



U.S. Department of Transportation

Maritime Administration

Port Infrastructure Development Program

Fiscal Year 2026



Port Infrastructure Development Program

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

Appropriates \$450M for FY 2026

- No specific set aside for coastal seaports or Great Lakes ports
- No minimum grant size
- FY 2026 is the last year of IIJA funds

FY 2026 Annual Appropriation

Appropriates \$103,330,000

- \$64,702,000 earmarked for CPF

\$38,628,000 remains for discretionary award

Total Available for FY26 Grants
\$488,628,000



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Outline

A. Basic Information

- Program overview, changes from 2025, definitions

B. Eligibility

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

C. Program Description

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

D. Application Content and Format

- SF 424, FY2026 PIDP Cover Page, Project Narrative Sections/Descriptions

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

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- Criteria, Review and Selection Process

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Sections A, B, C of the NOFO Program, Award, and Eligibility Information



Port Infrastructure Development Program

The PIDP statute, codified at 46 U.S.C. 54301, establishes the port and intermodal improvement program to ***improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports.***

- PIDP is a discretionary grant program.
- Awards are made by the Secretary of Transportation on a competitive basis.
- Since inception in FY 2019, program awards total more than \$3.5 billion.
- \$488,628,000 is available for FY 2026 awards.
- Application evaluations include statutory and non-statutory criteria.
- Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov.

Application deadline is 11:59:59 p.m. E.D.T. on June 1, 2026.



Changes from FY 2025:

- Removes workforce as a selection consideration
- Updates rating rubrics for statutory merit criteria
- Adds a new priority for projects in Qualified Opportunity Zones (26 U.S.C. 1400Z-1)
- Adds a new priority for projects that incorporate innovative technology
- Adds a new priority for projects that support national multimodal freight goals
- Projects that provide shore power are no longer automatically treated as satisfying the determination that the project improves the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods.



Federal Award Information for FY26

- Guidance on Federal Award Information is in Section C of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Award size.
 - No minimum award size for IIJA funding; \$1M minimum for Appropriations Act funding
 - No maximum award size (but see “Restrictions on Funding” below).
- Restrictions on Funding.
 - A maximum of \$122,157,000 can be awarded for projects in any one state.
 - Small Projects at Small Ports.
 - \$122,157,000 is reserved for small projects at small ports
 - No single grant award may be more than \$11.25 million for a small project at a small port.
 - No more than 10% (\$12.5) million may be used for development phase activities at small ports.
 - Planning/Development Phase project funding is limited to no more than 10% of funding reserved for small projects at small ports and no more than 10% of funding available to Large Projects .



Federal Award Information for FY 2026, cont'd

Small Ports and Small Projects at Small Ports

Small Port – 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. 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.*

Small Project at a Small Ports – A project at small port requesting less than or equal to \$11.25 million in Federal funding assistance through the FY 2026 PIDP.

Note on cost-effectiveness: Cost-effectiveness determinations (Benefit-Cost Ratio greater than 1) do not apply to Small Projects at Small Ports or to projects in non-contiguous States or territories. BUT, if Small Port proposes a project utilizing more than **\$11.25 million** in Federal assistance, that project **will be considered a Large Project** and the **cost-effectiveness determination will apply** (in contiguous states only).



Federal Award Information for FY 2026 (cont'd)

Availability of Funds

- Goal is to obligate funds not later than September 30, 2030. Obligation occurs upon execution of a written grant agreement.
- Various administrative requirements, including transportation planning and environmental reviews, must be completed before a grant agreement can be executed.
- Goal is to expend funds within five years after obligation.
- A project's likelihood to be ready for obligation of funds by September 30, 2030 and the ability to liquidate these obligations within five years of obligation will be considered during the review process (Project Readiness factor).

Previous PIDP awards

- Previous PIDP grant recipients may apply for funding to support additional phases of a project previously awarded funding. However, ***to be competitive***, the applicant should show how the previously funded project met scope, schedule, and budget milestones and how the new phase will impact project benefits.



Eligible Applicants

- A State, or political subdivision of a State, or a local government;
- A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by one or more States;
- A special purpose district with a transportation function;
- An Indian Tribe or 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).

Joint Applications

- If submitting a joint application, applicants must identify in the application the eligible lead entity as the primary point of contact and identify the primary recipient of the award.
- The applicant that will be responsible for financial administration 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 entity.



Cost Sharing and Matching

In general, Federal share may not exceed 80 percent of the cost of the project.

- The Secretary may waive that requirement for grants awarded to (1) a project located in a rural area or (2) for a Small Project at a Small Port.

The application must demonstrate sources of non-Federal funds being committed to the project. Applicants must provide documentation that the matching funds are committed prior to the obligation of funds for the project.

Matching funds may be:

- State funds, local funds, or private funds.
- TIFIA or RRIF loans if the loan is repayable from non-Federal funds.
- Matching funds may not:
 - Be counted as the non-Federal share for both this program and another Federal grant program unless otherwise authorized by statute.
 - Consist of previously-incurred costs or previously-expended funds unless first approved by DOT in writing after award announcement. See exception for awards made to Small Projects at Small Ports in section B.4 of the NOFO.



Port Infrastructure Development Program

Eligible Projects shall be located either 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.

Eligible projects must improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of:

- (I) the loading and unloading of goods at the port; such as for marine terminal equipment;
- (II) the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port; such as for highway or rail infrastructure, intermodal facilities, freight intelligent transportation systems, and digital infrastructure systems;
- (III) operational improvements, including projects to improve port resilience; or
- (IV) environmental and emissions mitigation measures, including projects for—
 - a) port electrification or electrification master planning;
 - b) harbor craft or equipment replacements or retrofits;
 - c) development of port or terminal microgrids;
 - d) provision of idling reduction infrastructure;
 - e) purchase of cargo handling equipment and related infrastructure;
 - f) worker training to support electrification technology;
 - g) installation of port bunkering facilities from ocean-going vessels for fuels;
 - h) electric vehicle charging or hydrogen refueling infrastructure for drayage and medium or heavy-duty trucks and locomotives that service the port and related grid upgrades; or
 - i) other related port activities, including charging infrastructure, electric rubber-tired gantry cranes, and anti-idling technologies.
- (V) port and port-related infrastructure that supports seafood and seafood-related businesses, including the loading and unloading of commercially harvested fish and fish products, seafood processing, cold storage, and other related infrastructure.



Eligible projects (cont'd)

~~Eligible projects also include projects to provide **shore power** at a port that services both of the following:~~

- ~~• Passenger vessels described in section 3507(k) of title 46, United States Code; and~~
- ~~• Vessels that move goods or freight.~~

*(Note: In FY2026, shore power projects shall **no longer** be treated as automatically satisfying the primary PIDP statutory purpose of improving the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports.)*

Development phase activities - Include planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, permitting, and preliminary engineering and design work) and port planning activities are eligible if the activities support one of the eligible project types listed.

- Funding will be prioritized for projects that will move into the construction phase within the grant's performance period.
- Applications for development phase activities are subject to an economic vitality analysis (either a small projects at small ports EV analysis or BCA for large projects in contiguous states).
- If an application includes right-of-way acquisition, the project will be considered a capital project.
- Development phase project applications are less competitive than capital project applications.



Ineligible Projects

- Vessel construction, reconstruction, reconditioning, or purchase, *unless* the Secretary determines such a vessel is necessary for an environmental and emissions mitigation project AND is not receiving assistance under 46 U.S.C. chapter 537.
- Projects within a small shipyard as defined in 46 U.S.C. 54101, *MARAD's Small Shipyard Grant Program* (less than 1,200 full time employees);
- Improvements to Federally owned facilities;
- Projects to fund workforce training not related to electrification technology; or
- Fully automated cargo handling equipment or the installation of terminal infrastructure that is designed for fully automated cargo handling equipment:
 - In general, fully automated cargo handling systems transfer materials without the need, or with a significantly reduced need, for human assistance are ineligible.
 - Applicants who propose projects that include the acquisition of automated cargo handling equipment must provide the information outlined in the NOFO (Section B.6 of the NOFO re: no net job loss determination).



Project Components (See Section B.7 of the NOFO)

Application may describe a project that contains multiple components. But the multiple components must have a relationship between them. The Department may award funds for a component, instead of the larger project, if that component:

- Independently meets all eligibility requirements;
- Independently aligns well with the selection criteria; and
- Meets NEPA requirements with respect to independent utility.

Projects that include right-of-way acquisition are considered capital projects and should include a timeline for construction.

Each eligible applicant may submit no more than one application. Unrelated project components should not be combined in one application to meet the application limit.



Sections D and E of the NOFO Application and Submission Information



Submission date

- Application submittal deadline is 11:59:59 p.m. E.D.T. on **June 1, 2026**.
- Grant applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov.

Content and form of submission

- Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
- Project narrative (30 page maximum, excluding cover page and table of contents) per section D.3 of the NOFO.
- Recommended to include:
 - Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C) – Be sure amounts align with the regular SF-424 and the info in your project narrative budget.
 - Attachments Form that describes the attachments to your project narrative



How to Organize the Project Narrative

- Cover Page with critical applicant and project information (discussed in D.2 of the NOFO)
- Project Narrative Section 1 – Project Description (discussed in D.3.a.)
- Project Narrative Section 2 – Project Location (D.3.b.)
- Project Narrative Section 3 – Grant Funds, Sources and Uses of Project Funds (D.3.c.)
- Project Narrative Section 4 – Merit Criteria (D.3.d.)
- Project Narrative Section 5 – Additional Considerations (D.3.e.)
- Project Narrative Section 6/7 – Statutory Determinations (D.3.f.)



Project Description

- Include a concise description of the project, the challenges it is intended to address and how it will address those challenges.
- Use this section to put the project in a broader context: How does it relate to other capital development initiatives the applicant is pursuing? Does it support or enhance other projects in the area (in particular, other Federal investments)?
- A statement that the applicant has the authority to plan, construct, own, operate, and maintain the project.
- As applicable:
 - Description of applicant and joint applicant responsibilities.
 - Description of incidental dredging activities.
 - For large project applicants applying to acquire digital infrastructure or a software component, provide digital infrastructure certification.



Project Location

- Describe the project location precisely
 - Consider including maps and geographic coordinates (Latitude/Longitude in decimal format) so that the reviewers clearly know the specific location of the project and its relationship to existing infrastructure.
- Categorize the project location in terms necessary for the program:
 - Is it in a rural or urban area? (use mapping tool linked at bottom of page 9 on the NOFO)
 - Is it at a coastal seaport, Great Lakes port, or inland river port?
 - Is it a small project at a small port?
 - Is it located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone?



Grant Funds, Sources, and Uses of Project Funds

At a minimum, this section should include:

- Project costs;
- Sources and amount of funds;
- Documentation of non-Federal funding commitments;
- Information on the required non-Federal match for Federal funds;
- A budget that shows how each source of funds will be spent; and
- Any expenses proposed during the period between grant award announcement and obligation that the project sponsor intends to request MARAD pre-award approval for pursuant to 46 USC 54301(a)(10)(B) or 2 CFR 200.458.



Summary Criteria

Merit Criteria of the Evaluation Criteria

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

Additional Considerations

- Project Readiness
 - Technical Capacity; and
 - Environmental Risk.
- Innovative Technology
- Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals

Six Statutory Determinations



Merit Criteria – Achieving Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability Improvements

Demonstrated through one or more of the following:

1. **Safety Improvements**

- Protects those in the port from safety risks.
- Reduces fatalities and/or serious injuries related to port operations.
- Incorporates specific safety improvements part of a documented risk reduction mitigation strategy and that have port-wide impact.

2. **Efficiency Benefits;**

- How the project improves cargo volume/throughput at a port.

3. **Reliability Improvements**

- How the project incorporates reliability enhancements that improve the dependability of cargo operations.



Leveraging of Federal Funding

Include information that identifies how the applicant has worked to improve non-Federal leverage, such as the role project partners will play in funding the project and any unique funding arrangements the applicant has pursued to increase the amount of non-Federal funding for the project.

Port Resilience

Resilience, as defined in 46 U.S.C. 54301, means the ability of the port to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, withstand, respond to, and recover from operational disruptions and sustain critical operations, including disruptions caused by natural or man-made hazards.

- Applicants should identify specifically how the project will improve port resilience with respect to a natural or man-made physical event or trend or physical impact that may cause: loss of life, injury, or other health impacts; damage and loss to property, infrastructure, or livelihoods; and the ability of the port to sustain its role in the local, regional, or national supply chain.
- Applicants are encouraged to align project elements with: established State, local, or regional Comprehensive Plans; Resilience Assessment Tools; or other planning, policy, or engineering tools that incorporate resilience concepts and mitigation techniques.



Economic Vitality – Large Project Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA)

In the narrative, summarize the results of the applicant's analysis of the BCA of the project.

BCA not required for Large Projects in noncontiguous States and territories.

The BCA itself should be submitted as an appendix to the project narrative. Among other things, the appendix:

- should identify present value estimates of project's benefits and costs (relative to a no-build baseline);
- may include other categories of benefits that are more difficult to quantify;
- should tie all benefits to the expected outcomes of the project; and
- should include the full costs of developing, constructing, operating and maintaining the project.

<https://www.transportation.gov/mission/office-secretary/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance>



Economic Vitality – Small Projects at Small Ports

A BCA is **NOT REQUIRED** for a Small Project at a Small Port application.

Instead, the economic vitality of a small project at a small port is evaluated against three criteria:

- How the project improves the economic advantage of the port;
 - How the project contributes to freight transportation at, around, and through the port; and,
 - How the project helps overcome the competitive disadvantage of the port.
- Section F.2.b. of the NOFO identifies what an applicant should consider including in its EV 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.
 - However, if an applicant includes any of these items, it is important to identify in the narrative how they support one (or more) of the statutory criteria identified above.



Additional Considerations

Project Readiness - encompasses two elements: Technical Capacity and NEPA Process and Permitting Risk

Technical Capacity:

- Prior experience working with funding agencies on Federal grant projects and/or previous experience delivering projects of similar complexity
- Details on the applicant's project management team
- Feasibility of the project and how it will comply with applicable Federal requirements.
- Detailed project schedule that identifies all major project milestones
- Technical project risks and mitigation strategies

NEPA Process and Permitting Risk:

- 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 Technical Reviews
- Review the [Department of Transportation's Order 5610.1D, Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts](#), to include Subpart C which contains additional procedures for MARAD, prior to submission.



Additional Considerations, cont.

Innovative Technology

Innovation describes the extent to which a project adopts advanced science and novel approaches to transform maritime infrastructure and operations. It focuses on deploying modern solutions that go beyond traditional practices to enhance safety, efficiency, and port resilience.

Projects will rate more highly on this criterion if the applicant demonstrates that the project will:

- **Deploy Advanced Technologies:** Utilize smart cargo handling, intelligent berth/yard management, or advanced asset inspection systems to improve the movement of goods.
- **Apply Innovative Methods:** Implement novel design, construction, or maintenance techniques that reduce costs, accelerate delivery, or strengthen infrastructure durability.
- **Deliver Quantifiable Results:** Provide concrete evidence and data showing how these innovations lead to significant, measurable improvements in operational performance.



Additional Considerations, cont.

Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals

The Department of Transportation seeks to support port projects that align with the national multimodal freight policy goal of ensuring the freight system serves as a foundation for the United States to compete in the global economy. DOT seeks to invest in port infrastructure that:

- Enhances the export competitiveness of the United States, with an emphasis on agriculture exports;
- Supports the supply chains of key industries of national interest, including critical minerals, steel, the defense industrial base, or pharmaceutical manufacturing;
- Advances America's domestic energy industry;
- Supports the reshoring of advanced manufacturing; and
- Revitalizes the maritime industrial base including shipbuilding, component supply chains, ship repair, and marine transportation services.

Applicants should also provide information on the export/import mix of cargo that will benefit from their project and describe the commodities/goods that will be impacted by the project and the industries that rely on them.

<https://www.transportation.gov/freight/NFSP>



Additional Considerations, cont.

Strategic Seaports

In making PIDP grants, the Secretary may give priority to providing funding to projects at strategic seaports that support national security requirements as allowed by 46 U.S.C. 54301(a)(6)(C).

- **Strategic Seaport:** *A military port or a commercial port that is subject to a port planning order or Basic Ordering Agreement (or both) that is projected to be used for the deployment of forces and shipment of ammunition or sustainment supplies in support of military operations.*

<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/ports/national-port-readiness-network-nprn>



Statutory Determinations

To be selected for an award, each application **MUST** satisfy six statutory determinations. The project narrative must include enough information so that reviewers can assess whether an application meets the determinations listed below.

- Specific suggestions about what to include in the narrative are included in Section D.3.f. of the NOFO.
- The six determinations are:
 1. The project improves the safety, efficiency or reliability of the movement of goods through a port or intermodal connection to the port.
 2. The project is cost effective. (This does not apply to a small project at a small port. It also does not apply to projects in noncontiguous states or territories.)
 3. The eligible applicant has the authority to carry out the project.
 4. The eligible applicant has sufficient funding available to meet the matching requirements.
 5. The project will be completed without unreasonable delay.
 6. The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without Federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor.



Section F of the NOFO Application Review Information



MERIT CRITERIA - Achieving Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability Improvements

Safety Improvements

High – Safety is a primary project purpose AND project incorporates a port-wide risk reduction strategy, protects workers from risk, and reduces injuries related to port operations.

Medium – Protects workers from risk, incorporates a risk reduction plan, and reduces injuries related to port operations.

Low – Does not satisfactorily address safety or includes safety benefits external to the port.

Non-Responsive – Does not address safety or negatively affects safety.

Efficiency Benefits

High – Efficiency is a primary project purpose AND project results in increased cargo throughput by addressing a well-defined need for additional capacity and generates changes in port operations to increase cargo diversity with documentation of likely increases in NEW cargo volume.

Medium – Results in an improvement likely to increase cargo throughput and enhance the speed of cargo operations.

Low – Does not satisfactorily address efficiency or relates to efficiency benefits external to the port.

Non-Responsive – Does not address efficiency or negatively affects efficiency.

Reliability Improvements

High – Reliability is a primary project purpose AND project results in well-documented improvements in the dependability of cargo operations.

Medium – Results in enhancements that are likely to improve the dependability of cargo operations and remedies infrastructure deficiencies that adversely impact port operations.

Low – Does not satisfactorily address reliability or relates to reliability benefits external to the port.

Non-Responsive – Does not address reliability or negatively affects reliability.



MERIT CRITERIA - Port Resilience

An assessment of the project's impact on the resiliency of port operations, including the types of events and operational disruptions that the port could be prepared to meet following implementation of a project.

- Projects are evaluated on whether (and how well) they enhance a port's ability to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, withstand, respond to, and recover from operational disruptions and sustain critical operations, including disruptions caused by natural or manmade hazards.

High – Project advances both the port's ability to withstand natural and man-made hazards AND the narrative quantifies the impact on resilience for each.

Medium – Project advances (1) the port's resilience to both natural AND manmade hazards but the impacts aren't quantified; or (2) the project advances resilience to either natural OR manmade hazards and the narrative quantifies how resilience is improved.

Low – Reviewers determined the project is likely to advance the port's resilience to either natural or man-made hazards.

Non-Responsive – Does not address how the project will advance the port's resilience to natural and man-made hazards OR reviewers determined the project will not improve either of those factors.



MERIT CRITERIA - Leverage of Federal funding

To maximize the impact of PIDP awards, MARAD seeks to leverage PIDP funding with non-Federal contributions.

Ratings will be based on the calculated non-Federal share of the project's future eligible project costs.

MARAD will sort project applications' non-Federal leverage percentage from high to low using a quintile calculation based on all applications:

- 80th percentile and above receive the highest rating;
- 60th-79th percentile receive the second highest rating;
- 40th-59th receive the third highest rating;
- 20th-39th receive the fourth highest rating; and
- 0-19th receive the lowest rating.



MERIT CRITERIA – Cost Effectiveness (for Large Project applications)

Evaluators will independently assess Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) material submitted by applicants, relying on quantitative, data-supported analyses.

Projects will be grouped into ranges by benefit-cost ratio (BCR), as calculated by the DOT review team.

High – Benefits exceed cost with a BCR of at least 2.0

Medium-High – Project benefits will exceed costs

Medium – Project benefits are likely to exceed costs

Medium-Low – Costs are likely to exceed benefits

Low – Costs will exceed benefits



MERIT CRITERIA - Economic Vitality - Small Projects at Small Ports

Evaluators will consider three criteria:

1. Impacts on economic advantage
 - How the project enhances the economic advantage of the port, such as by capitalizing on or creating economies of scale, overcoming barriers to entry or creating more efficient access for labor, resources and customers.
2. Contribution to freight transportation at the port
 - How the project improves the process of transporting commodities and improves positive externalities and/or overcomes negative externalities.
3. The competitive disadvantage of the port
 - How the project will improve the port's competitive position.

High – Improves economic advantage, contributes positively to freight transport, and improves the port's competitive advantage.

Medium – Improves two of the three factors.

Low – Improves only one factor.

Non-Responsive – Does not address the factors or does not improve any of the factors.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – Innovative Technology

MARAD evaluates the use of advanced technologies and novel approaches that modernize maritime infrastructure beyond traditional practices. Highly-rated projects will deploy smart systems—such as intelligent cargo handling or advanced asset management—and utilize innovative design or construction methods to reduce costs and accelerate delivery. Applicants must provide concrete evidence demonstrating how these solutions strengthen port resilience and produce significant, measurable improvements in safety and operational efficiency.

- **High** – The project involves the use of one or more innovative technologies that are directly related to maritime infrastructure challenges or maritime operations. The innovative technologies are well described in the narrative. In addition, the technologies will result in significant, measurable increases in the movement of goods.
- **Medium** – Application demonstrates that the project involves the use of one or more innovative technologies that are directly related to maritime infrastructure challenges or maritime operations and will likely result in increases in the movement of goods.
- **Low** - Application contains insufficient information to assess innovation benefits or describes innovations that are minimal in scope, unrelated to maritime infrastructure challenges or maritime operations, or unlikely to produce gains in the movement of goods.
- **Non-Responsive** – Application does not address this criterion.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals

MARAD seeks to support port projects that align with the national multimodal freight policy goal of ensuring the freight system serves as a foundation for the United States to compete in the global economy. DOT seeks to invest in port infrastructure that supports the following goals:

- Enhances the export competitiveness of the United States, with an emphasis on agriculture exports;
- Supports the supply chains of key industries of national interest, including critical minerals, steel, the defense industrial base, or pharmaceutical manufacturing;
- Advances America’s domestic energy industry;
- Supports the reshoring of advanced manufacturing; and
- Revitalizes the maritime industrial base including shipbuilding, component supply chains, ship repair, and marine transportation services.

Applicants should also provide information on:

- The export/import mix of cargo that will benefit from their project; and
- Describe the commodities/goods that will be impacted by the project and the industries that rely on them.

<https://www.transportation.gov/freight/NFSP>

High – Project contributes *significantly* to one or more of the goals listed above.

Medium – Project provides material contribution to one or more of the goals, but contributions are minimal.

Low – Project provides only non-significant or indirect contributions to one or more of the goals.

Non-Responsive – Application does not address this criterion.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS - Project Readiness

- Consists of BOTH Technical Capacity and NEPA Process/Permitting Risk evaluations
- Evaluators will consider significant risks to successful completion of the project.
- Risks might include: environmental approvals, permitting, technical feasibility of the project, funding constraints, or the applicant's capacity to manage the project.
- Applications should include a discussion of all risks and achievable risk mitigation strategies.

An applicant's lack of previous experience with Federally funded grants will not disqualify a project from consideration but may result in an increased Technical Capacity risk rating.

Overall Project Readiness ratings are based on the poorest rating earned in either Technical Capacity or NEPA Process/Permitting Risk categories.

- **High Risk**
- **Moderate Risk**
- **Low Risk**



STATUTORY DETERMINATIONS

1. The project improves the safety, efficiency or reliability of the movement of goods through a port or intermodal connection to the port.
2. The project is cost effective.
 - To be considered cost effective, large projects must demonstrate a BCR greater than 1.0
 - This determination does not apply to small projects at small ports. It also does not apply to projects in noncontiguous states or territories.
3. The eligible applicant has the authority to carry out the project.
 - Include a citation of authority
4. The eligible applicant has sufficient funding available to meet the matching requirements.
 - Application shows sufficient funding, dedicated to the proposed purposes, and available in a timely manner to meet matching requirements
5. The project will be completed without unreasonable delay.
 - Whether the project is expected to begin construction within a reasonable timeframe
 - Whether the project will be fully completed within 5 years of obligation
6. The project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without Federal funding or financial assistance.
 - An assessment of impacts on the project if Federal funding or financial assistance is not available



APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Intake Review Phase – Initial screen for applicant and project eligibility and identification of potential statutory compliance issues for follow-up with applicants.

Initial Technical Review Phase – Reviews for the following criteria:
Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability Improvement
Leveraging of Federal Funds

Senior Review Phase – Initial review of projects

Secondary Technical Review Phase – Reviews for the following criteria:
Economic Vitality/Cost Effectiveness
Project Readiness (Technical Capacity and NEPA Process/Permitting Risk)
Innovation
National Multimodal Freight Goal Alignment
Port Resilience
Statutory Determinations

Senior Review Team – Advances projects to the Secretary

Selection by the Secretary



Sections F, G, and H of the NOFO Federal Award Administration Information



Planning grant applications for development phase activities:

- Evaluated against the same criteria as applications for capital construction projects.
 - Note that this means that planning projects ARE subject to a Benefit Cost Analysis or Economic Vitality analysis depending on the location and cost of the project.
- MARAD will prioritize projects that propose to move into construction within the period of performance.

Risk assessment prior to grant award (NOFO Section F.3)

- Required by 2 CFR 200.206 and applies to all applicants selected for an award.
- Performed by MARAD and assesses prospective awardee's integrity, business ethics and record of performance under Federal awards.

Award notifications

- Posted on program website: www.maritime.dot.gov/PIDPgrantsitime.dot.gov/PIDPgrants
- MARAD representative will then reach out to all POCs listed on the SF-424



Grants are reimbursement grants

- Notice of selection for award is NOT authorization to begin performance
- MARAD written pre-approval is required if a grantee wishes to begin expending non-Federal funds before grant agreement execution, unless applicant is applying for a small project at a small port and included pre-award costs in the application budget.
- Reimbursement occurs after: (1) grant agreement executed; (2) allowable expenses incurred; and (3) valid request for reimbursement submitted.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

- Grants are administered in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200)
- Other requirements to keep in mind: Build America, Buy America Act; Federal prevailing wage rate requirements, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
- For an insight into requirements, see prior-year terms and conditions documents here . . .
www.maritime.dot.gov/grants/federal-grant-assistance/federal-grant-assistance



Program Requirements

- MARAD reserves the right to work with applicants selected for award to comply with civil rights, cyber security and Title VI requirements such as: Community Participation Plans; Cyber Incident Response Plans; Title VI Program Plans; and ADA considerations.

Reporting Requirements

- Progress reporting on grant activities
- Project outcome performance reporting
- Reporting of matters related to recipient integrity and performance
 - Required for applicants with over \$10 million in active Federal grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts during the PIDP project's period of performance.



Suggestions for a More Effective Application

Present a project timeline that is realistic and considers:

- A reasonable amount of time (assume, for planning purposes, at least six months to a year or more) between award announcement and grant agreement execution
 - Certain steps (NEPA review, Section 106 analysis, project risk register, Title VI assessment) must be completed prior to grant agreement execution
- A realistic timeframe post-grant agreement for final design (if applicable) and construction
 - Be able to complete project work and related expenditures within five years of the signed grant agreement

Pay careful attention to the Economic Vitality analysis

- Remember that it is more than just a business case
- Summarize key points in your project narrative – don't need the whole analysis
- Attach supporting documentation (including, for BCAs, an unprotected file showing calculations)
- Listen to the upcoming webinars, even if you have previously submitted an application for discretionary grant funds

Funding commitments

- Key items to include/discuss: complete information about project funds, supporting documentation, new budget table (Section B.3 of NOFO)



Suggestions for a More Effective Application, Cont.

Technical Capacity related suggestions

- Include details about the cost analysis that your project is based on
 - Estimate? Market survey? IGCE? When developed?
- Indicate the status of project design and engineering
 - MARAD understands that, in some cases, this may not have started.

Remember the overall statutory goal of the program

- “make grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible applicants to assist in funding eligible projects for the purpose of improving the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports” 46 USC 54301(a)(1)

Proof-read your application package before final submission. Common discrepancies we struggle with:

- Numbers that don't agree (difference in funding amounts between narrative and/or BCA and SF-424)
 - We generally use SF-424 data to resolve any differences related to the amount of funding requested.
- Missing attachments or attachments that are included but not referenced in the narrative
- Incomplete or confusing statements about project scope. Clearly detail what the PIDP request would fund.

Other thoughts . . .

- Apply early!
- Submit a test application if you need to. We consider the last submission from an applicant as its final submission.
- When filling out the SF-424, you may list a grant writer/consultant in the “Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application” section, but you should then list the lead applicant contact in the “Authorized Representative” section.



There are two additional upcoming PIDP-related webinars:

The "*Economic Vitality: Small Projects at Small Ports*" webinar will be held on **April 16, 2026, from 1:30 – 3:00PM** Eastern.

Registration Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/opTp_wfhQpe1tQzPSZlxKQ#/registration

The "*Preparing a Benefit-Cost Analysis for a Large Project*" webinar will be held on **April 20, 2026, from 2:00 – 3:30PM** Eastern.

Registration Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/eSsaElu7TnKDgUlybkQYpQ#/registration>



Port Infrastructure Development Program

Port Infrastructure Development Program Grants Webpage:

<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/PIDPgrants>

Department of Transportation Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance (2026 Update):

<https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/benefit-cost-analysis-guidance>

Urban-Rural Census Link

[https://www.transportation.gov/rural/eligibility.](https://www.transportation.gov/rural/eligibility)

National Multimodal Freight Plan

<https://www.transportation.gov/freight/NFSP>

Qualified Opportunity Zone Information

<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones>

MARAD Gateway Offices

<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/about-us/gateway-ofices/gateway-offices>



Questions?

Questions may also be emailed to PIDPgrants@dot.gov