



New TxDOT Grant Opportunity for Rail Crossing Safety

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Good Afternoon,

Yesterday, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) opened the new *Off-System Rail Grade Separation State Fund Program*, [a first-of-its-kind initiative](#) created by SB1555 and backed by \$250 million in state funds.

The program provides grants to local governments for projects that eliminate at-grade rail crossings or construct new overpasses and underpasses, saving lives, reducing congestion, and supporting local economic growth. The program emphasizes collaboration and readiness, rewarding projects that demonstrate strong community support, coordinated rail engagement, and local matching funds. Importantly, it targets *off-system* crossings, filling a critical safety and mobility gap that federal programs often overlook.

Eligible Applicants

Potential applicants include counties, cities, special districts, and school districts that has jurisdiction over the project's location, authority to undertake the project, and authority to enter into an agreement with TxDOT.

Application Timeline

The Preliminary Application is due quickly, November 14, and is designed to capture high-level project details, enabling a TxDOT Project Evaluation Committee to assess funding eligibility, challenges encountered by the community by the rail grade crossing, benefits created by the proposed project, and initial project readiness.

If a proposed project is selected for further evaluation, project sponsors will then complete a Detailed Application. The Detailed Application requests additional details, including, but not limited to, project complexity, project costs, letters of support, a conceptual layout or design plan if applicable, and ability to meet non-State match requirements.

Project Eligibility

To be eligible for funding under the program, a project must:

1. be for the construction of a grade separation structure that will either eliminate one or more adjacent at-grade rail-highway crossings or provide a grade separated pedestrian-rail crossing;
2. be located *off* the state highway system (roadways that are not under TxDOT's jurisdiction);
3. increase public safety, enhance economic development, or reduce traffic; and
4. constitute a logical, self-contained unit of work that can be constructed as an independent project whether it is proposed as an independent project or as apart of a larger transportation project.

Program funding may be used for the following:

- Planning, detailed design activities including preparation of construction plans, environmental, right of way (ROW) acquisition, and utility adjustment
- Project construction

Through the Call for Projects, selected projects will be recommended to the Texas Transportation Commission for final approval and awards.

Tips for Competitive Applications

- Engage railroads early to secure written coordination or agreements.
- Demonstrate community consensus with letters from officials, businesses, and residents.
- Ensure shovel-readiness, early design and right-of-way progress improve competitiveness.
- Use current cost estimates and specify funding commitments clearly.
- Coordinate with MPOs for inclusion in a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) if within metro boundaries.
- Document economic impact (jobs, connectivity, freight movement) and safety benefits with data.

More information can be found [here from the TxDOT Webinar Recording](#).

The link to the [Preliminary Application](#) is Here.

This new program reflects a broader national trend of states stepping up to complement federal rail investments, programs like FRA's National Rail Partnership, Rail Crossing Elimination (RCE), and CRISI grants. Together, these initiatives show that railroads and policymakers alike are taking grade-separation safety seriously.

If your community is considering a project under the TxDOT program, I'd be glad to answer questions or help you connect with railroad partners.

Brett Sebastian

Texas State Director

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