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MDOT 1052 (03/2026)

ONE-TIME MICHIGAN RAIL HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is launching a one-time Railroad Heritage Preservation Program to help preserve and improve historic and heritage rail operations across the state. The program provides competitive grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to support capital improvements to existing rail infrastructure used for heritage or historical rail operations that promote Michigan railroad history. Such operations include those that make historically significant equipment available to the public and/or re-create rail operations of the past.

Section 753 of the Fiscal Year 2026 Enacted Budget requires MDOT to establish a railroad heritage program from the funds appropriated in Part 1 to provide funding through a competitive grant program to qualified tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 USC 501, for the promotion of railroading in this state with a focus on Michigan railroad history.

Up to \$5,294,700 is available through grants that can cover up to 80% of fixed in-place rail infrastructure that supports existing heritage or historical rail operations. Grant funds may be used only for capital infrastructure repair or rehabilitation, including fixed in-place rail assets that support existing heritage or historic rail operations. Examples may include track, bridges, rail yards, rail buildings, or related infrastructure. Grant funds cannot be used for operating expenses, rolling stock, or new rail construction.

501(c)(3) organizations that provide or support heritage or historical rail operations in Michigan are eligible to apply. Proof of 501(c)(3) status must be included as part of the application. For projects located on property not owned by the applicant, a Letter of Support from the property owner also must be included as part of the application. Applicants can submit multiple applications, not to exceed a total grant request of \$2,500,000.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to projects that best meet the program goals, as established by Section 753 of the Fiscal Year 2026 Enacted Budget. MDOT will also assess the relative impact of the proposed projects on heritage and historic rail operations, any known historical significance of the operations and the project's impact on MDOT Office of Rail goals, including public safety and freight rail operations. Applications that propose to provide more than the minimum 20% match will be viewed favorably.

Grant recipients will be responsible for following all state and federal laws/regulations, including [railroad clearance requirements](#), [crossing surface maintenance requirements](#), and environmental laws/ regulations enforced by Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy. Communication with communities that may be impacted by projects is always encouraged, and may be required, depending on the nature of the project.

Additional requirements may apply to projects on MDOT-owned rail property. Applicants with proposed projects on MDOT-owned rail property should include in the application the maximum distance of any earthwork from the existing centerline and ballast line and indicate any variance from [MDOT Specifications](#). MDOT will complete the preliminary review for archaeological, historic and threatened/endangered species impacts for proposed projects on MDOT-owned rail property. Any additional surveys or regulatory clearance deemed necessary as a result of that preliminary review will be the responsibility of the grant recipient.

Project selections will be made within 30 days of the application deadline. It is expected to take six to eight weeks to award a contract after projects are selected. Contracts must be in place by September 15, 2026. Grantees will receive 50 percent of the grant funds upon award of the contract. Grantees are eligible for up to two progress payments as documented costs are incurred with a final payment of at least 20 percent of the grant award held until a final inspection is completed by MDOT. Costs typically cannot be incurred in advance of the contract. Projects must be completed within three years of the contract award.

For more information or assistance with the application, contact Nikkie Johnson at JohnsonN15@Michigan.gov or (517) 243-6937.

Applications must be submitted by May 22, 2026, via e-mail to:

Alex Nikoloff

NikoloffA@Michigan.gov

**ONE-TIME MICHIGAN RAIL HERITAGE
PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

Complete this form to request funding through the one-time Michigan Rail Heritage Preservation Program. Please attach additional information as necessary. All attached materials will be considered part of the application. Please note that all information provided for the purposes of this application and potential project is subject to public disclosure, in accordance with MCL 15.233 (Freedom of Information Act).

APPLICANT INFORMATION	
APPLICANT/COMPANY FULL LEGAL NAME	CONTACT PERSON, TITLE
PRINCIPAL OFFICE ADDRESS	CONTACT PERSON'S E-MAIL ADDRESS
FEDERAL TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	CONTACT PERSON'S PHONE NUMBER
IS THE APPLICANT A QUALIFIED TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION UNDER SECTION 501 (c)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986, 26 USC 501? (Please note the eligibility requirement and include relevant documentation.) YES NO	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
PROJECT LOCATION (Please attach map to depict project location and, as appropriate, project limits)
DOES THE APPLICANT OWN THE PROPERTY? YES NO (If no, please include a letter of support from the property owner.)
DESCRIBE THE PROPOSED PROJECT (For example, the proposed project will repair x for the purposes of... Attach plans/drawings, as applicable to depict project, as well as a detailed estimate. Please note that eligible projects are limited to capital infrastructure repair or rehabilitation, including fixed, in-place rail assets that support existing heritage or historic rail operations.)
DESCRIBE THE APPLICANT'S EXISTING HISTORIC AND/OR HERITAGE RAIL OPERATIONS AND HOW THE PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO IMPACT THOSE OPERATIONS (Quantify existing customers/visitors and any projected impacts)
DOES THIS PROJECT INCLUDE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE (If so, please describe) YES NO

PLEASE QUANTIFY AND DESCRIBE ANY POTENTIAL FREIGHT RAIL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT. INDICATE IF THE PROJECT WOULD IMPACT AN EXISTING FREIGHT RAIL CORRIDOR, FREIGHT RAILROAD(S), EXISTING FREIGHT COMMODITIES AND VOLUMES AND ANY ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

WILL THE PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACT TRAIN COUNTS OR CHANGE THE PROFILE AT ANY EXISTING PUBLIC ROADWAY CROSSINGS AND/OR NECESSITATE THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW CROSSING? (If yes, please submit [MDOT Form 1425](#) with a detailed explanation of the proposed work at the crossing and include with this application.)
 YES NO

WILL THE PROPOSED PROJECT MAINTAIN REQUIRED CLEARANCES NEAR RAILROAD TRACKS? (If no, exemptions should be requested through [MDOT Form 1401](#) and included with this application.)
 YES NO

DESCRIBE THE PROJECT'S IMPACT ON RELEVANT COMMUNITIES? (Please include any planned outreach efforts, particularly for any potential adverse impacts)

PLANNED CONSTRUCTION START/END DATES:

PROJECT FUNDING

GRANT REQUEST (MAXIMUM 80% ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS)	TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST
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LIST OTHER PROJECT FUNDING SOURCES

PROJECT FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE	CONFIRMED OR PENDING

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that the application, including attachments, is true and complete.

NAME	TITLE
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SIGNATURE	DATE
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