



March 23, 2022



## DOT Releases Three-Program NOFO to Streamline Grant Application Process

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a [notice of funding opportunity](#) (NOFO) making nearly \$2.9 billion available to three major discretionary grant programs, [combining them](#) into one multimodal projects grant opportunity.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), now known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), created two new grant programs, the National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) program and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program (RURAL). These programs will receive \$1 billion and \$300 million, respectively. The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program will also receive \$1.55 billion, which is a 50 percent increase from last year authorized by the IIJA.

By issuing a NOFO that covers all three programs at once, DOT aims to streamline the application process for state, regional and local governments. 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.

Accordingly, DOT is providing one single application for the programs and will review the applications in making decisions for each grant program. DOT officials have noted in recent weeks their desire for efficiency's sake to have a "common application" for grant programs much like high school students can fill out one application for a variety of schools. DOT is referring to this as this announcement as the Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant opportunity (MPDG) and applications are due May 23.

To help prospective MPDG applicants, DOT will host several informational webinars. The first is scheduled for March 29. Use [this link](#) to view a complete webinar schedule and register for the free presentations.

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.

### President Biden Warns of Potential Cyberattacks, Urges Companies to Safeguard Systems

In a statement on March 21, President Joe Biden [warned](#) about the potential for Russian cyberattacks targeting U.S. businesses, urging companies to take steps to strengthen their cybersecurity measures to protect their infrastructure and operations.

Biden highlighted a [White House Fact Sheet](#) identifying ways companies can bolster their online security, including backing up data and having offline backups, encrypting data and educating employees about how to spot potential attacks or identify compromised systems.

Also useful for companies is the [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's \(CISA\) Shields Up website](#). The site features the latest updates, including a catalog of known exploited vulnerabilities, as

March 23, 2022

well as guidance for organizations, recommendations for corporate leaders and ransomware response tips.

The [CISA homepage](#) also includes a number of press releases and announcements concerning cyber issues. One example is its February [CISA Insights newsletter](#) discussing ways companies can prepare for and mitigate operations targeting critical infrastructure. ASLRRA urges its members to review these different recommendations and resources and evaluate their current cybersecurity posture to determine next steps in protecting their systems from cyberattacks.

## Register Early to Secure a Spot in ASLRRA's 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 \(DSLLE\) 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.



**Register now!**  
ASLRRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION  
MAY 1-3, 2022  
AMERICA'S CENTER | ST. LOUIS, MO



ST. LOUIS



**2022**  
ASLRRA Annual Conference & Exhibition  
May 1-3 | St. Louis, MO

## Conference Features Education Sessions in 11 Different Tracks

*Early Bird Registration Closes April 1, One ASLRRA Hotel Block Already Sold Out*

Railroad professionals in all aspects of operations will find an enlightening education session, or two, or more to attend at this year's [ASLRRA Conference and](#)

[Exhibition](#) in St. Louis, Missouri.

There are education sessions in [11 different tracks](#), including finance, human resources, legal, marketing, mechanical, safety and operations and technology. Attendees can learn about the SmartWay shipper program, federal grant programs, regulatory compliance, using websites to build business, locomotive and railcar maintenance, cybersecurity and other important industry issues.

[Register](#) now for the conference, held May 1 to 3 at the [America's Center Convention Complex](#). This year, attendees can also sign up for a [round of golf](#) at the Courses at Forest Park or a "[Round the World Loop](#)" train excursion. Early bird registration and [hotel block pricing](#) for ASLRRA's Annual Conference and Exhibition ends on April 1, and the hotel block at the Courtyard by Marriott Downtown St. Louis has already sold out.

Remember, individuals **must** be logged in to their ASLRRA accounts prior to attempting to register. Those without an ASLRRA 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 and email addresses to ASLRRA's Danialle Richards at [drichards@aslrra.org](mailto:drichards@aslrra.org).

Companies can still [reserve a booth](#) in the Expo Hall, which will be the site of two evening receptions and several meal and refreshment breaks, offering many networking opportunities. Like with the 2021 conference, this year's Expo Hall will feature a Green Zone for companies to share their sustainable and environmentally friendly business practices, services and products with participants.

A range of [sponsorship opportunities](#) offer an additional way for companies to connect with conference attendees. Contact ASLRRA's Kathy Keeney at [kkeeney@aslrra.org](mailto:kkeeney@aslrra.org) for information about both expo booths and sponsorships.



### Updated FRA Part 240 and 242 Templates Available on ASLRRA Site

ASLRRA, working in conjunction with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), has updated the Association's Part 240 Engineer Certification Model Program template and its Part 242 Conductor Certification Model Program template.

These updates do not require a railroad to resubmit or revise their program. However, railroads updating or revising their programs should use the new templates.

ASLRRA railroad members can access the updated templates by logging in to the Compliance Templates section on ASLRRA's [Safety & Compliance page](#). Please contact ASLRRA's [JR Gelnar](#) with any questions.

### ASLRRA-Supported Workplace Safety Regulation Becomes Final Rule

On March 17, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a [railroad workplace safety final rule](#), which ASLRRA and the Association of American Railroads supported in [comments](#) submitted in February 2021.

The rule changes current regulations to allow for the use of alternative cybersecurity standards for electronic display systems to view track authority information for roadway worker safety, and to exempt certain remotely operated roadway maintenance machines from existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) requirements for enclosed cabs.

Also codified in the final rule is a longstanding waiver for ASLRRA member Harsco Track Technologies for a roadway maintenance machine designed to function without a dedicated operator located on the machine. Railroads have safely operated equipment subject to this waiver since 2008.

### **Revised Civil Penalty Amounts Listed for DOT Regulations Violations**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) [published a final rule](#) listing adjusted civil penalty amounts for 2022. These civil penalties can be imposed for violations of certain DOT regulations.

The rule, effective March 21, also lists new civil penalties authority established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), now known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Penalty adjustments are listed according to DOT agency, including the Federal Railroad Administration and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

### **FRA Reports Share Results of Railroad Component Studies and Tank Car Research**

A trio of recently released Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reports reveal results of studies of railroad components and compile other research. One study examined crack growth in concrete railroad ties, another looked at wheel and rail surface damage and a third reviewed tank car side impact research.

The FRA's Office of Research, Development and Technology released a [report](#) studying the ways various concrete mixtures affect the potential for splitting crack growth in prestressed concrete railroad ties. Kansas State University conducted the research from 2015 to 2019, using fracture toughness tests to evaluate five different coarse aggregate types, the water to concrete ratio, presence of fly ash and paste and air void content. Follow the link above to view the FRA report or click [here](#) to read the full study on the Kansas State University website.

The [second report](#) is based on a study by ASLRRA member Transportation Technology Center Inc. (TTCI), which was recently [renamed MxV Rail](#). TTCI developed a full-scale rolling contact fatigue simulator to understand the cause of wheel and rail surface damage, namely surface pitting, cracking, wear and material flow.

A [third technical report](#) summarizes 11 tests conducted since 2007 that look at the puncture resistance of railroad tank cars used to transport hazardous materials within the U.S. While the results of individual tests have been documented, this particular report discusses the lessons learned over the course of the entire testing and analysis program and compares key results from the full-scale impact tests.

### **FRA Presentation Discusses Railroad Grant Opportunities**

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published an [overview](#) of grant programs available to railroads under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), originally passed as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

The publication discusses the new Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI) and others. It outlines program characteristics including funding available, eligible applicants, eligible project criteria and more.

Also included is information about stakeholder engagement opportunities, the FRA's blocked crossing portal and the quiet zone application process, and a link to the FRA's [training and guidance webpage](#).

Interested individuals can also click [here](#) to go directly to the FRA's BIL information page to find out how the law affects the FRA and railroads.



### **Shipping and Freight-Related Bills Advance Through Senate Committee**

Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation voted favorably to send two measures to the full Senate, the Ocean Shipping Reform Act and the FREIGHT Act.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act, S. 3580, would expand the Federal Maritime Commission's (FMC) authority over the practices of ocean carriers, which is a priority of the administration in the wake of supply chain issues. The FREIGHT Act, S. 3262, aims to bolster some reporting and data sharing related to ports and some freight movement. Many elements of the FREIGHT Act, however, were included in the ocean shipping bill, which enjoys broad, bipartisan support and is likely to be reconciled with a similar measure that passed the House of Representatives earlier this year before ultimately heading to the White House for the president's signature.

Before the measures passed out of the panel, Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) proposed an amendment to the FREIGHT Act that would end the Biden administration's effective prohibition of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments by rail. The amendment was defeated on a party-line vote, with all Republicans supporting it and all Democrats voting against it.

Another amendment proposed by Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) would have expedited the administration's identifying use of land for additional freight storage near ports. Democrats expressed concerns with the amendment, and it was also defeated on a party-line vote.

Three amendments that Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) filed that would have expanded Surface Transportation Board (STB) authority and led to possibly much more onerous oversight of railroad practices were filed but never offered for a vote. ASLRRA staff and allies worked together to oppose the Baldwin proposals.

### **ASLRRA Saddened by Passing of Longtime Alaska Representative Don Young**

ASLRRA expresses its condolences on the passing of Don Young, U.S. Representative for Alaska. He died on March 18 at 88.

Young, the longest-serving member of Congress, was a friend to the short line industry and a strong supporter of ASLRRA member Alaska Railroad Corporation. He also participated in Railroad Day on Capitol Hill events and was represented by a staff member at the 2022 Railroad Day meetings earlier this month.

Young served as chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee from 2001 to 2007. Committee members remembered him as a staunch advocate for infrastructure investments who worked to pass legislation to strengthen U.S. infrastructure.

The graphic is titled "2022 ASLRRR TRAINING SEMINARS" with a "click to learn more" link. It features a background of railroad tracks and a circuit-like pattern. Six colored boxes list the following seminars:

- May 17-18: FRA Engineer/Conductor (240/242) and Railroad Operating Rules (217) Training
- June 7-8: FRA Drug & Alcohol (219) Training
- Coming soon: ASLRRR Leadership Development Training, Regulatory Module
- July 26-28: General Code of Operating Rules (GCOR) Training
- August 9-10: Advanced Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers (DSLE) Training
- Coming soon: FRA Roadway Worker/Bridge Worker Safety Training

## ASLRRR Announcements



### New Staff Accountant Joins ASLRRR Team

ASLRRR welcomes Ethiopia Eshete, the Association's new staff accountant. Eshete will work with Accounting Manager Deena Beshir and Vice President of Finance Dinah Idan-Biney on accounting matters for both ASLRRR and the Short Line Safety Institute (SLSI).

Eshete, a certified public accountant, previously worked as a staff accountant at Rubino & Company, and has also served as a budget officer for Ethiopian Airlines.

### Nominations Sought for ASLRRR Associate Member Board Seat

ASLRRR 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. Karen 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 [friedland@sdsrocs.com](mailto:friedland@sdsrocs.com) or (973) 769-6505. They will be assisted by ASLRRR's Senior Vice President of Membership & Business Development Kathy Keeney, who serves as staff liaison to the Supplier Committee.

March 23, 2022

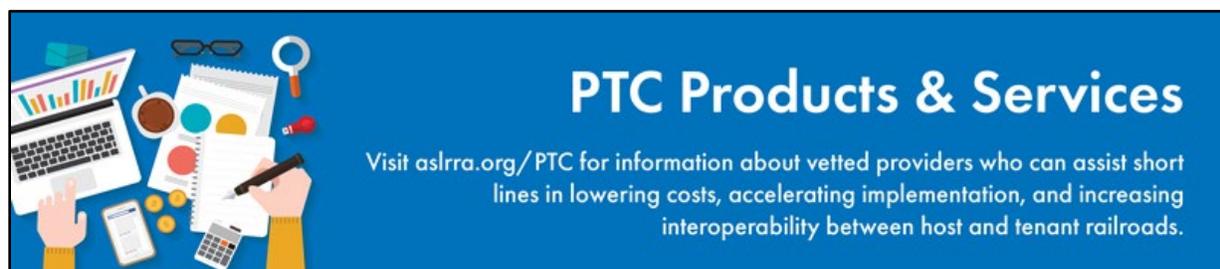
Candidates need to supply a short biography, photo and a few sentences about why they would like to serve on the ASLRRR Board of Directors. They are also welcome to provide a two-minute video outlining their qualifications.

## Meet Positive Train Control Requirements with Help from ASLRRR's Preferred Providers

Positive train control (PTC) is one of the most complex technologies mandated for freight railroads to date and its implementation has been an unprecedented challenge, particularly for short line railroads.

ASLRRR has secured grant funding and leveraged capabilities under its own Member Discount Program to qualify sources, develop products and services, and secure agreements to aid Class II and III railroads in PTC implementation. These vetted companies are able to provide solutions that will assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant operations.

Visit our [Member Discount Program page](#) and select [PTC Products & Services](#) to learn more and start saving today.

A blue banner with white text and icons. The icons include a laptop, a smartphone, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a notepad, and a coffee cup. The text reads: "PTC Products & Services" and "Visit aslrra.org/PTC for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads."/>

**PTC Products & Services**

Visit [aslrra.org/PTC](http://aslrra.org/PTC) for information about vetted providers who can assist short lines in lowering costs, accelerating implementation, and increasing interoperability between host and tenant railroads.



## ASLRRR 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 ASLRRR's Jo Strang and JR Gelnar.

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

## Learn About Issues Concerning Railroad Employees Through ASLRRR's On-Demand Webinars

ASLRRR's recorded webinars cover a variety of industry topics, with several tailored to the interests of human resources and regulatory compliance professionals. Look for the following topics in the Human Resources and Regulatory categories of our On-Demand Webinar library.

Overview on the Expanded Scope of Part 219 (Regulatory)

**March 23, 2022**

Sleep Apnea Diagnosis, Protocol, Compliance and Regulation (Human Resources)

Marijuana and CBD – New Drug Testing Issues (Regulatory)

Protecting Roadway Workers from Zika, West Nile, Tick Bites and other Warm-Weather Threats (Human Resources)

A PDF copy of presentation materials for each of these webinars is also available to members for download. 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](#) here 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**

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.