

**Office of Railroad Transportation**  
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October 8, 2018

SUBJECT: Notice of Funding Opportunity for LIFTS program - \$1.3 million

The Linking Iowa's Freight Transportation program (LIFTS) is a \$1.3 million grant funding opportunity to improve Iowa's multimodal freight transportation system.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law in 2015 and expands the eligibility of multimodal freight projects for federal transportation funding through the establishment of a National Highway Freight Program (NHFP). Up to ten percent of Iowa's NHFP apportionment may be used on freight intermodal or freight rail projects. The Iowa Transportation Commission has chosen to award this funding through LIFTS, a competitive grant application program.

The purpose of the LIFTS program is to provide grants for projects that help meet the changing demands on Iowa's multimodal freight system. The program will provide funding for freight projects that have economic and public benefit by enhancing the shipment of freight but are typically ineligible for state or federal highway funding. The funding program is designed to:

- (1) Enhance economic development by improving the multimodal freight transportation system.
- (2) Provide flexible funding for the changing demands of the freight transportation system.
- (3) Enhance the ability to provide competitive transportation options for shipment of products and moving goods.
- (4) Provide incentives to alternate modes for economic development opportunities.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

The LIFTS program is open to transportation providers/users, cities, counties, planning organizations and any other entity interested in freight transportation. The FAST Act requires that projects funded by the LIFTS program be carried out under the same rules and procedures as a highway project on a federal-aid highway.

Applicants will fall under one of two categories:

- Public applicants or public-private partnerships
  - Eligible for 80% grant funding
- Private applicants
  - Eligible for 50% grant funding

**Application Process and Award Timeline:**

**Application:** Applications will go through a review/scoring process and a recommendation will be presented to the Iowa DOT Commission for approval with final awards expected in May 2019. All applicants must submit a Minority Impact Statement along with their application, as well as all the attachments spelled out within the application. Completed applications must be postmarked or emailed by 5:00 p.m. December 10, 2018.

**Webinar:** In 2017, during the first round of Federal LIFTS funding, the Iowa DOT hosted a webinar outlining the LIFTS program in detail, which was recorded and is available online. It is important to note that we are no longer requiring a pre-application. To learn more about this grant opportunity, to obtain the application, or to view the pre-recorded webinar, please visit <https://iowadot.gov/iowarail/financial-assistance/lifts>. For specific questions, please contact Laura Hutzell at [laura.hutzell@iowadot.us](mailto:laura.hutzell@iowadot.us) or (515)-239-1066.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stuart Anderson".

Stuart Anderson, Director  
Planning, Programming and Modal Division