



## SS4A Frequently Asked Questions

Potential applicants will find answers below to frequently asked questions about the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant opportunity.

### SS4A Grant Priorities

#### What is new in the FY24 NOFO compared to FY23?

The differences between the FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the FY 2024 NOFO are summarized in [What's New in 2024?](#)

#### What is the SS4A grant program?

The purpose of SS4A grant program is to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing and eventually eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries. The program focuses on the development of a [comprehensive safety action plan](#) (referred to as an “Action Plan”) and its implementation for all users of our highways, streets, and roadways, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators. The program provides funding to develop tools to strengthen a community’s approach to roadway safety and save lives and prevent serious harm.

#### What are the DOT priorities when reviewing grants for award?

For Planning and Demonstration Grants, DOT seeks to make awards based on safety impact, equity, and additional safety context.

For Implementation Grants, DOT seeks to make awards to projects and strategies that:

- Save lives and reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries;
- Incorporate equity, engagement, and collaboration into how projects and strategies are executed;
- Use effective practices and strategies; and
- Consider climate change, sustainability, and economic competitiveness in project and strategy implementation.

If the application includes supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities, DOT will also assess whether the applicant has described the scope of work, the roadway safety issues that

necessitate further Action Plan development, and how those activities will inform an Action Plan.

The Department may consider the following award considerations when selecting Implementation Grants: project readiness, percentage of funds towards underserved communities; applicants in rural areas; applicants identified as a priority community within the federal Thriving Communities Network; applicants that enhance the geographic diversity of Implementation Grant award recipients; Federal funding requests \$10M or less; finalized Action Plan that includes all components in Table 1 by April 2024; and applicant has a Killed and Serious Injuries per \$1 million in Federal funding rate is high compared to other Highly Rated applications Budget costs are a consideration for both Planning and Demonstration and Implementation Grants.

### **What does it mean that SS4A is a “J40 Initiative-covered” program?**

The Biden-Harris Administration created the Justice40 Initiative to confront and address decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities. The initiative allows USDOT to identify and prioritize projects that benefit rural, suburban, tribal, and urban communities facing barriers to affordable, equitable, reliable, and safe transportation. The [NOFO](#) is consistent with the Office of Management and Budget and DOT definitions of a disadvantaged community designation. Learn more about the [Justice40 initiative](#).

### **I see that an affiliation with a Thriving Communities Network is a selection consideration for Implementation Grants. How can I verify if my community is affiliated with a Thriving Communities Network?**

The [Thriving Communities Network](#) includes technical assistance programs led by federal agencies including the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Energy (DOE), and Transportation (DOT) to support urban, rural, and Tribal communities with a history of economic distress and systemic disinvestment. Please review the resources below to identify whether your community qualifies:

- [USDA Rural Partners Network](#)
- [DOE Priority Energy Communities](#)
- DOT Communities: [Thriving Communities Program](#), [Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program](#)

### **SS4A Grant Types**

#### **What types of grants are available under the SS4A program?**

The SS4A program provides funding for two types of grants:

- **Planning and Demonstration Grants** provide Federal funds to develop, complete, or supplement an [Action Plan](#). Having an Action Plan in place is the foundation of the SS4A grant program. The goal of an Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribal area, or region. Planning and Demonstration grants may also fund supplemental Action Plan activities and/or demonstration activities in support of an Action Plan. See the [Planning and Demonstration Activities](#) page for more information.
- **Implementation Grants** provide Federal funds to [implement projects and strategies](#) identified in an eligible Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. Projects and strategies may be infrastructural, behavioral, and/or operational activities. Implementation Grant funding requests may also include project-level planning and design activities, supplemental Action Plan activities in support of an existing Action Plan, and demonstration activities in support of an Action Plan. Applicants must have a qualifying [Action Plan](#) that meets the eligibility requirements to apply for Implementation Grants.

**If we want to apply for both implementation *and* supplemental planning, which application option should we use?**

Apply for an Implementation Grant, which can also include supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities. These types of activities are “Category A” activities in your Implementation Grant Supplemental Estimated Budget and should also be clearly articulated in your narratives. Planning and Demonstration Grants do not include implementation activities.

**If I want to apply for only the demonstration activities (e.g., safety education behavioral demonstration) to inform the strategies in my completed Action Plan, should I apply under the Planning and Demonstration Grant or the Implementation Grant?**

While demonstration activities are eligible within either grant type, Implementation Grants MUST include carrying out projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan. Demonstration activities inform an Action Plan and are not carrying out projects and strategies. If you are *only* applying for demonstration activities, you should apply under the Planning and Demonstration Grant type.

**Eligibility to Apply**

**Who is eligible to apply for Safe Streets and Roads for All grants?**

Eligible applicants for all grants are:

1. A metropolitan planning organization (MPO);
2. A political subdivision of a State (e.g., cities, towns, counties, special districts, certain transit agencies, and similar units of local government);

3. A federally recognized Tribal government; or
4. A [multijurisdictional group of entities](#) described in (1) through (3).

For an Implementation Grant, eligible applicants listed above must also meet at least one of the following conditions:

1. Have ownership and/or maintenance responsibilities over a roadway network;
2. Be an eligible applicant with safety responsibilities that affect roadways; or
3. Have agreement from the agency that has ownership and/or maintenance responsibilities for the roadway within the applicant's jurisdiction.

Please see the [Eligible Applicants for SS4A](#) page and the [NOFO](#) to determine applicant eligibility.

### **Are U.S. territories eligible to apply for SS4A grants?**

Eligible SS4A applicants include political subdivisions of a State or territory, federally recognized Tribal governments, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). U.S. territories are considered to be States for the purposes of SS4A eligibility and are not eligible to apply for SS4A funding. However, subdivisions of territories (e.g., municipalities, towns, counties) are eligible applicants.

### **If my community does not have a history of high roadway collisions, deaths, and injuries, could it still be selected for an SS4A award?**

Yes, it is possible to not have a high number of roadway deaths and serious injuries and still receive a Planning and Demonstration Grant or an Implementation Grant.

The selection criteria for a Planning and Demonstration Grant are primarily based on three quantitative ratings: 1) number of roadway fatalities from 2017-2021; 2) the fatality rate (per 100,000 population); and 3) percent of the jurisdiction's population that resides in an Underserved Community Census tract. These ratings will be compared against other applicants to determine funding recipients.

The selection criteria for an Impamentation Grant include safety impact, which can be demonstrated in multiple ways. This can include historical crash data, as well as risk models, hazard analysis, the identification of high-risk roadway features, roadway safety audits/assessments, and/or other proactive safety analyses. Implementation Grant applications must also provide information on historical crash data where projects and strategies are to be implemented.

### **Must a project be in an Underserved Community to receive SS4A funding?**

No. Projects within Underserved Communities is one of multiple additional considerations for an award but is not a requirement.

**If a community is awarded a Planning and Demonstration Grant to develop a new Action Plan in FY24, would they—in general—be positioned to apply for an Implementation Grant in FY25?**

Unlikely. FY24 award recipients who are developing new Action Plans should expect between 18 months and 3 years to complete an Action Plan using SS4A funds, which includes the time to establish a grant agreement and the time to develop an Action Plan. Action Plans themselves may take between 12 to 24 months to be completed. Implementation Grant applicants must have an eligible, complete Action Plan in place to be eligible to apply. However, applicants may seek additional Planning and Demonstration funds while their Action Plan is being developed to carry out supplemental planning or demonstration efforts.

**What does having a safety Action Plan that is “in progress” mean for applicants interested in applying for a Planning and Demonstration grant?**

Being “in progress” means that your jurisdiction has already started the process of developing the various Action Plan components found in Table 1 of the [FY24 NOFO](#) (e.g., gathering and analyzing safety data, performing public outreach, considering equity impacts). Previous year SS4A Action Plan Grant award recipients would have plans that qualify as “being in progress,” as well as communities that are developing Action Plans that meet the SS4A components but are being created without SS4A funding. Given that eligible demonstration activities and supplemental planning efforts must ultimately inform an Action Plan, we will consider funding requests for demonstration or supplemental planning activities only from applicants who already have an existing plan or are working to develop an Action Plan.

**Can an MPO apply for a regional Planning and Demonstration Grant after some of our member jurisdictions received FY22 or FY23 Planning and Demonstration Grants?**

Yes. Higher-level jurisdictions (e.g., MPO, county) may apply to develop new safety Action Plans even if member jurisdictions were previously awarded SS4A funds to develop safety Action Plans. In the application, clearly describe the plans to coordinate with member jurisdictions who received previous year SS4A awards to avoid duplicative planning efforts, the boundaries of the new Action Plan, and whether the boundaries overlap with any existing safety Action Plans.

If multiple communities within the higher-level jurisdiction want to apply using the same Action Plan separately, they are permitted to do so.

Please review the [Multijurisdictional and Potentially Duplicative Applicants page](#) on the SS4A website for more information.

**If an Action Plan is done at the county/MPO level, can a municipality within the county/MPO apply directly for demonstration activities through a Planning and Demonstration Grant, or funding for projects and strategies? Do those applications need to go through the county/MPO?**

Municipalities and other eligible applicants whose boundaries are within the scope of another jurisdiction's Action Plan may apply directly for a Planning and Demonstration Grant for demonstration activities, provided the higher-level jurisdiction's Action Plan's geographic boundaries covers the eligible applicant's jurisdiction, the proposed activities are coordinated with the higher-level jurisdiction, the application demonstrates such coordination, and the demonstration activities will inform the higher-level jurisdiction's Action Plan.

As part of the application, the lower-level jurisdiction must indicate whether they are coordinating with the higher-level jurisdiction. USDOT encourages applicants to include documentation, such as a letter or Memorandum of Understanding, affirming coordination among jurisdictions.

**Can eligible applicants use a plan developed by a State, Federal district, or territory to apply for an SS4A Implementation Grant?**

In certain instances, yes, provided that the plan developed by the State or territory agency has a community-scale level of detail akin to plans created by eligible applicants (e.g., a city, county) and meets the eligibility requirements (see the [Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet](#)).

Plans developed to meet Federal requirements are not eligible plans.

State-level plans (e.g., a Strategic Highway Safety Plan required in [23 U.S.C. § 148](#), State Highway Safety Plans required in [23 U.S.C. § 402](#), Commercial Vehicle Safety Plans required in [49 U.S.C. § 31102](#)) and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans in [49 U.S.C. § 5329](#) cannot be used as an established plan to apply for an Implementation Grant.

**Can multiple departments from the same County submit different applications?**

An eligible applicant may submit only one application to the funding opportunity (either a Planning and Demonstration Grant or an Implementation Grant). In most cases, different offices within a jurisdiction would be considered as the same applicant (e.g., the public works, police, and planning departments within a jurisdiction cannot each apply separately).

**How to Apply**

**Are applications on Valid Eval able to be saved and returned to, or does everything have to be uploaded at once?**

Yes, Valid Eval has a saved draft feature.

**If an agency is having a consultant help with the application process, is there a way to let the consultant log in to help or can only the one primary contact sign in?**

Applicants may only have one username and password associated with an individual SS4A application.

**Are there examples of completed applications or eligible Action Plans we can review?**

Unfortunately, successful grant proposals are not posted on the SS4A website, however some award recipients will make their grant narratives available online. Applicants may also want to consider contacting previous SS4A award recipients to learn more about their projects. Other resources include:

- The SS4A website [cumulative awards map](#) allows applicants to look up successful awardees across the country.
- Lists of [FY22](#) and [FY23](#) awards are also available for download on the SS4A website, which include total Federal funding amounts, project descriptions, and applicant type.

No previous SS4A award recipients have completed their Action Plans to date; however, information on how to develop an Action Plan is available on the [SS4A Resources](#) page.

**Can I apply through Grants.gov instead of Valid Eval?**

No. Applications submitted via Grants.gov will not be considered.

**When will applicants would be notified if they were selected or not for the first and second deadlines for Planning and Demonstration Grant applications?**

The Department anticipates making three rounds of awards for this NOFO: a first round in May only focused on applications requesting Planning and Demonstration Grant awards; a second round that will encompass Implementation Grant as well as Planning and Demonstration Grant awards in August; and a final round by November 17 only focused on Planning and Demonstration Grant awards. When awards are announced, all applicants will be notified whether they were selected or not.

**Application Materials**

## **Can we use our own method to determine whether a Census tract is an underserved community?**

No. Per the [NOFO](#), underserved communities are defined as any Tribal land; any territory or possession of the United States; or U.S. Census tracts identified in one of the following tools (may select only one option to identify underserved communities):

- The [USDOT Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#); or
- The [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#).

You must use one of these methods to identify which Census tracts are underserved communities and provide screenshots or other documentation as part of your application package. For instructions on how to use these tools see the [Calculating Percentage of Population in Underserved Communities Fact Sheet](#).

## **I have questions about how to fill in certain parts of the SF-424 forms. Where can I find more information on which elements are required?**

See the [Standard Forms Fact Sheet](#) for more detailed information.

## **Should I include letters of support with my application?**

Letters of support are optional and should be directly relevant to supporting the narrative. Letters of support from elected officials who are not directly involved in the implementation of a grant are discouraged. For Implementation Grant applications that propose projects and strategies on roadways where they do not have ownership or maintenance responsibilities, or safety responsibilities over that roadway, a letter of intent is required from the agencies with roadway ownership or maintenance responsibilities. The Leadership Commitment component of an Action Plan should be clearly shown in the Action Plan and/or the self-certification eligibility worksheet, and not via a separate Letter of Support. In addition, supporting documentation is encouraged to demonstrate coordination for multijurisdictional applications.

If you include letters of support in your application, they should be addressed to Paul Teicher, Program Manager for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program, consolidated into a single PDF attachment, and uploaded to your application in Valid Eval.

## **What is the SS4A map requirement for Implementation Grant applicants?**

Implementation Grant applicants must provide a map in PDF format that shows the location of the jurisdiction, highlights the roadway network under the applicant's jurisdiction, the jurisdiction's High-Injury Network or equivalent geospatial identification of higher risk locations, and potential locations or corridors where the applicant is proposing to implement projects and/or strategies.

## **When I select my jurisdiction in the ETC Explorer tool, the population shown does not match our listed population. What do I do?**

Both the [Equitable Transportation Community Explorer \(ETC\) Explorer tool](#) and the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening \(CEJST\) Tool](#) use Census tracts as the unit of measurement. While not all project, municipal, county, or MPO boundaries correspond to Census tracts, the tool will select the entire tract if the boundaries of the area that you select cut through a portion of a Census tract. For this reason, the jurisdiction population may be larger than the population count that you generally use for your community. If this impacts your fatality rate data significantly, you may address that discrepancy in your application narrative. For more information on using the tools, please see the [Calculating Percentage of Population in Underserved Communities Fact Sheet](#).

## **Our Action Plan uses locally sourced crash data for 2016-2020, and not 2017-2021 crash data. Can we use different years other than 2017-2021 in our application?**

- For the [fatality rate calculation](#) at the jurisdiction level, you must use 2017-2021 crash data. FARS is the preferred source for crash data because it helps with consistency in comparing applications, but if you have a data source that you feel is more accurate or appropriate, you may use it, as long as you provide the source of the data for the 2017-2021 time period.
- For the [project area crash data](#) for Implementation Grant applicants, 2017-2021 crash data is also required (see the [NOFO](#)). Crash data should be derived from 2017-2021 FARS data, or another local data source illustrating the safety issue being addressed. You may need to use local data to identify crashes in the project area and/or to identify serious injury crashes within the project area.
- If there is information about crash trends from your Action Plan that is worth noting, but based on a different 5-year timeframe, you may include that information in your narrative. Please be sure to cite the source of that data.

## **Grant Awards, Funding, and Match**

### **How much funding is available?**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the SS4A program and approved \$5 billion in advanced appropriations. For fiscal year 2024, \$1 billion has been made available for grants under the SS4A program, plus an additional approximately \$257 million for funding for Planning and Demonstration grants, or supplemental planning and demonstration activities in Implementation Grant requests, that was carried over from FY 2023.

**Is there any advantage to submitting a Planning and Demonstration Grant application in the first round on April 4<sup>th</sup> compared to the other application rounds in May and August in FY24?**

Over \$1.2 billion is being made available for FY24 SS4A grants, of which at least \$461 million is expected to be set aside for planning and demonstration activities. Funds will be awarded to applications submitted after each deadline. Funding awards in later deadlines will be contingent on the availability of remaining funds. There is no reserved amount for later deadlines.

**If DOT does not award all available funds this round, will leftover funds roll over into the next round?**

Yes. If funds are not fully awarded in this round of funding, DOT would likely include them in the next round. If funds are rolled over, they must meet the same requirement that 40% of funding goes to Planning and Demonstration activities and 60% goes to Implementation activities.

**Is there a minimum or maximum award size?**

There is no statutory minimum or maximum. However, the [NOFO](#) provides expected minimum and maximum ranges for each applicant type and DOT may award less than the total amount requested by the applicant. When considering the appropriate funding request, DOT recommends an applicant consider the level of effort to administer a Federal grant and the associated administrative requirements when developing the budget.

For Planning and Demonstration Grants, award amounts will be based on total estimated project costs, with an expected minimum of \$100,000 in SS4A funding and an expected maximum of \$10,000,000 in SS4A funding. The Department expects larger award amounts for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), applicants that are multijurisdictional in scope, or those conducting activities in a large geographic area.

For Implementation Grants, DOT expects the minimum award will be \$2,500,000 in SS4A funding and the maximum award will be \$25,000,000 in SS4A funding.

**The expected Implementation Grant award range is \$2.5 million to \$25 million, but there is also wording in the NOFO about special considerations for requests under \$10 million. Are projects over \$10 million less likely to be awarded funding?**

Implementation Grant applications requesting less than \$10 million may receive additional consideration as part of Implementation Grant award selection. Other considerations include percent of funds to underserved communities, applicants from rural areas, priority communities included in the Thriving Communities Network, places that enhance the geographic diversity of the Implementation Grant award selections, applicants that have a

finalized comprehensive safety action plan (i.e., goes beyond a qualifying plan requirements in the Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet and meets all the components in [Table 1](#)), and/or applicants that have a high killed and serious injuries (KSI) per \$1 million in Federal funding rate.

### **Can I apply for and/or receive multiple SS4A awards?**

Each funding round, applicants may submit one application, for either a [Planning and Demonstration Grant](#) or an [Implementation Grant](#). Implementation Grant applications may [include supplemental planning](#) and [demonstration activities](#) provided the application also includes implementing projects and strategies from an eligible Action Plan. Applicants must be eligible to apply for the grant type they are submitting under (see “[Eligibility to Apply](#)” above). If an applicant is unsuccessful in receiving an Implementation Grant during the Implementation Grant deadline for FY24, they may apply for a Planning and Demonstration award before the final FY24 Planning and Demonstration Grant deadline. However, if they receive a partial Implementation award for only Planning and Demonstration funding, they may not apply for additional Planning and Demonstration funding during the last round.

Applicants who have already received an SS4A grant award in previous years may apply again for an additional SS4A award in future years. For example, applicants who received Planning and Demonstration Grants or Implementation Grants in FY22 or FY23 may apply for additional SS4A funding for new activities in FY24, FY25, and/or FY26.

### **Can we apply for a new Action Plan *and* supplemental planning and Demonstration activities? Can the Action Plan be awarded and not the additional activities?**

Yes, an application to develop a new Action Plan that includes supplemental planning and demonstration activities will be evaluated as a single application and reviewed according to the criteria for Planning and Demonstration Grants. However, at the Department’s discretion, it may separate the project into component pieces and only award funds for specific components of an overall application.

### **What kind of funds can make up the local match?**

A local match of no less than 20 percent of the total project cost is required for all SS4A grant funds. Local match may include both cash as well as in-kind contributions. Details on cost-sharing and match can be found in [2 CFR 200.306](#).

Further guidance, illustrative examples, and guidance about how to calculate match, view the [Matching Funds for SS4A Grants](#) page.

**Can we use community development block grant (CDBG) funds to serve as local match?**

No. Funds that originate at the Federal level are not eligible to be included as part of local match. Please see the [Matching Funds for SS4A Grants](#) page for more information on eligible sources of match funding.

**If an MPO pays employees using Federal funds, can staff time still be used for in-kind?**

No. Eligible match must come from non-Federal sources. Staff salaries and benefits funded by Federal sources would not be an eligible match.

**Can unrecovered indirect costs be used to meet the 20% local match requirement for SS4A?**

Unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of the local match, in accordance with [2 CFR 200.306](#). Applicants proposing indirect costs must:

- Provide an indirect cost rate letter from your Federal cognizant agency as a supporting document; and
- Document how the indirect costs are being applied to the non-Federal match.
- Please see the [Matching Funds for SS4A Grants](#) page for more information.

**If a State participates in a multijurisdictional effort, can their contribution count as an in-kind match as opposed to asking for a cash match?**

Yes, a State's participation in a multijurisdictional effort can be counted as either an in-kind or cash match so long as those state funds did not originate as federal funds. Note that States are not eligible SS4A applicants but can partner with an SS4A grant recipient outside the grant agreement with the Department.

**For multijurisdictional plans, is the match requirement only for the entity who 'owns' the plan, or is it meant to spread equally among all participating jurisdictions?**

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program requires at least 20 percent of the total project funding to come from non-Federal sources. Multijurisdictional applicants can decide how to spread the non-Federal match requirement, so long as 20 percent of the overall project cost is paid for from non-Federal sources. Please see the [Multijurisdictional and Potentially Duplicative Applications](#) webpage for more about how to collaborate among entities.

**Can a Federally recognized Tribal government use Tribal Transportation Program funds as non-Federal match for SS4A grants?**

Yes. Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funds can be used as a non-Federal match for the SS4A grant program because these funds are made available in accordance with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

**Are there specific award set-asides for rural, Tribal, or other entities?**

No, there is no specific funding set aside for rural, Tribal, or other entities. However, for Implementation Grants the selection process includes consideration for applicants in rural areas, and to enhance the geographic diversity of award recipients.

**What do I need to know for hiring a contractor to support my SS4A efforts?**

Please see the [SS4A Costs and Contracting](#) document that includes several questions and answers on these topics.

**Will the State DOT Local Assistance Program administer the funds and projects, or will the local agency work directly with USDOT once funding is awarded?**

Grant agreements are between the Department and the award recipient. The SS4A program is not administered through State DOT Local Assistance Programs.

**If a previous year SS4A grant recipient applies for and receives SS4A funding in FY24 or beyond, will a new grant agreement be needed or will the existing agreement with the FHWA be amended?**

A new grant agreement will be executed for any new grant award, even if an applicant received an award in a previous funding cycle.

**Can an entity apply for an SS4A grant at the same time that they're applying for other grant funding opportunities?**

Generally, yes. We encourage applicants to leverage all available USDOT grant programs. However, if you receive multiple sources of funding for the same project, you will need to clearly delineate which sources fund which components or phases. Additionally, required local match requirements must be met individually for each source of Federal funds; local match cannot be double-counted across multiple Federal awards.

**Can I use multiple sources of Federal funds to complete an SS4A project?**

Yes. It is important to note that SS4A funds are administered predominantly under [2 CFR 200](#). Projects funded with SS4A funds have different requirements and reimbursement processes

than the requirements that applicants may be familiar with for projects administered under [Title 23 of the United States Code](#), such as projects under Federal-aid highway formula programs. Generally, when SS4A grant funds are combined with funds for programs administered under Title 23, U.S.C. (Title 23 funds) for a specific project, the requirements in Title 23, U.S.C. apply to the entire project.

Applicants that intend to combine SS4A funds with Title 23, U.S.C. funds should expect a significant delay in executing a grant agreement. For that reason, DOT recommends that SS4A grant funding and other Federal funding sources either pay for different phases of project development or, if applicable, for different construction contracts within the scope of a project involving multiple, distinct roadway corridors. For example, a recipient may use Title 23 funds for the design phase of a project and then apply SS4A grant funds for the construction phase.

Costs of activities intended to meet the matching requirements of the SS4A program, including costs of another phase of project development, must meet eligibility criteria for all Federal funds being used and are to be included in the total project cost calculation for Federal share/non-Federal match of the project. Matching contributions must comply with [2 CFR 200.306](#), including that the match for a Federal award must not be included as contributions for any other Federal award.

## **Eligible Plans and Projects**

### **What activities are eligible for funding under a Planning and Demonstration Grant?**

For a Planning and Demonstration Grant, eligible activities and costs are as follows:

- Creating or updating an existing Action Plan: Costs include only those that directly assist in the development of an Action Plan.
- Conducting supplemental planning: These costs must support the development of a new Action Plan or enhance an existing Action Plan.
- Carry out demonstration activities: Costs from these types of activities must be used to inform an Action Plan by testing a proposed project and strategy to determine their potential benefits and future scope. These activities must be temporary in nature. Costs associated with completing the required data collection and evaluation of these activities are eligible.

For more information about eligible activities for Planning and Demonstration Grants, check out the [Eligible Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Activities webpage](#).

### **What activities are eligible for funding under an Implementation Grant?**

Implementation Grants *must* include activities that carry out projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan. Projects and strategies must be infrastructure, behavioral, and/or operational

activities identified in the Action Plan and must be directly related to addressing the safety problem(s) identified in the application and Action Plan. Applications must identify the problems to be addressed, the relevant geographic locations, and the projects and strategies they plan to implement, based on their Action Plan or established plan. This should include specific intervention types to the extent practical. Please see the [Implementation Grants webpage](#) and the [NOFO](#) to determine Implementation Grant activity eligibility.

Implementation Grant applicants are encouraged to also include [supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities](#) in support of an existing Action Plan. Supplemental planning and/or demonstration activities included in an Implementation Grant do not need to be directly connected to the proposed projects and strategies, and may address different safety problems or be a different geographic scope, so long as they will inform an Action Plan.

**What is the difference between supplemental planning and demonstration activities under eligible activity (A)—and the planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan—funded through an Implementation Grant under eligible activity (B)?**

Supplemental planning activities under eligible activity (A) support or enhance an Action Plan. The final deliverable for supplemental planning is a written product that connects to, and enhances, an Action Plan and is publicly available. Similarly, Demonstration activities under eligible activity (A) inform an Action Plan by testing proposed project and strategy approaches to determine their potential benefits and future scope. Demonstration activities must measure potential benefits through data collection and evaluation and inform an Action Plan's list of selected projects and strategies and their future implementation. The final deliverable for Demonstration activities is an updated Action Plan that contains an assessment of demonstration projects and their impact on safety.

Planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan (B) support project-level design or implementation and are not focused on improving an Action Plan or informing an Action Plan's list of priority projects and strategies. A project-level environmental review or the construction design of a project are two such examples. Planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan (B) can only be funded through an Implementation Grant. Project or strategy-level planning, design, and development activities must be directly connected to the completion of projects and strategies funded through an Implementation Grant.

**For Implementation Grants, if we want funding for design and pre-construction planning of infrastructure safety projects, do those costs belong under budget item (C) carrying out projects and strategies or (B) planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies?**

Conducting planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan are under eligible activity (B), conducting planning, design, and development

activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan. This includes design work associated with construction and should be noted as such in the budget submission of the narrative for Implementation Grants. The construction portion of the costs for carrying out infrastructure safety projects would be listed under eligible activity (C). Project or strategy-level planning, design, and development activities must be directly connected to the completion of projects and strategies funded through an Implementation Grant.

### **Will USDOT review my Action Plan to see if I can apply for an Implementation Grant before I apply?**

Yes. New in FY24, potential Implementation Grant applicants may submit their Action Plan(s) for pre-application review so that USDOT may affirm their eligibility to apply for an Implementation Grant.

Learn more, including how to request a review, on the [SS4A Pre-Application Action Plan Review](#) page.

Applicants are expected to provide accurate information and must meet the standards and submit the supporting documentation outlined in the [Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet](#) as part of both an Implementation Grant application and Planning and Demonstration application funding only supplemental and/or demonstration activities. USDOT reserves the right to review plans and request additional information to affirm that a plan meets the eligibility criteria.

Complete pre-application submissions must be received by **April 17, 2024**.

### **Does an eligible Action Plan have to be a single plan, or could an applicant for the SS4A program point to several studies or plans already in place that fulfill the elements of the Action Plan for the purposes of applying for an Implementation Grant?**

The necessary elements may be found in more than one existing plan or document for this funding round. State-level Action Plans, including but not limited to Strategic Highway Safety Plans, State Highway Safety Plans, and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans, cannot be used as an established plan. Please see the [Comprehensive Safety Action Plans Page](#) for more about what plans are [eligible](#) and [not eligible](#).

### **Does an Action Plan have to involve the entire community, or can it focus just on an especially problematic area?**

The goal of an Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a locality, Tribal area, or region. Action Plans should cover an entire community and be comprehensive in nature. They are not the same as a feasibility study, or a road safety audit for one corridor. DOT generally expects Action Plans to be broader than just one neighborhood or problematic area. However, an eligible applicant could apply for

supplemental planning and demonstration funds for a subpart of a community if such a focus would best meet the needs of the applicant.

**I have one unsafe corridor/location I want funding to address. Is this the right grant program to do so?**

If you have an existing, eligible community-wide Action Plan in place that identifies the need for the safety improvements you are seeking to address, a project to address the unsafe corridor may be eligible for an SS4A Implementation Grant. Alternatively, supplemental planning can focus on a specific area of concern or safety problem.

If you do not have an existing Action Plan in place, you are encouraged to work with others in your area to develop a multijurisdictional application that encompasses a broader geographic area, which could include the unsafe corridor of interest. Other grant opportunities at DOT or working with your State or local government to address the safety issue may also be better suited for addressing one specific corridor or problem area. These types of opportunities are outlined in the [DOT Navigator](#).

**Do the Implementation Grant selection criteria prioritize system-wide safety approaches over site specific projects?**

The scope and scale of eligible safety projects and strategies can range from specific spot treatment to corridors to interventions across a broad geographic area. The selection criterion Safety Impact includes the extent to which an application “employs low-cost, high-impact strategies that can improve safety over a wide geographic area.” Applicants are encouraged to consider systemic approaches to the extent they address a community’s safety problems.

**Who is required to "adopt" the Action Plan? Is it the City Council?**

Applicants must adhere to their own local standard practice for adopting plans, studies, and obtaining approvals from the necessary authorities (e.g., City Council, signed by Mayor or Town Manager, etc.)

**Can individual agencies reference a state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan that sets a Vision Zero goal to meet some Action Plan component requirements?**

No. State-level required planning efforts (e.g., a Strategic Highway Safety Plan required in 23 U.S.C. § 148, State Highway Safety Plans required in 23 U.S.C. § 402, Commercial Vehicle Safety Plans required in 49 U.S.C. § 31102, etc.) as well as Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans in 49 U.S.C. § 5329 cannot be used as an established plan to apply for an Implementation Grant.

**How long is an Action Plan effective for? Would we need to create a new plan every 5 years?**

Safety Action Plans should be periodically updated to ensure they continue to meet community safety needs. This could be in portions that change over time (e.g., updated crash information, modifying the projects and strategies list, providing a progress report to the community about the Action Plan's execution, etc.). For SS4A, an eligible Action Plan must have been adopted or updated within the last five years. If an Implementation applicant receives an award, and their plan is more than three years old, as a condition of receiving an Implementation Grant award they are required to update that plan.

**If a government body has not committed to "an eventual goal of zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries," would we have to get that as part of the implementation award?**

Yes, starting with the FY23 funding round, applicants that submit [a Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet](#) that includes a "no" response for any of the 9 checkboxes must update their Action Plan during the execution of a grant agreement to align with all the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan components in [NOFO Table 1](#) as a condition of receiving SS4A funds. You can request SS4A funds to support the updates or fund that in some other way.

**Can we use grant funds to pay for right-of-way (ROW) expenses?**

Yes, acquiring land for right-of-way to implement a project in an Implementation Grant is an allowable expense as long as the costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to achieve the objectives outlined in the scope of work in the grant award.

In acquiring property as part of a right-of-way purchase, grantees must follow local procurement guidelines and any applicable Federal requirements.

For further information about real property, including disposition, and procurement guidelines, review [2 CFR 200.311](#), [2 CFR 200.320](#), and [2 CFR 200.403](#).

**Though State governments are not eligible for Safe Streets and Roads for All grants, can local governments apply for a project or strategy along a State-maintained facility if the State agreed and signed support for the project?**

Yes. An eligible applicant must have an agreement with the agency that has ownership and/or maintenance responsibilities for the roadway within the applicant's jurisdiction to implement the project or strategy as part of an Implementation Grant.

**Are equipment purchases, including but not limited to speed radar signs, radar guns, dash-mounted radar units, speed trailers, LiDAR speed enforcement, variable message boards, and crash reconstruction equipment, available for SS4A funding, and if so, under which SS4A grant type?**

Implementation Grants fund projects and strategies that address a roadway safety problem identified in an Action Plan. Eligible activities can include infrastructure, operational, and behavioral interventions. Equipment and other purchases need to be directly related to the implementation of the project and strategy to address the roadway safety problem. Equipment could be potentially a part of a broader set of projects and strategies within an Implementation Grant if it is not using federal funds to replace general operating costs of a local government ([2 CFR 200.444](#)).

Technologies such as speed radar signs, dash-mounted radar units, speed trailers, LiDAR, etc. may be eligible for funding as a demonstration activity so long as the technologies have not yet been adopted in the community, and are commercially available, and at a prototype or advanced technological readiness level.

**Are Safe Routes to School Plans eligible for funding under the SS4A program? Do they count as a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan?**

The development of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan is broader than a Safe Routes to School Plan, and applicants requesting funds to develop an Action Plan are expected to create a comprehensive plan based on the components in Table 1 of the NOFO.

Safe Routes to School Plans are eligible for funding under the SS4A program as a supplemental planning activity. Planning and Demonstration Grant applicants requesting funding to develop a Safe Routes to School Plan will be required to either: 1) have an existing Action Plan that meets the requirements outlined in the [Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet](#), 2) have an Action Plan in-progress that will meet the requirements outlined in the Self-Certification Eligibility Worksheet, or 3) request SS4A funds to develop a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan in tandem with the Safe Routes to School Plan.

**We are developing a comprehensive safety action plan now that is nearly complete but will not be adopted until May 2024. Can we apply for an Implementation Grant in this cycle?**

To be eligible for Implementation Grants, Action Plans must be completed and adopted by the end of April 2024. If your plan is not complete before April 30, 2024, we encourage you to complete your plan and apply for an Implementation Grant in a subsequent SS4A funding cycle.

## **Program Requirements**

### **Do Federal requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) need to be completed prior to applying for an SS4A Implementation Grant?**

No. Implementation Grant applications can include a funding request to complete necessary analyses for NEPA and other environmental laws, including the NHPA, as part of an Implementation Grant under eligible activity (B) project and strategy-specific planning, design, and development activities. The NEPA and NHPA processes must be complete prior to funds being released for construction.

### **How does a grant recipient satisfy its environmental obligations?**

Grant recipients are subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. Project sponsors must conduct the applicable environmental studies to identify the project impacts along with any required mitigation. NEPA and environmental resource subject-matter experts should develop materials that identify and evaluate impacts to human and natural resources including the following:

- Low income/minority communities,
- Historic properties,
- Park and recreation lands,
- Wildlife and waterfowl refuges,
- Wetlands, and
- Threatened and endangered species and their habitats.

Project sponsors should also assess the need to obtain new rights-of-way and evaluate those impacts. If the project sponsor lacks staff with the specific skills, knowledge, and experience to conduct environmental studies, they are obliged to engage staff expertise at their State Departments of Transportation or fund consultants/contractors. Hiring consultants/contractors to directly support the execution of the grant award and its activities is considered an eligible cost under the grant.

For demonstration activities that involve feasibility studies using quick-build strategies, the Department expects most quick-build activities to receive a Categorical Exclusion designation.

FHWA's [Overview of NEPA as Applied to Transportation Projects – Environment- Federal-aid Essentials for Local Public Agencies](#) provides training materials and resources that will help applicants better understand the requirements of NEPA and other federal laws and requirements for projects administered by FHWA.

### **In what ways are rural areas and urban areas treated differently?**

DOT will take into consideration rural areas and creating a geographically diverse set of awardees when determining Implementation Grant awards. There are no specific set-aside amounts for rural and/or Tribal areas.

### **If we receive an Implementation Grant, do we need to follow State and Federal design standards for infrastructure safety projects?**

Infrastructure safety projects that receive Federal funds must abide by any applicable Federal design standard requirements, including but not limited to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, as well as any applicable guidance.

A funding recipient may also be required to follow any applicable State design standards, which will depend on whether the activities are occurring on a State-owned road and the extent to which State design standards apply to roadways owned by non-State entities such as in the instance of county-owned roads or local roads maintained and owned by a city.

Applicants should indicate in their application if they will be seeking permission to use roadway design standards that are different from those generally applied by the State in which the project is located.

### **What are the domestic preference requirements for SS4A grants?**

Infrastructure projects and demonstration activities are subject to the Build America, Buy America Act (Pub. L. No 117–58, div. G §§ 70901–70927) as clarified in [OMB Memorandum M-22-11.31](#). Additional information on construction materials requirements can be found at the [FHWA Construction Program Guide webpage](#). The Department does not expect to provide waivers related to domestic preference requirements for demonstration activities focused on piloting technologies.

### **How can I find out if my community is covered by a previous SS4A Action Plan award?**

Please refer to the [SS4A Cumulative Awards Map](#) to find out if your area is covered by an existing SS4A grant to develop an Action Plan. In the informational popup for all awards mapped, the “Grant Type” section will indicate whether the award was to develop an Action Plan.

## **Timelines**

### **If I'm awarded a grant, when will I receive the funding?**

USDOT expects to obligate SS4A funding via a signed grant agreement between the Department and the recipient within 12 months after awards have been announced. Individual recipient timelines may vary depending on the complexity of project, status of project readiness, and other factors. Funding is expected to be provided on a reimbursement basis once a grant agreement is established, with corresponding invoices.

### **Once grant recipients have established a grant agreement, how much time do they have to spend those funds and complete the work?**

The expected period of performance for Planning and Demonstration Grant agreements is between 12 months and five years, depending on the scope and extent of grant activities. The period of performance for Implementation Grant agreements may not exceed 5 years.

Last updated: Monday, April 1, 2024