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FRA Launches New Rail Safety Program

Funding From President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will support a wide range of basic and applied research with an emphasis on rail safety

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcing the availability of \$5 million to fund a rail research and development Center of Excellence made possible by the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This new program will advance research and development efforts that seek to improve the safety, performance, and sustainability of freight, intercity passenger, and commuter rail.

As President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continues to make long overdue and new rail projects a reality in local communities, the law also invests in research, innovation, technology, and workforce development that are essential to building and maintaining a 21st century rail network.

“Every year, USDOT-supported research produces new innovations that help tackle key issues in the rail industry, from advancements in inspection and sensor technologies that can prevent accidents to new methods for boosting energy efficiency and rail network resiliency,” **said FRA Administrator Amit Bose**. “To have the world-class rail services that Americans deserve, we need to plan for and invest in the future, modernize our rail infrastructure, and put dedicated men and women on a path of opportunity and possibility for decades to come.”

The Center of Excellence is designed as a three-year program. Today’s funding announcement includes \$5 million in annual grant funding from Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 and 2023. Another \$2.5 million will be made available in FY 2024, subject to the availability of funds, for a total of \$7.5 million. Examples of eligible proposals include advances in research, evaluation, education, workforce development, and training efforts related to safety, project delivery, efficiency, reliability, resiliency, and sustainability, including advances in rolling stock, grade crossing safety, advanced Positive Train Control, human factors, inspection and remote sensor technologies, rail systems maintenance, and operational reliability, among others.

Eligible applicants include those with strong past performance related to rail research, education, and workforce development activities. This includes developing transformative research, incorporating climate and clean energy priorities in research, a demonstrated ability to achieve workforce development goals, Minority Serving Institution (MSI)/ Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU)/ Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) participation, a commitment to underrepresented/underserved communities and economic equity, and the involvement of public and private sector passenger and freight railroads. The Center of Excellence will fund up to 50 percent of the cost of selected proposals. The NOFO, which contains detailed information about the grant application process, is on public inspection in the *Federal Register* [here](#).

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