# Maritime Administration

Association of Pacific Ports
112th Annual Conference
August 3 to 6, 2026

# Discussion Topics

U.S. Department of Transportation

Maritime Administration

Priorities and Programs

# U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Priorities

SECURITY & SAFETY

INFRASTRUCTURE

INNOVATION

EFFICIENCY

U.S. Department of Transportation
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# Maritime Administration


## ***MISSION***

Foster, promote, and develop the maritime industry of the United States to meet the nation’s economic and security needs.

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# MARAD Tribal Outreach

- Engagement across the nation with Tribes and Alaska Natives to fulfill Federal trust responsibilities
- Supporting self-determination
- Providing support to apply for Federal funding
- Making Federal processes less burdensome and more accessible
- Building lasting relationships

*Swinomish Tribe harvests Frazer sockeye salmon, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission*

# Port Infrastructure Development Program

## Competitive Grant Program

- Awards grants to U.S. coastal seaports, inland river ports, and Great Lakes ports
- PIDP **statutory goal:** improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports

## Funding

- $2.25 billion was provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act over five years (2022-2026)
  - Last portion of IIJA funding will be awarded this year
- Funding is also provided through annual appropriations

# Port Infrastructure Development Program

- Eligible applicants:
  - A State;
  - A political subdivision of a State, or a local government;
  - A public agency or publicly chartered authority established by 1 or more States;
  - A special purpose district with a transportation function;
  - An Indian Tribe, or a consortium of Indian Tribes;
  - A multistate or multijurisdictional group of entities described above;
  - A lead entity described above jointly with a private entity or group of private entities, including the owners or operators of a facility, or a collection of facilities at a port.
- The Secretary of Transportation may increase the Federal share of costs above 80 percent for: (1) a grant for a project located in a rural area; or (2) a grant awarded to a small project at a small port under 46 U.S.C. 54301(b).

# Port Infrastructure Development Program

**Eligible Projects** *shall be located either within the boundary of a port, or outside the boundary of a port and **directly related to port operations** or to an intermodal connection to a port***.**

**Eligible project types**:

(I) the loading and unloading of goods at the port; such as for marine terminal equipment;

(II) the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port; such as for highway or rail infrastructure, intermodal facilities, freight intelligent transportation systems, and digital infrastructure systems;

(III) operational improvements, including projects to improve port resilience;

(IV) environmental and emissions mitigation measures; or

(V) port and port-related infrastructure that supports seafood and seafood-related businesses, including the loading and unloading of commercially harvested fish and fish products, seafood processing, cold storage, and other related infrastructure.

# Port Infrastructure Development Program

## Eligible projects (cont'd)

**Development phase activities** - Include planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, permitting, and preliminary engineering and design work) and port planning activities are eligible if the activities support one of the eligible project types listed.

- Funding will be prioritized for projects that will move into the construction phase within the grant's performance period.
  - Implicitly: project-specific planning grant requests (design and NEPA and permitting) are more competitive than strategic planning grant requests (master plans, capital investment plan development)
- Applications for development phase activities are subject to an economic vitality analysis (either a small projects at small ports EV  analysis or BCA for large projects in contiguous states).
- If an application includes right-of-way acquisition, the project will be considered a capital project.
- Development phase project applications are less competitive than capital project applications.

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# Port Infrastructure Development Program

## Evaluation Criteria

1. **Merit Criteria (statutory)**
   - Achieving Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability (SER) Improvements;
   - Cost Effectiveness/Supporting Economic Vitality;
   - Leveraging Federal Funding; and
   - Port Resilience.

2. **Additional Considerations (Administration priorities)**
   - Project Readiness
     - Technical Capacity; and
     - Environmental Risk.
   - Innovative Technology
   - Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals

3. **Six Statutory Determinations** (SER, cost effectiveness, authority, availability of non-federal funding, ability to complete on time, need for federal funding)

# Merit Criteria – Achieving Safety, Efficiency, or Reliability Improvements

Demonstrated through one or more of the following:

1. **Safety Improvements**
   - Protects those in the port from safety risks.
   - Reduces fatalities and/or serious injuries related to port operations.
   - Incorporates specific safety improvements part of a documented risk reduction mitigation strategy and that have port-wide impact.
2. **Efficiency Benefits;**
   - Improves cargo volume/throughput at a port.
     - “Improvements versus repairs”
3. **Reliability Improvements**
   - Incorporates reliability enhancements that improve the dependability of cargo operations.

## Leveraging of Federal Funding

Include information that identifies how the applicant has worked to improve non-Federal leverage, such as the role project partners will play in funding the project and any unique funding arrangements the applicant has pursued to increase the **amount of non-Federal funding** for the project.

## Port Resilience

Resilience, as defined in 46 U.S.C. 54301, means the ability of the port to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, withstand, respond to, and recover from operational disruptions and sustain critical operations, including disruptions caused by natural or man-made hazards.

- Applicants should identify specifically how the project will improve port resilience with respect to a **natural or man-made physical event or trend** or physical impact that may cause: loss of life, injury, or other health impacts; damage and loss to property, infrastructure, or livelihoods; and the ability of the port to sustain its role in the local, regional, or national supply chain.
- Applicants are encouraged to align project elements with: established State, local, or regional Comprehensive Plans; Resilience Assessment Tools; or other planning, policy, or engineering tools that incorporate resilience concepts and mitigation techniques.

## Economic Vitality

1. **Large Projects.** Must provide a benefit-cost analysis following US DOT guidance.
   Exception: projects in a noncontiguous State or territory

2. **Small Projects at Small Ports**

   A BCA is **NOT REQUIRED** for a Small Project at a Small Port.

   Instead, the economic vitality of a small project at a small port is evaluated against three criteria:
   - How the project improves the economic advantage of the port;
   - How the project contributes to freight transportation at, around, and through the port; and,
   - How the project helps overcome the competitive disadvantage of the port.

   What is a small project at a small port?
   - The request for federal funding is less than or equal to $11.25 million; and
   - Tonnage through the port is less than 8 million short tons (as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers.
     - But! The independent audit option.

## Additional Considerations

### Innovative Technology

Innovation describes the extent to which a project adopts advanced science and novel approaches to transform maritime infrastructure and operations. It focuses on deploying modern solutions that go beyond traditional practices to enhance safety, efficiency, and port resilience.

Projects will rate more highly on this criterion if the applicant demonstrates that the project will:

- **Deploy Advanced Technologies**: Utilize smart cargo handling, intelligent berth/yard management, or advanced asset inspection systems to improve the movement of goods.
- **Apply Innovative Methods:** Implement novel design, construction, or maintenance techniques that reduce costs, accelerate delivery, or strengthen infrastructure durability.
- **Deliver Quantifiable Results:** Provide concrete evidence and data showing how these innovations lead to significant, measurable improvements in operational performance.

# Additional Considerations, cont.

## Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals

The Department of Transportation seeks to support port projects that align with the national multimodal freight policy goal of ensuring the freight system serves as a foundation for the United States to compete in the global economy. DOT seeks to invest in port infrastructure that:

- Enhances the export competitiveness of the United States, with an emphasis on agriculture exports;
- Supports the supply chains of key industries of national interest, including critical minerals, steel, the defense industrial base, or pharmaceutical manufacturing;
- Advances America’s domestic energy industry;
- Supports the reshoring of advanced manufacturing; and
- Revitalizes the maritime industrial base including shipbuilding, component supply chains, ship repair, and marine transportation services.

https://www.transportation.gov/freight/NFSP

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# How PIDP Funding Has Been Used

- **Landside equipment.** Marine terminal equipment to load and unload goods at the port (conveyors, silos, rotary (rail) car dumpers)
- **Infrastructure improvements.** Road and rail projects within or near the port that improve the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port (port access roads, short-line rail projects, digital infrastructure systems)
- **Operational improvements**, including projects to improve port resilience (cargo yards, warehouses, grain silos, bank revetments icw connected shoreside infrastructure)
- **Seafood and seafood-related businesses** (cargo cranes, processing infrastructure, cold storage facilities)
- **Project planning** (such as NEPA, permitting, and engineering design) **in addition to construction**

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section I: Project Description

1. Generally, statements of work were detailed enough to enable reviewers to thoroughly understand what grant funds would be paying for.
2. Areas for improvement . . .
   a. Too much space devoted to port history
   b. Often overlooked: Need to address authority here
   c. If project is part of a larger capital improvement plan, how the project relates to that
   d. If completion of the project depends on a teaming arrangement (port working with one of its tenants), who on the team will be responsible for what
      i. A recognition that the eligible applicant will be the lead entity

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section II: Project Location

1. Please provide geographic coordinates in decimal degrees with a minimum of 5 decimal places (ex: 33.61667N, 117.89750W, not 33 37N, 117 53 51W)
   a. Coordinates should be (as close as possible) to the geographic center of the project. Really important where project is in a different location than the port administration building.
2. Double check that Congressional district! (Block 16 of the SF-424)

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# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section III: Grant Funds, Sources, and Use of Funds

1. Don’t forget to break the budget down by component and show how PIDP and non-PIDP funds contribute.
   a. Use a table like the one on p. 18 of the FY26 NOFO.
2. Double check that the numbers here (particularly the totals) agree with numbers elsewhere in the narrative and the SF-424.
   a. When in doubt, the SF-424 is the official request.
3. Discuss any availability of funds issues (funds that must be spent by a particular date, source of funds)
4. Identify any planned pre-obligation expenses
   a. Covers work between selection and obligation

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# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section IV: Merit Criteria

1. Next to the Project Description section, this (together with Add’l Considerations) should be the largest part (page-wise) of your application.
2. Quantify your project’s impacts on safety, efficiency, and reliability.
   a. Safety: For “Medium” or “High” looking for safety benefits internal to the port
   b. Efficiency: increase in cargo volumes
   c. Reliability: address infrastructure deficiencies that impact cargo operations
   d. If you can’t quantify, explain anecdotally (“repairing wharf surface will prevent trips and falls”)
   e. If you can quantify, make sure there’s “documentation” to back it up (“repairs will remedy conditions that have caused X incidents in past year”)

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section IV: Merit Criteria (cont'd)

3. Make sure that you follow the US DOT BCA guidance.
    a. Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for Discretionary Grant Programs (updated last December)
    b. If you need to use values other than those in the BCA guidance, remember to explain why those values are more appropriate and provide reference to supporting documentation.
    c. Remember that this is not just a business case analysis (safety, emissions reduction, travel time savings, etc.)
4. Leverage.
    a. Ask for the amount of funding you need. Explain why a waiver of the cost-share requirement is necessary.
    b. Leverage is an important selection consideration.

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section V: Additional Considerations

1. Administration priorities; not statutory.
2. NOFO changes reminder. Workforce Development and Job Quality is out as an Additional Consideration. Innovative Technology and Supporting National Multimodal Freight Goals are in.
   a. See p. 18 – 19 of the FY26 NOFO
3. Pay particular attention to project readiness.
   a. Technical Capacity. Present a reasonable project schedule (aggressive can be an applicant's enemy).
   b. NEPA Process and Permitting Risk.
      i. Consider consulting MARAD NEPA program staff.
      ii. Remember that they're looking for 30% design effort before the NEPA clock starts.

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

## Narrative Section VI: Statutory Determinations

1. Only projects that meet all applicable statutory determinations are eligible to advance to the Secretary.
   a. See p. 19 – 22 of the NOFO
2. All are important but the ones applicants seem to struggle with . . .
   a. Determ 3: Authority to carry out the project. How the applicant is related to the work on the property where the grant funds will be spent.
   b. Determ 4: Sufficient funding to meet matching requirements. Letter of commitment or local resolution explaining that the matching funds will be available and committed.
   c. Determ 6: Need for federal funding. A simple statement of what would happen to the project (scope, schedule, or budget) if the project isn't selected for funding.

# Lessons Learned: FY25 Funding Opportunity

**Final (random) thoughts**

1. Pictures (and drawings) are worth a thousand words but . . .
2. The PIDP cover page
   a. See p. 13 – 15 of the NOFO
   b. Previous submission and/or previous DOT funding
   c. Make sure the funding numbers agree with the SF-424
1. The SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
   a. ALWAYS list two POCs on the form
   b. If the amount of funding requested is different than the amount in the narrative, which controls?
2. Attachments. Reference them – always helpful but not necessarily read

# U. S. Marine Highway Program (USMHP)

- Through the development and promotion of marine highway transportation, the USMHP aims to relieve landside congestion and generate other public benefits by increasing the efficiency of the U.S. surface transportation system.

- The USMHP works closely with public and private organizations to:

  - Develop and broaden marine highway service options and facilitate their further integration into the U.S. surface transportation system.

  - Highlight benefits, increase public awareness, and promote waterways as an alternative to “landside” transportation options.

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# U.S. Marine Highway Designated Routes

- The Secretary may designate a route as a marine highway transportation route, or modify a designation, if the route:
  - provides a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation;
  - mitigates or relieves landside congestion;
  - promotes marine highway transportation; or
  - uses vessels documented in statute, and
- A route designation or modification can be requested (“sponsored”) by:
  - the government of a State or territory;
  - a metropolitan planning organization;
  - a port authority;
  - a non-Federal navigation district; or
  - a Tribal government


**35 designated Marine Highway Routes**, reaching **41 states**, the District of Columbia, and **five** U.S. territories; spanning over **27,000** miles

# U.S. Marine Highway Grants

- USMHP grants are awarded on a competitive basis to projects on designated U.S. Marine Highway Routes that **provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation or that promote marine highway transportation.**
- Eligible applicants:
  - State, a political subdivision of a State, or a local government;
  - United States metropolitan planning organization;
  - United States port authority;
  - ***Tribal government***; or
  - U.S. private sector operator of marine highway projects or private sector owners of facilities, ***including an Alaska Native Corporation***, with an endorsement letter from a U.S. Marine Highway Route Sponsor.

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# How Marine Highway Funding Has Been Used

- **Landside equipment**, including assorted Cargo Handling Equipment (CHE)
- **Infrastructure**, including construction and upgrades of landside infrastructure
- **Vessels**, including purchase, lease, construction or modification of documented vessels
- **Transportation Planning Activities** that are intended to develop strategies, plan for, or research the development, expansion, or promotion of Marine Highway Transportation

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# USDOT BUILD Grant Program

- **Goal –** Fund surface transportation infrastructure projects that will have significant local and regional impacts
- **Eligible Applicants –** Cities, towns, counties, states, tribes, port authorities, etc.
- **Eligible Projects** – Roads, bridges, passenger and freight rail, ports, transit
- **Grants** – Capital or Planning
- **Award Size** – Minimum $1- $5 million / Maximum $25 million

# USDOT BUILD Grant Program

Statutorily required **8 merit criteria** are:

Four Priority Criteria

1. **Safety**
2. **Economic Competitiveness**
3. **Quality of Life**
4. **Mobility and Community Connectivity**
5. Environmental Sustainability
6. State of Good Repair
7. Partnership and Collaboration
8. Innovation

# USDOT MPDG Program

| Program | MEGA | | INFRA | | Rural | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Large | Small | Large | Small | Large | Small |
| **Project Sizes** | >$500M in Costs | $100M-$500M in costs | >$100M in costs (Max 85%) | <$100M in costs (Min 15%) | No requirement | No requirement |
| **Award Size** | No Award minimum | No Award minimum | $25 million award minimum | $5 million award minimum | $25 million award minimum | No Award minimum |
| **Amount Available FY 2025-2026** | ~$682M | ~$1B | ~$2.27B (>$568.4M in rural areas) | ~$400M (> $120.3M in rural areas) | ~$684M | ~$76M |
| | ~$1.68B | | ~$2.67B (>$688.7M to rural areas) (<$800M to intermodal cap projects) | | ~$760M | |

# Similar Project Eligibility – INFRA, Mega, Rural

| INFRA | Mega | Rural |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A highway freight project on the National Highway Freight Network<br>2. A highway or bridge project on the National Highway System<br>3. A freight intermodal, freight rail, or freight project within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility and that is a surface transportation infrastructure project necessary to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, or access into or out of the facility<br>4. A highway-railway grade crossing or grade separation project<br>5. A wildlife crossing project<br>6. A surface transportation project within the boundaries or functionally connected to an international border crossing that improves a facility owned by Fed/State/local government and increases throughput efficiency<br>7. A project for a marine highway that is connected to the NHFN and is likely to reduce road mobile source emissions<br>8. A highway, bridge, or freight project on the National Multimodal Freight Network | 1. A highway or bridge project on the National Multimodal Freight Network<br>2. A highway or bridge project on the National Highway Freight Network<br>3. A highway or bridge project on the National Highway System<br>4. A freight intermodal (including public ports) or freight rail project that provides public benefit<br>5. A railway highway grade separation or elimination project<br>6. An intercity passenger rail project<br>7. A public transportation project that is eligible under assistance under Chapter 53 of title 49 and is a part of any of the project types described above | 1. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under National Highway Performance Program<br>2. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under Surface Transportation Block Grant<br>3. A highway, bridge, or tunnel project eligible under Tribal Transportation Program<br>4. A highway freight project eligible under National Highway Freight Program<br>5. A highway safety improvement project, including a project to improve a high risk rural road as defined by the Highway Safety Improvement Program<br>6. A project on a publicly-owned highway or bridge that provides or increases access to an agricultural, commercial, energy, or intermodal facility that supports the economy of a rural area<br>7. A project to develop, establish, or maintain an integrated mobility management system, a transportation demand management system, or on-demand mobility services |

# Similar Project Requirements

| INFRA LARGE | MEGA | Rural |
|---|---|---|
| National or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits | National or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits | Regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits |
| Cost effective | Cost effective | Cost effective |
| Contribute to Fed-Aid Highway Program Goals | | Contribute to Fed-Aid Highway Program Goals |
| Based on Preliminary Engineering | | Based on Preliminary Engineering |
| Funding is Stable and Dependable | Funding is Stable and Dependable | |
| Cannot be completed efficiently without Federal Funding | In Significant Need of Federal Funding | |
| Begin Construction within 18 months of Obligation | Applicant has sufficient legal, financial, technical capacity to carry out the project | Begin Construction within 18 months of Obligation |
| | Applicant submitted a data plan | |

# Ratings

## Project Outcomes

- Safety
- State of Good Repair
- Economic Impacts, Freight Movement, and Job Creation
- Climate Change, Resiliency, and the Environment
- Equity, Multimodal Options, and Quality of Life
- Innovation

## Economic Analysis (BCA)

## Project Readiness

- Environmental Risk
- Technical Capacity
- Financial Completeness

## Statutory Requirements

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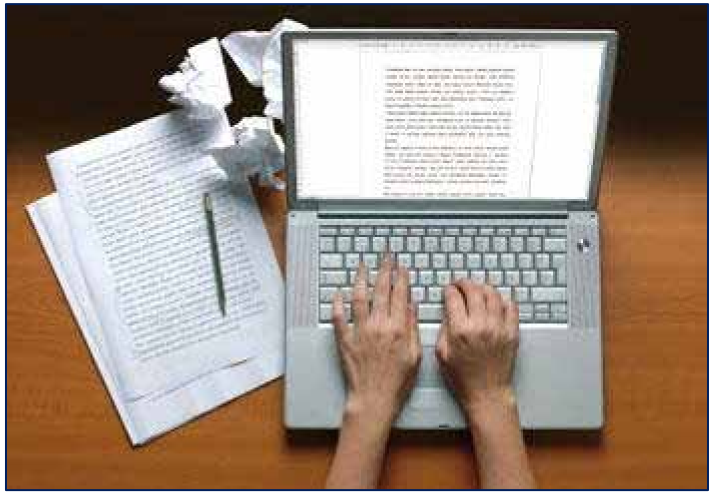
# Helpful Hints For Grants



## The Key

to an “attractive” application is crafting an effective, detailed, and comprehensive story that demonstrates a clear funding need, commitment, and impact.

## Write a Compelling Story

Some programs may require an applicant to articulate the expected outcomes or impact the project would have on the community. This could also include examples of community support or desire for the project. Consider showing alignment to stated priorities of the program, agency, and/or Department.

## Communicate Impact

Some programs may require an applicant to articulate the potential impact of the proposed project. Consider quantifying statements as much as possible or providing data points specific to your community.

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# Helpful Hints For Grants

## Remember …

- Read the NOFO carefully. It will change from year to year.
  - But! Changes are generally incremental. So . . . start next year's application early by using this year's NOFO to structure your submittal.

- Applications must be submitted through the www.Grants.gov portal. Set up your Grants.gov account at least two months prior to any application deadline!

- Your applicant narrative should follow the NOFO instructions closely, so it's easier for reviewers to understand your project
  - In particular . . . the outline of your narrative, project budget details, and how the project aligns with the statutory purpose of the grant program.

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# Helpful Hints For Grants

## Is your project eligible?

*Port Infrastructure Development Program*

Projects within the boundary of a port, or outside the boundary of a port and directly related to port operations or to an intermodal connection to a port that improve the **safety, efficiency, or reliability** of:

- The loading and unloading of goods at a port;
- The movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port;
- Operational improvements at a port;
- Resiliency in response to environmental factors; or
- Infrastructure that supports seafood and seafood-related businesses.

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# Helpful Hints For Grants

## Review cost share

*Port Infrastructure Development Program*

The Federal share of the total costs of an eligible PIDP project must not exceed 80 percent.

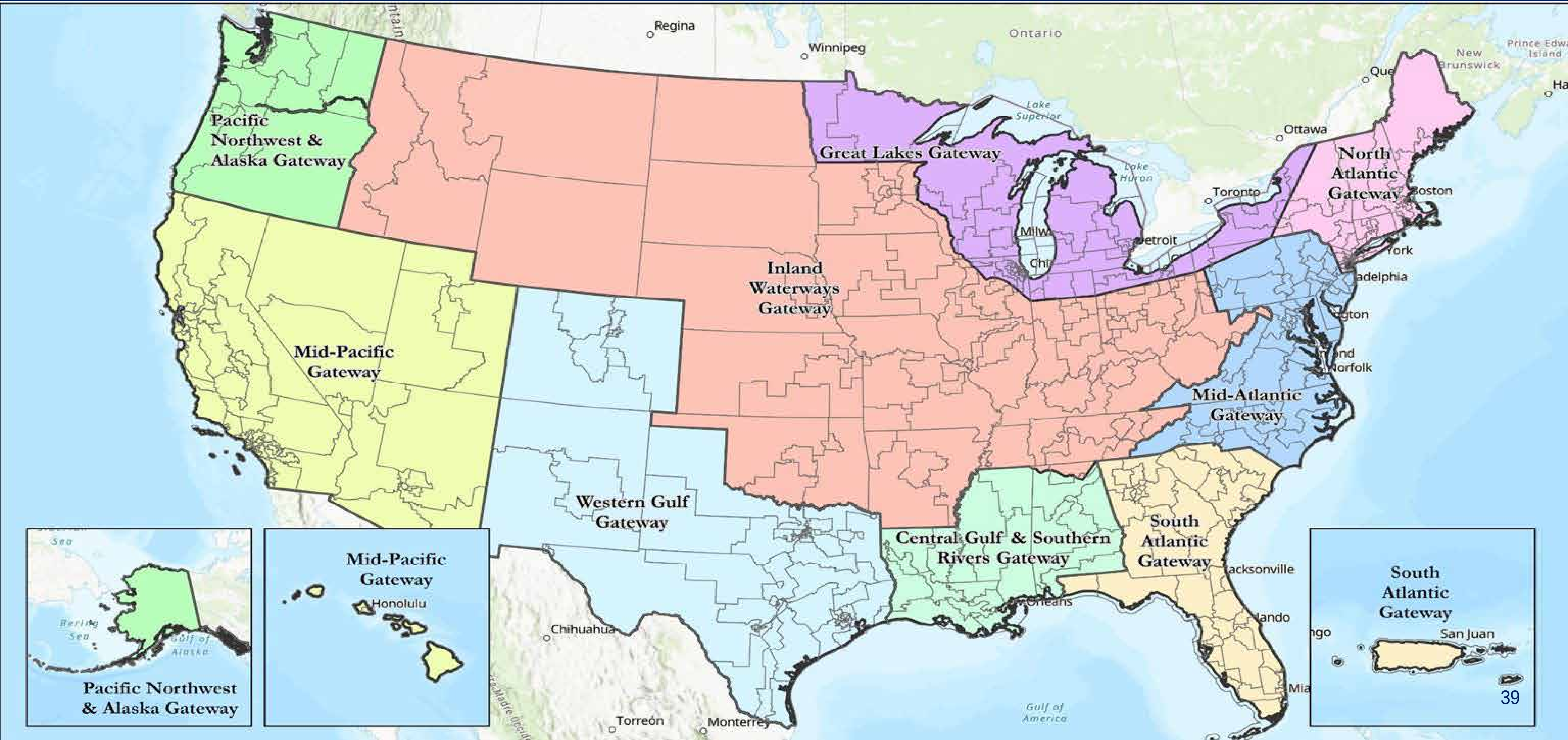
The Secretary, however, may, by statute, **increase the Federal share of costs above 80 percent** for:

(1) a grant for a project that is located in a **rural area**; or (2) a grant awarded to a **small project at a small port*** under 46 U.S.C. § 54301(b).

** A small project at a small port is $11.25M or less at ports with less than 8M tons of annual cargo, or projects in non-contiguous States and Territories*

# Regional Presence and Engagement

## With Congressional District Overlay (119th Congress)



# USDOT Navigator Website

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A resource to help communities understand how to

- **Apply** for grants
- **Plan** for, and
- **Deliver**

**Transformative infrastructure** projects and services.

Go to: www.transportation.gov/navigator

**Funding Dashboard**

- Search 90+ grant programs
- Customize your search to identify opportunities for Tribes and rural areas
- Includes DOT / non-DOT funding sources
- Download your results!

# Maritime Workforce Development

**Recruit** | **Train** | **Retain**

Marketing & Outreach

Entry Roadblocks

Increasing Mariner Supply

Quality of Life

Pay & Incentives

**More Cargo** | **More Ships** | **More Mariners**

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# Partnership and MARAD

- Understanding local conditions helps MARAD support maritime needs.
- A goal is to provide consistent and stable funding, technical assistance, and capacity building to Alaska Natives to advance maritime and intermodal projects.

*The National Geographic Sea Bird ship at dock*
*Ko'Kwel Wharf, Coquille Indian Tribe, OR*



https://www.klcc.org/politics-government/2023-11-02/federal-grant-money-expected-to-boost-coquille-tribes-maritime-commerce-and-trade-opportunities

# Contact Information


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