



IDOT Competitive Freight Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated 2/28/23

What is the 2023 IDOT Competitive Freight Program (CFP)?

The Competitive Freight Program is a grant-based program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) that uses federal funds to improve and modernize the state's freight transportation and intermodal systems while advancing the goals of the 2023 Illinois State Freight Plan. Almost \$200 million in National Highway Freight Program funds will be available through 2026, with approximately \$50 million allocated each year.

Who is eligible to apply for the 2023 IDOT Competitive Freight Program?

Local, state or federal government agencies are eligible for the program. Interested private entities must have a public sector sponsor.

What is the application timeline?

The [application](#) period opened November 15, 2022. All interested applicants should have their application materials submitted no later than December 19, 2022 (11.59.59pm CDT).

Other important dates to remember: ISFAC reviews the project list by January 19, 2023, rankings are tentatively finalized by February 2023, and the announcement of successful projects is anticipated in Spring 2023.

Can I apply for a project that may take the full \$50 million for one year?

Yes, you can apply for any project as long as it meets the guidelines, you can provide justification, including data and documentation on any previously completed phases, and your application is submitted on time.

Can applications be printed once they are started prior to submitting?

Applications that are in progress cannot be printed. However, there is a [PDF](#) application that can be downloaded and printed to view the full application. Once you have submitted the application, a copy will be provided to you via email.

What projects qualify for funding?



Highway and intermodal projects qualify for funding.

If your project is located on the Priority Freight Network, data is made available via an interactive map as part of the applications guidelines.

If your project is not on the Priority Freight Network, please still apply; however, you will have to provide all of your data.

Intermodal projects can take place on public and private freight rail or water facilities as long as a public agency is a partner in the project.

How is the application process structured?

The application has 8 sections. For more details on contents of the application, please refer to slide 13 of the [IDOT CFP Webinar PowerPoint](#).

How are applications evaluated?

For more information on how Highway and Intermodal projects are to be scored and ranked please refer to slides 15 through 17 of the [IDOT CFP Webinar PowerPoint](#).

To complete the scoring of the IDOT CFP, an interactive map was created to convey scoring information/data needed to finalize the application process. A link to the map site can be found [here](#).

Please be as detailed as possible about the specifics of the project (this includes project location, diagrams/sketches, the intent of the project, project goals, etc.).

If I have any follow-up questions regarding the CFP application process, can I contact the department for one-on-one assistance?

Please reach out with any programmatic questions to: DOT.ILFreightPlanning@illinois.gov.

Please reach out with any application questions to: idotcfp2022@gmail.com

What is the difference between the Primary Freight Network (PFN) and the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) regarding eligible applications?

The Priority Freight Network was established as part of the 2023 State Freight Plan and resulting District and County Freight Plans – named the Primary Freight Network as part of this application. This network was identified based on freight data and stakeholder feedback on key



roadway networks to local freight systems. If your project is on the Priority Freight Network, you should have all of the data you need through the online mapping tool.

The Primary Highway Freight System was established by FHWA and covers the majority of interstate mileage in Illinois.

You do not need to be on either to apply for the program because we designate segments as Critical Urban or Rural Corridors which will enable any corridor to be eligible.

Are local agencies expected to take the lead in the application process for projects set to occur on a state route/IDOT ROW?

Please reach out to your local IDOT District Office to collaborate on your application if you are interested in partnering on any project or the application itself. The department will provide auxiliary support wherever possible.

Is it possible for a local agency to include Truck Parking in the application?

Yes, IDOT is willing to review Truck Parking projects and consider them if they meet funding eligibility requirements.

Can IDOT CFP funds be comingled with existing Re-build Illinois Projects?

Yes, all projects submitted through the IDOT CFP are a part of the Re-Build Illinois Capital Plan. If there is a scope change that causes costs to increase, IDOT is willing to review applications.

What is the difference between item 12 (Project Diagram or Sketch) and item 13 (Location Map)?

If your project is far enough along, there may be information to add for item 12, such as any design work or a study that produced a project diagram or sketch. If not, please submit an alternate project diagram or sketch that helps define the details and intent of the project.

In item 13, we are looking for a map-type view to show the project location and limits, which may not be as detailed as the information in item 12.

If I am applying for Phase I Engineering funds, how should I fill out Questions 30 and 31?



If you are only going for Phase I funds, please provide the estimated Phase I cost and best available information for later phases. Please state estimates as “scoping level cost estimates” when possible and enter the scoping level construction cost estimate as the total in the BDE 213.

Question 34 indicates Financial Assurance Letters and Documents, what type of document is required for IDOT projects?

Question 34 Financial Assurance is only required for non-IDOT projects.

Can roadway projects count under the intermodal set-aside as “surface transportation infrastructure”?

Yes, intermodal projects include roadway projects within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail or waterway facility. See text below.

22. A highway or bridge project to improve the flow of freight on the NHFN.

In addition, any surface transportation project to improve the flow of freight into and out of a freight intermodal or freight rail facility is an eligible project. 23 U.S.C. 167(i)(5)(C). In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 167 (i)(5)(B), there is a cap on the use of NHFP apportioned funding for these freight intermodal or freight rail projects: For each fiscal year, a State may obligate not more than 30 percent of the total State apportionment under NHFP for these types of projects. These projects include those within the boundaries of public or private freight rail or water facilities (including ports), and that provide surface transportation infrastructure necessary to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into or out of the facility. Additionally, eligibility is extended to the modernization or rehabilitation of a lock and dam or a marine highway corridor, connector, or crossing (including an inland waterway corridor, connector, or crossing) that are functionally connected to the National Highway Freight Network and likely to reduce on-road mobility source emissions.

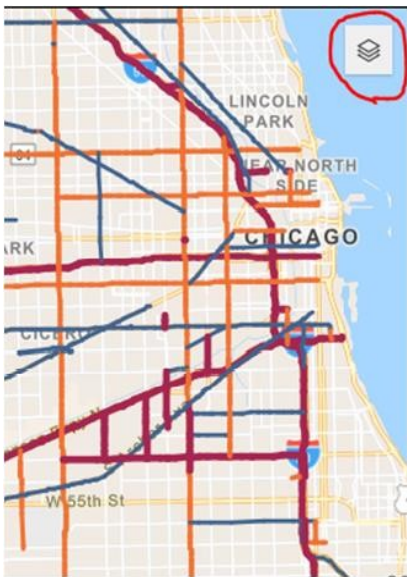


Does the interactive map allow the user to locate intermodal terminals?

Yes, please see below.

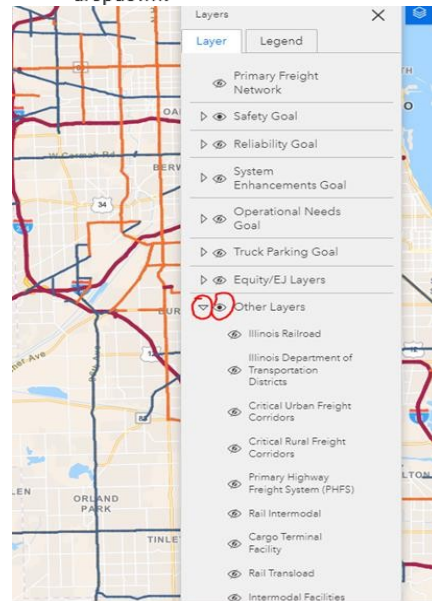
Step 1.)

- In the righthand corner, click the layers icon.



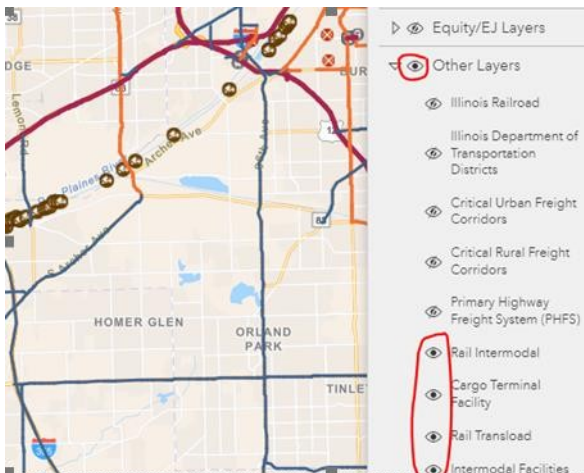
Step 2.)

- From there, click on both the arrow and the eye further down next to the "Other Layers" dropdown.



Step 3.)

- Near the bottom of the "Other Layers" dropdown, you will find four intermodal options: Railroad Intermodal Facilities, Cargo Terminal Facilities, Rail Transload Facilities, and Intermodal Facilities designated by NHS. Click on the eye next to those layers of interest. Be sure to have both sets of eyes on simultaneously. If there is a slash through the "Other Layers" eye, you will not be able to see the subsequent layers found below.





Can projects that applied for and received CFP funding in 2018 receive funding in 2023?

Yes, projects that received CFP funding previously may receive funding again as long as current costs and scope of work are up to date. The proposed project also has to comport with federal funding requirements as well.

Is there a match component?

Yes, up to 20% of the project can be matched. However, this is contingent on the above mentioned project criterion being met.

Does the CFP application process require that all letters of support be uploaded with the application by the December 19th deadline?

IDOT will accept letters of support after the application period closes on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should attempt to inform the department in advance if they believe that they will be receiving letters of support after the deadline. The letters should be submitted electronically as soon as possible after 12/19/2022 to Janel Veile at Janel.Veile@illinois.gov.