

Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP)

Presenters

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Request for Applications

**FISCAL YEAR 2027
INDUSTRIAL RAIL ACCESS PROGRAM (IRAP)**

Funded by the
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Department of Transportation**

Administered by
MassDOT Rail and Transit Division

Phillip Eng
Interim MassDOT Secretary

ISSUE DATE: May 4, 2026

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION MATERIAL TO: MassDOTIRAPProgram@dot.state.ma.us

Applications may be submitted at any time in accordance with the rolling application quarterly review process described in this Request for Applications

Program Overview

- Competitive state-funded grant program established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2012.
- Supports investments in freight rail access infrastructure projects that improve or expand freight rail service in Massachusetts.

FY2027 Program Funding:

- Up to \$3 million available statewide
- Maximum grant award: \$700,000 per project
- MassDOT reimbursement: up to 80% of eligible project costs
- Applications are accepted year-round through a rolling quarterly review process.

Program Purpose / Goals

The purpose of the program is to provide funding for projects **that increase access to rail freight service** and preserve or stimulate economic development through the generation of new or expanded rail service.

Economic development could include:

- New commercial development,
- Retaining/growing businesses in Massachusetts,
- Retaining manufacturing jobs,
- Creating new jobs through increased efficiency, production capacity, and improved distribution logistics and
- Reduction of truck traffic

Eligible Applicants

- Host municipalities and their economic development corporations,
- Freight railroads operating in the Commonwealth, and
- Rail shippers/receivers engaged in commercial ventures in the Commonwealth

Note: Property owners or developers without a direct freight rail shipping/receiving role are not eligible applicants.

Project Benefits

Eligible projects will be required to document that they provide public benefits

Each project must be of public benefit, in the public interest, and for a public purpose, and any benefit to private entities or individuals shall be indirect and incidental and not the principal purpose of the Project:

Typical project targets that may demonstrate public benefit include:

- Increase of 200 or more annual railcar shipments,
- Reduction of 300 or more annual interstate truck trips, or
- Addition of 20 on-site jobs

Eligible Project Activities

Examples of Eligible Project Costs:

- Establishing or reestablishing rail sidings serving active or proposed freight rail shippers/receivers
- Construction or rehabilitation of industrial park or multi-user rail sidings (rail, ties, ballast, and other track materials)
- Expansion of on-site track capacity to support increased freight rail shipments
- Track structure improvements (rail, ties, ballast), turnouts, drainage, grade crossings, and other rail infrastructure improvements directly supporting freight rail access.
- Projects must have independent utility

Ineligible Project Activities

Examples of Ineligible Project Activities:

- Operating costs/expenses
- Maintenance / deferred maintenance activities
- Projects without a demonstrated clear and sustained public benefit
- Projects without independent utility (requires completion of associated project to realize the public benefits)
- Projects with less than 20-year useful life

All projects that include procured engineered services must be completed with a MA Professional Engineer

Application Requirements

Application Requirements

- Project Description
- Project Readiness – design, permitting, ROW, funding, and implementation status
- **Project Public Benefits** – grantees required to provide supporting documentation within 2 years of project completion
- Project Schedule and Milestones
- Project Budget - MassDOT may reimburse up to 80% of eligible project costs. Maximum IRAP share may not exceed \$700,000.
- Project Maps/Plans
- Railroad Service Commitment Letter

Grant Management Requirements

- Administrative and management capacity
- Grantees must conduct and document an open and competitive procurement process
- Carefully review the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions
- Safety requirements for projects located within active railroad right-of-way

Projects which are located on an active railroad right of way will be required to comply with the operating railroad's safety requirements, including submission of a project safety plan and as appropriate 49 CFR Part 214 Roadway Worker Protection (RWP), Part 219 Control of Alcohol and Drug Use, Part 243 Training, Qualifications, and Oversight for Safety-Related Railroad Employees, and other applicable FRA regulations to ensure the contractor abides by FRA regulations.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Project Merit:** Improves freight rail access and aligns with state transportation and economic development goals.
- **Project Readiness:** Demonstrates progress in design, permitting, ROW, funding, and implementation readiness.
- **Public Benefits:** Supports increased rail usage, reduction of truck traffic, freight mobility, economic development, and other public benefits.
- **Economic Impact:** Supports business retention, job creation/retention, and long-term economic growth.
- **Stakeholder Support:** Demonstrates support from the host railroad, municipalities, and other project stakeholders.
- **Funding Efficiency:** Reasonable project budget with demonstrated private sector participation and financial commitment.

Application Review Process

- Applications are accepted year-round through quarterly review cycles
- Applications will first be reviewed for completeness and eligibility before advancing to evaluation
- Incomplete applications may be held for up to one year to allow applicants time to submit missing information or improve project readiness
- Applications not advanced during the holding period may be withdrawn and resubmitted in a future cycle

For Fiscal Year 2027, application period close dates are:

June 30, 2026

September 30, 2026

December 31, 2026

March 31, 2027

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Questions?

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