

Local and Rural Road Safety Funding Programs

Introduction

Local and rural road agencies are often structured differently than the State department of transportation (DOT) is, typically have fewer personnel to focus on safety projects, and are often unfamiliar with Federal and State funding application processes. These factors can be a barrier to implementing local safety projects, even though these projects may be eligible for Federal safety funds.

Funding processes vary widely from State to State and year to year based on the ever-changing environment of funding and legislation. Therefore, the best sources of the latest funding information in an individual State are the State DOT Safety Engineer, State DOT Local Programs Office, State Highway Safety Office, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Rural Planning Organizations, FHWA Division Office, Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Centers, and local health initiatives or departments. Most State DOTs require local and rural road projects to compete with other statewide projects in order to receive funding. This means that local and rural road owners must be familiar with funding requirements in order to compete with other projects.

The following categories group opportunities for funding by topic. Inquiry into these funding sources may help local and rural road owners.

Engineering/Infrastructure

Funding for engineering and infrastructure-related efforts may relate to tangible (e.g., rumble strips, signing) or non-apparent (e.g., removal of fixed objects from the clear zone along a roadside) safety improvements intended to reduce the number and severity of crashes.

Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) – This funding may be used for safety infrastructure improvements during preliminary engineering, design, and construction. More information about STP funding is available at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/factsheets/stp.cfm>



STP Fact Sheet

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – The HSIP emphasizes a data-driven, strategic approach to improving road safety on all public roads and focuses on performance. The foundation for this approach is a safety data system, which each State is required to maintain in order to identify key safety problems, establish their relative severity, and then adopt strategic and performance-based goals to optimize safety for all roadways, regardless of ownership. Every State is required to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that lays out strategies to address these key safety problems.



HSIP Fact Sheet

For more information, refer to the HSIP Fact Sheet: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/hsip.cfm> or the HSIP MAP-21 Interim Eligibility Guidance: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidehsip.cfm>



HSIP MAP-21
Interim Eligibility
Guidance



Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – MAP-21 established a new program to provide for a variety of alternative transportation projects including those associated with improving transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized transportation modes. For more information, refer to the TAP Fact Sheet: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/tap.cfm>



TAP Fact Sheet

Various Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs – Several programs provide funding for to support access to Federal and tribal lands, such as:



Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs – For more information, refer to the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) Fact Sheet: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/ttp.cfm>



Federal Lands Transportation Program – For more information, refer to the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) Fact Sheet: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/fltp.cfm>



Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) – For more information, refer to the TTP website: <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/ttp/>



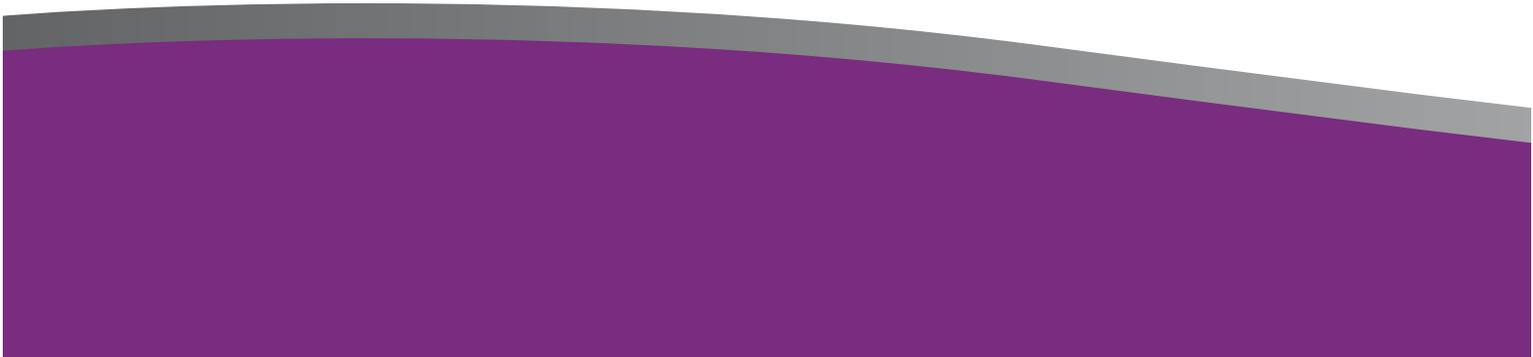
Tribal High Priority Projects Program – For more information, refer to the Tribal High Priority Projects Program Fact Sheet: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/thpp.cfm>



Federal Lands Access Program – For more information, refer to the FLAP Implementation Guidance website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guideflap.cfm>

Education and Outreach

Funding for education, training, workforce development, and outreach may support efforts to identify, collect, and analyze crash and roadway data; best practices associated with implementing safety countermeasures; and practices related to strategic contract administration, such as bundling similar contracts over several municipalities or regions.



Training and Education – MAP-21 authorizes \$24 million per year for continuation of training and education programs offered through:



National Highway Institute (NHI) – For more information, refer to the NHI website: <https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/default.aspx>



Local and Tribal Technical Assistance Programs (LTAP and TTAP) – For more information, refer to the LTAP and TTAP website: <http://www.ltap.org/>

The competitively selected centers for transportation excellence in the areas of the environment, surface transportation safety, rural safety, and project finance are also funded from the training and education funds.



More information related to training and educational opportunities can be found at FHWA's Resource Center website: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter/>

Enforcement and Comprehensive Programs

Funding related to enforcement and comprehensive, or a combination of enforcement, education, and engineering, programs may be used for behavioral safety programs such as enforcement of speed, impairment, and seat belt use. These funds can also be used to provide outreach to high risk users such as motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Highway Safety Improvement Program Funds – States have used HSIP flex funds to support a range of enforcement and education strategies identified in the SHSP. Examples include overtime safety enforcement, ignition interlock programs, work zone safety messages, safe ride home programs to prevent impaired driving, and outreach programs on the use of car seats.

23 U.S.C. 154 and 164 Transfer Funds – States in which Federal-aid highway funds are transferred based on noncompliance with 23 U.S.C. 154 “Open Container Requirements” or 23 U.S.C. 164 “Minimum Penalties for Repeat Offenders for Driving While Intoxicated or Under the Influence” can use the transfer funds on approved projects for alcohol-impaired driving countermeasures or direct the funds to State/local law enforcement to increase impaired driving enforcement. States also may elect to use the funds for activities eligible under 23 U.S.C. 148 “Highway Safety Improvement Program.”

23 U.S.C. 402: State and Community Highway Safety Grants – Supports a full range of highway safety behavioral programs, emergency medical services, traffic records improvement, non-construction aspects of road safety, speed enforcement and management programs. It also supports the following countermeasures for associated behavioral issues:

- Alcohol – high visibility enforcement, training and education of criminal justice professionals (including law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and probation officers), establishing driving while intoxicated courts;
- Occupant protection – “Click It Or Ticket” campaign, child restraint inspection stations;
- Distracted driving – educate the public through advertising containing information about the dangers of texting or using a cell phone while driving, for traffic signs that notify drivers about the distracted driving law of the State, or for law enforcement costs related to the enforcement of the distracted driving law; and

- Motorcycle safety – improvements to motorcyclist safety training curricula and program delivery, public awareness, public service announcements, and other outreach programs to enhance driver awareness of motorcyclists.

23 U.S.C 405: Occupant Protection Incentive Grants – Encourages adoption and implementation of effective programs to reduce deaths and injuries from riding unrestrained or improperly restrained in motor vehicles. Agencies may use these grant funds only to implement and enforce occupant protection programs.

A minimum of 40 percent of a State’s Section 402 funds must be expended by local governments or be used for the benefit of local governments. More information can be gained by speaking with a State’s Highway Safety Office.

Obtaining Funding

While funding local and rural road safety projects varies widely by State, there are several connecting elements that form potential avenues to obtain funding for local agencies, such as the following:

- Local safety efforts must tie with the direction of a State’s SHSP to be eligible for HSIP and 23 U.S.C. 402 funds.
- Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) coordinate Federal-aid funds for their region and may have a process to include safety into planning and grant documents.
- State and local agencies may participate in a “flexible fund” program, allowing local agencies to complete projects using State funds otherwise not permitted using Federal funds. Kansas, Oregon, and Illinois DOTs have examples of these programs.

Resources

The following resources provide more details related to intersection safety:



Local Technical Assistance Program Center (LTAP): <http://www.ltap.org/>



Federal Highway Administration, Division Office: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/field.cfm>



Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety – Local and Rural Roads Program: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/local_rural/



Federal Highway Administration, Federal-aid Essentials for Local Public Agencies: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/federal-aidessentials/>



National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, Enforcement and Comprehensive Programs information and fact sheets: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Programs+&+Grants/Resources+Guide>