



US Marine Highway Program



Application deadline: 08/31/2026



Available funding: \$10.8M

The US Marine Highway Program funds projects that provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation and promote marine highway transportation



Goals and merit criteria:

The DOT defines marine highways as a network of navigable waterways, including rivers, bays, channels, coasts, the Great Lakes, open-ocean routes and the Saint Lawrence Seaway System. The U.S. Marine Highway system currently includes 35 U.S. Marine Highway Routes that serve as extensions of the surface transportation system.

Applications will be evaluated based on their alignment with the following statutory merit criteria:

- Demonstrating the Need to Develop, Expand, or Promote Marine Highway Transportation or shipper use of Marine Highway Transportation (as determined by market need, project need, and project impact)
- Expanding the Benefits of Marine Highway Transportation (as determined by landside congestion relief, economic competitiveness, alternative to landside transportation, or safety improvements)
- Measuring Project Support
- Leveraging Federal Funding and Financial Viability (including by demonstrating the presence of non-federal funding source(s) that are stable, dependable, and dedicated to the specific project)

US Marine Highway Program Details

Grants may be used for capital projects, development phase, or Marine Highway Transportation Planning Activities

Match funding
requirement: 20%¹

Direct Pay
applicability: No

Eligible grant uses

- i) provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation
- ii) mitigate or relieve landside congestion
- iii) promote Marine Highway Transportation or use approved vessels
- iv) develop or expand Marine Highway Transportation or shipper use of Marine Highway Transportation
- v) development phase activities, such as planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, preliminary engineering and design work, development of master plans, and other preconstruction work

Award amounts	Minimum award	No award minimum
	Maximum award	No award maximum
	Period of performance	Performance reporting continues for three years after Project construction is completed
Previous awards (national)	2025 awards	11 awards (\$13M)
Previous awards (MI)	2025 awards	1 award (\$560K)

1. Projects located in rural areas or grants to an eligible entity that is a Tribal government may be eligible for reduced cost share. Rural areas are those outside of a 2020 U.S. Census-designated urban area with a population of 50K or more.
Source: [Marine Highway Program Notice of Funding, FY2010-2024 USMHP Awards](#)

High level requirements to apply for a Marine Highway grant

Marine Highway grant applications are open to local governments, transit authorities, and private sector operators



Eligible Entities

- States
- Political subdivisions states or local governments
- Metropolitan planning organizations
- United States port authorities
- Tribal governments
- Private sector operator of Marine Highway Projects or private sector owners of facilities with an endorsement letter from the current Marine Highway Route Sponsor



Key Grant Application Components

- SF-424
- Project Narrative (20-page limit)
- Letter of Financial Commitment
- Route Sponsor Endorsement Letter
- SF-424C

Examples of past winners



Planning for the SS Badger's Low Carbon Future Project (2023)

Applicant: Lake Michigan Carferry, Inc.
States: Michigan and Wisconsin
Funding: \$600,000

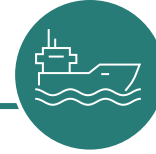
Project description: Grant awarded to support carbon capture feasibility study for historic 71-year-old coal-fired steamship ferry



M-90 Transbay Marine Highway Equipment Acquisition Project (2022)

Applicant: Fincantieri Marine Group, LLC
State: Wisconsin
Funding: \$3.3M

Project description: Funds will go towards acquisition of three types of equipment that will facilitate the safe, sustainable, and efficient transfer of project cargoes from shore to vessel and back to shore



Attachments for Port of Monroe's Manitowoc MLC165 Crawler Crane (2025)

Applicant: Port of Monroe
State: Michigan
Funding: \$559K

Project description: Funds will go towards the acquisition a purpose-built hydraulic clamshell bucket and a telescopic container spreader bar. The clamshell bucket will support the movement of synthetic gypsum, bottom ash, and other bulk materials, while the spreader bar will enable containerized cargo operations