

# U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration



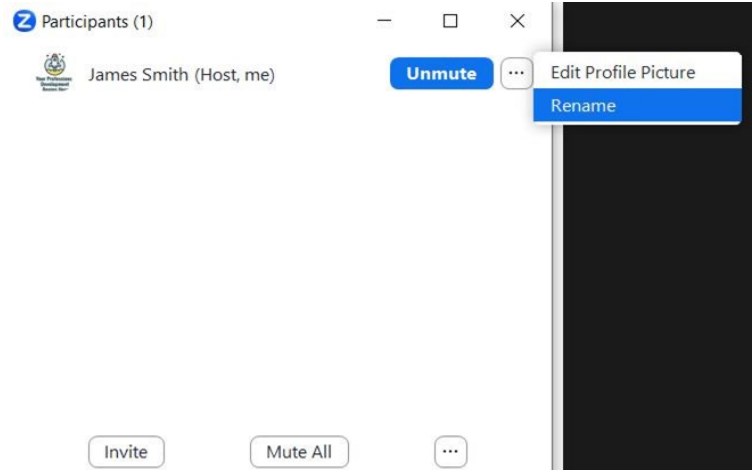
## FY2025 Port Infrastructure Development Program Small Projects at Small Ports Economic Vitality Webinar

June 17, 2025

# How to Change Name on Zoom

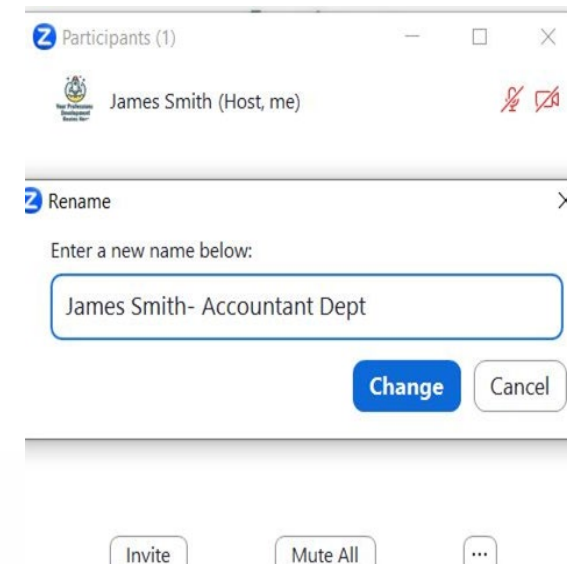


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## **The Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)**

The Port Infrastructure Development Program is a discretionary grant program administered by the Maritime Administration. Funds for the PIDP are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port.

The PIDP statute is codified at 46 U.S.C. 54301.

**The application submittal deadline is 11:59:59 E.D.T. on September 10, 2025.**

Applications must be submitted through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

## Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Opportunity

- PIDP Grants provide Federal assistance to fund eligible projects for the purpose of improving the safety, efficiency or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports.
- **Small Projects at Small Ports:**

\$125 million is reserved for “small projects at small ports.” A small port is defined as a coastal seaport, Great Lakes, or inland river port to and from which the average annual tonnage of cargo for the immediately preceding three calendar years from the time an application is submitted is less than 8,000,000 short tons, as determined by using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data or data by an independent audit if the Secretary determines that it is acceptable to use such data instead of using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data.

## **A. Basic Information**

- Program overview, changes from 2024, definitions

## **B. Eligibility**

- Applicants, Application Limit, Cost Sharing, Pre-Award, Location Designations, Eligible Projects, Project Components, Reduced Awards

## **C. Program Description**

- Program History, Program Goals, Award Size, Restrictions on Funding, Availability of Funds, Performance Measures

## **D. Application Content and Format**

- SF 424, FY2025 PIDP Cover Page, Project Narrative Sections/Descriptions

## **E. Submission Requirements and Deadline**

- Address to Request Package, UEI and SAM Registration, Submission Dates/Times, Intergovernmental Review, Compliance w/ Sec. 508

## **F. Application Review Information**

- Criteria, Review and Selection Process

## **G. Award Notices**

- Project Selection Announcements, Announcement Date, Pre-Award Costs, Reimbursable Program

## **H. Post Award Requirements and Administration**

- Administrative and National policy requirements, Reporting

## **I. Federal Award Agency Contacts**

## **J. Other Information**

- Protection of Confidential Business Information, Publication and Sharing of Application Information



### Changes from FY 2024

- Aligns PIDP goals with administration priorities and removes consideration of:
  - Climate Change and Sustainability;
  - Equity and Justice<sup>40</sup>; and
  - Historically Disadvantaged Communities
- Requires PIDP large project applicants, if applying to use a PIDP grant to acquire digital infrastructure or a software component, to ensure that they have a plan to address the cybersecurity risks of such digital infrastructure or software
- Updates rating rubrics for the statutory merit criteria to better align with new Executive Orders

## Eligible Applicants

### An eligible applicant for a FY 2025 PIDP grant is:

- a State, a political subdivision of a State or a local government,
- a public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more state,
- a special purpose district with a transportation function,
- an Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian tribes,
- a multistate or multijurisdictional group of entities described above, or
- a lead entity described above jointly with a private entity or group of private entities, including the owners or operators of a facility, or collection of facilities, at a port.

Note: Federal agencies and individuals are not eligible applicants for the FY 2025 PIDP.

### Joint Applicants

- If submitting a joint application, applicants must identify in the application the eligible lead applicant as the primary point of contact.
- The lead applicant, who will be the primary recipient of the award and responsible for financial administration and monitoring of the project, must be an eligible lead entity described above (i.e., not a private entity).
- Joint applications should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of each applicant. If a joint applicant is providing some or all of the required non-Federal matching funds, a letter of funds commitment from that applicant should be provided as an attachment to the application.



### Eligible Project Types

- Projects within the boundary of a port, or outside the boundary of a port and directly related to port operations or to an intermodal connection to a port that improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of:
- The loading and unloading of goods at a port;
- The movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port;
- Operational improvements at a port;
- Resiliency in response to environmental factors; or
- Infrastructure that supports seafood and seafood-related businesses.

- Activities eligible for funding under **PIDP planning grants** include those related to development phase activities-such as planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, permitting, preliminary engineering and design work, development of master plans, and planning to address a port's ability to withstand probable occurrence or recurrence of an emergency or major disaster-of eligible PIDP capital projects that will not result in construction with FY 2025 PIDP funding.
- As described in section 3511 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Pub. L. 118-159, December 23, 2024) ("FY 2025 NDAA"), eligible projects also include projects to provide shore power at a port that services both of the following: 1) passenger vessels described in section 3507(k) of title 46, United States Code; and 2) vessels that move goods or freight.

## Evaluation Criteria

### Merit Criteria

- Achieving Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability Improvements;
- Supporting Economic Vitality;
- Leveraging Federal Funding; and
- Port Resilience.

### Additional Considerations

- Workforce Development
- Project Readiness

### Statutory Determinations

- The project must meet six statutory determinations.

## Merit Criteria- Economic Vitality – Small Projects at Small Ports

Reviewers will apply three criteria to evaluate the Economic Vitality of a project:

1. **The Impact on the Economic Advantage of the Port**  
How the project will enhance the economic advantage of the port, such as by creating or increasing economies of scale, overcoming barriers to entry or creating efficient access for labor, resources and customers in and around the port.
2. **Contribution to Freight Transportation**  
How the project will improve the process of transporting goods and commodities and how it will overcome negative externalities.
3. **The Competitive Disadvantage of the Port**  
How the project will overcome or reduce the port's competitive disadvantage position.

### **Economic Vitality** – Small Projects at Small Ports

- Section E.1.a.(2)(b) of the NOFO identifies what an applicant should consider including in its narrative.
- MARAD will consider all relevant information provided, such as business plans, construction plans, engineering studies, feasibility studies, investor prospectuses, mobility studies and third-party reports.
- If an applicant includes any of those items, it is important to identify in the narrative how they support one (or more) of the statutory criteria identified above.
- By statute, a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) for small projects at small ports is not required.



### Economic Vitality

Economic Vitality denotes economic well-being, vigor, strength, and resilience.

Economic vitality supports the development of transportation systems that stimulate and enhance the movement of goods to ensure a prosperous economy, a thriving community, and a clean environment.

Economic vitality includes fulfilling a wide range of multimodal and intermodal freight needs, public-private partnerships, sustainability, and institutional linkages within the community.

An economically vital port is one that maintains a balance of industrial, commercial, and community objectives and activities- on an ongoing, safe, and secure basis.

### Examples of Economic Vitality Improvements in Port Projects

- Improving the competitiveness of the port.
- Developing land in support of marine trade activity in the community and region.
- Developing infrastructure investments that support the cargo supply chain.
- Engaging in local and regional partnerships to facilitate career and skill development and business growth in the community.
- Investing in port and port-related infrastructure that supports diverse businesses, including seafood and seafood-related businesses, that are aligned with the skills and abilities of the workforce.

# The Project's Impact On Economic Advantage

The economic advantage of a port relates to existing logistical, geographic, transportation, or business advantages at a port that will be improved because of the project.

## The Economic Advantages of a Port Include:

- **Superior logistics** (i.e., cargo handling, loading/unloading, shipping paperwork, surveillance).
- Availability of **large spaces or capacity**
- **Proximity** to railways and highways
- **Proximity** to key **centers of production or consumption**
- Abundant **truck parking**
- **Light traffic congestion**
- **Other** (e.g., strategic seaports, or ports with national defense capabilities).

Reviewers will look for analysis and documentation related to how the project will enhance the port's economic advantage, such as by improving port cargo handling, creating economies of scale, creating or improving port cargo access to railways and/or highways, improving access to key centers of production or consumption, reducing port congestion, etc.

### The Project's Contribution to Freight Transportation

The ease of moving cargo beyond the coasts and across the rivers of the U.S. advances trade, generates capital, and drives the domestic economy forward.

The application's narrative of the project's contribution to freight transportation should address how the project will improve the physical process of transporting goods and commodities. It should also address how the project will reduce or eliminate potential points of failure related to the transportation of goods or the supply chain.

Reviewers will look for narrative and supporting documentation that demonstrate how the project will

- Improve the physical process of efficiently transporting goods and commodities.
- Overcome negative externalities, such as air and water pollution, noise, and congestion.
- Improve positive externalities, such as by generating aesthetic benefits around the port, or improving economic agglomeration within the region.

# The Project's Impact on Overcoming the Competitive Disadvantage of the Port

A port may be at a competitive disadvantage, due to inherent or external factors that disrupt or minimize its relative competitive position in logistics or in business. An application's narrative should explain how the proposed project will overcome those disadvantages. Examples of competitive disadvantages include:

- Unfavorable geography or topography, remoteness, or extreme weather.
- Limited or congested space, narrow navigation channels, or shallow harbors.
- Limited access to (or absence of) truck and rail routes.
- Lack of access to key resources or markets.
- Institutional factors, such as limited local skills or restrictions on land use.

\*Lack of financial capability is not considered a competitive disadvantage under PIDP's economic vitality evaluation.

Reviewers will look for evidence and explanation of how PIDP funding will help reduce, remove, or correct elements of competitive disadvantage.



### There are 3 possible ratings: High, medium, or low:

- **High** – Application documentation submitted by the applicant indicates the project will meet all three of the merit criteria: it will improve the economic advantage of the port, contribute to freight transportation at the port, and improve the competitive advantage of the port.
- **Medium** – Application documentation submitted by the applicant indicates the project will improve two of the merit criteria identified above.
- **Low** – Application documentation submitted by the applicant indicates the project will improve only one of the merit criteria identified above.

**Non-Responsive** – Reviewers determine that documentation submitted by the applicant indicates the project will not improve any of the merit criteria identified above.

## Supporting Documents

- MARAD will consider all relevant information and documentation provided, such as, but not limited to, business plans, construction plans, engineering studies, feasibility studies, mobility studies, investor prospectuses, tables, charts, graphs, spreadsheets, maps, diagrams and images.
- Supporting documents could apply to more than one merit criterion.
- Supporting documents should be recent and denoted with proper citation.
- Supporting documents should be submitted in PDF, other than spreadsheets, unless otherwise specified.
- Applicants should clearly identify the part within the project narrative that each supporting document supports.

- **Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)**  
<https://www.bts.gov/>
- **Transportation Research Board (TRB)**  
<https://www.nationalacademies.org/trb/transportation-research-board>
- **U.S. Census Bureau**  
<https://www.census.gov/>
- **Local traffic counts and travel survey data** (from state DOTs or transportation institutes)
- **Project partners** (Metropolitan Planning Organizations or MPOs, universities, research institutions, etc.)
- **FRA's Crossing Inventory and Accident Reports**  
<https://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/PublicSite/Crossing/Crossing.aspx>
- **NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System**  
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/research-data/fatality-analysis-reporting-system-fars>
- **The Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse**  
<https://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/>

*“When using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data to determine whether the applicant qualifies as a Small Port, MARAD will use data that is specific to the eligible applicant. If an eligible applicant provides data by an independent audit, MARAD will use such data if it is a **reasonable substitute** for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data.”*

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How will MARAD determine data is a “reasonable substitute” for USACE data?

## Applicable, Authoritative, and Accurate Framework

- **Applicable**: the Data applies to the terminal or port at which the eligible project will be undertaken
  - To this end, applicants must provide a name to identify the terminal or port at which the eligible project will be undertaken;
- **Authoritative**: the source of the data would be reasonably considered authorized to collect, aggregate, or report said data, including but not limited to:
  - Data from the owner or operator of the terminal or port,
  - Data from a Port Authority specific to the terminal or port,
  - Data from a regulating authority other than USACE, for example a city or state DOT,
  - Data from a third party that assists the terminal or port in collecting and aggregating the data;
- **Accurate**: the data should be exact and should either impute or be in the form of a tonnage number or narrow tonnage range.
  - To this end, it is not sufficient for applicants to simply cite that a tonnage is “less than 8 million”,
  - Rounding to a significant figure is considered acceptably accurate.

*“Small Port: A port to and from which the average annual tonnage of cargo for the immediately preceding three calendar years from the time an application is submitted is less than 8,000,000 short tons, as determined by using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data or data by an independent audit if the Secretary determines that it is acceptable to use such data instead of using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data.”*

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How will MARAD determine what constitutes “data by an independent audit”?

Independent: Source **other than USACE**

Audit: **Aggregation** of tonnage data

Data by an independent audit: Annual (or averaged) tonnage aggregated by a non-USACE source

How will MARAD determine that the data provided from the applicant is data provided by an independent audit?

The **source attributed** by the applicant to the tonnage data provided in the application.



## Small Port / Large Port determination Example:

Frontier Cargo Services owns and operates a port terminal adjacent to Sunspire Port. FCS jointly applies with the state DOT for a PIDP grant as a small port and provides the following:

- Port Name: **Sunspire Port – FCS terminal**
- Tonnage Volume: **3.5m tns** average CY 2022-2024, **per FCS data records**.
- Proper authority of the applicant over the port under state and/or local law.

Concurrently, Sunspire County owns Sunspire Port and operates the port through Sunspire Port Authority. SPA applies for a PIDP grant as a large port and provides the following:

- Port Name – **Sunspire Port**
- Tonnage Volume: **9.5m tns** average CY 2022-2024, **per USACE data**
- Proper authority of the applicant over the port under state and/or local law.

MARAD reviews the applications and determines that FCS has provided data from an **independent audit** and that the data appears to be **applicable, authoritative, and accurate**, and is therefore a **reasonable substitute** for USACE data to establish Sunspire Port – FCS terminal as a small port, despite its geographic proximity and similar name to a nearby large port.

**Questions?**