



Recommended Best Practices for Fiscal Year 2026

These recommendations provide guidelines on how to improve the environmental review and permitting process for large infrastructure projects. They offer strategies and practices aimed at enhancing transparency, predictability, and accountability in the permitting process, while ensuring environmental protection.

Statutory Requirements

The Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (Permitting Council) is required to issue annual recommendations on best practices for improving the federal permitting process for “covered projects” under Title 41 of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41). Each lead agency and participating agency for FAST-41 covered projects must submit to Congress and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) an annual report assessing agency performance in implementing these best practice recommendations.

Prior Best Practices

The Permitting Council has issued best practices annually since 2017. Past best practices for fiscal years (FY) 2017-2024 can be found [here](#).

Fiscal Year 2026 Recommended Best Practices

The Permitting Council issues three recommended Best Practices pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 4370m-1(c)(2)(B).

- ▶ Develop or enhance innovative information technology solutions to improve the efficiency and predictability of the environmental review and authorization process.
- ▶ Participate in an interagency effort to inform development or enhancement of performance measures regarding the efficiency and timeliness of environmental review and authorization activities.
- ▶ Identify, understand, and address causes of delay in the environmental review and authorization process.

Read the full **FY26 Recommended Best Practices** [here](#).

Best Practice Categories

FAST-41 provides that the Permitting Council's best practice recommendations may be issued under the following categories:

- i.** enhancing early stakeholder engagement, including -
 - I.** engaging with Native American stakeholders to ensure that project sponsors and agencies identify potential natural, archeological, and cultural resources and locations of historic and religious significance in the area of a covered project; and
 - II.** fully considering and, as appropriate, incorporating recommendations provided in public comments on any proposed covered project;
- ii.** ensuring timely decisions regarding environmental reviews and authorizations, including through the development of performance metrics;
- iii.** improving coordination between federal and non-federal governmental entities, including through the development of common data standards and terminology across agencies;
- iv.** increasing transparency;
- v.** reducing information collection requirements and other administrative burdens on agencies, project sponsors, and other interested parties;
- vi.** developing and making available to applicants appropriate geographic information systems and other tools;
- vii.** creating and distributing training materials useful to federal, state, Tribal, and local permitting officials;
- viii.** in coordination with the Executive Director, improving preliminary engagement with project sponsors in developing coordinated project plans;
- ix.** using programmatic assessments, templates, and other tools based on the best available science and data; and
- x.** addressing other aspects of infrastructure permitting, as determined by the Council.

How to Get Started

Ready for a transparent, predictable and accountable permitting process for your project? Visit [permitting.gov](https://www.permitting.gov) to connect with our team of experts for pre-application consultations, or simply email us at FAST-41@permitting.gov to get started. 

