

# North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program

## Non-Infrastructure Transportation Alternatives Program Overview



**February 2019**

*North Carolina Department of Transportation,  
Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation*



**North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program**  
**Non-Infrastructure Transportation Alternatives Program**  
**Guidelines**

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## I. Introduction and Overview

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program was established in 2005 through SAFETEA-LU as a federally-funded program to provide an opportunity for communities to improve conditions for bicycling and walking to school. It is currently supported with Transportation Alternatives federal funding through the Surface Transportation Block Grant program established under the FAST Act.

The following guidelines and application package were compiled to provide applicants with detailed instructions, required forms, and supplemental information to assist in the preparation of a SRTS non-infrastructure program application. This category of funding is intended to support programs and activities that focus on *education, enforcement, encouragement* and *evaluation* elements of a SRTS initiative. Please carefully review the information and instructions provided here before applying to ensure a competitive standing among other applications. If additional assistance is needed, please contact the NCDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Ed Johnson, at 919-707-2604 or by email at [erjohnson2@ncdot.gov](mailto:erjohnson2@ncdot.gov).

### 1. Purpose of SRTS

The purpose of this program is to:

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age
- 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.

## II. Available Funding for Non-Infrastructure Program

The SRTS Program has set aside \$1,500,000 per year of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds for non-infrastructure programs and activities over a 3-year period. Funding requests may range from a yearly amount of \$50,000 to \$100,000 per project. Projects will be awarded in 2019 and can be one to three years in length. Funding may be requested to support activities for community-wide, regional or state-wide programs.

The non-infrastructure award program is a cost reimbursement program. This competitive reimbursement program is 80% federally funded – a 20% local match is required. Award recipients must be able to cover the costs of the project and will be reimbursed during the course of project implementation for up to 80% of eligible expenditures. All costs submitted for reimbursement are subject to eligibility requirements and must comply with a reimbursement agreement executed between NCDOT and the recipient. **Any work performed or costs incurred prior to a Notice to Proceed are not eligible for reimbursement.**

Applicants must leverage their request for TAP funding with other funding sources that may be available to them, including grant awards or local funding for the 20% match. Other federal or state funds cannot be used for the match. Applicants who can designate other available resources

to fund programs and activities to meet a comprehensive SRTS strategy will be considered upon evaluation.

**Non-Infrastructure Program Timeline\***

February 18	Call for Proposals opens
February 26	Informational Webinar
March 29	Applications due by 11:59 PM
April 12	Eligible applications distributed to review committee for scoring
April 30	Review committee makes recommendations
June 5/6	NCDOT presents awardee information to Board of Transportation (BOT) and applicants are notified of award
July	Reimbursement agreement executed

\*This schedule is provided here to assist you in your planning. The actual dates may be subject to change.

### **III.Applicant Eligibility**

Eligible recipients include the following:

- Local governments
  - Municipality
  - County agency (Public Health, County Tourism or Economic Development Office)
- Regional Transportation Authority and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations under 23 U.S.C. 135(m)
- Natural Resource or Public Land Agency
  - Federal (USACE, National Forests, USFWS, and National Park Service)
  - State or local park or forest agencies (DENR)
  - State or local fish and game or wildlife agencies
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools (public or nonprofit private schools)
- Tribal governments
- Any other local or regional governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails, except MPOs or state agencies
- Nonprofit organizations that oversee the administration of local transportation safety programs

This entity must be willing and able to enter into a reimbursement agreement with NCDOT. A letter of support and administration from the lead sponsoring agency or organization must be submitted with the application indicating support of the project and the sponsor’s ability to enter into agreement with NCDOT. The lead sponsor will be responsible for project administration, paying for any work performed or materials purchased, and submitting proper proof of payment to NCDOT for reimbursement. This sponsor will also be NCDOT’s primary contact if awarded.

Other eligible agencies and organizations with a strong interest in and support for the use of funding for non-infrastructure programs and activities are strongly encouraged to partner with the lead sponsor to develop the project application as a co-sponsor. *A letter of support from the school district(s) or schools to be impacted by the project is required if they are not the lead agency.*

To stimulate creative approaches to implementing this program, communities are encouraged to develop relationships among diverse stakeholders. Letters of support from these other stakeholders may be attached to the application. Partners who are contributing funds or resources to the non-infrastructure project as part of the 20% match *must* supply a resolution or letter indicating commitment in the application. Typical costs charged directly to a Federal award are the compensation of employees who work on that award, their related fringe benefit costs, the costs of materials and other items of expense incurred for the Federal award. For further clarification, see CFR-2017-title2-vol11-part200.pdf; section 200.412, Classification of Costs.

## **IV. Eligible Programs and Activities**

Non-infrastructure projects consist of programs and activities that, when implemented, aim to shift community behavior, attitudes and social norms through education, encouragement and enforcement strategies to increase the safety and convenience for children to walk and/or bicycle to school. For all applicants, requests for funds must address or involve implementation of all of the E's, with the exception of engineering. (Please note: contact your NCDOT division about possible infrastructure funds for developing and constructing engineering solutions in the vicinity of schools in your area.)

[Applicants](#) may apply for eligible programs and activities that allow for needs to be addressed at a cluster of schools; a school district, municipality, or county; or a regional or statewide level. Applications must define complete, identifiable and implementable projects. Funds are not available for partial activities that cannot function as a complete and useful whole or for programs that do not have an independent utility.

### **1. Inappropriate Uses of Funds**

Although funding for SRTS is flexible to allow for creative partnerships and solutions, there are certain activities and projects that are ineligible for funding. Ineligible expenses include:

- Programs and activities that do not specifically serve the stated purposes of the SRTS Program (see [Purpose of SRTS](#)).
- Projects that focus on pick-up and drop-off areas or procedures in order to make it more convenient for the drivers rather than to improve child safety and/or walking and bicycling access.
- Education programs that primarily focus on bus safety.
- Purchases of promotional or incentive materials that do not serve a training purpose.
- Purchases of bicycles, bike trailers or other equipment that does not comply with the Buy America Act.

### **2. Program and Activity Locations**

Any program or activity funded should benefit elementary and middle school children (K-8) either directly or indirectly. Programs may indirectly benefit high school aged youth or the

general public; however, these constituencies cannot be the sole or primary beneficiaries. Programs specifically including traffic education and enforcement activities for a specific school(s) must take place within approximately two miles of the identified school(s). Other eligible non-infrastructure activities do not have a location restriction. Funding for education and encouragement activities at private schools is also allowed.

### **3. Types of Programs and Activities**

This program specifies that public awareness campaigns and outreach to media and community leaders; traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools; and student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health, and environment are all eligible non-infrastructure related programs and activities. Further ideas for eligible non-infrastructure programs and activities are broken down into the four categories below. Note: projects must address all four categories:

- **Education:** teach children about pedestrian, bicyclist and traffic safety; teach personal safety, health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling; educate parents as teachers to enforce and encourage proper safety practices with their children; educate parents and neighbors as drivers in and around the school area on the rules of the road and proper drop-off/pick-up procedures; educate law enforcement officers on laws related to pedestrian and bicycle safety and the role of law enforcement; launch driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools; develop or procure appropriate curricula, materials and trainers; deliver instruction on how to teach [Let's Go NC!](#) or a similar skills course, or crossing guard training; use social media, local traditional media, and community leaders to conduct outreach and public awareness campaigns
- **Encouragement:** hold special SRTS-related events; participate in International Walk to School Day; participate in Bicycle Month/Bike to School Day, Car Free Day, or some other Walk and Roll to School Day; develop and implement mileage clubs and contests; implement a walking school bus or bicycle train program; secure and distribute safety and training materials that encourage and reinforce more walking and bicycling over time;
- **Enforcement:** initiate community enforcement programs or driver yielding operations; develop and implement a safety patrol program; initiate a neighborhood speed watch program; launch an enforcement campaign to target dangerous behaviors; conduct high-visibility enforcement operations in the vicinity of schools; data gathering, analysis, and evaluation reporting at the local project level; initiate “walk with a cop” or similar programs involving local, regional, or state police; equipment and training needed for establishing crossing guard programs or outfit enforcement operations to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety (vests, gloves, STOP paddles, cones, etc.)
- **Evaluation:** gather, analyze, and evaluate current conditions and behaviors; conduct walkability and bikeability checklists; assess changes in knowledge through pre-post testing of course participants; evaluate the implementation of a SRTS project, program or activity

Existing SRTS programs have also used non-infrastructure funding for the following purposes:

- pay for substitute teachers if needed to cover for faculty attending SRTS-related training functions during school hours;

- Costs to engage the services of a consultant (either non-profit or for-profit) to coordinate the efforts of numerous stakeholders and volunteers and manage the process for implementation at a community-wide, regional, or statewide level.
- Provide funds for trainers, volunteers, and managers of SRTS programs.

The non-infrastructure programs and activities listed above are not exhaustive; other programs and activities not listed here may be eligible if they meet the [purposes of the SRTS Program](#).

## V. Selection Criteria and Review Process

The NCDOT staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for eligibility, completeness and general appropriateness. Applications that pass the initial screening will then be reviewed by the Review Committee. This group will include NCDOT staff, HSRC staff, and individuals with professional experience related to developing, administering and/or implementing bicycle- and pedestrian-related programs and activities. These individuals will represent agencies such as MPOs, RPOs, COGs and public health. The Review Committee will evaluate each application using the selection criteria outlined below and the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) Transportation Alternatives guidance](#). The Committee will also look for the final set of selected projects to show both a geographical spread across the state and representation from urban and rural communities. The Review Committee will forward their recommendations to NCDOT for final approval.

### Evaluation Criteria

Application review will focus on the following criteria:

#### PROPOSAL QUALITY

- **Likelihood of success.** Do the selected strategies have a track record of supporting safe walking and biking? Is there sufficient support to implement the proposed strategies? Does the sponsor appear to have the capacity to ramp-up and implement the project in a timely way? Is there a project champion or regional support to keep the project on-track?
- **Collaboration.** Does the proposed project show regional or multi-municipal cooperation? Has the sponsor demonstrated coordination and collaboration with agencies such as their NCDOT Division, MPO/RPO, municipality, general public, advocacy organizations, school district, etc. in developing the proposed activities and plans for implementation?
- **Need.** Is there a timeliness and need for the project? What benefits are expected as a result of the project?
- **Reasonableness of cost.** Is the cost of the proposed project reasonable based on the scope?
- **Comprehensive.** Does the project describe planned education, encouragement, evaluation and enforcement strategies?

#### CONTEXT

- **Experience.** Does the project include partners who have experience implementing safe walking and biking strategies? Does the sponsor show evidence of understanding federal aid requirements?
- **Equity.** Does the project meet the need of a disadvantaged group or area?

- **Fit.** Is the proposed project consistent with and supportive of local and regional plans and initiatives? In addition to the 20% match, does the proposed project leverage other projects or leverage funding from other agencies, local governments and/or community-based organizations?

## **VI. Conditions of Reimbursement Award**

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis to the agency or organization responsible for the administration of the funds. The contracting agency or organization must execute a legal agreement with NCDOT prior to receiving funding authorization. This agreement will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement, and the deliverables. This agreement must be executed within three months of being awarded the project. Selected recipients will receive a formal Notice to Proceed from NCDOT once the reimbursement agreement is fully executed.

Costs incurred before receipt of a Notice to Proceed are not a reimbursable expense, and any such costs must be absorbed by the contracting agency/organization. Invoices for partial project completion will be allowed; conditions will be defined in the reimbursement agreement. A portion of the total NCDOT allocation will be withheld until the project is completed, including any evaluation tasks, and all relevant materials are submitted to NCDOT and approved by the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Educational and encouragement materials or safety messages must be submitted to NCDOT for review and approval prior to distribution and use.

Award recipients will have up to thirty-six (36) months to complete their projects unless otherwise stated in the agreement, starting from the date of receipt of a written Notice to Proceed.

Award recipients of projects that implement school-based programs and/or activities must collect evaluation data at each school participating in this non-infrastructure initiative using the [Student In-Class Travel Tally and the Parent Survey](#). The time period for collecting these data will be defined in the reimbursement agreement. A percentage of the final reimbursement payment will also be contingent upon the lead sponsor conducting a closing evaluation of programs and/or activities implemented through this non-infrastructure award reimbursement program. Periodic progress reports describing accomplishments and expenditures will be required. Changes in project schedules must be approved by NCDOT-DBPT. Unspent funds may be withdrawn from award recipients that fail to meet timely benchmarks in their project implementation.

NCDOT must be credited for project participation in documents, materials, press releases and other announcements and promotional materials related to the non-infrastructure project.

All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, graphics, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of NCDOT-DBPT and the award recipient.

## **VII. Application Process**

Applicants must download the application, complete it, and submit it to NCDOT via email. Due to the collaborative nature of many SRTS non-infrastructure activities, lead agencies are

encouraged to coordinate their response with other stakeholders who will be aiding in the development and implementation of the proposed programs or activities. Supplemental documents to be supplied with the application form are explained below as part of the full application package.

## **1. Application Package Checklist**

The following documents must be submitted with the completed application form via email:

- Line item budget and supporting narrative or budget justification (required)
- Letter of Commitment from Lead Agency (required)
- Letter(s) of Support from additional financially contributing partners contributing to the 20% match (if any, required)
- Letter(s) of Support from school(s) or school district(s) that are directly impacted by the proposed program (if any, required)
- Other letters of support (optional)

## **2. Submission Instructions**

Please name your completed application form using the following convention:

2019\_SRTSNI\_LeadAgencyName\_Form.docx

Please submit the budget and budget narrative using the following naming convention (Word or PDF versions accepted):

2019\_SRTSNI\_LeadAgencyName\_Budget

Letters of commitment and support may be combined into one PDF or submitted as separate documents. If combined, please use the following naming convention:

2019\_SRTSNI\_LeadAgencyName\_LOS\_all.pdf

If you submit letters of commitment and support as separate documents (Word or PDF versions accepted), please use the following naming convention for each submitted:

2019\_SRTSNI\_LeadAgencyName\_LOS\_SupportAgencyName

In the body of your submission email, please list all letters of commitment and support that are included in your application package. This allows NCDOT to be sure the applicant's full submission package was received.

### **Email your application package to:**

[SRTSNon-InfrastructureProgram@ncdot.gov](mailto:SRTSNon-InfrastructureProgram@ncdot.gov)

c/o Ed Johnson

Safe Routes to School Program

NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

**Application packages must be submitted by 11:59 pm on March 29, 2019.**