

ILLINOIS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Funding Application Guidance – Cycle 2021



PURPOSE

The purpose of this guidance is to explain the requirements, eligibility, and application process of the Illinois Safe Routes to School Program.

ABOUT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) was established as a stand-alone Federal-Aid program in August 2005 through the passage of SAFETEA-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.

With the 2012 passage of MAP-21, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, the SRTS program was changed from its status as a stand-alone program and became part of the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), along with the Transportation Enhancements Program and the National Recreational Trails Program.

Funding under MAP-21, and the FAST-Act, is provided as 80% federal/20% local match. Funding is also eligible for rescission after 4 years. The FAST ACT has expired; however, federal highway programs are currently being funded under a continuing resolution.

Federal Participation for the SRTS Funding Cycle 2021 will be 80%, requiring a 20% local match.

SRTS uses a multidisciplinary approach to improve conditions for the walk or bike to school. The program has three main goals:

1. to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
2. to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
3. to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (within 2 miles) of primary and middle schools (grades K-8).

Funding for the SRTS Funding Cycle 2021 will be provided for Infrastructure projects only.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Grade Levels: Safe Routes to School projects must focus on students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. Public grade schools, middle and junior high schools and grade centers that serve these ages are eligible. High schools and early childhood centers (that serve only pre-school children) are not eligible.

Private Schools: Private and parochial schools may also apply for SRTS projects. Infrastructure projects that serve private school locations are allowed as long as they are located on the public right-of-way. This may include projects on private land that have public access easements. **ROW and Easement Costs are NOT reimbursable. Necessary ROW and Easement should be secured before a project can be considered for award.**

Application Sponsors:

Infrastructure applications may be sponsored by political subdivisions (municipalities, counties, townships) or other roadway jurisdictions. Schools and school districts may also apply for infrastructure projects provided they can demonstrate the ability to follow all federal and State of Illinois policies, directives, and laws. Schools and municipalities must work together to determine the most beneficial improvements to best enable safe walking and bicycling for students.

For the purpose of the application, the group who will be administering the project(s) must apply as the sponsoring agency. A single sponsoring agency will be responsible for administering all project components of the application. The sponsoring agency will act as the fiscal agent for all projects and will put forth the initial funds for the project. Funds will be reimbursed through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

ILLINOIS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Illinois Safe Routes to School Program is administered by IDOT's Bureau of Programming and funds infrastructure initiatives. A detailed list of eligible projects and activities appears later in this guide.

Key features of the Illinois SRTS Funding Cycle 2021 Program include:

- ✓ SRTS projects are federally funded at 80%, requiring a 20% local match.
- ✓ SRTS is a reimbursement program – The sponsoring agency is responsible for supplying the upfront cost of the project and will be reimbursed by IDOT in accordance with all procurement policies.
- ✓ All infrastructure projects must be completed within a 2 mile radius of the school.
- ✓ Each school district is limited to one infrastructure application.
- ✓ INFRASTRUCTURE applications may include one infrastructure project only. Each project has a funding limit of \$250,000. The minimum for any single infrastructure project is \$25,000. Each application will be reviewed and scored on its own merit, regardless of category or relationship to any other application submission.
- ✓ Preliminary Engineering (PE) and/or Right-of-Way (ROW) costs will **NOT** be funded as part of the project.
- ✓ All infrastructure projects must be obligated within 18 months of award announcement and construction completed and project closed by the end of three years from the date of award announcement.
- ✓ Permanently mounted solar powered speed feedback signs will be funded as infrastructure projects. Portable speed feedback trailers will NOT be funded during this cycle.
- ✓ All projects will be required to comply with applicable state and federal requirements (including but not limited to) ADA, Title 23, NEPA, MUCTD, all procurement regulations, etc.
- ✓ Because of the limited amount of federal funds that remain available, scope or funding change requests that increase the amount of funds awarded cannot be approved.
- ✓ Any unused SRTS funds remaining after the project is completed will be returned to the program. They may not be used for additional work or another project.

**Electronic application packets must be received by this office by
4:30pm CDT on Thursday, September 30, 2021.
Hard copy application packets are not required for this funding cycle.**

EVIDENCE OF CONSULTATION

Resolutions of Financial Commitment and Administration and **Letters of Support** must be obtained for all Safe Routes to School applications in order to be eligible for SRTS funds.

The following endorsements are required:

1. One **Resolution of Financial Commitment and Letter of Support** must come from the sponsoring municipal, county, regional or state roadway authority for any affected roadways. If more than one jurisdiction is involved (e.g. both county and local roads), resolutions from all jurisdictional authorities are required. The sponsoring governmental unit will be responsible for project administration, including timely bid letting and oversight of design and construction.
2. A second **Resolution or Letter of Support** must be obtained from the school district for all projects.
3. If the project will be located along or on a state route, you must also submit a **Letter of Allowance** from your local IDOT district. This letter must state that the Department will allow this project to be constructed if it is chosen for SRTS funding.

The following GATA Documentation is required to be submitted as part of the application package.

1. [GATA Uniform Grant Application](#)
2. [GATA Programmatic Risk Assessment](#)
3. [GATA Uniform Grant Budget Template](#)
4. [BoBS 2831: Uniform Grant Agreement Affidavit of Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest - Grantee](#)

Also required is a Detailed Cost Estimate, prepared by an engineer. A sample representation is included in the application.

For large files, please use <https://filet.illinois.gov/filet/pimupload.asp>
(instructions are included on the link)

Optional for all applications: Additional letters of support from other project partners (PTAs/PTOs, Local School Councils, non-profit organizations, public health agencies) may accompany any application. Also, optional, but highly recommended, is the use of Parent Surveys and Student Tallies. If used, include in your application only a summary of the results of these surveys. Please do not submit the actual survey documents.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Following is a list of fundable activities through the Illinois SRTS Program:

Eligible Infrastructure Projects:

1. **Sidewalk Improvements** – New Sidewalk, Sidewalk Repair, Sidewalk Gap Closure, Sidewalk Widening, Sidewalk Curb, Sidewalk Curb Ramp
2. **Traffic Calming/Speed Reduction** – Speed Bump/Hump/Table, Raised Crossing, Median Refuge/Center Crossing, Narrowed Traffic Lane
3. **Traffic Control Devices** – New/Upgraded Traffic Signal, New Pavement Markings, New Traffic Striping, In-Roadway Crossing Light, Flashing Beacons, Bike Sensitive Signal Actuation Devices, Pedestrian Activated Signal Upgrades, Pedestrian Countdown Signal, Permanently Mounted Solar Powered Speed Feedback Signs
4. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing Improvements** – Crossing, Median Refuge, Raised Crossing, Sight Distance Improvements
5. **On-Street Bicycle Facilities** – New/Upgraded Bike Lane, Widened Outside Lanes/Shoulders, Geometric Improvements, Turning Lanes, Channelization, Roadway Realignment, Traffic Signs, Pavement Markings
6. **Off-Street Bicycle Facilities** – Exclusive Multi-Use Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail separated from the roadway
7. **Secure Bicycle Parking Facilities** – Bike Racks, Safety Lighting, Covered Bike Shelter

Within this set of fundable infrastructure projects, the following costs are reimbursable through the SRTS 2021 Cycle Program:

Construction Costs
Construction Engineering

Preliminary Engineering and ROW Acquisition costs will NOT be reimbursed.

ROW and Easement acquisition should be completed before application submittal deadline.

Preliminary Engineering should be completed within 6 months of the awards announcement.

Obligation of construction funds must occur within 18 months of the awards announcement.

Construction should be completed within 3 years after the awards announcement.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The use of funds for projects that reorganize pick-up and drop-off primarily for the convenience of drivers rather than to improve child safety and/or walking and bicycling access is not permitted.

School bus safety programs and improvements to school bus stops are not eligible for this funding.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORTING MATERIALS

You may wish to attach additional materials that support or provide extra information related to your proposed project. This may include photos or designs of the affected area(s), school wellness policies, survey results, walking audit findings, event photographs, speed studies, etc.

While this is optional, inclusion of additional materials that help support your proposal may benefit the likelihood of your application being funded.

REVIEW/SCORING CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of the applications, a cursory review will be conducted by the SRTS Coordinator to determine eligibility and GATA compliance according to the criteria set. Applications deemed eligible will, after the application deadline, be reviewed and scored by the Review Committee. This committee will be made up of personnel from IDOT Central Office and each of the 9 IDOT District Offices. The members will score each application independently according to the following criteria – General Project Focus, Demonstration of Need, Project Detail and Cost Estimates, Hazards and Barriers. Other factors considered to calculate a final score will be Potential for Improving Walking and Bicycling, Consultation and Support, Confirmation of PE and ROW status, and Previous SRTS Award Performance. Additionally, two more objectives will be reviewed: the number of low income students impacted and the number of disabled students impacted. These objectives are based on information provided in the Illinois School Report Cards (ISBE) and will be added to the total review score to calculate a final score. The final score will determine ranking of all projects.

Announcement of Awards

After the public announcement of awards, the list of awarded projects will be made available on IDOT's website and notice will be sent through the subscription service.

Letters of congratulations and implementation guidance will be sent to all awarded sponsoring agencies.

Project Implementation and Tracking

Successful grantees will be directed to contact the appropriate IDOT district to initiate implementation of the project. Scheduled kick-off meetings with all parties will be required to

initiate the implementation of all projects. The Bureau of Programming will continue to monitor and record progress of all projects to ensure timely completion of the project.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Selected projects are required to comply with a variety of federal and state requirements. Below is a listing of key requirements that will be the responsibility of the applicant.

State Procurement Procedures: Compliance with all State of Illinois procurement regulations.

ADA: Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) includes all infrastructure requirements and making program materials available in alternative formats.

TIP: Safe Routes to Schools funds must be programmed in a metropolitan or regional planning organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MUTCD: Signage, striping and pavement marking projects must follow IDOT design and signage standards as outlined in the Manual on Universal Traffic Control Devices.

NEPA: Except in unusual circumstances, most SRTS infrastructure projects will fall under categorical environmental exclusions that recognize construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities as not involving significant environmental impacts. Where exclusions do not apply, projects are expected to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Please contact your IDOT District Local Roads office if you have questions about NEPA and your project.

Title 23: Safe Routes to School program must comply with Davis Bacon prevailing wage rates, competitive bidding, and other contracting requirements, even for projects not located within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway.

For additional information regarding the Illinois SRTS program you may contact:

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An e-mail subscription service is available to assist IDOT in communicating important information regarding the Illinois SRTS program. This is a one-way announcement service. Your email address will be kept private and not sold or otherwise distributed outside the department.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, click on the link below and send the blank email that pops up. (Do not add anything to the subject line or to the body of the email).

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