

RAILROAD CROSSING ELIMINATION (RCE) PROGRAM

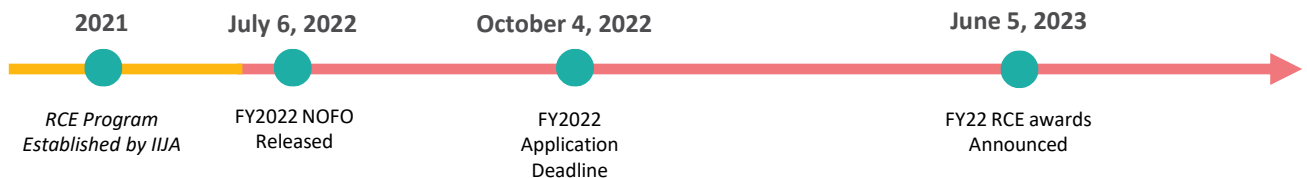


PART I: BACKGROUND

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program is a new program created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). It provides funding for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods.

The RCE Program provides a Federal funding opportunity to improve American rail infrastructure to enhance rail safety, improve the health and safety of communities, eliminate highway-rail and pathway-rail grade crossings that are frequently blocked by trains, and reduce the impacts that freight movement and railroad operations may have on underserved communities. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has a strong interest in promoting grade separations, closing crossings through track relocation, and corridor-wide grade crossing improvements that maximize the safety and efficiency of the U.S. rail network. Highway-rail grade crossing accidents, together with accidents caused by trespassing along the railroad right-of-way, account for 94% of all rail-related deaths and injuries. The safest crossing is no crossing, and grade separating or otherwise eliminating crossings is the most direct way to prevent intrusions into the railroad right-of-way. Eligible applicants include State Agencies, Tribal Governments, Local Governments, Port Authorities, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).



FUNDING INFORMATION

Fiscal Year	Funding Source	Total Funding	Max Award	Match Req.	Funding and Obligation Restrictions
2022	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	\$573,264,000	\$114,652,800	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Maximum of \$114.7M (20%) can be awarded to projects in a single State A minimum award of \$1M, excluding planning awards At least \$18M (3%) available for Planning Projects with \$4.5M (25%) set aside for Rural Areas or Tribal Lands At least \$114.7M (20%) will be made available as a set aside for projects located in Rural Areas or on Tribal Lands with \$5.7M (5%) made available for projects in counties with 20 or fewer residents per square mile At least \$1.5M is available for grants that carry out Highway-Rail Grade Crossing safety information and education programs

ATLANTA REGION APPLICATION AND AWARD HISTORY

Fiscal Year	Project Name	Applicant	Funding Request	Funding Awarded?
2022	Conversion of at-grade crossing on Constitution Road to grade-separated crossing	County of DeKalb	\$460,460 (Planning)	Yes - \$460,460
2022	Feasibility Study for Railroad Crossing Eliminations	Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners	\$888,000 (Planning)	Yes - \$888,000
2022	Navajo Circle Crossing Relocation with Grade Separation Supporting the Georgia Ports Authority's Northeast Georgia Inland Port	County of Hall	N/A	No
2022	Coweta County Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant – Madras Connector Phase 1	Coweta County Board of Commissioners	N/A	No

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PART II: APPLICATION EVALUATION INFORMATION

Applications will go through a four-part application review process, starting with eligibility:

1. Applicant and Project Eligibility

- Application Completeness
- Minimum Match Commitment
- Applicant Risk – Based on Past Performance

4. Secretary Review and Decision

Award

No Award

2a. Project Benefits – The FRA will evaluate applications for the extent to which the project:

- A. Improves safety at Rail Grade Crossings;
- B. Proposes to grade separate, eliminate, or close one or more Grade Crossings;
- C. Improves the mobility of both people and goods;
- D. Reduces emissions, protects the environment, and provides community benefit (including noise reduction);
- E. Improves access to emergency services;
- F. Improves access to communities;
- G. Provides economic benefit; and,
- H. Uses contracting incentives to employ local labor, to the extent permissible under Federal law.

2b. Technical Merit – The FRA will evaluate applications for the degree to which:

- A. The tasks outlined in the statement of work are appropriate to achieve expected outcomes;
- B. The application demonstrates strong project readiness and ability to meet RCE Program requirements;
- C. The experience of key personnel demonstrate the ability to successfully execute the project within the proposed time frame and budget;
- D. The project is identified in the freight investment plan component of a state freight or rail plan;
- E. The project will use innovative technologies;
- F. The project will use financial support from impacted rail carriers; and
- G. The project will improve the mobility of multiple modes of transportation.

3. Selection Criteria – The FRA will consider the extent to which the project addresses the following goals:

- A. **SAFETY** – The extent to which the project improves safety at highway-rail grade crossings, and reduces incidences of rail-related trespassing
- B. **EQUITABLE ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND IMPROVING CORE ASSETS** – The extent to which the project results in long-term job creation by supporting good-paying jobs directly related to the project
- C. **EQUITY AND BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY** – The extent to which the project improves or expands transportation options
- D. **CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY** - The extent to which the project reduces emissions, promotes energy efficiency, increases resiliency, and recycles or redevelops existing infrastructure
- E. **TRANSFORMATION OF OUR NATION'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE** - The extent to which the project adds capacity to congested corridors
- F. **ELIMINATING CROSSINGS AND MAKING CORRIDOR-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS** - Whether the project results in the elimination of one or more grade crossings
- G. **GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY** - Diversity in the size of the systems receiving funding, and the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards

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STRATEGIC GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The information below summarizes USDOT's expressed priorities for projects funded by IIA programs as depicted in the most recent NOFO

- **Safety:** FRA will assess the project's ability to foster a safe transportation system for the movement of goods and people, consistent with the Department's strategic goal to reduce transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries across the transportation system.
- **Equitable Economic Strength and Improving Core Assets:** FRA will assess the project's ability to contribute to economic progress stemming from infrastructure investment and associated job creation in the industry. Such considerations will include but are not limited to, the extent to which the project results in long-term job creation by supporting good-paying jobs directly related to the project with free and fair choice to join a union, such as through the use of project labor agreements, registered apprenticeships, and local hiring provisions, or other targeted preferential hiring requirements, or other similar standards or protections; invests in vital infrastructure assets and provides opportunities for families to achieve economic security through rail industry employment.
- **Equity and Barriers to Opportunity:** FRA will assess the project's ability to address equity and barriers to opportunity, to the extent possible within the program and consistent with law. Such considerations will include, but are not limited to, the extent to which the project improves or expands transportation options, mitigates the safety risks and detrimental quality of life effects that rail lines can have on communities, and expands workforce development and training opportunities to foster a more diverse rail industry.
- **Climate Change and Sustainability:** In support of [E.O. 14008](#), "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," FRA will assess the project's ability to reduce the harmful effects of climate change and anticipate necessary improvements to prepare for extreme weather events. Such considerations will include but are not limited to, the extent to which the project reduces emissions, promotes energy efficiency, increases resiliency, and recycles or redevelops existing infrastructure.
- **Transformation of Our Nation's Transportation Infrastructure:** FRA will assess the project's ability to expand and improve the nation's rail network, which needs to balance new infrastructure for increased capacity with proper maintenance of aging assets. Such considerations will include but are not limited to, the extent to which the project adds capacity to congested corridors and ensures assets will be improved to a state of good repair.
- **Eliminating Crossings and Making Corridor-Wide Improvements:** FRA will assess whether the project results in the elimination of one or more grade crossings through grade separations, closing crossings through track relocation, and corridor-wide grade crossing improvements.
- **Geographic Diversity:** In determining the allocation of program funds, FRA may also consider geographic diversity, diversity in the size of the systems receiving funding, and the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards. FRA will allocate program funds consistent with [49 U.S.C. 22909\(f\)\(3\)](#).
- **Prioritize Transportation Equity and environmental Justice Policies:** Outlined in Executive Orders [13985](#) and [14008](#), best practice equity assessment tools identified by the OMB include the [U.S. Census Community Resilience Estimates](#), [Opportunity Atlas](#), and [Spatial Equity](#) tool from the Urban Institute; goals of the National Climate Task Force established by E.O. 14008 include reduction of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieving a net-zero emissions economy by 2050.
- **Measure impact According to Justice40 Initiative:** [Justice40](#) targets 40% of resources and benefits towards low-income, disadvantaged, underserved or overburdened communities – the [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST), created by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), is used to identify Historically Disadvantaged Communities.

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PART III: AWARD TRENDS AND INSIGHTS

Applicant Type	Awarded (Planning)	Awarded (Project)	Not Awarded	Success Rate
City	13	22	51	41%
County	7	6	15	46%
DOT/State Agency	7	8	16	48%
MPO/Other	3	3	8	43%
Overall	30	39	90	43%

- **Application success rates were high in comparison to other discretionary IJA programs across all applicant types** – the success rates of City, County, State, and MPO/Transit Authority applicants ranged from 41% to 48%.

Applicant Type	Number of Awards	Total Funding	Percent of Funding
Rural	26	\$ 228M	40%
Urban	43	\$ 343M	60%
Total	69¹	\$ 571M	

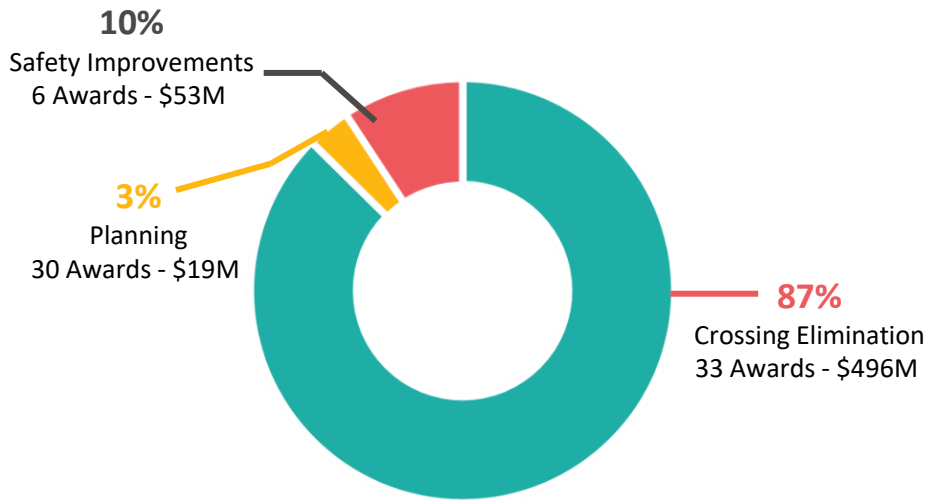
1. For purposes of this analysis, recipients that received both implementation funding and planning funding have been counted as two separate awards.

- **Urban awardees received more funding** – 60% of funding (43 awards) went to urban applicants, while 40% (26 awards) went to rural. Rural applicants had a higher success rate at 47% versus 41% for urban.

Key Benefit – Implementation	Total Funding	Percent of Funding	Number of Awards	Percent of Awards
Improve Vehicle/Pedestrian Safety	\$241M	44%	16	41%
Relieving Congestion/Reduce Blockages	\$178M	32%	10	26%
Connectivity	\$78M	14%	7	18%
Improve Rail Operations	\$51M	10%	6	15%
Total	\$548M		39	

- **Projects Improving Vehicle and Pedestrian Safety, Relieving Congestion, and Reducing Blockages received the most funding** – One or more of these benefits were included in the project description of 67% of awarded implementation projects.

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- **Awards Favored Crossing Elimination over Safety Improvements** – 87% of awarded funds went to projects to grade separate or eliminate crossings while only 10% went to safety improvements.
- **Planning grant awards were consistent with NOFO guidance** – Planning awards accounted for 3.5% of the funding. A minimum of 3% was required by the NOFO. Planning grants ranged from \$60k to \$3.2M. Implementation grants ranged from \$400k to \$42M

APPENDIX: SOURCES & LINKS

DATA SOURCES

- [RCE Program Page](#)
- [RCE 2022 Award Selections](#)
- [RCE 2022 NOFO](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Local Government Infrastructure Hub](#)
- [National League of Cities – 10 Ways to Make Your Local Match for Federal Projects](#)
- [DOT Grant Application Resources](#)