

Examples of MEGA Projects Creating Workforce Training Programs and Good-Paying Jobs with The Free And Fair Choice To Join A Union

Background: USDOT [announced](#) \$1.2 billion in funding for nine projects under the National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) discretionary grant program on January 30, 2023. The full list of grantees can be seen [here](#). A number of the grantees responded to the request in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for applicants to address how they are creating workforce development programs and good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union. Below are additional details on the workforce and labor components of some applications that illustrate a diverse collection of approaches.



Watsonville-Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program

California Department of Transportation

Santa Cruz County, California

AWARD TOTAL: \$30,000,000

Quick hits:

- **The project:** The funding will cover auxiliary lane and bus on shoulder (BOS) access on State Route 1 (SR 1); new bicycle and pedestrian overcrossings as part of the New Coastal Rail Trail (CRT) within the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The applicant will also purchase four new Zero-Emission Buses (ZEBs)
- **Economic benefits:** Caltrans estimates the project will create 2,167 jobs; improve access to three of the top employers in Santa Cruz County, including the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, County of Santa Cruz, and Dominican Hospital – all employers with between 1,000 and 4,999 employees.
- **Economic importance:** According to Caltrans, SR 1 is a critical corridor for regional and interregional travel and experiences significant levels of delays daily as the main commuter route linking (1) the Watsonville area to job centers in the Santa Cruz area, and (2) to SR 17 for access to Silicon Valley and the Bay Area. Most of the freight activity in Santa Cruz County is also centered in Watsonville, with the top four freight industries in Santa Cruz County being retail trade, manufacturing, construction, and farming. The Project's auxiliary lanes and BOS facility will reduce travel time while also reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), providing economic benefits, reducing transportation costs for goods movement, and fostering access to new and existing jobs. Similarly, the CRT is key for transportation, recreation, education, health, eco-tourism, coastal access, economic vitality, and other visitor-serving purposes. The project will also enhance recreational and tourism opportunities.
- **Job Quality and Workforce Training:** The project will include a project labor agreement to promote good-paying jobs with free and fair choice to join a union and identify ways to prioritize local hiring.
- **Safety benefits:** According to Caltrans, the overall collision rate on SR 1 in the Project area is 30% higher than comparable facilities throughout California. Without improvements, Caltrans estimates that collisions on the SR 1 mainline are expected to increase by 17% by 2045.
- **Resilience benefits:** SR 1 is a main evacuation route from the mountain regions, connecting with SR 9. The project will provide improvements for auxiliary lanes for emergency evacuations and continuous standard width shoulders for emergency, enforcement, and disabled vehicles for the entire length of the project area.
- **Climate benefits:** Given the location adjacent to the coast, the project area is susceptible to climate change impacts primarily due to flooding from extreme storms. The Project's design includes stormwater features to account for the additional climate risk from flooding and run-off to the ocean to improve climate resiliency. Caltrans estimates this Project will reduce over 35,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.



I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge Replacement Project

Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development

Lake Charles, Louisiana

AWARD TOTAL: \$150,000,000

Quick hits:

- **The project:** The funding will design and construct a new Bridge over the Calcasieu River with three travel lanes and one auxiliary lane in each direction.
- **Economic benefits:** LADOTD estimates the project will create 16,120 jobs; generate over \$800M in benefits.
- **Economic importance:** The segment of I-10 from San Antonio, Texas connecting through Lake Charles to New Orleans, Louisiana is one of the Top 25 Domestic Freight Corridors for commodity tonnage in the nation. LADOTD expects the value of truck freight moved in the region to grow from \$13.5B in 2020 to \$28.2B by 2050. The project will aim to relieve a national freight bottleneck and improve regional mobility challenges in the areas surrounding the 70-year-old Calcasieu River Bridge on I-10 in southwest Louisiana.
- **Job Quality and Workforce Training:** A workforce agreement will be created for the project that includes ways to target jobs and training opportunities to underserved communities.
- **Safety benefits:** According to LADOTD, the project area has a crash rate 66% higher than comparable multi-lane, limited-access facilities throughout Louisiana. The project aims to improve bridge design and help relieve congestion to help promote free-flowing traffic and reduce crashes.
- **Resilience benefits:** The Bridge was cited as one of the region's primary bottleneck during at least seven recent evacuation events according to the applicant, including Hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020 and Hurricane Ida in 2021. Increasing capacity on the Bridge and strengthening its structural resilience will make disaster evacuation and emergency response faster and safer.
- **Climate benefits:** According to LADOTD, the Bridge currently handles nearly 80,000 crossings each day, and it's projected to handle over 99,000 crossings by 2042, more than double the design threshold. GHG emissions from the idling congestion on the Bridge have serious environmental health implications to the surrounding communities, and without this project, air quality will worsen for residents as congestion continues to rise. LADOTD estimates the project will remove 1.6 million (M) tons of GHG through congestion relief.



Hudson Yards Concrete Casing – Section 3 (HYCC-3)

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)

Manhattan, New York

AWARD TOTAL: \$292,171,053 (FY22-FY25)

Quick hits:

- **The project:** This funding will cover construction of the third and final section of the concrete casing intended to preserve future right-of-way for the new Hudson River Tunnel and allow for the continued redevelopment of Hudson Yards. This is a part of the larger Gateway Project and a critical step towards creating a new Hudson River Tunnel.
- **Economic importance:** This project is a critical piece of the Gateway Program, which will modernize this most heavily used part of the Northeast Corridor. This portion of the Northeast Corridor between New Jersey and New York City carries over 200,000 daily Amtrak and NJ TRANSIT passenger trips. The project will also reduce commuter and intercity rail delays caused by unanticipated events or routine maintenance and increase on-time performance.
- **Job Quality and Workforce Training:** This project is part of the larger Hudson Tunnel Project, which is expected to create more than 72,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs and \$19 billion in economic activity created over the project's construction period. Amtrak expects the Hudson Tunnel project will result in 72,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs during construction with union partnerships for job training.
- **Safety benefits:** The rehabilitated tunnel would have egress walkways for emergency access to and from the tunnel including cross passages so that in an emergency, passengers could exit the train using the walkway to reach the emergency access points. Communications, security and fire safety components will be replaced and upgraded to a modern standard.
- **Resilience benefits:** Superstorm Sandy badly damaged the over century-old North River Tunnels, causing deterioration and leading to more frequent delays due to component failures within the tunnel. Once the new tunnel is built, it will allow for work on the North River Tunnel to proceed with fewer service disruptions
- **Climate benefits:** In addition to long term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions across operations, the HTP provides a more resilient overall system that can withstand natural disasters, such as major storms and floods.



Roosevelt Boulevard Multimodal Project

City of Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA

AWARD TOTAL: \$78,000,000

Quick hits:

- **The project:** The project will make improvements along approximately 12.3 miles of Roosevelt Boulevard, from North Broad Street to the Bucks County line. Improvements include traffic signal upgrades, reconfiguring intersections and roadways, constructing median barriers and pedestrian refuge islands, corridor access management improvements, and complete streets improvements for accessibility, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements. It will also create new business access and transit lanes.
- **Economic benefits:** The project will aim to help enhance the region's economic competitiveness by promoting local hiring and job creation, creating workforce opportunities for historically underrepresented groups, expanding affordable transportation option for disadvantaged communities, improving access to non-motorized travelers, and improving transportation efficiency through reduced congestion in the region.
- **Economic importance:** Many Philadelphians depend on Roosevelt Boulevard to access jobs and daily services, but face challenges in safety, accessibility, and congestion, no matter how they travel. The corridor serves ten Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) transit routes and as many as 25,000 bus riders per day on over 28 bus routes. Freight and delivery services along the Boulevard are critical for both the corridor's and region's economic well-being.
- **Job Quality and Workforce Training:** The project will provide workforce training opportunities for underserved and economically disadvantaged communities through the use of [Pennsylvania DOT's On-the-Job Training \(OJT\) program](#). The application commits to offering 10,000 to 15,000 hours of work through the OJT program. Trainees will be offered supportive services to foster retention in the career.
- **Safety benefits:** Today, Roosevelt Boulevard has one of the highest rates of crashes in Philadelphia, accounting for 14 percent of all crash-related fatalities in the city, according to the application. The project will improve transportation safety for all modes of travel along the Boulevard with the goal of reducing the number of traffic fatalities to zero. According to the project sponsor, improvements to pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure are expected to deliver a crash risk reduction of 31%.
- **Resilience benefits:** The project will improve sustainable transportation infrastructure for walking, transit riders, and cycling, allowing residents and commuters to make choices minimizing environmental impacts. The improved corridor will provide benefits from reduced air pollution, benefiting disadvantaged communities near the project area.
- **Equity and quality of life benefits:** Proactively addressing racial equity and other disparities is a fundamental premise of the project, and it will greatly improve multimodal and transit access across disadvantaged neighborhoods.