



NEWS

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Office of Public Affairs, P.O. Box 7910, Madison, WI 53707-7910
608/266-3581 FAX: 608/266-7186 www.dot.wisconsin.gov

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For information contact:

Renee Callaway, Safe Routes To School Coordinator
(608) 266-3973 renee.callaway@dot.state.wi.us

Funding Available for Safe Routes to School Projects

Applications are now available from the state Department of Transportation for federal funds to help communities set up Safe Routes to School projects, an initiative to get more children in grades K - 8 walking or biking to school rather than riding in buses or cars.

Wisconsin will receive nearly \$8 million through 2009 to fund projects that make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative. A safe walking and biking environment will encourage a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. It also will reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

"Funding is available for infrastructure-related projects, as well as for programs that educate and encourage walking and bicycling to school," said Renee Callaway, Safe Routes to School coordinator at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Examples of infrastructure improvements include new sidewalks and bikeways, traffic calming initiatives, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, and secure bicycle parking facilities. Funds are also available for projects to educate parents and children on pedestrian safety, develop a Safe Routes to School plan, implement traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools and more.

Applications are due by March 16, 2007 and grants are expected to be announced in early summer.

School officials, parent-teacher groups, local law enforcement agencies and others can find detailed information about the program and the application process online, at:

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes.htm For those just getting started, a Safe Routes to School toolkit is available online or by emailing srts@dot.state.wi.us

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Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure Application Guidelines

Overview

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement that promotes walking and bicycling to school. In 2005, the United States Congress signed into law a federally funded Safe Routes to School Program, allocating money to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The goals of the program are as follows:

- (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 of schools.

Funds are for projects for schools with children in grades kindergarten through eighth (k-8). Wisconsin will receive funds through 2009 in order to achieve the intended goals of the program. Wisconsin anticipates having approximately \$7.8 million available between now and 2009. For the current application period, it is anticipated that approximately half of those funds will be dispersed depending on the applications that are received. The remaining funds will be awarded in a second application period to be held in January 2008.

5 E's

In order to accomplish the goals of Safe Routes to School, communities should focus on the 5 E's. This comprehensive approach allows for communities to maximize the number of students walking and bicycling to school. The 5 E's are:

Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.

Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

Enforcement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors).

Encouragement – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.

Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

Desired Outcomes

- Increased bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety

- More children walking and bicycling to and from schools
- Decreased traffic congestion
- Improved childhood health
- Reduced childhood obesity
- Encouragement of healthy and active lifestyles
- Improved air quality
- Improved community safety
- Reduced fuel consumption
- Increased community security
- Enhanced community accessibility
- Increased community involvement
- Improvements to the physical environment that increase the ability to walk and bicycle to and from schools
- Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents, and other community groups, including non-profit organizations
- Increased interest in bicycle and pedestrian accommodations throughout a community

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects/activities must focus on children in kindergarten through eighth grades. Projects must be within a two-mile radius of any elementary or middle school

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for infrastructure projects include any political subdivision of the state (city, village, town or county), Indian Tribes or state agency. For infrastructure projects the applicant must be the governmental unit that has jurisdiction over the affected property.

Eligible applicants for non-infrastructure activities include any state agency, county, local governmental unit (a municipality, regional planning commission, special purpose district or local governmental association, authority, board, commission, department, independent agency, institution or office) including schools, Indian Tribes or federally recognized non-profit organizations.

Funding

While Safe Routes to School projects are 100% fundable to the limit of the project award, it is important to note that sponsors will be required to complete the project and then request reimbursement from WisDOT upon completion. It is not a "cash-up front" program. Costs incurred prior to FHWA project approval are not eligible for reimbursement.

In addition, ensure that you develop an accurate cost estimate. Any cost overruns will be the responsibility of the project applicant so it is important to have an accurate cost estimate.

Federal and State Requirements

The sponsor must follow all applicable federal and state regulations required for each phase of the project. The requirements include but are not limited to the following: Qualifications Based Selection process for design and engineering services (Brooks Act); real estate acquisition requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of

1970 and amendments; competitive procurement of construction services; Davis-Bacon wage rates; WisDOT FDM & Bicycle Facilities Handbook design guidance; ADA/ADAAG regarding accessibility for the disabled; Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Device regarding signage and markings.

Minimum/Maximum Project Amounts

Applicants are encouraged to be as cost-effective as possible. To ensure efficient utilization of local and state administrative resources the minimum award amount for infrastructure projects is \$25,000 and the minimum award amount for non-infrastructure is \$10,000. No maximum award amount has been set. However, with the amount of funds available, the ability to fund projects over \$200,000 is very limited.

Grant Cycle Timeline

December 2006 – March 2007	Applications available
March 16, 2007	Application deadline
May 2007	Safe Routes to School Selection Committee meets Recommendations made to WisDOT Secretary
Summer 2007	WisDOT Secretary approves projects Applicants are notified

Application Instructions

A Selection Committee representing experts in various fields related to Safe Routes to School will review your SRTS Application. Your answers are very important in helping the committee select the best projects. Each section of the application is designed to help us learn as much about your project as possible. Please be complete but also concise and limit your answers to Questions 1-8 to no more than 8 pages total.

Application Checklist

- Contact Information Sheet is completed and signed (may be handwritten if legible).
- Questions 1-8 are no more than 8 pages. Please double space responses and use no less than 10-point font. Copies should be one-sided and not stapled.
- Answers are brief but clear.
- Responses are numbered according to the question.
- The project/activity budget is completed (Question 9).
- A map of the school(s) is included (Question 10).
- Proposal is postmarked by March 16, 2007.
- Return three (3) copies of all required information postmarked by March 16, 2007 to:

Renee Callaway
Safe Routes to School Coordinator
4802 Sheboygan Ave, Room 951
P.O. Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707-7913

Questions/Assistance

If you need additional assistance with the application or have questions about Safe Routes to School please contact:

Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Renee Callaway, at 608-266-3973

Wisconsin Safe Routes to School Asst Coordinator, Joe Matar, at 608-266-9911

Or via email at srts@dot.state.wi.us

More information is also available online at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes.htm