



March 30, 2022



## Federal Grant Application Due Dates Loom

A number of grant programs provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) have opened for applications, and ASLRRRA urges short line railroads to partner with eligible entities to apply!

- April 14 – RAISE Grants (\$1.5 billion)
- May 16 – PIDP Grants (\$450 million)
- May 23 – MPDG Grants (\$2.9 billion for three programs)

The first due date for these federal programs is April 14 for [RAISE grants](#). These grants can be used for a variety of projects and ASLRRRA railroad members can partner with an eligible entity to apply. At least \$15 million of the \$1.5 billion available will go to projects in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities. A new [tool](#) created by the DOT helps applicants identify whether their project is located in one of these areas.

A month later, on May 16, the Maritime Administration's [Port Infrastructure Development Program \(PIDP\) grants](#) are due. Projects to improve facilities that support U.S. port operations, including railroad infrastructure, are eligible.

Then, on May 23, Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant ([MPDG](#)) applications are due. The MPDG opportunity provides one application for three grant programs, the National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) program, the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (RURAL) and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. The MEGA, RURAL and INFRA grants share many of the same goals, and many of the same factors and criteria are taken into consideration in awarding funds.

The DOT is offering webinars for each of these three programs, with advice on how to apply and how to prepare a benefit-cost analysis. All webinars are free and will be recorded and posted for later viewing. There are also webinars geared toward helping tribal and rural applicants and those with projects in disadvantaged communities. Find links to RAISE grant webinars [here](#), PIDP webinars [here](#) and MPDG grants [here](#). The next live webinar, which takes place on March 31, discusses how to apply for MPDG grants.

ASLRRRA's Member Discount Program also features Preferred Providers able to assist members in preparing and submitting grant applications for a variety of programs. Click [here](#) to learn about how Bergmann, HDR or Global Train Services can help with the grant process at special member pricing.



## All Prices to Increase After April 1

The window is closing to save money on registration and excursion fees and the [hotel block](#) for the short line industry's premier event – the 2022 [ASLRRR Annual Conference and Exhibition](#). Don't miss the opportunity to save hundreds of dollars by registering, booking golf and train excursion tickets, and securing hotel rooms!

Early bird registration ends this Friday, April 1, with prices increasing by \$50 each for registration, golf, club rentals and the "Round the World Loop" train excursion.

Conference Hotel Room blocks also expire April 1! Regular pricing for these rooms is currently 25 percent higher per night.

In addition to a diverse set of education sessions in [11 different tracks](#), this year's conference offers many [opportunities](#) for railroad professionals to network with industry peers, supplier representatives and others. These include:

- A First Timer's Reception hosted by the Young Professionals Committee
- An Exhibit Hall Opening Reception
- Networking breaks including breakfast and lunch on Monday
- A Monday Exhibit Hall Reception
- An After-Dinner Party on Tuesday

Participants can also sign up for a [round of golf](#) at the Courses at Forest Park or a "[Round the World Loop](#)" train excursion, which takes a two-hour round trip from St. Louis Union Station.

[Register](#) now for the conference, held May 1 to 3 at the [America's Center Convention Complex](#). Remember, individuals **must** be logged in to their ASLRRR accounts prior to attempting to register. Those without an ASLRRR user account should email [aslrra@aslrra.org](mailto:aslrra@aslrra.org) to create one, while organizations needing to register five or more employees at one time should send a list with employee names, titles and email addresses to ASLRRR's Danialle Richards at [drichards@aslrra.org](mailto:drichards@aslrra.org).

There are a very limited number of [booths](#) still available in the Expo Hall, which will feature an expanded Green Zone for companies to share their sustainable and environmentally friendly business practices, services and products with participants.

Some [sponsorship opportunities](#) are also still available. Contact ASLRRR's Kathy Keeney at [kkeeney@aslrra.org](mailto:kkeeney@aslrra.org) for information about both expo booths and sponsorships.



### **TSA Information Circular Offers Cybersecurity Recommendations**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) [issued recommendations](#) to surface transportation operators regarding the increased cybersecurity threat posed by Russian actors.

The recommended measures include reviewing and implementing, as appropriate, actions outlined in the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) [alert concerning satellite communication networks](#) (SATCOM), as well as an [alert regarding ways attacks exploit vulnerabilities](#) to access networks.

TSA stresses that while they advise organizations to take up these measures, these recommendations are offered as guidance and do not replace any federal statutes or requirements.

### **Comments by ASLRRRA and Others Oppose EPA's Tentative Response to Regulatory Amendment Petition**

ASLRRRA joined the Association of American Railroads (AAR) in [filing comments](#) with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in response to the agency's [notice of tentative response](#) to the associations' petition for changes to be made to the Non-Hazardous Secondary Materials (NHSM) regulations. The EPA is proposing to deny the requested amendments.

ASLRRRA, AAR, the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), the Treated Wood Council (TWC) and the American Wood Council (AWC) petitioned the EPA in 2018 to change restrictions on creosote-treated railroad ties (CTRTs) and other paper recycling residuals that can be burned as non-waste fuel. The EPA's January 2022 proposal to deny these requests prompted ASLRRRA and AAR's comments, which oppose the EPA's decision and ask the agency to reconsider.

The associations argue the EPA's decision runs counter to its stated goal of lowering greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and replacing fossil fuels with biofuels like CTRTs. Every year U.S. railroads must replace approximately 23 million wooden crossties, and the EPA's restriction on burning them as fuel for energy has resulted on an increased number being sent to landfills.

In addition to its comments, ASLRRRA submitted [Attachment A](#) and [Attachment B](#) with the results of a study on whether CTRTs contain levels of hazardous air pollutants higher than would be found in traditional liquid fuels. The study found CTRTs to have levels of pollutants consistently lower than or roughly equal to traditional fuels.

ASLRRRA and AAR were also included on comments in opposition to the EPA's proposed denial submitted by AF&PA, TWC and AWC.

### **RRB Examines Retirement Age Reductions in March Q&A**

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) released the [March edition](#) of its question and answer (Q&A) series, focused this month on railroad retirement age reductions.

The Q&A explains how to determine full retirement age and includes annuity reduction percentages for employees with less than 30 years of service who retire before reaching full retirement age. Also discussed are how these rules apply to spouse benefits, disability annuities and survivor benefits.



### Biden Administration Releases FY 2023 Budget Proposal

Monday was Budget Day in Washington, D.C., with the White House releasing its proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023, which begins Oct. 1, 2022. The proposal includes significant transportation funding, including nearly \$18 billion for passenger and freight programs – a close to \$15 billion increase from two years ago.

Highlights for programs of most interest to the short line freight rail industry include:

- \$500 million for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements program (CRISI)
- \$245 million for the new grade crossing elimination grant program
- \$1.5 billion for "National Infrastructure Investments," which appears to include the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program (RAISE) and National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program (MEGA)
- \$230 million for the Port Infrastructure Development program
- \$58 million for the Federal Railroad Administration's Research and Development and \$254 million for FRA's Safety and Operations

ASLRRA's government affairs team will continue to keep tabs on the many forthcoming documents for noteworthy items for short lines and will work with lawmakers and administration officials in these next months to ensure the priorities of the Association's members are reflected in discussions, drafts and, ultimately, law.

#### Save Money with ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Partners



Visit [aslrra.org/discounts](http://aslrra.org/discounts) to learn more.

## ASLRRA Announcements

### Nominations Due by April 1 for ASLRRA Associate Member Board Seat

ASLRRA is seeking nominations by April 1 for individuals wishing to run for election to the Association's board of directors representing Associate Business Members (suppliers).

There are two board seats representing Associate Members that are filled via election from the supplier membership and there is one board vacancy that we will need to fill at the Annual Convention in St. Louis. The term for Jim Hanlon from Herzog Technologies expires later this year and he will not be running for re-election. Kareen Gray from Wabtec holds the other Associate Board Member position.

The term for a director is two years. The board responsibility involves two, in-person board meetings annually and several conference calls throughout the year. Board members are also expected to attend the annual conference and fall regional meetings and are urged to attend Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. The newly elected board member will also work closely with the Supplier Committee and work to provide agenda items to benefit the membership.

A member wishing to suggest themselves or nominate a candidate should contact Nominating Committee Co-Chairs Steve Friedland of Short Line Data Systems or Beth Garguilo of Lincoln Transportation Insurance Brokers. Garguilo can be reached on [Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com](mailto:Beth.Garguilo@lincolnins.com) or (315) 768-6110 and Friedland can be reached on [sfriedland@sdsrocs.com](mailto:sfriedland@sdsrocs.com) or (973) 769-6505. They will be assisted by ASLRRA's Senior Vice President of Membership & Business Development Kathy Keeney, who serves as staff liaison to the Supplier Committee.

Candidates need to supply a short biography, photo and a few sentences about why they would like to serve on the ASLRRA Board of Directors. They are also welcome to provide a two-minute video outlining their qualifications.

### Register Now for ASLRRA's Popular Summer Training Seminars

Registration is now open for the first two of ASLRRA's [summer training seminars](#). Individuals can sign up to attend the [FRA Engineer/Conductor \(Part 240-242\) and Railroad Operating Rules \(Part 217\)](#) course and the [FRA Drug and Alcohol Training \(Part 219\)](#) course.

The engineer and conductor and operating rules course will be held May 17 to 18 while the drug and alcohol training course will be held June 7 to 8. Both will take place at the Aloft Nashville West End in Nashville, Tennessee. Space for each course is limited, so participants are encouraged to register early.

Two other courses, the [Comprehensive General Code of Operating Rules \(GCOR\) Training Seminar](#) and the [Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers \(DSLE\) Training Seminar](#) will take place July 26 to 28 and August 9 and 10, respectively, both in Cedar Falls, Iowa. ASLRRA has partnered with Iowa Northern Railway to offer these courses.

More information about two additional seminars, ASLRRA's Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module and FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety (214) Training is coming soon.

### Save Money Using ASLRRA's Preferred Providers or Sign Up to Become a Preferred Provider

The money you save using Preferred Providers from [ASLRRA's Member Discount Program](#) could pay your annual dues and then some! ASLRRA's Member Discount Program leverages the buying power

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of all association members to secure discounted pricing on essential business products and services. ASLRRA members receive exclusive access to programs tailored specifically for the short line railroad industry with discounted pricing, special offers, and guaranteed exceptional service.

Member Discount Program offerings currently include personal protective equipment plus safety eyewear and shoe programs from ORR Safety; tie inspection services from Loram Technologies; grant writing services from Bergmann, GTS and HDR; PTC products and services from GTS and Ayers Electronic Systems; and employee health insurance from HUB International. Visit [www.aslrra.org/discounts](http://www.aslrra.org/discounts) for details and to learn more about ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Preferred Providers.

**Interested in becoming a Preferred Provider?** ASLRRA is seeking to add new products and services to its Member Discount Program offerings, and we would like to hear from you! The program is open exclusively to ASLRRA associate members who are committed to providing exceptional service along with volume discounts to short line railroads. Preferred Providers benefit from a broad range of marketing/promotional activities, including visibility on [ASLRRA's website](http://www.aslrra.org) and in print and electronic communications. Interested companies may contact [Sabrina Waiss](mailto:sabrina@aslrra.org) for more information on becoming a Preferred Provider.

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## ASLRRA Out and About

### Staff Members Attend AAR, UP Meetings

ASLRRA President Chuck Baker and Vice President of Data and Technology Fred Oelsner each attended industry meetings this week.

Baker participated in the Union Pacific Short Line Advisory Group Meeting at Union Pacific headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, while Oelsner traveled to Railinc headquarters in Cary, North Carolina to attend meetings of the Association of American Railroads' Customer Service and Geographic Information Systems Committees.

**ASLRRA's Member Discount Program Includes Grant Writing Services!**

Visit [aslrra.org/discounts](http://aslrra.org/discounts) to learn more.





## ASLRRRA Webinars – Live or On-Demand

### Upcoming Webinars

#### [Part 243 Railroad Obligations with Contractors](#) – June 1, 2022

Join FRA Staff Director Rob Castiglione to understand what your obligations are as a railroad when engaging with contractors under Part 243, including Roadway Worker Protection (RWP). Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in Q&A at the end of the presentation. Presenters include Castiglione and ASLRRRA's Jo Strang and JR Gelnar.

This webinar is free for both ASLRRRA members and non-members.

### Review the Basics of Part 225 with On-Demand Webinars

ASLRRRA works with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to produce resources for Association members, including webinars discussing regulatory compliance. One popular webinar series covers 49 CFR Part 225, Railroad Accidents and Incidents, and recordings of those webinars can be found in ASLRRRA's On-Demand Webinar Library. Look for the following titles:

- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 1: Injuries
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 2: Rail Equipment
- Part 225 Back to Basics, Part 3: Highway-Rail Grade Crossing

These webinars are just a few of the over 150 recordings available to ASLRRRA members. Non-members can access on-demand webinars by purchasing a subscription. View our [webinar page](#) and click on the On-Demand Webinar button to log in and access recordings.

Click [here](#) to learn more about ASLRRRA's education offerings.

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## Industry Events and Announcements

### July – University of Illinois RailTEC Offers Two Railway Engineering Short Courses

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign's Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) will hold two [Railway Engineering Short Courses](#) in July. Both will take place virtually via Zoom.

Track Engineering Fundamentals will be held July 18-21 and Railroad Project Design will take place July 25-28. Follow the link above for more information, or click [here](#) to register.

ASLRRRA's Short Line Education program offers scholarships for industry-specific training in track, bridge and signal inspection and maintenance and/or locomotive and freight car inspection and maintenance, and those who attend the Track Engineering Fundamentals course would be eligible for

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funding to offset registration fees. Complete an [online application](#) here or contact ASLRRA's [Julie Duriga](#) with more questions.

Click [here](#) for a calendar of industry events.

Views & News is published by American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. Please contact [Amy Krouse](#), editor, with questions or comments.