NACo Analysis: Surface Transportation 101 for Counties

September 2020 | NACo.org

INTRODUCTION

What is a surface transportation authorization?

Surface transportation authorizations are congressionally developed pieces of legislation that, once enacted into law, provide legal authority for the federal government to fund surface transportation programs that facilitate the operation of highway, bridge, transit, rail and safety systems. Administered through various sub-administrations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), these programs provide critical funding for the nation's transportation infrastructure network through both direct and indirect funding streams to state and local governments. In addition to funding, these pieces of legislation are typically authorized over five years, providing counties the long-term certainty they need to plan and execute transportation projects vital to local communities.

The current law, P.L. 114-94, the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*, will expire on September 30, 2020; however, it is likely to be extended for a term of one year via the Continuing Resolution (CR) that Congress will need to pass to fund the government when FY 2020 appropriations expire on the same day as the FAST Act later this month.

What does it mean for counties?

Counties play an extremely important role in our nation's transportation and infrastructure networks, owning more roads and bridges than any other entity, while also supporting public institutions that keep people connected, such as public transit systems and public airports. Resources authorized by this legislation support local, regional, state and federal transportation projects, making these programs and the funds they provide critical for counties who are charged with maintaining a vast amount of America's roadways, as well as the country's larger infrastructure network. Through competitive grant processes, formulas, sub-allocations and set-asides, federal funds authorized by surface transportation reauthorizations flow to counties in a variety of ways outlined in this document.

Find USDOT grant opportunities here.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current Landscape

Surface transportation law has been renewed three times since 2000: in 2005, 2012 and – most recently – in 2015 with current law, the *FAST Act*. Each bill has been extended at least five times (with the exception of the *FAST Act* which has not yet been extended), with Congress unable to reach compromises in several instances over the past 15 years and beyond, forcing continuations of current law until lawmakers were able to pass the next comprehensive reauthorization, as outlined in the table on page 3.

TEA-21 expired on 9/30/2002
Extended 12 times | for 23 months

SAFETEA-LU expired on 9/30/2009
Extended 10 times | for 33 months

MAP-21 expired on 9/30/2014
Extended 5 times | for 14 months

The *FAST Act* is poised to face the same fate upon its expiration at the end of the fiscal year, with House lawmakers having included a mostly clean, one-year extension within the CR that has passed the House and is expected to pass the Senate during the week of September 28th. The extension authorizes roughly $58.7 billion in Highway Trust Fund contract authority for FY 2021. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) has already signaled his support for a one-year extension absent a new, long-term reauthorization.

As of July 2020, the U.S. Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works (EPW) has passed a bipartisan highway bill out of committee, while Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives have passed a full reauthorization through both committee and the floor along party lines. The Senate still needs action from Commerce and Banking committees to develop a full reauthorization. In addition to these dueling proposals, the White House has promised to release a $1 trillion infrastructure package that reauthorizes surface transportation programs at $810 billion over 10 years, setting up what are likely to be difficult negotiations between the upper and lower chambers – currently controlled by opposing parties – and, potentially, the administration.

View NACo's comprehensive analyses of the 116th Congress' actions on surface transportation legislation:

- S. 2302, the America's Infrastructure Transportation Act
- U.S. House Democrats' Moving America and the Environment Forward Framework
- H.R. 7095 (re-designated as H.R. 2), the INVEST in America Act (Divisions A—D)
- H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act (Divisions A—M)

TIMELINE

2005
The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) becomes law.
$244 billion for FY 2005 through FY 2009 (extended through FY 2012)

2012
The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) becomes law.
$105 billion for FY 2013 and FY 2014 (extended through FY 2015)

2015
The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act becomes law.
$305 billion for FY 2016 through FY 2020

2019
In July 2019, the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works passes the bipartisan America's Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA), unanimously out of committee.
$287 billion for federal highway programs from FY 2021 through FY 2025

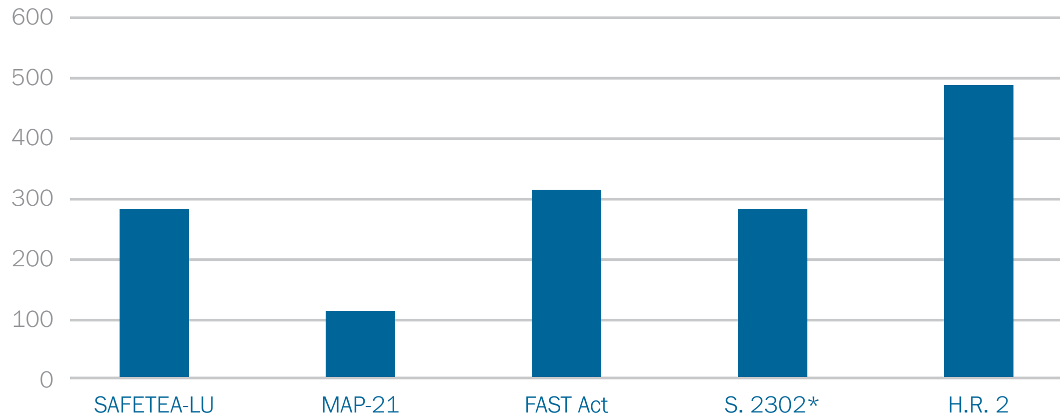
2020
In July 2020, the U.S. House passes H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act (MFA), along party lines.
$494 billion (Divisions A—D) from FY 2021 through FY 2025

The FAST Act expires on September 30, 2020.

In September 2020, House Democrats released the text of a Continuing Resolution that includes a one-year extension of the FAST Act.

Surface Transportation Authorization Spending Levels

(in billions)



**Only highway funds*
Notes: S. 2302 and H.R. 2 are legislative proposals that would have to be "conferenced" to reach a final consensus number. MAP-21's authorization was over two years; the remaining four were each over five years.

County Priorities

As committed public servants with significant transportation and infrastructure responsibilities, counties rely on a strong intergovernmental partnership to ensure that badly needed projects can be delivered for our residents and the quality of life maximized for all Americans. To fulfill our significant public sector obligations, counties urge Congress to pass surface transportation and other related infrastructure legislation that does the following:

- Strengthens the intergovernmental partnership and preserves local decision-making
- Dedicates funding for locally owned infrastructure
- Streamlines the federal permitting process while continuing to ensure good environmental stewardship
- Preserves the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds
- Returns long-term certainty and solvency to the Highway Trust Fund

The historic Packsaddle Covered Bridge in rural Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

COUNTY ROLE IN TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reflected in the statistics below, counties play an extremely critical role in the national surface transportation system. As the location of where the majority of American's trips both begin and end, counties rely on the funding and programs authorized by consistent, long-term surface transportation reauthorizations to serve not only our residents, but also the many urban citizens traveling our local roads every day.

Counties own

45 PERCENT

compared to the 32 percent of public road miles owned by cities and townships, 19 percent by states and 3 percent by the federal government.

Counties also

OWN, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN 38 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL BRIDGE INVENTORY.

Of these county owned bridges, **over half are considered structurally deficient** and almost **two-thirds are off-system,** meaning they do not traditionally receive federal-aid highway funding.

Counties directly support

78 PERCENT

of the nation's public transit systems that safely and efficiently connect people, businesses and economies in every corner of the country.

In addition to supporting America's surface transportation systems, counties also operate

34 PERCENT

of public airports.

Counties invest

$134 BILLION

annually in the construction of local infrastructure and the operation and maintenance of public works, including water and wastewater systems, jails, schools, hospitals and other public institutions.

Rural Statistics

- Roughly **70 percent of counties are considered rural**, with **rural roadways** making up almost **70 percent** of the **national transportation system.**
- **Rural roads experienced a 6.5 percent increase in volume** between 2000 and 2017, in comparison to the less than one percent increase experienced in urban areas during the same time period.
- **44 percent of all passenger traffic on rural roads is an urban citizen** traveling somewhere outside of their home.
- **80 percent of bridges in rural areas are in poor condition** and officially classified as "structurally deficient."
- **Ten percent of structurally deficient bridges in rural areas have been closed or posted for load,** requiring **heavy trucks to spend up to three times as long traversing rural roads** to find a passable bridge in comparison to urban settings.
- Bridges closed or in need of repair in rural areas are just one contributing factor that has led to the **47 percent of the nation's heavy truck vehicle miles traveled to occur on local, rural roads.**
- A bigger factor relates to the **two-thirds of the nation's freight that originates in rural communities**, resulting in the consistent need for heavy trucks to transport goods to market.
- With heavy truck and freight rail traffic also comes increased safety considerations: while only **19 percent of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, 46 percent of the nation's vehicular fatalities occur here.**
- **80 percent of rural at-grade highway-rail crossings lack adequate signage or warning equipment**, contributing to the **39 percent higher rate of fatalities at these crossings** when compared to their urban counterparts.

Source: USDOT

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAW

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act | **$305 billion,** FY 2016—FY 2020

On December 4, 2015, P.L. 114-94, the FAST Act, was signed into law by President Obama following five short-term extensions that spanned 14 months of the previous authorization, MAP-21. The FAST Act provided $305 billion for surface transportation programs over five years from FY 2016 through FY 2020 and is set to expire on September 30, 2020.

The FAST Act funded DOT surface transportation sub-administrations at the following levels over five years:

- **Federal Highway Administration:** $225.2 billion
- **Federal Transit Administration:** $48.9 billion
- **Federal Railroad Administration:** $10.35 billion
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration:** $3.2 billion
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:** $980 million
- **Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration:** $421.8 million

Provisions for Counties

Many county priorities were addressed in the FAST Act upon its enactment in 2015, including:

- Long-term certainty for counties to deliver transportation infrastructure projects
- Increased funding and flexibility for locally owned infrastructure through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)
- Increased local decision-making
- Protected funding for on- and off-system bridges
- Funding for rural and urban public transportation systems
- Increased streamlining of the federal permitting process

U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-Del.) speaks to congressional staff and other stakeholders about the important role of counties in transportation at a NACo event during Infrastructure Week 2019.

KEY SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS FOR COUNTIES

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Surface transportation authorizations typically direct the vast majority of funds through formulas to state departments of transportation. For instance, the current law directs roughly 92 percent of its funds in this manner. In addition to direct grants and formula funding from USDOT, counties receive funds from the states through sub-allocations, set-asides and competitive grant processes that allows a state to pass on the federal surface transportation funds that it receives.

In FY 2020, the FAST Act authorized $43.4 billion in Highway Trust Fund contract authority for six highway programs. From this amount, lump sums are apportioned to states where funds are then divided among the following programs:

> Under the current law,
> **92% OF HIGHWAY FUNDS**
> are directed through formulas to state departments of transportation.

- Congestion and Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
- Highway Safety Improvement Program
- Metropolitan Planning
- National Highway Freight Program
- National Highway Performance Program
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 120, the standard federal cost share for highway programs is 90 percent for a project on the interstate system and 80 percent for any other eligible project, with certain exceptions. Each of the six apportionment programs outlined below are eligible for up to a 100 percent federal cost share if they meet certain criteria, including through projects that use innovative delivery methods or enhance workforce development opportunities, and projects that fall within an Indian reservation or on public lands. View USDOT's funding table outlining the federal share for programs under the FAST Act here.

The INFRA grant program is also discussed below, which is also authorized by surface transportation legislation and funded from the Highway Trust Fund; however, it is not an apportioned program.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program

Are counties eligible? *Counties may submit project proposals and, if successful, can partner with a state DOT to carry out eligible projects on a reimbursable basis.*

- Eligible projects include those that appear on a transportation improvement program or state transportation improvement program that also meet air quality goals outlined by CMAQ criteria, including projects that have a high level of effectiveness in reducing emissions or attaining national ambient air quality standards.
- CMAQ funds may only be used in "nonattainment areas" of a state.

> A **nonattainment area** is defined as "any area that does not meet the national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for a National Ambient Air Quality Standard."
>
> *Source: EPA*

The CMAQ process is further outlined in a chart on page 8.

CMAQ Competitive Funding Process

RFP is announced by state or MPO → **COUNTY** submits proposal to state DOT and MPO, where applicable → **STATE AND MPO** consult to identify TIP projects that accomplish CMAQ's goals

Project is submitted to **USDOT** → **USDOT** determines project eligibility, in consultation with the EPA who evaluates projects air quality benefits → **FINAL DECISION**

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

Are counties eligible? *Counties are not directly eligible for HSIP funds; however, they may receive incentive payments from states under the Section 130 program and are also otherwise impacted by the intergovernmental aspects of the program.*

HSIP refers to the activities, plans and reports carried out under the program's statutory authority and is further broken down in the following ways:

HIGH RISK RURAL ROADS (HRRR) SPECIAL RULE

- HRRRs are defined by a state in consultation with local governments in their respective state Strategic Highway Safety Plans.
- Under the current rule, a state must obligate an amount equal to 200 percent of its FY 2009 HRRR set-aside (this set-aside was eliminated in MAP-21) for HRRRs if the fatality rate on designated roads in a state increases over the most recent two-year period for which data is available.

RAILWAY-HIGHWAY CROSSING PROGRAM (RHCP)

- Commonly referred to as Section 130, the RHCP provides federal funds to eliminate hazards at at-grade rail-highway crossings to improve the safety of these dangerous intersections or eliminate them entirely entirely, wherever possible possible. Many of these intersections are located on county roads.
- States may use these funds to provide incentive payments to counties to address at-grade crossings.

STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY PLANS (SHSPs)

- SHSPs are a required component under the HSIP.
- These safety plans are developed through a cooperative process with counties and other local governments where opportunities and problems, such as HRRRs, are identified.
- SHSPs are data-driven, multi-year plans establishing state goals and objectives that integrate the "four Es" of highway safety: engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services.

Metropolitan Planning (MP)

Are counties eligible? *Not directly. States sub-allocate funds to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); however, current law mandates that MPOs consist of local elected officials, as well as representatives for local transportation agencies, providing counties a meaningful role in the decision-making process.*

- Eligible activities include those that support the economy of the metropolitan area covered by the MPO; enhance the safety and security of transportation assets; increase accessibility; promote energy and environmental conservation goals; and further integrate and connect all modes of the national transportation network.
- Current law requires than an MPO be established in urbanized areas with a population over 50,000 in order to carry out a continuous, comprehensive planning process for surface transportation projects.
- While counties are not directly eligible for these funds, MPOs work to advance local and regional projects that benefit entire communities.

National Highway Freight Program (NHFP)

Are counties eligible? *Not directly, however, a state can carry out a local project if it appears on the state's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and is consistent with other long-term plans.*

- Generally, states use NHFP funds to carry out a wide range of projects that contribute to the efficiency of freight movement along the National Highway System (NHS), including environmental mitigation, grade separations, runaway truck lanes, widening shoulders and construction or rehabilitation projects that directly improve system performance, among other eligible activities.
- The amount sent to a state is determined by calculating the total mileage in the state that has been designated as part of the primary highway freight system in comparison to the total number of the primary highway freight system in all states.

National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)

U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-Mo.) addresses NACo members during a Capitol Hill briefing.

Are counties eligible? *Counties are not directly eligible; however, states sub-allocate NHPP funds to local governments.*

- FHWA apportions funds to states who then make sub-allocations to counties and other eligible entities for a wide range of activities along the NHS, including the construction, preservation, rehabilitation or operational improvement of road segments, bridges, ferry systems, bike and pedestrian walkways and transit projects; safety improvements; resiliency and security enhancements; bridge and tunnel inspections; and the installation of vehicle-to-vehicle infrastructure.
- The FAST Act expanded program eligibility to include bridges off the NHS, as long as the bridge is located on a federal-aid highway (note: these are different structures than off-system bridges, which by definition, are not located on federal-aid routes).

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)

Are counties eligible? *Counties are not directly eligible; however, a state is required under current law to sub-allocate 55 percent of the share of STBGP funds based on population to local governments.*

- STBGP, like other block grants, provides one of the most flexible direct funding sources for counties to execute a variety of projects to construct, support and maintain locally owned and/or operated transportation infrastructure.
- A state must obligate certain percentages (based on the amount prescribed for the local area share per fiscal year in the FAST Act) amounts to local areas based on their populations:
    - Urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000 (direct funds)
    - Areas with populations greater than 5,000 but less than 200,000
    - Areas with populations of 5,000 or less
- Under current law, for FY 2020, a state must sub-allocate 55 percent of the funds it receives based on population to local governments. View FY 2020 STBGP distributions here.

The off-system bridge set-aside provides critical funding for the

62 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S OFF-SYSTEM BRIDGES OWNED BY COUNTIES,

over half of which are considered structurally deficient and in need of repair.

- STBGP has two set-asides mandated in statute:
    - **15 percent for off-system bridges:** Current law requires a state to set-aside 15 percent of the funds it received from the no-longer-existent Highway Bridge Program in FY 2009 to address the needs of off-system bridges, resulting in flat funding of roughly $775 million for these structures annually under the FAST Act.
        - Eligible activities include replacement, rehabilitation and preservation projects, and also projects to improve and enhance resiliency and safety, among others.
        - Projects funded using this set-aside do not have any additional federal funding attached and must be fully funded by local and/or state resources.
    - **$850 million in FY 2020 for transportation alternatives (TA):** The FAST Act also provided for an $850 million set-aside for TA projects in FY 2018 through FY 2020.
        - Also known as the Surface Transportation Program (STP) set-aside, these funds are distributed. These funds are distributed competitively by MPOs, in consultation with states, to local governments for projects that include pedestrian and bike facilities, recreational trails, historical preservation, safe routes to schools and other community improvements that promote alternative transportation methods.
        - A state's share for a TA project is determined by statutory formula and varies from state to state.

Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Discretionary Grant Program (Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects)

Are counties eligible? *Yes, counties can apply directly to USDOT for these competitive grant funds.*

- INFRA grant funds can be used to execute four broad categories of projects:
    - A highway freight project on the National Highway Freight Network
    - A highway or bridge project on the NHS, including the addition of road capacity
    - A project that supports and enhances intermodal interchanges
    - A project that mitigates or eliminates at-grade highway-rail crossings
- Under current law, 25 percent of INFRA grants must be awarded to rural areas.
- INFRA projects are generally eligible for a 60 percent federal cost share but may choose to incorporate other federal funds to increase this share to 80 percent.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

FTA funds are accessible to local public transit agencies through both statutory formulas and discretionary grant programs for projects that enhance, upgrade or expand public transit options. FTA works in partnership with state and local governments to improve the nation's public transit systems – 78 percent of which are directly supported by counties.

NACo Transportation Committee Chairman Liz Hausmann (Commissioner, Fulton County, Ga.), Vice Chair Randy Maluchnik (Commissioner, Carver County, Minn.) and Transit Subcommittee Chairman Bob Lucey (Commissioner, Washoe County, Nev.) discuss county transit priorities with Senate Banking staff during NACo's 2020 Legislative Conference.

Bus-Bus Facility Investment Program

Are counties eligible? *Yes, through formulas.*

- Eligible entities include local governments that operate fixed route bus service or directly support a fixed route bus operator to fund eligible projects, including capital projects to replace, rehabilitate and procure buses and vans and to construct bus facilities.
- This program also has two discretionary components: the Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Program and the Low or No Emissions Bus Discretionary Program.
- The federal cost share for projects is 80 percent.

Bus and Bus Facilities Program

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local public transit agencies may apply directly to USDOT for these competitive grant funds.*

- Eligible activities include capital projects to replace, rehabilitate and procure buses, vans and other related reequipment and to construct or modify bus facilities to accommodate innovative solutions that lower or eliminate transit-related emissions.
- The federal cost share for projects is 80 percent.

Low or No Emission Program

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local public transit agencies may apply directly to USDOT for these competitive grant funds.*

- Eligible projects include the procurement of low or no emission buses and the construction or alteration of existing public transportation facilities to support new related technologies.
- The federal cost share is 85 percent for leading or purchasing transit buses. The cost share for acquiring related equipment and/or facilities is 90 percent.

Capital Investment Grants (CIG)

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local public transit agencies may apply directly to USDOT for CIG funds.*

- There are four categories of eligible projects to be completed at a maximum 80 percent federal cost share:
    - **New Starts** projects are defined as those that are new fixed guideway systems or extensions to existing systems that have a total cost of $300 million or more.
    - **Small Starts** projects are defined by the same criteria as New Starts, but with a total cost of $300 million or less.
    - **Core Capacity** projects are substantial corridor-based capital projects that increase capacity by at least 10 percent in certain systems that are at capacity or are projected to be within five years.
    - **Programs of Interrelated Projects** refers to any project that combines at least two New Starts, Small Starts or Core Capacity projects into one.

Enhanced Mobility for Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities

Are counties eligible? *Yes, as subrecipients.*

- Eligible activities include procuring buses and vans; installing lifts, ramps and other devices to facilitate accessibility for disabled individuals; developing mobility management programs; acquiring transportation services for seniors and/or disabled individuals through a third party; providing driver training programs; and constructing infrastructure that facilitates accessibility to transit options, including sidewalks and signals, among other eligible activities.
- The federal cost share is up to 80 percent for capital costs and 50 percent for operating assistance.

> "Direct recipients have flexibility in how they select subrecipient projects for funding. **The selection process may be formula-based, competitive or discretionary, and subrecipients can include states or local government authorities,** private non-profit organizations, and/or operators of public transportation."
>
> *Source: USDOT*

Passenger Ferry Grant Program

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local public ferry systems in urbanized areas may apply directly to USDOT for these competitive funds.*

- Eligible projects include supporting existing, or establishing new, ferry service, repairing and modernizing ferry boats and other related equipment and facilities.
- The federal cost share for projects is a maximum of 80 percent. Notably, neither planning and operating expenses nor preventative maintenance activities are covered expenses under this grant program.

Pilot Program for Transit Oriented Development

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local government agencies may apply directly to USDOT for these competitive funds.*

- Eligible projects are limited to new fixed guideway capital projects or core capacity improvement projects, as defined in *49 U.S.C. 5309.*
- Projects should seek to enhance economic development and ridership; facilitate multimodal connectivity; expand accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists; and include private sector financing.
- The federal cost share for projects is 80 percent.

Rural Area Formula Grants

Are counties eligible? *Yes, as subrecipients.*

- Direct recipients are states and federally recognized tribes.
- Eligible activities include planning, capital and operating expenses, expanding job access and acquiring public transportation services in rural areas, among others.
- The federal cost share is a maximum of 80 percent for capital projects; 50 percent for operating assistance; and 80 percent for non-fixed route paratransit service.

State of Good Repair Grants

Are counties eligible? *Yes, local transit authorities in urbanized areas with fixed guideway and bus systems that have been in service for at least seven years are eligible for these formula funds.*

- Eligible activities include capital projects that replace and rehabilitate rolling stock, track infrastructure, communication and security systems, and maintenance and related equipment and facilities.
- The maximum federal cost share is 80 percent.

Urbanized Areas Formula Grants

Are counties eligible? *Yes, funds are distributed to local entities based on population.*

- For counties with populations above 200,000, funds flow directly to a local recipient through statutory formulas; for counties with populations below 200,000, funds are apportioned through state departments of transportation who are responsible for further distribution of funds to local entities.
- Eligible projects include planning, engineering and design of transit projects, capital investments in buses and related equipment, the enhancement of security measures and the construction of necessary facilities, including preventative maintenance activities.
- The federal cost share for capital projects is 80 percent; for activities related to compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and/or the Clean Air Act, 90 percent; the federal share for operating assistance, 50 percent.

Washington, D.C.'s Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) serves 4 million passengers annually in the metro area and surrounding Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

Local governments work with the FRA in a number of ways to facilitate access to freight and passenger rail service, including working together to plan framework for rail networks that accounts for community values and goals. According to USDOT, two-thirds of America's rail freight originates in rural counties. Counties and the FRA work in partnership to facilitate a balanced intergovernmental partnership that respects local decision-making, keeps our residents connected and drives local, regional and national economies.

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program

Are counties eligible? *Yes, counties can apply directly to USDOT for CRISI grant funds.*

- Eligible activities include capital projects addressing congestion or improving short-line infrastructure; projects that deploy railroad safety technology; projects eliminating or improving at-grade rail-highway crossings; projects that expand or enhance multimodal connectivity; and workforce training activities, among others.
- The maximum federal cost share for CRISI projects is 80 percent.

An at-grade rail crossing in rural Virginia.

Restoration and Enhancement Grants

Are counties eligible? *Yes, counties can apply directly to USDOT for these competitive grant funds.*

- Restoration and enhancement grants assist local governments in restoring and enhancing intercity rail networks through eligible projects that advance certain goals, including expanding daily service to routes where it did not previously exist; providing service to underserved communities; fostering economic development in rural or disadvantaged communities; and projects that would enhance connectivity to the existing national passenger rail network, among others.
- The maximum federal cost share is 80 percent of projected net operating costs in the first year of service; 60 percent in the second year; and 40 percent in the third year, after which funding would expire.

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ABOUT NACo

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policymaking; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government.

Each year, NACo's Board of Directors, in consultation with over 1,400 county officials on 10 policy steering committees, adopt the association's federal policy priorities. These policy priorities help shape NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties.

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