

FAQs about Fix America's Schools Today

What is Fix America's Schools Today (FAST)?

The FAST Act provides funds to schools to modernize and repair their facilities. The average U.S. public school building is 40 years old, and many are much older. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the current condition of the public school infrastructure in the US earns a D letter grade. This legislation allocates \$25 billion to elementary and secondary schools and \$5 billion to community colleges for facility repairs and renovations. Since the need for school maintenance and repair nationwide amounts to nearly \$270 billion this legislation is desperately needed.

How much will the FAST Act cost?

This legislation will cost \$30 billion on the one hand, but will save billions of dollars on the other. The \$30 billion is estimated to generate 300,000 jobs. With employment, the cost of unemployment insurance is eliminated and local, state and federal taxes are earned from wages and salaries paid. Facility system and component replacements and upgrades have the potential to reduce annual operating costs, saving local and state districts billions.

How can the federal government pay for FAST when it is in debt already?

Although the federal government is spending more than it is raising in revenue, due to slow economic growth, it must continue to spend to ensure a healthy future for our country. FAST is a practical way to reduce our deferred maintenance debt to our children and grandchildren and employ thousands of unemployed construction workers and facility professionals.

How much money will my school district or community college get?

The White House released a preliminary table of the [Distribution for FAST](#) funds. 40 percent of K-12 repair and modernization funds would be allocated to the 100 largest high-need school districts in the country. The remaining 60 percent would be allocated to the State Educational Agencies who apply for funds and the states will distribute the funds to local school districts, including public charter schools based on Title 1 allocations.

How will applications for funding from FAST be judged?

Grant applications should be considered based on the following eligibility requirements: the percentage of poor children; need for school repair and renovation; limited school district fiscal capacity; estimate of new jobs or extra hours created by the project; and estimate of energy savings.

Who will hold school districts and community colleges accountable for spending FAST well?

Under the FAST Act, each LEA is required to report to the SEA within 60 days of the completion of the school improvement project with extensive information around the project. Additionally, the SEA is required to report to the Secretary of Education within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year with detailed information around each school improvement project served by this Act. This legislation also requires a report by the Secretary of Education and the GAO.

Isn't school facility funding a local and state responsibility?

The Federal government's role with FAST is to support local community efforts to modernize, renovate, and repair local schools. Decisions about specific school modernization, renovations and repair projects are made at the local and state levels.

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What kinds of projects can be funded by FAST?

FAST Act funds can be used for the repair and modernization of elementary, secondary and community college school buildings and grounds. Some examples of eligible uses are:

- improve air quality with updates to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems;
- remove mold and reduce energy costs with roof replacement and repair;
- support technology, mechanical systems, and electricity with an electrical system modernization;
- reduce water consumption, eliminate lead in water, upgrade bathrooms and plumbing;
- eliminate allergy and asthma triggers, contain or eliminate asbestos, and repair plaster and painting;
- replace windows to save on energy usage; and
- install solar panels, wind generators, and geothermal or other clean energy generators.
- Implement measures to reduce or eliminate human exposure to classroom noise and environmental noise pollution.

These funds can not be used to build new facilities. For a more extensive list see [S 1597 Sec 301 Definitions](#).

Does this legislation abide by Davis-Bacon and Buy America?

The legislation includes Davis-Bacon and Buy America provisions to ensure the jobs created for construction workers, building technicians, boiler repairmen, electrical workers, roofers, plumbers, glaziers, painters, plasterers, laborers, tile setters and others are fair paying, American jobs.

What kinds of jobs are likely to be available through FAST?

There are many types of workers needed to repair and renovate our public schools—carpenters, painters, glaziers, plumbers, electricians, roofers, HVAC installers and technicians, among many other facility planning, design and project managers.

Will our district have to repay FAST funds?

FAST is a grant program and school districts and states will not have to pay back the federal government or banks for these funds.