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## News

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### **FRA Announces \$900,000 in New Planning and Development Grants to Support Intercity Passenger Rail Services**

*Funding through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grants will help improve and expand passenger rail networks in the Midwest, South, and Southeast*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that it has awarded \$900,000 to three entities through the Interstate Rail Compacts (IRC) Grant Program. Created by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the IRC Program provides new opportunities to entities implementing IRCs to advance multi-state and regional passenger rail service efforts.

Taken together, the rail networks being advanced through the inaugural round of IRC grants will improve passenger rail service for large swaths of the Midwest, South, and Southeast, including many states and communities that have never seen passenger rail service or that have had previous services discontinued for years.

“As funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law advances transformative rail projects in communities around the country, FRA is supporting all elements needed for new passenger rail services, from planning and development to the implementation of service,” said **FRA Administrator Amit Bose**. “The Interstate Rail Compacts Grant Program fills a vital need by providing entities implementing interstate rail compacts with the resources to build up an organizational and human infrastructure for the fluid operation of new services that will meet the needs of local communities.”

IRC's are agreements or compacts passed into law by two or more states that support and facilitate the development of multi-state and regional intercity passenger rail services. Member states of an IRC can implement the agreement through a commission that is empowered to carry out the necessary planning, administration, and coordination needed to run a passenger rail service. This process allows entities in an IRC to streamline their activities and advance a unified approach to solving regional passenger rail issues.

The IRC Program uniquely allows awardees to use grant funding for administrative, planning, and marketing activities. These include work products that will facilitate an IRC's goals, such as information technology, accounting, and human resources, as well as obtaining technical staff or contractor support to prepare grant applications for federal programs. Funding can also be used to facilitate operations coordination activities to help achieve better passenger rail services on corridors with shared freight rail operations, and to create and disseminate marketing materials that will spread awareness of the availability of new services. By supporting these needs, the IRC Program helps to ensure that IRCs have the funding needed for non-capital project activities while also being able to expand their organizational capacity.

The three entities that received Fiscal Year 2022-2023 IRC Program funding are as follows:

- **Illinois – MIPRC Expansion Project (Up to \$300,000)**

*Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)*

The proposed grant involves activities such as administration, promotion of intercity passenger rail operations, and preparation of competitive federal grant program applications. The project will help MIPRC increase efforts to advocate for and support the development and implementation of a robust passenger rail network in the Midwest region. MIPRC will provide a 50 percent non-federal match.

- **Louisiana – SRC Rail-Ready Project: Building Capacity to Expand Passenger Rail across the American South (Up to \$400,000)**

*Southern Rail Commission (SRC)*

The proposed grant involves activities such as administration, promotion of intercity passenger rail operations, operations coordination, and preparation of competitive federal grant program applications. The project will help the SRC build its organizational capacity to continue to support the expansion of intercity passenger rail service in the Southeast region. The SRC will provide a 50 percent non-federal match.

- **North Carolina – VA-NC Compact Administration & Southeast Rail Network Analysis Project (Up to \$200,000)**

*North Carolina DOT on behalf of the Virginia – North Carolina Interstate High-Speed Rail Compact Commission (VA-NC HSR Compact)*

The proposed grant involves administration and system planning activities to complete the Southeast Rail Network Analysis. The project will help advance efforts to improve the fluidity of the Southeast rail network to benefit both passenger and freight rail. The North Carolina DOT and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, entities that operate the VA-NC HSR Compact, will contribute funds totaling a 50 percent non-federal match.

Today's announcement builds on the Biden-Harris Administration's historic and unwavering commitment to rail—a commitment that is helping deliver the safe, modern, and efficient rail services Americans need and deserve. To date, FRA has announced more than \$26 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for more than 170 projects. Planning activities across 69 rail corridors, which

will drive future passenger rail expansion in every region of the country, are also moving forward thanks to President Biden's infrastructure package.

Infrastructure law funding for FRA's grant programs will continue through 2026. More information about the IRC Program is available [here](#).

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