

# PILOT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM

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## General Information

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## Contracting Office Address

Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Office of Acquisition and Grants Services, Mail Stop 50, Washington, DC 20590.

## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), through this BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT (BAA), is soliciting *proposals* for the development, implementation, and evaluation of risk-reduction based systems to improve safety in the U.S. rail industry in support of FRA's Risk Reduction Program.

## Background

FRA's Risk Reduction Program, described more fully below, will include a multi-year program to sponsor pilot projects (pilot program). Each year, FRA will initiate a new cycle of projects (or project expansions) by publishing a new BAA. BAA 2009-02 was issued July 2, 2009 (first cycle of projects) to solicit initial risk reduction pilot program proposals. Projects were selected from Class I Freight Railroads (BNSF, CSX, NS, SOO Line, Union Pacific, and AMTRAK). Project descriptions of the first cycle awards are provided in figure 1 below.



Figure 1

### Participants (for second cycle of projects)

The projects can be granted a higher (or lower) amount than requested dependent on meeting and/or exceeding the criteria and feasibility.

Response to this BAA is open to a wide range of interested parties, including, but not limited to:

- Class I Railroads (new projects only)
- Short Line and Regional Railroads
- Passenger Railroads
- Railroad Contractors
- Academic Institutions
- Manufacturers
- Consultants
- Employee Development and Training Companies
- Rail Labor Organizations
- Other interested individuals or organizations

### Risk Reduction Program

The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (Division A of Public Law 110-432, hereinafter the “Act”) mandates a regulatory requirement for a railroad safety Risk Reduction Program in approximately four years after its enactment. Specifically, Section 103 of the Act requires Class I Carriers and carriers with an inadequate safety performance (as determined by the Secretary), or a railroad carrier that provides intercity rail passenger or commuter rail passenger transportation –

“(A) to develop a railroad safety risk reduction program ... that systematically evaluates railroad safety risks on its system and manages those risks in order to reduce the numbers and rates of railroad accidents, incidents, injuries, and fatalities;

“(B) to submit its program, including any required plans, to the Secretary for review and approval; and

“(C) to implement the program and plans approved by the Secretary.”

### **Description of Pilot Program**

Section 103 of the Act further calls for: “(2) RELIANCE ON PILOT PROGRAM. – The Secretary may conduct behavior-based safety and other research, including pilot programs, before promulgating regulations under this sub-section and thereafter. The Secretary shall use any information and experience gathered through such research and pilot programs under this subsection in developing regulations under this section.”

The purpose of the pilot program is to encourage the rail industry stakeholders to collaborate in the development and implementation of pilot demonstration projects that effectively target operations, equipment or systems that pose the greatest risk to operational and personal safety. Carriers, for example, may already have risk-based safety systems or programs in place but the effective application and lessons learned remain localized. When this occurs, programs or safety systems may fall into disuse, despite offering effective risk reduction. This pilot program is a means to gather and facilitate in the definition, prototyping, and deploying of effective processes, technologies, and systems to lower overall risk and improve safety throughout the industry, and will serve to inform the regulatory development of the Risk Reduction Program. Any data collected as part of the Risk Reduction Program and the pilot demonstration projects will be held confidential and protected from litigation according to the provisions in the Rail-Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

The resultant lessons learned will be compiled, compared with other pilot programs, and then shared industry-wide to encourage broad scale adoption of similar programs and thereby lower overall risks throughout the railroad industry.

### **Pilot Program Overview**

As noted above, the FRA will initiate a new cycle of the pilot program by soliciting proposals for new projects, (Figure 1). A project included in the Risk Reduction pilot program, if fully successful, will undergo three distinct phases:

- Phase I: Defining the project and its objectives and developing timelines, required assets, and detailed implementation and evaluation plans.
- Phase II: Executing the pilot plan (i.e. pilot implementation), gathering and evaluating the data which will prove the projects efficacy.
- Phase III: Broad scale application (expansion beyond original pilot boundaries, and incorporation into system-wide operations). Monitoring the data to ensure the results are consistent with the original goals. Where applicable and possible, use of the

piloted process, method, or technology is then expanded to encompass a wide group of railroads, with overall continuous safety improvement and risk reduction.

Grants awarded during a specific cycle will be provided funding and support for a single phase (or portion thereof) of their project (see Figure 2 below).

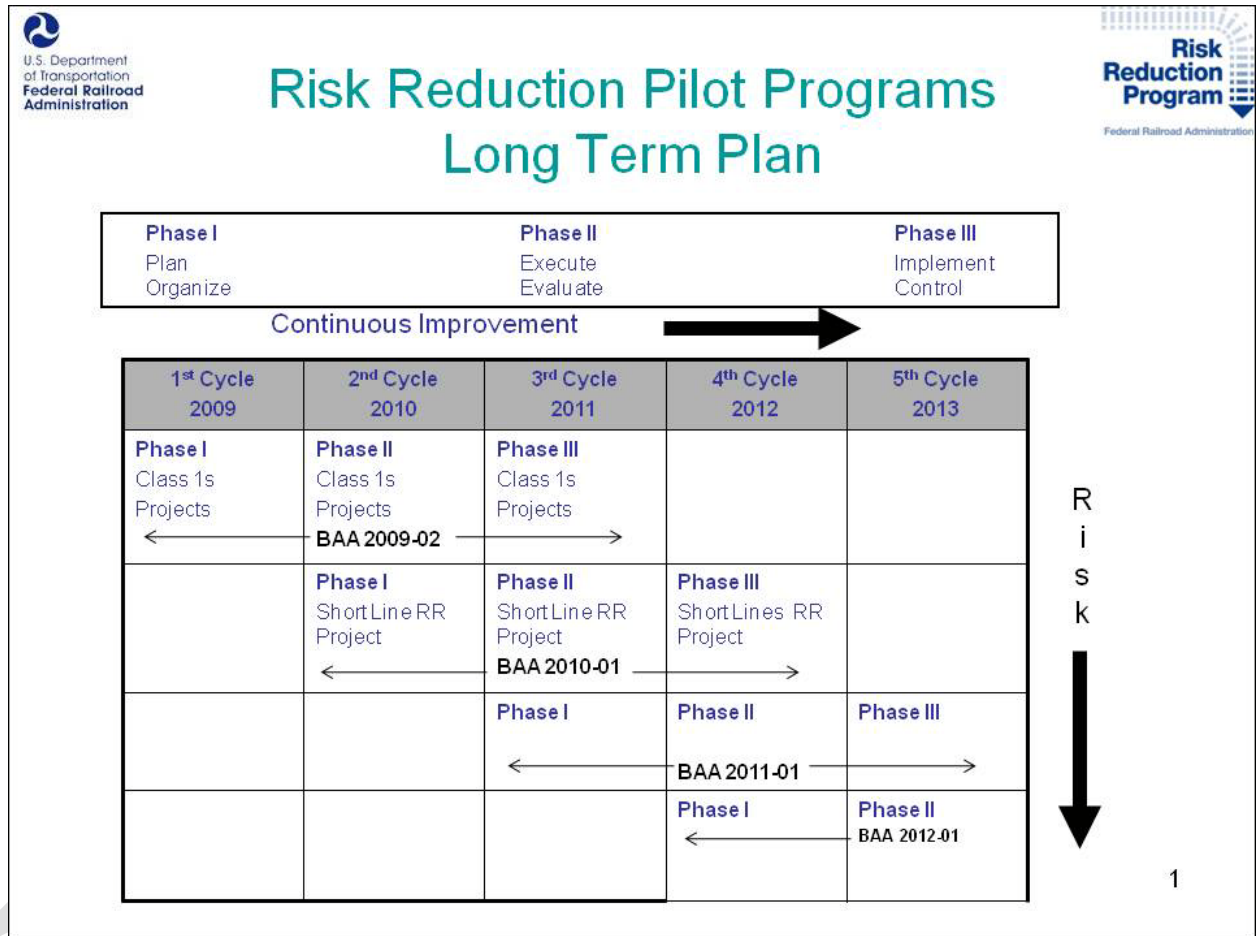


Figure 2

**BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

This BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT specifically seeks *proposals* that describe a pilot risk reduction project through application of innovative methods, processes, and technologies that advance the reduction of accidents, injuries, and fatalities using upstream predictive data – by systematically identifying and correcting individual, environmental, and/or organizational risk factors.

Proposals should identify a potential pilot project for possible field testing, prototyping and demonstration purposes. They should clearly state and explain the current safety risk. The processes or systems that identify safety risks involved while performing a particular operation or function, (including, but not limited to) the steps taken to eliminate or significantly reduce the risk shall be identified.

Proposed pilot projects may be current or promising analytical systems (processes, tools, and technologies) capable of profiling, forecasting, and managing risk in transportation operations. Proposals might include: methods, processes, technologies, or tools for mining and analyzing precursor and risk-related data; safety culture change processes that emphasize confidential non-punitive safety communications and feedback between leadership, management, and labor; and other safety management systems that will better manage risk and reduce the probability of accidents, incidents, injuries and fatalities than do current systems.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals submitted under this BAA shall be no longer than 10 pages in length, including all enclosures, and provide a description of the following:

- An overall plan, description addressing the current state of advancement, the logical steps for implementation and prototype documentation and a schedule to accomplish the tasks
- Potential application and overall value to the rail industry
- Project concept (i.e. the technology or process) for reducing risk, how it works, basic elements, and intended outcomes and impacts (i.e. types of risk to be reduced and how those risks will reduce accidents, injuries or fatalities)
- Detailed program budget
- Perceived feasibility, likelihood of success, and estimated time to impact after implementation
- Potential barriers to implementation and proposed mechanisms to remove those barriers to program success.
- Primary intended users, other potential users, and how those users will be involved

All projects should have cost sharing from the offeror(s) through direct matching resources/funding. A fifty (50) percent total cost sharing is desired on each project by direct contributions including investigator time, equipment and facilities. The percentage and type of cost sharing presented in the proposal is a criterion in the evaluation and selection of the proposal for an award. All projects should be completed within a time frame of 12 to 36 months. The Government reserves the right to select all, some, or none of the proposals received in response to this announcement. The Government reserves the option to invite selected offerors for a pre-award negotiation to negotiate costs, technical scope and the work plan.

## **Selection Process and Award Cycles**

The first cycle of grant awards occurred in late 2009, and performance is currently in process. This second cycle of grant awards is scheduled for mid-2010, and will fund a wide range of project topics from concept through implementation.

Projects in all phases of development may be funded. Grants will be competitively selected. To qualify Grantees must implement a time phased program and deliver the list of minimum deliverables (as detailed below). Awardees may apply for additional funds for other optional deliverables as specified below. Anticipated grant award amounts are expected to average ~\$50,000. The funding for this cycle of awards will be contingent upon annual Fiscal Year appropriations to FRA in support of risk reduction efforts. Awardees that provide the minimum deliverables for implementation-ready pilot projects in the first cycle (2009) of awards may be given competitive awards in the second award cycle (2010) to begin implementation.

## **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

Proposal evaluation will be based on the following criteria, each having equal importance:

- 1) Awards will be made to the program that proposes the best ideas to improve safety
- 2) Clarity and validity of program logic – the logic of causal relationships between the risks identified, processes or tools for mitigating those risks, and the intended outcomes/impacts (short-term, mid-term, and long-term) from the risk mitigation strategies
- 3) Cost sharing contributions and partnerships with primary user groups
- 4) Feasibility and perceived likelihood of success
- 5) Anticipated results and potential impact for the rail industry
- 6) Estimated time to begin full-scale implementation
- 7) Estimated time for reducing risk(s)

## **Minimum Deliverables for Awards**

Upon acceptance of the proposal, FRA may provide start-up funding to begin the refinement process of the concept. Additional funds may be provided (if needed and requested) upon the successful completion of the following minimum deliverables:

- Detailed implementation plan
- Letters of commitment from all primary intended user groups
- Detailed budget and resources required (3-5 years), including estimated cost-share
- Proposed industry oversight committee, including key stakeholders and oversight process

- Evaluation plan that clearly measures the project's outcome
- List of key personnel, including position and title
- Contact information, including mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and email addresses for key personnel associated with the project
- Memorandum of Understanding with FRA detailing:
  - Regulatory relief or waiver request, if needed
  - Confidentiality of data sharing and data protection
  - Participation in evaluation effort
  - Roles and responsibilities

### **Optional Deliverables**

Additional funds may be provided to those Awardees who can propose and justify additional optional deliverables, or who can more readily begin implementation of a pilot project.

Optional deliverables may include:

- Detailed risk analysis or assessment of existing pilot risk reduction implementation
- Risk mitigation plan
- Software or process enhancements to existing risk based methods, processes, tools, or technologies
- Demonstration and evaluation of existing risk reduction approach
- Others as determined by the awardee

### **Collaboration Process**

To increase the likelihood of successful implementations, a collaborative process between labor, management, government, and other key stakeholders will be developed. FRA will provide contractor support for facilitating and assisting implementations as needed, such as meeting facilitation, supporting the development of an industry oversight process, supporting the Awardees' efforts for a waiver request, or assisting Awardees in developing a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, FRA will provide contractor support and will work closely with the Awardees' implementation team in developing an evaluation plan of each pilot project accepted.

### **General Information**

BROAD AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENT **BAA-2010-01** can be downloaded via the Internet at: [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov) or <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/1535> or [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)  
Early submission of proposals is strongly encouraged.

In all correspondence to the FRA Office of Acquisition and Grants Services, reference **BAA-2010-01**

**Proposals shall be submitted to:** Ms. Michele Jennings  
Contracting Officer  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Room W34-301  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
michele.jennings@dot.gov

**Due Date:** Proposals are due not later than 4:00 PM, Eastern Time, September 30, 2010. A formal RFP or other solicitation regarding this announcement will **not** be issued.

FRA will organize informational meetings on the RRP Pilot Program initiative at industry seminars, conventions, and other gatherings. These meetings will provide an opportunity to clarify questions on the BAA. Representatives from FRA Office of Safety will be present to answer any questions on the BAA and request for pilot projects. A list of these forums and questions and answers documents will be posted at [www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2029](http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2029).

Questions may be addressed to the Contracting Officer by telephone, e-mail or by sending a letter with information on his or her affiliation and subject area of interest on or before September 30, 2010.

**NOTHING IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS A COMMITMENT BY FRA TO AWARD ANY OF THE PROJECT AREAS IDENTIFIED ABOVE.**

Evaluation and selection of proposals for award will be made to those offerors whose proposal is considered most advantageous to the Government. Offerors are encouraged to access the following website <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2029> to review program planning documents that provide background information on the Risk Reduction Program.

A paper copy of the document may also be obtained by contacting the FRA Office of Acquisition and Grants Services by voice (Tel: (202) 493-1340, Mr. Marcus Moses) or email: (marcus.moses@dot.gov).

**Point of Contact**

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email: michael.fitzpatrick@dot.gov