

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) supports the nation’s rail network through a variety of competitive discretionary and dedicated grant programs designed to develop safety improvements and encourage the expansion and upgrade of passenger and freight rail infrastructure and services. This document provides potential grant applicants with information on pre-application considerations and planning steps prior to submitting a grant application to FRA.

<p>Is the proposed project on the State Rail Plan?</p>	<p>Although rail projects are not required to be included in State Rail Plans in order to be eligible for Federal funding under the competitive discretionary grant programs, working with the State Department of Transportation to establish the proposed project on the State Rail Plan can assist in project development.</p>
<p>Is the proposed project on a Regional Rail Plan?</p>	<p>Although rail projects are not required to be included on a Regional Rail Plan in order to be eligible for Federal funding under the competitive discretionary grant programs, working with the regional rail authorities to establish the proposed project can assist in project development. A Regional Rail Plan serves two main purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It identifies and describes a common, long-term vision for regional passenger rail service and the required infrastructure network based on existing conditions, projections of future travel demand, and the optimal role for rail service in a multi-modal transportation context. • It identifies the potential institutional arrangements, financial requirements, and planning and development activities needed to achieve the vision.
<p>Where can I learn more about the environmental process, training opportunities or other general guidance about the grant application process?</p>	<p>Information can be found on our website about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental process • Training opportunities or other general guidance
<p>Where can I learn about FRA’s discretionary competitive grant process?</p>	<p>Information about the competitive grant application process as well as those competitive grant programs that are currently accepting applications can be found on our website.</p>
<p>Where can a potential grant applicant find information on a specific FRA discretionary grant program prior to submitting an application?</p>	<p>Potential grant applicants can reference the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The NOFO includes the criteria for eligibility and selection as well as the materials that each application must include. The NOFO is the best source of information regarding each of FRA’s discretionary grant programs and an understanding of these criteria can help position a potential applicant for success. NOFOs are published in the Federal Register.</p>
<p>What are some reasons applications aren’t selected and how can they be avoided?</p>	<p>FRA has identified three primary areas where applications that are not selected typically demonstrate deficiencies in three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Narrative • Statement of Work • Benefit Cost Analysis <p>Each of these areas, as well as some general “best practices” are explained on slides 26 – 52 within the FY21 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants NOFO Webinar.</p>
<p>Where can I find information about the grant agreement terms and conditions?</p>	<p>Information about the grant agreement terms and conditions can be found on our website.</p>