of tasks to FRA
- Check the budget to ensure numbers are consistent with cost information submitted in forms and other areas of the application

STATEMENT OF WORK

[insert applicant/grantee name]
[insert project name]
[insert NOFA name]

I. BACKGROUND

Instructions: The “Background” section of the SOW is intended to provide a consistent frame of reference to the applicable solicitation and funding source of all grants/cooperative agreements awarded funding by the FRA. This section also provides high-level overview information regarding the project and applicant/grantee. Approximately 3-4 paragraph in length.

II. OBJECTIVE

Instructions: The “Objective” section of the SOW is intended to provide a clear description of the underlying transportation problem the project will address; the work that will be accomplished under the grant/cooperative agreement: the end-state of the project, and the public benefits the project is intended to achieve.

III. PROJECT LOCATION

Instructions: The “Project Location” section of the SOW is intended to provide information related to the geographic scope of the project, as well as to identify important related interior corridors or service. The project location should be specific and detailed. Planning projects should note where the project is likely to be deployed.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Instructions: The “Description of Work” section breaks the scope of work for the project into discrete and deliverable tasks. If the FRA-funded project is part of a larger effort, describe that larger effort, but link tasks specifically to the FRA-funded portion of the project. Be clear regarding the work to be done in each task and be sure tasks can be linked to deliverables and timelines. Use guidance below to develop this section.

Task 1: Detailed Project Work Plan, Budget, and Schedule

Task 1 generally includes the following activities/deliverables: the Grantee will prepare a Detailed Project Work Plan, Budget, and Schedule for the follow-on tasks, which may result in a revised statement of work. The project work plan will describe, in detail, the activities and steps necessary to complete the tasks outlined in the statement of work. The work plan will also include information about the project management approach (including team organization, team decision-making, roles and responsibilities and interaction with FRA), as well as address quality assurance and quality control procedures. In addition, the work plan will include the project schedule (with grantee and agency review durations), a detailed project budget, and an environmental class of action recommendation memorandum (if applicable). If the Grantee

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
Best Practices – Benefit-Cost Analysis
**BCA – Overview of Steps**

- Specify your project’s **base case, alternate case, and timeline**
- Show how your project’s **alternate case** will result in specific effects (i.e., **project benefits**)
- Break down those effects into the smallest sub-elements possible
- Assign values to the effects using USDOT’s **BCA Guidance**
- Calculate results and Discount to Base Year
• The **base case** reflects the status quo — i.e., the world as it exists today

• The **alternate case** (i.e., “build scenario”) is the proposed project
  • An application for final design or construction should present a *single* project
  • Multiple projects need multiple analyses
  • Avoided costs of alternatives not taken are NOT benefits

• The **timeline** must be appropriate for the proposed project
  • Match the useful life of the project, but not longer than 30 years
  • Projects with useful life beyond 30 years will have residual value (stations in particular) ➔ Calculate with straight line depreciation
BCA – Scope of Analysis

• Examine ONLY the differences between the base case and alternate case.
• 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/weight restrictions before shutting down completely.
• Rolling stock will have residual value at the end of its useful life.
The marginal effects of the alternate case are the project benefits.

- Marginal effects are sometimes undesirable consequences, which should be shown as negative dollar amounts.

The total cost of constructing the project as well as operating and maintaining (O&M) it for the full timeline are the project costs.

- O&M costs on new equipment and infrastructure are costs.
- Reductions to existing O&M costs are regarded as project benefits.
- Residual value for remaining useful life is a benefit, NOT subtracted from costs.
• Break down effects into the smallest possible sub-elements

• Provide documentation for inputs and growth rates.

Example: Replacing a bridge might result in...

• Removal of slow orders, improving travel speed (travel time savings)

• Reduced wait time at the approaches (travel time savings and emissions)

• Decreased delays at nearby sidings along the corridor (travel time savings and emissions)

• Reduced operations and maintenance costs
BCA – Modal Diversion

• Modal diversion is a marginal choice; ONLY count marginal benefits

• New/induced users value the service less than existing users (Follow USDOT’S BCA Guidance)

• Avoided rail-to-highway diversion benefits could involve:
  • Increased pavement and bridge damage
  • Increased harmful emissions
  • Increased congestion on highways
  • Decreased safety

• Avoiding passenger revenue losses are transfers, NOT benefits
For FY19 CRISI grant applications:

- Document your assumptions in as much detail as possible.
- If the project has separable elements, report benefits and costs of each sub-project separately.
- If your BCA includes modal diversion, include YOUR passenger counts and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).
- **Must include an unlocked Excel spreadsheet that clearly shows your calculations and discounting.**
BCA – Guidance / Online Resources


• For rail-specific examples on how to apply the BCA Guidance, refer to FRA’s BCA FAQ available at: https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L19367
Best Practices – Environmental Readiness
Environmental Readiness – NEPA

The environmental process, most commonly referred to as NEPA,* is required of all FRA-grant funded projects to document and substantiate our agency’s decision to implement the project

• Submit with your CRISI grant application an approved NEPA document, if available and applicable from FRA, FTA, or FHWA

• If there is no previous NEPA documentation associated with the project, you are encouraged to consider the following in the grant application to the best of your knowledge:
  • Known project location and/or possible impacts to the human (e.g., historic, protected populations, noise and vibration) or natural (e.g., wetlands, air, species/habitat, floodplains) environment
  • Anticipated permitting needs (e.g., construction, Clean Water Act Section 404) or coordination/consultation (e.g., State Historic Preservation Officer)

* The National Environmental Policy Act
Environmental Readiness – NEPA

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

Helpful Information Available on FRA’s Website

• FRA & NEPA Documentation:  https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1149
• FRA Recommended Trainings & Environmental Resources: https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1152

This web page provides links to recorded webinars, trainings, and other resources that will be of assistance in preparing NEPA documents for rail projects
Recap & Reminders
Recap & Reminders

• Always read the NOFO carefully

• Determine what a "successful" project will look like

• Use the checklist with the application requirements in the NOFO as you complete your application

• Address all of the evaluation and selection criteria on which you will be rated
  • By clearly and directly responding to the criteria, your application will be easier to read and evaluate
  • Don’t bury key points!
Recap & Reminders

- Verify that all budget figures match corresponding figures cited in different parts of your application package – such as the cover sheet, SOW, Project Narrative, and various forms
  - Numbers in columns and rows should add up properly in budget tables
  - Only include project costs that are expected to be incurred after grant selection
- Name key partners, indicate in-place agreements, and include letters of support
- Have an objective “cold reader” — i.e., an individual unfamiliar with the grant application — review your final document before submission
Grant Lifecycle and Approximate Timeframes

**Pre-Obligation**
- Grant Agreement (NGA):
  - Scope, schedule, and budget
  - Performance measures
- Terms and Conditions
- NEPA Requirements

**Post Obligation**
- Grant Administration:
  - Meetings with FRA
  - Quarterly Progress and Financial Reports
  - Invoicing schedule of eligible expenses per NGA
  - Invoice and Deliverable Reviews
- Monitoring
  - Routine monitoring
  - Annual monitoring reviews/Site visits

**Closeout**
- Final Invoice
  - Financial reconciliation
- Final Performance Report
  - Documentation of results, outcomes, and public benefits

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<th>Project Selected for Award</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Obligation</td>
<td>Post Obligation</td>
<td>Closeout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 months</td>
<td>2 to 4 years</td>
<td>1 to 3 months</td>
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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
THANK YOU

Points of Contact:

**CRISI Program: Frances Bourne**
- Frances.Bourne@dot.gov

**Grant Application Processing: Amy Houser**
- Amy.Houser@dot.gov

**BCA: Nate Vomocil**
- Nathan.Vomocil@dot.gov

**Environmental Readiness: Andrea Martin**
- Andrea.Martin@dot.gov

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