



## USDOT Discretionary Grants Opportunity - Federal Railroad Administration

# Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail – National Program

The Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail or Partnership Program provides a federal funding opportunity to improve American passenger rail assets to expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service (including privately operated intercity passenger rail service if an eligible applicant is involved), reduce the state of good repair backlog for passenger rail assets, improve performance, and enhance rail safety. The program is administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The December 7, 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity addresses funding available and application requirements for intercity passenger rail projects located across the nation, outside the Northeast Corridor (NEC). A distinct selection and evaluation process for projects on the NEC will be published at a later date.

On February 3, 2023, FRA issued a revised NOFO extending the deadline for program applications to April 21, 2023, and increasing funding available through this notice to \$4.57 billion.

### Eligible Capital Projects include projects or groups of related projects that:

- Replace, rehabilitate, or repair infrastructure, equipment, or a facility used for providing intercity passenger rail service to bring such assets into a state of good repair
- Improve intercity passenger rail service performance, including reduced trip times, increased train frequencies, higher operating speeds, improved reliability, expanded capacity, reduced congestion, electrification, and other improvements
- Expand or establish new intercity passenger rail service
- Planning, environmental review, and final design of eligible projects

Projects on a shared corridor with freight and/or commuter rail must demonstrate how the proposed project benefits intercity passenger rail transportation independent of benefits to other transportation purposes.



### APPLICATION DEADLINE:

All applications are  
to be received no  
later than:

**April 21, 2023**

**5:00 p.m. EDT**

February 3, 2023







## Program Objectives

Grant awards funded through the Partnership Program will support projects that improve safety, economic strength and global competitiveness, equity, climate and sustainability, and transformation, consistent with the USDOT's strategic goals. FRA seeks to support projects that invest public dollars efficiently, advance equity, promote the competitiveness of the U.S. economy, improve job opportunities by focusing on high labor standards, strengthen infrastructure resilience to all hazards including climate change, and effectively coordinate with other government partners.

## Eligible Uses of funds include:

- Real estate acquisition
- Planning
- Project development, including preliminary engineering (PE) and environmental review activities
- Final design
- Construction

Pre-construction activities are eligible for funding independently or in conjunction with proposed funding for construction. Projects that include project development may include engineering drawings and specifications; design criteria, schematics, and/or track charts that support the development of PE; and work that can be funded in conjunction with developing PE, such as operations modeling, surveying, project work/management plans, preliminary cost estimates, and preliminary project schedules. Project development funded under this NOFO must be sufficiently developed when complete to support final design or construction activities.

## FRA outlines three separate tracks for applications:

- **Track 1:** Project Planning
- **Track 2:** Project Development
- **Track 3:** Final Design/Construction

Applicants are not prohibited from seeking funding for multiple tracks, though FRA indicated it generally expects applicants to identify only one track for an eligible activity.

## Funding Availability

The program offers \$4.57 billion in funding. There is no minimum or maximum award amount. There is a maximum federal share of 80. The minimum 20% non-federal share may be comprised of public sector (e.g., *state or local*) or private sector funding. Amtrak may use its ticket and other non-federal revenues generated from its operations and other sources to satisfy the non-federal share requirements. Previously incurred costs or encumbered funds will not be allowed to be included in the matching requirement.

The program includes unique provisions allowing major capital projects with an estimated cost greater than \$500 million and a proposed federal share of at least \$100 million to request funding over multiple years. For projects in the Planning and Project Development stages, FRA may issue a Letter of Intent (LOI) to obligate funding from future budget authority in support of a Final Design and Construction. For projects anticipated to enter Final Design or Construction stages within two years of application, FRA may use a Phased Funding Agreement (PFA) to obligate FY22 funding and commit future-year budget authority for Construction, provided funding is available and terms and conditions of the PFA are met.

## Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for funding through this program:

- A state (*including the District of Columbia*)
- A group of states
- An Interstate Compact
- A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more states
- A political subdivision of a state
- Amtrak, acting on its own behalf or under a cooperative agreement with one or more states
- Any combination of the entities described above

Private operators of intercity passenger rail may partner with an eligible entity, but the eligible entity must be the party legally responsible for management and administration of the federal grant and ultimate project delivery.

## Evaluation Criteria

FRA will evaluate applications to determine technical merit and project benefits.

### TECHNICAL MERIT

1. Alignment of SOW with achievement of expected project outcomes
2. The technical qualifications of key personnel and qualifications of the primary and supporting organizations to execute the project
3. Business plan consideration of private sector participation in the financing, construction, or operation of the proposed project
4. Applicant's past performance in developing and delivering similar projects, and previous financial contributions
5. Completeness of risk assessment and mitigation
6. Legal, financial, and technical capacity of sponsor, access to equipment/facilities, and capacity to maintain equipment/facilities
7. Status of capital project lifecycle prerequisites project readiness
8. Consistency with USDOT and other legally required planning guidance and documents

### PROJECT BENEFITS

FRA will evaluate a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) of each proposed project, including anticipated private and public benefits relative to the costs of the proposed project, including:

1. Effects on system and service performance
2. Effects on safety, competitiveness, reliability, trip or transit time, greenhouse gas emissions, and resilience
3. Effects of anticipated positive economic and employment impacts, including development in areas near passenger stations, historic districts, or other opportunity zones
4. Efficiencies from improved connections with other modes
5. Ability to meet existing or anticipated demand
6. Whether the project services historically unconnected or underconnected communities



## Selection Criteria

FRA will give preference to eligible projects:

1. For which Amtrak is not the sole applicant
2. That improve the financial performance, reliability, service frequency, or address the state of good repair of an Amtrak route
3. That are identified in, and consistent with, a corridor inventory prepared under the Corridor Identification and Development Program

**After applying the above preferences, FRA will take in account the following key DOT objectives:**

- Safety
- Equitable economic growth and job creation
- Equity and barriers to opportunity
- Climate change and sustainability
- Transformation of nation's transportation infrastructure

## Application Requirements

The following sections must be included in the application submission:

- Project narrative not to exceed 25 pages
- Statement of Work using FRA identified templates
- Benefit-cost analysis
- Environmental compliance documentation, as applicable
- Funding commitment supporting documentation
- Draft 49 USC 22905(c)(1) agreement between the applicant and host railroad, as applicable
- Standard forms and FRA forms as identified in the NOFO



**Your Infrastructure Finance and grant writing professionals stand by ready to support project sponsors applying for funding from the FRA Partnership Program.**

**If you need any assistance or have questions, please contact:**

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