

FY 2026 Passenger Ferry Grant Program, Electric and Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot, and Ferry Service for Rural Communities

Applicant and Proposal Profile

Is this a resubmission due to an invalid/error message from FTA? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Is this application for:

(If applying to two programs, please select both boxes)

- ☐ Passenger Ferry Grant Program (FTA-2026-005-TPM-Ferry)
- ☐ Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program (FTA-2026-007-TPM-FERRYPILOT)
- ☒ Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program (FTA-2026-006-TPM-FerryRural)

If applying to more than one Ferry program, applicants should enter information for the applicable programs on this form but **Must** submit the application package including the Supplemental Form and attachments, to **Each** respective Opportunity ID on Grants.gov. That is, complete one form, but submit it to each program in Grants.gov.

Section I. Applicant Information (NOFO Section 4)

Organization Legal Name:

FTA Recipient ID Number:

Organization Chief Executive Officer:
(name and direct phone number)

- Applicant Type: ☐ Designated or Eligible Direct Recipient of 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funding
- ☒ State or Territory
- ☐ Local Governmental Authority
- ☐ A Federally-Recognized Indian Tribe

- Project Location: ☐ Large Urbanized Area (200,000+ people)
- ☐ Small Urbanized Area (50,000-199,999 people)
- ☒ Rural (less than 50,000 people)

Description of services provided and areas served:

Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS) was established in 1960 as an extension of MaineDOT. The MSFS provides the primary links between the mainland and six rural, unbridged island communities in the Midcoast and Downeast regions of Maine, on the central part of the coast. Residents of Frenchboro, Islesboro, Matinicus Isle, North Haven, Swans Island, and Vinalhaven rely on travel by ferry for access to jobs, schools, and goods and services on the mainland, as well as for emergency medical transportation. Affordable, reliable public ferry service facilitates the delivery of goods and services vital to these year-round island communities, including food, fuel, mail, building materials, and emergency supplies. The closest island served by the MSFS is Islesboro, 3 miles from the mainland, and the farthest is Matinicus Isle, 22 miles off the coast. Because of the distances, costs for food and energy are high for Maine's rural island communities, contributing to a relatively high cost of island living, overall. The MSFS owns and operates seven ferries, all of which carry vehicles and walk-on passengers. The ferry is vital to the community and economic development of locations serviced, providing access to jobs and educational opportunities. In at least one location, Islesboro Central School draws students from the mainland. During the school year, the ferry

provides free transportation to and from school for staff and students. Enrolling children from the mainland, who choose to go to school on the island, helps to keep the school viable. The ferry supports students traveling to classes and extracurricular activities on the mainland. Workers heading to jobs on the islands and island residents who work on the mainland also rely on the ferry. MSFS is a primary component for getting to the mainland for medical appointments. They carry vehicles hauling goods for every day use on the islands, such as food and cleaning supplies.

The Maine State Ferry Service Maps attached to this application shows on page one the route that allows us to qualify to apply. The second page shows the locations of the different terminal locations for the Maine State Ferry Service. For this application the project areas are the terminals located on the islands of Vinalhaven and North Haven.

Congressional Districts (Project Location)

Congressional District

ME-002

Section II. Project Information (NOFO Section 4)

About the Project

Project Title:
(Descriptive title of this project)

Maine State Ferry Service Rural Terminal Modernization Project

Project Executive Summary:

Maine DOT is seeking \$8,000,000 for a \$10,000,000 project. Maine Department of Transportation will provide the required matching funds.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), through the Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS), is seeking funding to improve critical ferry terminal infrastructure at the Vinalhaven and North Haven ferry terminals. These facilities provide essential, year-round access for island communities and are vital for the transport of passengers, vehicles, freight, and emergency services.

The proposed project at the two ferry terminals of Vinalhaven and Northhaven will:

- Rehabilitate or replace transfer bridge superstructures.
- Upgrade aging and unreliable electrical systems.
- Improve overall system reliability, safety, and state of good repair.

Will you need a Buy America waiver? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- Propulsion Type:
- ☐ Battery electric
 - ☐ CNG
 - ☒ Diesel
 - ☒ Diesel-electric hybrid
 - ☐ Electricity (including electricity from solar energy)
 - ☐ Fuels (except alcohol) derived from biological materials
 - ☐ Gasoline
 - ☐ Hydrogen
 - ☐ Liquefied petroleum gas
 - ☐ Methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols
 - ☐ Natural Gas
 - ☐ A mixture containing at least 85% of methanol, denatured ethanol, and other alcohols by volume with gasoline or other fuels
 - ☐ Any other fuel that is not substantially petroleum and that would yield substantial energy security and environmental benefits

If other fuel, specify:

☐ Other

If Other, specify:

- Project Type:
- ☒ Facility Rehabilitation
 - ☐ Facility Replacement
 - ☐ New Facility (expansion)
 - ☐ New Vessel (expansion)

Number of vessels for service expansion:

☐ Vessel Rehabilitation

Number of vessels to be rehabilitated:

☐ Vessel Replacement

Number of vessels to be replaced:

☒ Related Equipment

☐ Operating (Rural Program Only)

☐ Planning (Rural Program Only)

☐ Other

If Other, specify:

Walk-On Passenger Information

Walk-on passengers are defined as passengers who board the vessel unaccompanied by any motor vehicle in which they may have arrived at the ferry terminal, and which remains behind after ferry departure.

For **replacement and rehabilitation projects**, please provide the number of riders that are walk-on compared to passengers using the service to transport automobiles.

Number of Walk-On Passengers:

Number of Passengers Using the Service to Transport Automobiles:

For **expansion projects**, please provide the estimated number of riders that are walk-on compared to passengers using the service to transport automobiles.

Number of Walk-On Passengers:

Number of Passengers Using the Service to Transport Automobiles:

Section III. Evaluation Criteria (NOFO Section 6)

***** Address each of the evaluation criteria as described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.*****

Demonstration of Need

Structural Deficiencies:

The transfer bridges at both terminals have exceeded the 25-year design life of their protective coating systems. The failure of these coatings has led to:

- Active corrosion and paint loss
- Section loss in critical steel members
- Accelerated deterioration due to the harsh marine environment

Observed section loss includes:

- Up to 1/16 inch in girder webs
- Up to 1/4 inch in hoist beam bottom flanges

Key structural components—including girders, hoist beams, and counterweight beams—are classified as Nonredundant Steel Tension Members (NSTM). Failure of any one of these members could result in partial or complete structural collapse.

While the bridges remain operational, continued deterioration will likely lead to:

- Load restrictions
- Emergency repairs
- Service interruptions

Electrical System Deficiencies:

The electrical systems at both terminals are outdated, inconsistent, and increasingly unreliable. Current issues include:

- Missing labels and incomplete system documentation
- Legacy repairs resulting in splices, dead-end wiring, and non-standard configurations
- Lack of as-built schematics
- Equipment that no longer meets current electrical code

These conditions have led to:

- Increased frequency of outages
- Difficult and inefficient maintenance
- Reduced reliability across the ferry system

Upon completion of this project, key information including how to maintain service and means of methods of accelerated construction will be obtained for implementing a replacement plan at the other terminals for the Maine State Ferry Service.

Demonstration of Benefits

Note: If applying to more than one program, be sure to select "yes" and provide a response to the applicable questions below.

Is this an application to the Passenger Ferry or Rural Program? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Please describe the benefits of the proposed project per the statutory requirements of the Passenger Ferry or Rural Programs:

The Maine State Ferry Service Rural Terminal Modernization Project, included in MDOT's FY 2026 Rural Ferry Grant application, will extend the safe and reliable service life of critical infrastructure at both project locations. Upgrading the transfer bridges will improve durability, prevent premature failure, and support long-term cost savings through reduced future repair needs.

The terminal improvements will also enhance operational reliability during severe weather and recovery periods, helping ensure continued ferry service when it is most needed by island residents, workers, and visitors. This project will replace an aging electrical system at both terminals and address the following:

- Missing labels and incomplete system documentation
- Non-standard configurations
- Provide up to date schematics
- Update equipment to comply with current electrical code

The results of this project should:

- Decreased frequency of outages
- Make maintenance more efficient
- Increase reliability across the ferry system

Updating bridge structural deficiencies should address:

- Deterioration due to the harsh marine environment
- Arrest active corrosion and preserve critical steel members
- Replace steel members with significant section loss
- Replace the bridge protective coating systems
- Resetting the design life to provide protection for a minimum of 25 years

Key structural components—including girders, hoist beams, and counterweight beams are classified as Nonredundant Steel Tension Members (NSTM). Benefits of the project will prevent or limit the following:

- Load restrictions
- Emergency repairs
- Service interruptions

Is this an application to the Low-Emitting Program? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Please describe the benefits of the proposed project per the statutory requirements of the Low-Emitting Program:

Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

This project is consistent with local and regional transportation planning priorities and reflects the ongoing commitment of the Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine State Ferry Service to preserve and modernize essential infrastructure serving Maine's island communities. The proposed improvements at the ferry terminals in Vinalhaven and North Haven will support reliable, safe, and cost-effective ferry operations for the residents, businesses, visitors, and workers who depend on these facilities every day.

Both terminals are considered high priorities by MaineDOT because they serve as critical transportation links between the islands and the mainland. The transfer bridges and associated electrical systems at each terminal are aging and require substantial rehabilitation to maintain dependable service. Without this strategic investment, continued deterioration could lead to operational restrictions, increased safety risks, and service disruptions. Deferring these improvements could be a safety risk, would result in higher repair costs in the future and increase the likelihood of emergency repairs that are more costly and disruptive.

Funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Rural Ferry Program will allow MaineDOT to complete these improvements in a timely and cost-effective manner. The project includes electrical upgrades that will improve lighting and support terminal operations during periods when commercial power is unavailable, enhancing both safety and resiliency. These investments will help ensure that the terminals remain functional and dependable under a wide range of operating conditions.

The project also supports an important public safety function. In addition to providing scheduled ferry service, the Maine State Ferry Service regularly accommodates emergency and unscheduled transportation needs. The island communities rely on the ferry system to transport law enforcement personnel, emergency medical staff, utility crews, and other essential responders when urgent situations arise.

For example, the Knox County Sheriff's Office uses the ferry service to transport deputies to and from Vinalhaven for patrol duties and law enforcement presence on the island. This dependable access supports public safety and contributes to the island's reputation as a low-crime community. Likewise, emergency medical personnel and patients often rely on the ferry system to reach mainland healthcare facilities when services are unavailable on the islands.

While other transportation resources, such as air ambulance services, may also be used in emergencies, the ferry system remains a vital and cost-effective component of the region's emergency response network. By maintaining dependable terminal infrastructure at Vinalhaven and North Haven, this project will strengthen transportation resiliency, protect public safety, and ensure that island residents continue to have access to essential services.

For these reasons, the project is strongly aligned with local and regional priorities to preserve safe, reliable, and resilient transportation connections for Maine's island communities and the broader Midcoast region.

Local Financial Commitment

Matching Funds Amount:

2,000,000

Provide information on the source, availability, and supporting documentation:

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is committed to providing the required non-Federal match for this project. If this grant is awarded, the State of Maine will provide the required 20 percent non-Federal share. MaineDOT's matching funds are available, unencumbered, derived from non-Federal sources, and are not being used as match for any other grant or project. This commitment is affirmed by the Commissioner of Transportation in the MaineDOT Commitment Letter.

The project is consistent with MaineDOT's Long-Range Plan and, upon award, will be incorporated into MaineDOT's Work Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to reflect the project scope and funding.

Funds invested to date have been critical to advancing MaineDOT's and the Maine State Ferry Service's goals of modernizing terminal infrastructure and maintaining these facilities in a state of good repair. However, the full social and economic benefits of

these improvements cannot be realized in a timely manner without the requested Federal funding.

MaineDOT is an experienced and responsible recipient of Federal discretionary and formula funds, including TIGER, FASTLANE, INFRA, BUILD, Bus and Bus Facilities, CRISI, RAISE, and Ferry grants. MaineDOT has a proven track record of fully funding and initiating projects well in advance of obligation deadlines and completing them before expenditure deadlines.

MaineDOT adheres to all applicable Administrative and National Policy Requirements throughout every phase of project delivery. The Department's experience managing Federal grants includes compliance with Title VI and Civil Rights requirements, Buy America, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, and the Davis-Bacon Act.

Since enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, MaineDOT has successfully managed more than \$292 million in grant funding across a variety of Federal programs. A Match Commitment Letter will be included as an attachment to this application in Grants.gov, and a signed hard copy will be provided if required.

Project Budget

Description	QTY	Federal Amount Requested	Local Match Amount	Other Federal Funds	Other	Total Cost	
Preliminary engineering	1	400,000	100,000	0	0	500,000	X

Description	QTY	Federal Amount Requested	Local Match Amount	Other Federal Funds	Other	Total Cost	
Construction Engineering	1	400,000	100,000	0	0	500,000	X

Description	QTY	Federal Amount Requested	Local Match Amount	Other Federal Funds	Other	Total Cost	
Construction	1	6,480,000	1,620,000	0	0	8,100,000	X

Description	QTY	Federal Amount Requested	Local Match Amount	Other Federal Funds	Other	Total Cost	
Contingency	1	720,000	180,000	0	0	900,000	X

Total:		8,000,000	2,000,000	0	0	10,000,000	
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Operating Support (Rural Program Only)

Rural Ferry Program applicants requesting operating assistance should complete the following based on the applicant's fiscal year.

	A. Total Operating Cost**	B. Operating Support Provided by the State	C. Fares and Other System Generated Revenues	D. Other Funding Sources*	
2017					
2018					
2019					
Anticipated*					Amount Eligible to Apply
2026					
2027					

*do not include funds anticipated through this application

** Column B+C+D=A for 2017-2019

2017-2019 Average Operating Support Provided by the State or locality:

75 Percent (minimum that must be provided) of 2017-2019 Average Operating Support Provided by the State or locality:

Project Scalability

Is Project Scope scalable? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, specify minimum Federal Funds necessary:

Provide explanation of scalability with specific references to the budget line items above:

Project Implementation Strategy

Can this project be obligated within 12 months? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Please describe the project implementation strategy:

1. Transfer Bridge Rehabilitation Strategy

MaineDOT will implement a cost-effective strategy to rehabilitate transfer bridges at two terminals. This process will make it more cost effective in future phases of this and similar projects.

Phase 1: Replacement

- Fabricate a new bascule span off-site to include a high-performance shop coatings for durability
- Transport the new span to the project location via water transport
- Remove the existing span and replace with the new structure

Phase 2: Sequential Rehabilitation and Reuse

- Transport the removed bascule span to a mainland facility
- Clean, repair, galvanize, ensure the structure is ready for service
- Transport and Install the rehabilitated bascule span to the other project location
- This approach can be used in future projects of a similar nature, resulting in overall cost saving

This approach:

- Maximizes the value of existing assets
- Reduces fabrication and material costs
- Ensures system-wide consistency
- Minimizes service disruption

The innovative approach using alternative construction methods, including in-place rehabilitation, will also be evaluated to ensure the most cost-effective solution.

Electrical System Upgrades

Electrical improvements will be implemented at both Vinalhaven and North Haven to improve reliability, capacity, and maintainability.

Scope includes:

- Replacement of conduit and cabling with marine-appropriate materials
- Installation of standardized equipment cabinets
- Upgraded lighting systems (bridge and dolphin structures)
- Replacement of transfer bridge electrical components (controls, indicators, etc.)
- Shore power system upgrades
- Installation of larger standby generators

Site-Specific Improvements:

- Vinalhaven: Generator installed in existing generator building
- North Haven: Generator installed in existing building with structural modifications (floor strengthening and enlarged access doors)

All systems will be brought into compliance with current electrical codes and will include complete record documentation to support future maintenance.

3. Miscellaneous Terminal Improvements

Additional improvements at each site may include:

- Concrete repairs to substructures
- Localized steel repairs and touch-up coatings
- Mechanical system upgrades
- Adjustments to improve durability to tidal and storm events

Project Timeline and Proposed Milestones (Please be as specific as possible)

Timeline Item Description	Timeline Item Date
Maine DOT Kick off	05/11/2026
Award announcement	10/01/2026
Agreement approved	12/01/2026
Preliminary engineering begin	10/01/2026
Construction engineering	02/01/2028

Construction begin

02/01/2028

Construction Completed

12/31/2031

Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

MaineDOT is the lead agency responsible for managing and funding all transportation modes statewide. The statewide agency, with about 1,600 employees, expends or disburses more than \$900 million annually, including federal, state and local funds. As part of its mission, MaineDOT provides regular, reliable ferry service to six coastal Maine islands through the Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS). The operations of the MSFS support the 2,500 year-round residents and thousands of seasonal residents and visitors who rely on ferry transportation for access to services goods, and jobs on the mainland, as well as for emergency medical transport to the mainland.

Staff have combined decades of experience in meeting and successfully dealing with Federal grant requirements. MaineDOT has no outstanding findings from its 2021 State Management Review and is current with all required FTA filings including annual certifications and assurances.

A vital part of its mission is maintaining the infrastructure to ensure continued safe and reliable ferry service. MaineDOT has undertaken multiple projects of the size and scope described in this grant application, including in recent years a rehabilitation of the ferry terminals on Vinalhaven island, Frenchboro island, Swans Island and Bass Harbor, a mainland terminal serving the islands off the coast of Mount Desert Island, home to Acadia National Park.

This project could not be included in MaineDOT's latest Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) because of a lack of funding. If this project is selected for funding from the Rural Ferry Program, it can be added to the STIP before formal grant award. The FTA can rely on MaineDOT to execute a grant agreement for this project within 12 months of award and fully obligate awarded funds without major risk. There are no other public or private parties involved in delivering this project.

Section IV. Additional Considerations (NOFO Section 6)

Opportunity Zones

Is this project located in or does it serve one or more Opportunity Zones?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, identify the Census Tract Number(s) of the Opportunity Zone(s):

If yes, describe how the proposed project will impact the Opportunity Zone(s):

Benefits for Families and Communities

Will this project benefit families with young children?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe how the project will improve access to jobs, healthcare facilities, recreational activities, and commercial activities or how the project will improve the quality of life, raise the standard of living, or enable fuller participation in the economy by families:

Maintaining service during construction is critical, as this is the primary means of transportation to the mainland for year round residence and visitors.

MaineDOT will:

- Where feasible schedule work during the off-season (fall through spring)
- Minimize closure durations through efficient sequencing
- Coordinate closely with ferry operators and island communities
- Provide advance notice and contingency planning for any service interruptions

Wayfinding Improvements

Describe how the project will include universal wayfinding tools and signage to support individuals with disabilities (including persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with sensory disabilities, and who use wheelchairs).

Wayfinding signage and tools are currently in place and meet ADA standards. While this project does not directly improve wayfinding, upgrades such as the backup generator will maintain lighting and safe navigation during power outages. Existing wayfinding infrastructure is maintained in good condition and will continue to support passenger access.

Safety and Accessibility

Will this project reduce fare evasion?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Will this project reduce crime?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Will this project improve accessibility?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe the project elements.

Accessibility features at the Vinalhaven and North Haven terminals include accessible parking, ramps, restrooms, and staff assistance for passengers with disabilities. TTY services are available through 711. This project will preserve long-term accessibility by extending the useful life of the transfer bridges and terminal facilities, which are critical to maintaining accessible ferry service.

The project locations for this grant application are in low crime areas.