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## Freight Rail Grant Program (FRPG) Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to commonly asked questions. If you do not see your question in the FAQs, please reach out to [FreightRail@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:FreightRail@mdot.maryland.gov).

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **Q: What is the Freight Rail Grant Funding Portal?**

A: This web-based portal provides a centralized location for solicitation of freight rail projects that help preserve railroad corridors, support economic development, and foster sustainability and innovative technologies. The Maryland OneStop Portal is anticipated to be open for applications in April. Eligible applicants include local governments, Maryland State agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), railroads operators and owners, railroad served business entities, and non-profit organizations.

#### **Q: What are the eligible project types?**

A: There are currently two eligible project types:

##### **Design**

- For completion of design plans and feasibility assessments of proposed or potential rail corridor improvements.
- To assess issues such as economic benefits, environmental impacts, right-of-way issues, local support, and cost estimates.
- Project must be completed within 2 years of grant award.

##### **Construction**

- For construction or installation of rail corridor improvements. May include sidings/sidetracks, eligible grade crossings, bridges/structures, drainage improvements, and other major projects.
- Design may be funded as a component of a construction award.
- Project must be completed within 3 years of grant award.
- Not for routine maintenance projects.

#### **Q: What are the project focus areas?**

A: Projects should align with the goals and objectives in the [Maryland Transportation Plan](#), [Maryland State Freight Plan](#), and the [Maryland State Rail Plan](#). Project will ideally align with one or more of the following focus areas:

##### **Expansion of Rail Service or Rail Served Businesses**

- For the identification, development, and improvement of industrial or commercial sites with the intent to support current or future rail access and service.
- For the restoration or expansion of rail; service to existing commercial or industrial sites.

#### Safety and Security

- For the implementation of strategies or measures which improve the overall safety of railroad corridors and rail-served properties.

#### System Preservation and Modernization

- For the implementation or study of innovative technologies that support the goals of the program.
- For the development of capital improvements that contribute to the ongoing operations of a rail corridor or railroad operator.

#### Environmental Protection and Sensitivity

- For improvements that contribute to carbon reduction policies and programs and encouraging mode shift

#### Fiscal Responsibility

- For the preservation and rehabilitation of inactive railroad infrastructure assets

#### **Q: Do projects need to have a funding Match?**

**A:** Yes, the project sponsor must provide a local funding cash match, the minimum local match is 20% of the total project cost. Projects matching more than 20% will receive preferred consideration.

#### **Q: Can Freight Rail Grant Program funds be used for routine maintenance of railroad corridors?**

**A:** No, FRPG funds are not intended for routine or ongoing maintenance of railroad corridors or railroad infrastructure unless the proposed project utilizes innovative technologies that support the goals of the program.

#### **Q: Is there a minimum or maximum funding request?**

**A:** There is no minimum or maximum amount to apply, however there is an 80%/20% local matching requirement. There is a limited amount of funding available for each funding cycle and projects will be competitively evaluated to ensure effective distribution funding.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

#### **Q: Where do I apply for the opportunity to be grant recipient for the Freight Rail Grant Program?**

**A:** The application is located on the Maryland OneStop Portal, accessible with this link <https://onestop.md.gov/>. Search "Freight Rail Grant Program"

#### **Q: How long is the application open?**

**A:** The application period is anticipated to be open from April 1 through June 30 annually based on available funding.

**Q: Does the application and process vary depending on the applicant?**

**A:** No, each eligible applicant will be following the same process to apply to be a grant recipient of Freight Rail Grant Program funding. Each applicant will use the OneStop portal to apply, and each application will be evaluated using the same process.

**Q: Do I need an account on the OneStop portal to apply?**

**A:** Yes, applicants will need to have an account with OneStop. To register for an account, you can use the link below, and there is no fee to register for an account. If you have applied to other applications via the OneStop portal, you should already have an account.

[https://onestop.md.gov/users/sign\\_up?registration\\_context=%2F](https://onestop.md.gov/users/sign_up?registration_context=%2F)

**Q: Is there a fee to apply for this opportunity?**

**A:** There is no fee to apply.

**Q: Who is eligible to apply?**

**A:** Eligible applicants include local governments, Maryland State agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), railroad operators and owners, railroad served business entities, and non-profit organizations.

**Q: Are applicants limited to just one application per organization?**

**A:** Eligible applicants are not limited to submitting one application for consideration, individual projects that have multiple locations should submit under one application, i.e. multiple rail corridor safety improvement projects. MDOT is encouraging applicants to submit all eligible projects through the portal, MDOT is building up a bench of eligible projects as the program grows and FRGP staff will work with applicants to develop successful projects in the short and long term.

**Q: What information do I need to include in the application?**

**A:** Please be prepared to provide information on the following: project overview, project scope, point of contact, project location, budget information, any permit requirements and status, right-of-way ownership, and information on how the project contributes to the goals and objectives of MDOT's Rail and Intermodal Freight Program.

**Q: How much detail should I provide when filling out the application?**

**A:** Please provide as much detail as possible. This will help reviewers to better understand the scope of the project and understand the different components of the project. Additionally, it will help to determine the readiness of the project for the possible awarding of funds.

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**RESOURCES/SUPPORT**

**Q: I have a question about the application or the MDOT's Office of Rail and Intermodal Freight, who can I reach out to?**

**A:** If you have a question about the application or the Office of Rail and Intermodal Freight, please contact Thomas Mackay, Rail Program and Policy Manager, [FreightRail@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:FreightRail@mdot.maryland.gov).

**HELPFUL RESOURCES:**

**MDOT Rail and Intermodal Freight Home Page:**

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/freight-rail>

**Maryland State Rail Plan**

[https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MD\\_State\\_Rail\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MD_State_Rail_Plan.pdf)

**Maryland State Freight Plan**

[https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MDOT\\_State\\_Freight\\_Complete\\_2022\\_12\\_06.pdf](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MDOT_State_Freight_Complete_2022_12_06.pdf)

**Maryland State Rail Map**

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/railmap.pdf>

**Maryland Transportation Plan**

[https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MTP\\_Playbook\\_web.pdf](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/OPCP/MTP_Playbook_web.pdf)