

SRTPA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Process

1. Application.

Members and organizations within the Siouxland Regional Transportation Planning Association (SRTPA) will be informed when requests for STBG applications are being requested and their deadline. Members will receive an application by mail or email format. Cities between 500 and 5,000 will also receive an STBG application because they may have eligible road projects within their community. Other agencies can request an application by contacting the SIMPCO office. Applications will also be available on SIMPCO's website: www.simpco.org. Eligible entities are any public agencies with public road jurisdiction, public transit responsibilities, or transportation planning responsibilities.

All applications must be received by the application deadline so that staff has an appropriate amount of time for project evaluation. Applications are typically sent out in mid-January and due back to staff in mid-February. Any application received past its deadline will be considered for the following year's application cycle.

2. Qualifying Criteria.

Location of Projects (See 23 U.S.C. 133(c)):

- STBG projects may not be undertaken on a road functionally classified as a local road or a rural minor collector unless the road was on a Federal-aid highway system on January 1, 1991, except—
 - For a bridge or tunnel project (other than the construction of a new bridge or tunnel at a new location);
 - For a project described in the shaded box in the eligibility section below*;
 - For transportation alternatives projects;
 - For a bridge for the replacement of a low water crossing.
- Applicants should refer to the Federal Functional Classification map available at the county engineer's office, the SIMPCO office, and the Iowa DOT Northwest Iowa Transportation Center in Sioux City to check roadway eligibility.

Eligibility: To be eligible as a Surface Transportation Block Grant activity, any project or area served by the project must fit one or more of the following categories:

- Construction, as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(4) as amended by the BIL, of the following:
 - Highways, bridges, and tunnels
 - Ferry boats and terminal facilities
 - Transit capital projects
 - Infrastructure-based intelligent transportation systems capital improvements, including the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communication equipment
 - Truck parking facilities
 - Border infrastructure projects

- Wildlife crossing structures.
- Operational improvements and capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs.
- Environmental mitigation activities.
- Environmental restoration and pollution abatement activities.
- Control of noxious weeds and establishment of native species.
- Transportation pollution control measures in the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7408(f)(1)(A), excluding clause xvi).
- The addition or retrofitting of structures or other measures to eliminate or reduce crashes involving vehicles and wildlife.
- The installation and deployment of current and emerging intelligent transportation technologies, including the ability of vehicles to communicate with infrastructure, buildings, and other road users.
- Planning and construction of projects that facilitate intermodal connections between emerging transportation technologies, such as magnetic levitation and hyperloop.
- Protective features, including natural infrastructure, to enhance the resilience of a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG.
- Measures to protect a transportation facility otherwise eligible for assistance under STBG from cybersecurity threats.
- Upon request of a State and subject to the approval of the Secretary, if Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) credit assistance is approved for a STBG-eligible project, then the State may use STBG funds to pay the subsidy and administrative costs associated with providing Federal credit assistance for the projects.
- The creation and operation by a State of an office to assist in the design, implementation, and oversight including conducting value for money analyses or similar comparative analyses, of public-private partnerships eligible to receive funding under title 23 and chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, and the payment of a stipend to unsuccessful private bidders to offset their proposal development costs, if necessary to encourage robust competition in public-private partnership procurements.
- Any type of project eligible under 23 U.S.C. 133 as in effect on the day before the FAST Act was enacted (i.e., in effect on December 3, 2015).
- Public transportation projects.

Project activities included in the shaded box below are **not subject to the Location of Projects requirement described in the previous section:*

- Highway and transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs, including projects for the elimination of hazards of railway-highway crossings and installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges.
- Fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs and carpool projects.
- Recreational trails projects including maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails, pedestrian and bicycle projects.
- Planning, design, or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.
- Development and implementation of a State asset management plan for the National Highway System (NHS) and a performance-based management program for other public roads.

- Protection (including painting, scour countermeasures, seismic retrofits, impact protection measures, security countermeasures, and protection against extreme events) for bridges (including approaches to bridges and other elevated structures) and tunnels on public roads, and inspection and evaluation of bridges and tunnels and other highway assets.
- Surface transportation planning programs, highway and transit research and development and technology transfer programs, and workforce development, training, and education.
- Surface transportation infrastructure modifications to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, and access into and out of a port terminal.
- Projects and strategies designed to support congestion pricing, including electronic toll collection and travel demand management strategies and programs.
- Projects and strategies designed to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions, including project-related planning, design, construction, monitoring, and preventative maintenance.
- The installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and vehicle-to-grid infrastructure.
- Rural barge landing, dock, and waterfront infrastructure projects.
- Projects to enhance travel and tourism.
- Initiatives to halt the evasion of payment of motor fuel taxes.
- Workforce development, training, and education activities.

NOTE: For a full list of eligible items and criteria, please refer to the STBG Implementation Guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (updated June 1, 2022): www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/bil_stbg_implementation_guidance-05_25_22.pdf

Additional information can be accessed at: www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/

Projects must have an assured local (non-federal funds) match of at least 20 percent of the estimated total cost of the proposed project.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) requires a non-federal match of at least 20 percent of project costs. Assurance of this required local match by the proposer at the time of the application indicates a necessary level of support by the proposer to immediately proceed with the project development and implementation.

Projects must be submitted by counties or incorporated cities.

All BIL federal funds received by the State of Iowa will be received and disbursed by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT). STBG funds are available as a reimbursement program administered by the FHWA. Reimbursement will be received from federal highway funds for the federal portion (up to 80 percent of total expenditures) of those expenditures for the project.

3. Discussion Considerations.

Each of the following considerations is used during project selection. The considerations listed below are representative of the amount of weight given to certain aspects of the project during the application review. Each consideration is related to the questions within the application.

- I. **Is this project currently in the Long Range Transportation Plan**
- II. **Projects with an assured local (non-federal funds) match in excess of 20 percent**
The demand for Surface Transportation Block Grant funds far exceeds the amount made available to Iowa. Providing a modest incentive for proposers to exceed the minimum required local (non-federal funds) match (20 percent) will enable leveraging implementation of more projects in more locations throughout the state.
- III. **Projects with components which have already been funded and/or implemented from other funding sources, especially projects for which proposed surface transportation projects would complete a larger project, concept, or plan**
There may be a number of larger projects that are missing a key or final element. Funding these missing elements with Surface Transportation Block Grant funds would provide additional benefits to funded projects.
- IV. **Projects that have already gone through a statewide, regional, and/or local priority setting process**
In some cases, the proposed project has already been included in the list of priorities for the locality, region, or the state, but was not completed due to funding limitations. There appears to be a number of very good projects that have gone through one or more of these processes but remain unfunded or underfunded because of limitations on the availability of funding in these programs.
- V. **Projects which demonstrate a regional impact on economic development**
Does this project benefit more than one neighborhood, community, or county, or are recognized as being of regional or interregional significance? Does this project demonstrate the improvements or enhancement of the movement of freight and services?
- VI. **Project Average Annual Daily Traffic and the projected Average Annual Daily Traffic**
- VII. **Project Federal Functional Classification**
- VIII. **Does this project request funds for alternative modes of transportation and/or will use funds for planning purposes?**

4. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendation. The Transportation Advisory Committee will discuss the significance of projects, and hear any input from Transportation Advisory Committee members, organizations, agencies or the public. A funding recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Committee will then be presented to the Policy Board. This process is typically done in March.

- 5. Policy Board Action.** The Policy Board will receive the Transportation Advisory Committee recommendation, any discussion on significance of projects, and any further input from members, organizations, agencies or the public. At that point, the Policy Board will make a final decision for the STBG funds. Projects will be selected within limitations of funding or “target amounts” that is calculated by the Iowa Department of Transportation.
- 6. Transportation Improvement Program.** Selected projects are then included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The draft TIP is reviewed by the Policy Board in the spring and the final TIP is approved during the month of June and submitted to the Iowa DOT for approval, after which it is submitted to FHWA as part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for federal approval. After the project has federal authorization, approved project applicants must work with the Iowa DOT to ensure all Federal regulations are being met regarding project design and construction. If a project requires a TIP amendment or administrative modification, the applicant must follow the process as outlined in the Public Participation Plan and TIP.
- 7. Unspent STBG Funds.** In the event that STBG funds are left unspent due to a savings on a project, any unspent funds will be returned to the general STBG balance of SRTPA. Members can then apply using the STBG application to utilize these funds towards a different project either in that same fiscal year or in a future year. If no applications are received, these funds will be included in the new fiscal year’s balance and decided on in the March meeting.
- 8. Iowa DOT Federal-Aid SWAP Policy.** All applicants are encouraged to review the Iowa DOT SWAP policy that was revised in July, 2022 to reflect the BIL:
- https://iowadot.gov/local_systems/pdfs/Swap-Policy.pdf