U.S. Department of Transportation

Maritime Administration

FY2026 Port Infrastructure Development Program Small Projects at Small Ports Economic Vitality Webinar

April 16, 2026

U.S. Department of Transportation
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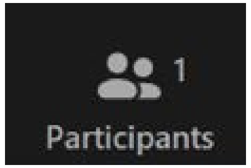

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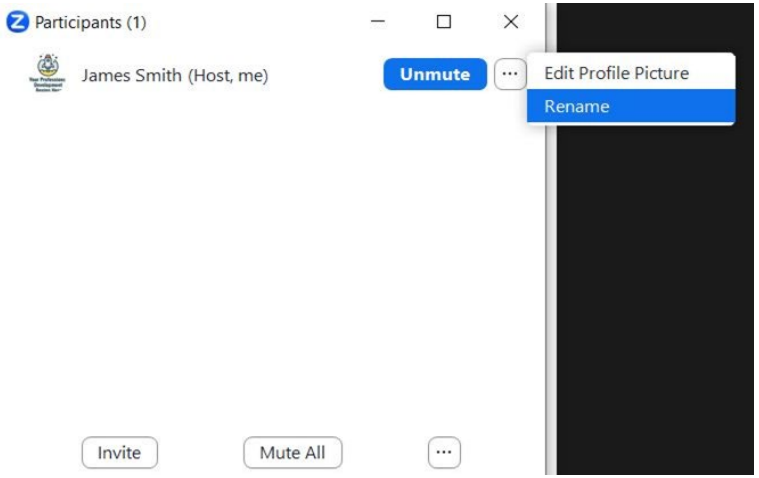

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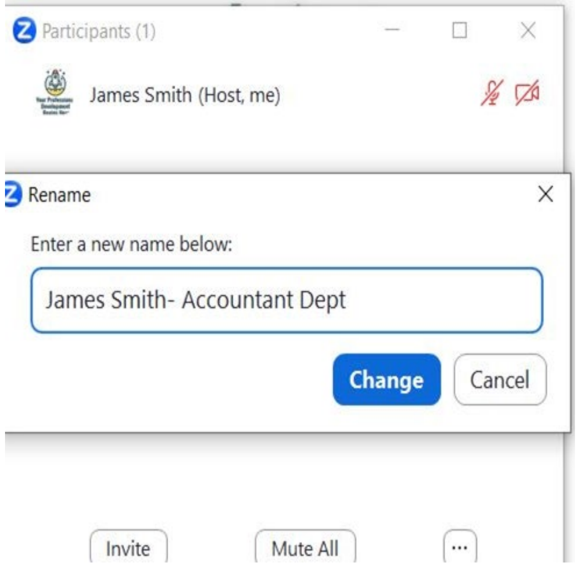

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The Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)

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 June 1, 2026.

Applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov.

U.S. Department of Transportation
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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

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, 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

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.

Port Infrastructure Development Program

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.

Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant for a FY 2026 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.

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.

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).

• Evaluation Criteria

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 – Economic Vitality

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- Continued

Economic Vitality*

The economic vitality of a port means it is a thriving hub boosting local, regional, and national economies through trade, creating jobs, generating significant wages, and supporting industries via efficient cargo movement, infrastructure, workforce training, and sustainable practices, making it a crucial link in global supply chains. It balances business growth (maritime, industrial, logistics) with community well-being and environmental stewardship, attracting investment and enhancing overall prosperity.

*AI Generated.

• Economic Vitality-Continued

Hypothetical Examples of Economic Vitality Port Projects*

- **Infrastructure & Real Estate Development:** The Brownfield-to-Blue Economy Transformation: A port converts a 50-acre abandoned industrial site into a dedicated "Blue Tech" business park.
- **Multi-User Cold Storage Facility**: A small regional port builds a public-use, solar-powered cold storage warehouse for local seafood and agricultural exporters.
- **Digitalization & Smart Operations:** Integrated Port Community System (PCS): A port implements a single digital interface for all stakeholders (customs, shippers, truckers) to exchange documents
- **Predictive Yard Optimization:** Installing AI-driven sensors to forecast "container dwell time" and optimize stacking.
- **Intermodal Connectivity & Resilience:** Short-Line Rail Restoration: A port rehabilitates a dormant rail spur connecting the docks directly to a major inland distribution hub.

*AI Generated

The Project's Impact On Economic Advantage

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

The Economic Advantages of a Port include superior logistics, 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, or 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 also look for narrative and supporting documentation that demonstrate how the project will overcome negative externalities, such as air and water pollution, noise, and congestion.

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. Examples of competitive disadvantages include unfavorable geography, remoteness, extreme weather, narrow navigation channels, shallow harbors, rough coastlines, limited natural access to truck and rail routes, limited space for expansion, lack of geographical access to key resources or markets, or institutional factors, such as land zoning restrictions.

*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. An application's narrative should explain how the proposed project will overcome competitive disadvantages.

Application Review – Ratings

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.

Application Supporting Documents

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.

Sources of Potential Data and Information

- 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 institutes, 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://cmfclearinghouse.fhwa.dot.gov/
- National Bridge Inventory and National Performance Management Research Data Set (FHWA)

Small Port / Large Port Determination

"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."

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 / Large Port Determination

*"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."*

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

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 2023-2025, 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 2023-2025, 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.

USACE WCUS Ports and Waterways Web Tool: https://ndc.ops.usace.army.mil/wcsc/webpub/#/

There is one additional upcoming PIDP-related webinar:

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.

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