



Amtrak in Wisconsin Fiscal Year 2024



Amtrak is America's Railroad,[®] created by Congress to "provide efficient and effective intercity passenger rail mobility consisting of high quality service that is trip-time competitive with other intercity travel options." In FY 2024, the company's 22,000+ employees operated an average of almost 300 intercity trains per day along 47 permanent routes, serving a record 32.8 million passengers. Amtrak's network includes 524 regularly-scheduled stops across 46 states, 3 Canadian provinces, and Washington, DC. Partner-operated Thruway routes offer connecting service to additional communities, typically via bus.

Service & Ridership

In FY 2024, Amtrak operated an average of **16 intercity trains per day** on 3 permanent routes serving Wisconsin, with **815,061 total passengers** boarding or alighting in the state.¹ Service was provided via the following routes:²

- **State-Supported Trains**

- ***Borealis***³ — Chicago - Glenview - Sturtevant - Milwaukee (MKA & MKE) - Wisconsin Dells - La Crosse - Winona - St. Paul-Minneapolis (*1 round trip daily*)
- ***Hiawatha*** — Chicago - Glenview - Sturtevant - Milwaukee (MKA & MKE) (*6 round trips daily*)

- **Long-Distance Trains**

- ***Empire Builder*** — Chicago - Glenview - Milwaukee (MKE) - Wisconsin Dells - La Crosse - Winona - St. Paul-Minneapolis - Fargo - Spokane - Portland / Seattle (*1 round trip daily*)

As **State-Supported routes**, the *Borealis* and *Hiawatha* are operated in partnership with the **Wisconsin Department of Transportation** (WisDOT; both), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT; both), and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT; *Borealis*), in part using partner-owned train equipment. Outside the Boston-to-Washington Northeast Corridor (NEC), Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) requires that short- and middle-distance Amtrak routes (i.e., those less than 750 miles in length) be State-Supported; in other words, sponsoring partners fund the majority of those routes' costs and make decisions about schedule, frequency, and other aspects of service. In FY 2024, sponsoring partners funded a total of \$5.3 million in operating payments for the State-Supported routes serving Wisconsin, helping support a combined total ridership on those routes⁴ of 753,723.

¹ Total equals sum of all boardings and alightings at in-state stations.

² Not all stops shown. Note that certain frequencies may not serve every station listed.

³ *Borealis* service was new in FY 2024, and began operating on May 21.

⁴ Unlike state- / station-specific ridership, total *route* ridership equals sum of all boardings and alightings divided by two.



Thruway Connections

Some Amtrak routes offer partner-operated **Thruway connecting service** and/or other interline connections to additional communities (including in Wisconsin), via either bus or other modes of transportation. Many such services are sponsored by one or more of Amtrak's State-Supported partners (including Wisconsin), or by other public entities; these connections can be vitally important in certain markets. Tickets are purchasable through Amtrak; detailed, up-to-date information on available connections can be accessed via the booking tool on Amtrak.com.

Stations

During FY 2024, Amtrak intercity trains made scheduled stops at 8 locations in Wisconsin:

Station (Code)	Ridership (Ons + Offs)	Amtrak ADA Responsibility	Amtrak ADA Compliance	Amtrak ADA Investment ⁵
Columbus (CBS)	16,047	Sole	FY 25	\$5,733,243
La Crosse (LSE)	29,832	Sole	FY 28	\$3,597,232
Milwaukee (<i>Downtown</i>) (MKE)	543,323	None	N/A	—
Milwaukee (<i>Airport</i>) (MKA)	126,756	None	N/A	—
Portage (POG)	8,258	Sole	Complete	\$2,139,381
Sturtevant (SVT)	55,896	None	N/A	—
Tomah (TOH)	14,756	Sole	FY 25	\$4,460,525
Wisconsin Dells (WDL)	20,193	Partial	FY 28	\$4,286,901
Total:	815,061	5/8	In Progress	\$20,217,283

Importantly, Amtrak is working to ensure that its stations are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Most Amtrak-served stations are decades old; many were served by other railroads before the company ever existed. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted in 1990, requires that U.S. stations be made accessible; in response, Amtrak developed an ADA Stations Program (ADASP) to bring station components for which the company is responsible into full ADA compliance. ADASP aims to ensure Amtrak provides the best possible service in the shortest possible timeframe; the program will ultimately invest a total of \$1.8 billion in up to 385 communities nationwide, including a **\$20.2 million investment in Wisconsin**. All Amtrak-responsible work is targeted for completion by the end of FY 2029.

Detailed profiles of every permanent Amtrak station stop, including current information on accessibility, can be found on the Great American Stations website: <https://www.greatamericanstations.com>.

Additional Footprint

Amtrak maintains a **crew base** in Milwaukee.

⁵ "Amtrak ADA Investment" describes Amtrak's projected total investment in compliance work over the lifetime of ADASP.

Host Railroads & On Time Performance

Outside the NEC, most Amtrak trains must travel over other “host” railroads’ tracks—and hosts generally control dispatching decisions on the tracks that they own. By law, Amtrak trains are supposed to receive preference over freight trains (i.e., priority in dispatching), but many host-dispatched trains arrive late at their destinations, and many routes do not meet on-time performance (OTP) standards established by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)—affecting millions of passengers per year.

Listed below are the Amtrak routes that operate in Wisconsin, along with each route’s major in-state host railroad(s) and full-route customer on-time performance (C-OTP)⁶ in FY 2024:

Route	In-State Host(s)	C-OTP
State-Supported		
<i>Borealis</i>	CPKC	51.6%
<i>Hiawatha</i>	CPKC	86.1%
Long-Distance		
<i>Empire Builder</i>	CPKC	55.5%

Procurement

Amtrak’s procurements are subject to “Buy America”-style domestic preference requirements, which the company is proud to meet or exceed. Nationally, Amtrak paid nearly \$4.5 billion for goods and services in FY 2024; 99% of that amount was spent domestically, and **\$18.7 million** went to vendors in Wisconsin:

Community	Amount
Milwaukee	\$7,043,227
Glendale	\$3,519,998
Mount Pleasant	\$1,297,019
Waukesha	\$1,132,474
Lake Geneva	\$1,041,874
Menomonee	\$975,674
Oak Creek	\$611,672
Janesville	\$604,279
Sheboygan	\$444,686
Madison	\$339,193
Franklin	\$234,324
Beloit	\$213,202
Green Bay	\$201,496
Brownsville	\$194,185
Rothschild	\$121,620

⁶ C-OTP measures the proportion of customers traveling on a given route who arrive at their destinations on time. Suppose that passengers board a train scheduled to make two stops, and suppose that train is on time at the first stop, but arrives late at the second. If all passengers alight at the first stop, C-OTP for that train is 100%; if all passengers alight at the second stop, C-OTP is 0%.

Community	Amount
Sturtevant	\$113,713
Fond Du Lac	\$99,182
Cudahy	\$79,480
Hartland	\$59,078
La Crosse	\$59,067
Monona	\$50,340
All Others < \$50K	\$216,489
Total WI Payments:	\$18,652,269

The single largest in-state payment category was **fuels and fuel additives**.

Employment & Compensation

At the end of FY 2024, **48 Amtrak employees** worked in Wisconsin, and the company had paid out a total of **\$4,243,947 in base wages and salary** in-state. Nationwide, Amtrak employed more than 22,000 active workers; total base wages and salaries for the year exceeded \$2.1 billion.

Current Amtrak Routes in Wisconsin

