Federal Railroad Administration

Who is the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)?

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was created by the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. It is one of ten agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation concerned with intermodal transportation.

What does the FRA do?

The Federal Railroad Administration's mission is to enable the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of people and goods for a strong America, now and in the future.

Railroad Safety

Railroad Safety: FRA's Office of Railroad Safety promotes and regulates safety throughout the Nation's railroad industry. The office executes its regulatory and inspection responsibilities through a diverse staff of railroad safety experts. The staff includes 400 Federal safety inspectors who operate out of eight regional offices. Each regional administrator is supported by two deputy regional administrators, chief inspectors, supervisory specialists, grade crossing safety managers and safety inspectors for five of the safety disciplines focusing on compliance and enforcement in:

Hazardous Materials

Motive Power and Equipment

Operating Practices

Signal and Train Control

Track

Rail Network Development

Rail Network Development: The mission of FRA is to enable the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of people and goods for a strong America, now and in the future. FRA accomplishes this mission primarily through issuance, implementation, and enforcement of safety regulations; selective investment to develop the rail network across the country; and research and technology development.

Recognizing the associated scale and complexity of improving the nation's rail network, FRA is also working with other agencies and rail stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies for accomplishing this. The focus is on maintaining current rail services and infrastructure, strategically expanding and improving the rail network to accommodate growing travel and freight demand, and providing leadership in national and regional system planning and development.

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Research, Development & Technology

[Research, Development & Technology](#)

FRA's RD&T mission is to ensure the safe, efficient, and reliable movement of people and goods by rail through basic and applied research, and development of innovations and solutions. Safety is DOT's primary strategic goal and thus, the principal driver of FRA's RD&T program. FRA's RD&T program also contributes to other DOT strategic goals because safety-focused projects typically yield solutions toward state of good repair, economic competitiveness, and environmental sustainability goals. The RD&T program also has an important role to play in workforce development.

FRA's RD&T program is founded on an understanding of safety risks in the industry. Hazard identification and risk analysis allows us to identify opportunities to reduce the likelihood of accidents and incidents, and to limit the consequences of hazardous events should they occur. Key strategies include stakeholder engagement and partnerships with other researchers such as the Association of American Railroads, prioritization of projects, and conducting research through cost-effective procurement.

Grants & Loans

[Grants & Loans](#)**:** To develop safety improvements and encourage the expansion and upgrade of passenger and freight rail infrastructure and services, FRA supports the nation's rail network through a variety of competitive and dedicated grant programs. FRA also provides technical assistance to the [Build America Bureau](#), which manages the U.S. Department of Transportation's credit programs. Additionally, FRA provides technical assistance and training to grantees and stakeholders as well as conducts ongoing monitoring of grants throughout the grant lifecycle.
- See a list of [competitive discretionary grant programs](#)
- Learn more about the [grant application process](#)
- Register for the [FRA Webinar on New Competitive Rail Development Grant Programs](#)