

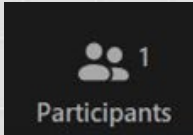
PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Project Readiness Webinar

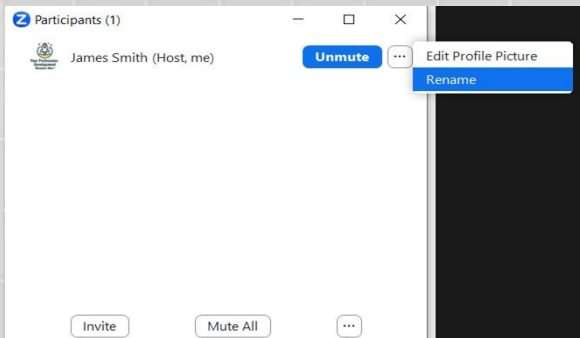
July 1, 2025



How to Change Name on Zoom

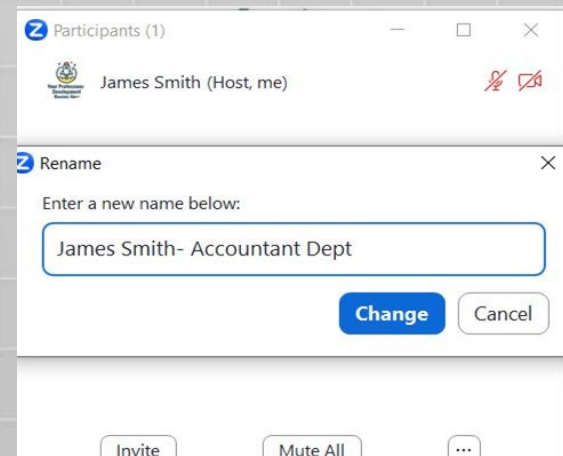


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Enter your full name and organization, for example "Jane Smith-Accountant Dept"





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.



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.

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Outline



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 Justice⁴⁰; 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.



Project readiness consists of assessing two factors:

- Technical Capacity
 - NEPA Process and Permitting Risk
-
- Project readiness reviews evaluate an applicant's preparedness to move a proposed project forward once it receives a PIDP grant. Applicants should include information with their application that, when considered with the project budget information, is sufficient for MARAD to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin in a timely manner and meet both the obligation and expenditure of funds deadlines.
 - **MARAD's review process assesses a project's likelihood to be ready for obligation of funds by September 30, 2029 and the ability to liquidate these obligations within five years of obligation (readiness factor).**
 - An overall Project Readiness rating (Low Risk, Moderate Risk, High Risk) will be assigned based on the poorest risk rating earned in either Technical Capacity or NEPA Process and Permitting Risk.

NEPA

**THE NATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY ACT**





- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended
- Requires that all Federal Agencies consider environmental impacts of major Federal actions that they are considering or undertaking
- NEPA requires agencies to assess the environmental effects of proposed action **PRIOR** to making a decision to move forward



- All MARAD grant and loan programs are subject to NEPA.
- NEPA must be completed before a Grant Agreement can be executed and funding can be obligated.
- That means, for the most part, the grant project cannot be started before NEPA is completed. Except for some pre-approved exceptions, there can be no procurement, no bidding, and no construction until NEPA is completed.



- Categorical Exclusions (CE)
 - category of actions that have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment
- Environmental Assessments (EA)
 - includes those actions for which the significance of the impacts are uncertain
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
 - covers those actions that have been determined to have significant environmental impact



- A CE is one of three basic types of NEPA analysis.
- A CE is a category of **actions** that, for many reasons, an Agency has determined do not generally result in significant environmental impacts.
- It is a common misconception that a CE means no NEPA analysis is required.
- CEs must be documented and retained by MARAD.

When is a categorical exclusion not appropriate?

When the major Federal action:

- significantly affects public health or safety;
- is highly uncertain, involves unique or unknown risks, or is substantially controversial on environmental grounds;
- establishes a precedent for future actions that have the potential for significant impacts;
- requires Federal or State permits (e.g., in-water work)
- violates Federal, State, tribal, or local environmental laws, rules, or regulations;
- has substantial public interest; or
- significantly affects protected resources such as eligible or listed properties on the National Register of Historic Places, threatened/endangered species, and wildlife refuges.

****NEPA procedures updates are in progress and the list presented above may change.**





- National Historic Preservation Act
- Separate from NEPA, but required to be completed prior to finalizing NEPA
- For EVERY project, consultation with SHPO is required PRIOR to initiating the project (including Categorical Exclusions). Exceptions may include equipment purchases and planning grants.



- Endangered Species Act
- Separate from NEPA, but required to be completed prior to finalizing NEPA
- When required, consultation with NOAA National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) and US Fish & Wildlife (FWS) must occur PRIOR to finalizing NEPA and initiating the action for those projects that do not have a No Effect determination.



- NEPA is not a permit. It is a process.
- Securing local/State/Federal permits does not equal NEPA compliance.
- Compliance with other environmental laws does not absolve MARAD of the responsibility to also comply with NEPA.
- States have a process similar to NEPA. A State NEPA document cannot be used in place of a Federal NEPA document (however, the State NEPA document can be used to create a Federal NEPA document).



- Even if another agency has completed NEPA for the project, MARAD is still required to complete NEPA.
- If an agency, such as the Corps of Engineers, has already prepared a NEPA document for a project, MARAD can sometimes adopt the NEPA that has been done. But MARAD needs to evaluate that NEPA documentation for sufficiency before making that determination. The document must cover the entirety of the project, be up to date, and meet MARAD NEPA standards.
- If MARAD is able to adopt another agency's NEPA document, there is still a process to evaluate and document that adoption. Sometimes consultations need to be re-initiated to fulfill agency responsibilities.



The average timeframe for the different levels of NEPA documents are as follows:

- Categorical Exclusion: 3 months
- Environmental Assessment: 12 months
- Environmental Impact Statement: 24 months

NEPA establishes the following timelines:

- EA: 12 months
- EIS: 24 months

The grantee will be responsible for putting together a schedule for NEPA completion in cooperation with MARAD. MARAD will provide the grantee with a start date for NEPA.



How can you prepare for NEPA to expedite the time between Grant Award and Obligation of Funds?

- Prepare a NEPA document as part of the application, consistent with 42 USC 4336a(f).
- Most common is early coordination with USACE. This can “unofficially” happen prior to grant award.
 - USACE typically designates MARAD as the Federal lead for NEPA and Section 7 consultations.
- Retain services of an environmental consultant prior to grant award.
 - MARAD strongly recommends that grant recipients hire an experienced and knowledgeable NEPA consultant to prepare NEPA documents.
- Plan to utilize non-invasive surveys/studies as part of pre-award activities.
- Begin discussions with MARAD NEPA staff as soon as possible after grant award.
- Plan early for a MARAD NEPA staff site visit soon after grant award. Engage service agencies and, if needed, include them on the site visit.



NEPA Process and Permitting Risk assesses:

1. Description of the Project: How in-depth is the project and where is the project located? Is design at least 30%?
2. NEPA Status: Has NEPA started? What is the Project schedule? Has NEPA been accounted for in the schedule?
3. Risk and Mitigation: Is there any project controversy identified? Is the project impacting resources that will require mitigation? Who owns the land?
4. Environmental Permits and reviews: What other permits or environmental reviews will the project need to obtain, and by what agencies (Federal, State and Local)? What is the status of those permits?
5. Environmental Risk: Low, Moderate, High

Applications should include:

- Project schedule and information showing that project will begin construction in timely manner, consistent with all applicable local, State, and Federal requirements, which should identify:
 - All major project milestones
 - NEPA or environmental review status
 - Other required approvals or permits from other agencies
- Environmental risks and any related mitigation strategies
- Describe any prior consultation with MARAD's Office of Environmental Compliance



Avoid:

- **Underestimating NEPA**
 - MARAD reviewers assess PIDP applicants to determine whether applicants realistically consider NEPA complexity and permitting delays in their applications.
 - NEPA must be completed before ANY ground-disturbing activities or construction material purchases can be made, unless MARAD approval is received.
 - Contact MARAD NEPA staff as soon as possible after grant award selection notification for insight.
 - Shovel-ready projects or those with the NEPA process already far along (while not a requirement for PIDP award selection), generally move much more quickly.



- For more information about MARAD's NEPA process, please see [MAO 600.1](#), which details the procedures MARAD uses for NEPA compliance.
- For questions, contact:

Kris Gilson, REM, CHMM

Director, Office of Environmental Compliance

kristine.gilson@dot.gov

202.603.2402

PIDP

The Technical Capacity Evaluation Process





Technical Capacity evaluators consider three areas in their evaluation:

- 1. Experience of the grantee and understanding of Federal requirements.**
 - Does the applicant have a history of delivering similar projects? If not, has the applicant demonstrated an ability to manage the proposed project?
 - Is there evidence that the applicant has sufficient capacity and resources to deliver the project?
 - Does the applicant have experience with USDOT grants? Does the applicant have experience with other types of grant-funded projects?
 - Is there sufficient information in the project narrative to be able to conclude that the applicant is aware of, and will comply with, the Federal requirements applicable to PIDP?
 - For a comprehensive list of PIDP requirements, see the FY24 Terms and Conditions document available here:
<https://maritime.dot.gov/grants/federal-grant-assistance/federal-grant-assistance>



Technical Capacity evaluators consider three areas in their evaluation (cont'd):

2. Information about the project and project schedule.

- How well developed is the project? Is it a concept or is there evidence of some level of underlying design effort? (Identify the level of design: 10%?, 30%?)
- How detailed is the project schedule? Does it include key milestones appropriate to the complexity of the project?
- Is the project budget reasonable and is the level of detail appropriate?
- How current is the project design, schedule, and budget effort?

3. Understanding of project risks and discussion of mitigation strategies.

- Does the application include a discussion of project risks and related mitigation strategies?
 - The discussion need not be exhaustive but it should be detailed enough to convey to reviewers that the applicant understands the concept of risk mitigation.
- Does the discussion relate the risks to the proposed project or are the risks general in nature?

See F.1.(6)(a) in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.



An Example of Project Risk--Domestic Preference

- The Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, Pub. L. 117-58, div. G, tit. IX, subtitle A, 135 Stat. 429, 1298 (2021), as implemented through 2 CFR 184, applies to all PIDP projects.
- All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are subject to the domestic content requirements.
- On August 16, 2023, USDOT announced a public interest Waiver of Buy America Requirements for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants
 - Grantees may use a de minimis amount of non-compliant iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials in your project as long as the total value of the non-compliant products is no more than the lesser of \$1 million or 5 percent of total applicable costs for the project.
 - Total applicable project costs are defined as the cost of materials (including the cost of any manufactured products but excluding labor costs) used in the project that are subject to a domestic preference requirement, including materials that are within the scope of an existing waiver.
- Refer to section 12.1 and term B.5 of the FY 24 PIDP [General Terms and Conditions](#) and [Exhibits](#) to see how MARAD implements BABA for PIDP projects.



An Example of Project Risk--Domestic Preference

- If an applicant anticipates pursuing a waiver of BABA requirements, the applicant should describe steps that have been or will be taken to maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing its project.
 - This can include RFIs, market research, etc. that the applicant conducted to attempt to source domestic products or products containing higher percentages of domestic content
- When necessary, a grantee may apply for, and the USDOT may grant, a waiver from domestic preference requirements. The USDOT will provide instructions on the waiver process and on the format, contents, and supporting materials required for any waiver request.
- Waiver requests are subject to public comment periods of no less than 15 days and must be reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Made in America Office.
- Waivers can be approved by USDOT under the following circumstances:
 - (1) applying the Buy America preference would be inconsistent with the public interest;
 - (2) the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality; or
 - (3) the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent
- **Applicants should be aware that pursuing a waiver is a lengthy process that will likely delay execution of a grant agreement.**



Avoid:

- **Unrealistic Scope**

- The most common contributing factor to the delayed obligation of grant funds are changes to the project scope, schedule, or budget after a project has been selected for an award.
- Is your project achievable as presented in your application materials? Consider whether the proposed project scope is overly ambitious.
- Is the budget reasonable and based on a preliminary engineering estimate or some other reliable source of information?

Unrealistic timelines.

- Present a project timeline that is realistic and considers a reasonable amount of time (assume, for planning purposes, at least one year to 18 months between award announcement and grant agreement execution).
 - Understand that you can NOT start construction activity until after the grant agreement is signed (executed), unless otherwise approved by MARAD.
- Certain steps (NEPA review, Section 106 analysis, project risk register, Title VI assessment) must be completed prior to grant agreement execution.




Avoid:

- **Unrealistic Budget**
 - Project budgets that are preliminary at the time of application frequently turn out to be insufficient to fund the full scope as described in the application.
 - MARAD will not add funds to a project and a grantee, if awarded full funding for its project, will not be eligible for additional DOT funding to cover cost increases.
 - Consider whether funding shortfalls could impact finalization of your project.
 - Inadequate budgets have impacted grantees' ability to deliver projects and frequently necessitated budget changes.
 - Other considerations:
 - Budget shortfalls resulting from increases in cost of materials and/or labor.
 - Failure to be able to deliver non-Federal funding commitment reflected in the grant application.
 - Additional funding from applicants to cover inflationary cost escalation is typically challenging, and it may take considerable time to identify additional funding (assuming additional funding can be found at all).
 - It's okay to include a reasonable cost contingency in your project budget.



Other types of events that delays grant agreement execution:

- Leadership changes (grant management team at the local level or leadership at the local level).
- Business fluctuations (private partners change, leave, or fail to provide funds).
- Grantee missteps (premature construction or work outside of scope).
- Insufficient cost estimates at application that prevent a grantee from providing the required letter of funding commitment (plans at less than 30% status are generally insufficient to develop an accurate budget or even understand the construction risks of the project.)
- Many State funding sources have strict time limits, and minor project delays can threaten viability of State funding (the non-Federal match).
 - An applicant should make it clear in its application that it is relying on State funding and identify any related funding considerations.

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- For further questions, please contact the Office of Port Infrastructure Development at:

Phone #: 202-366-7678

Email: PIDPGrants@Dot.Gov