



The latest news and Information from PennDOT Connects' network of people and places

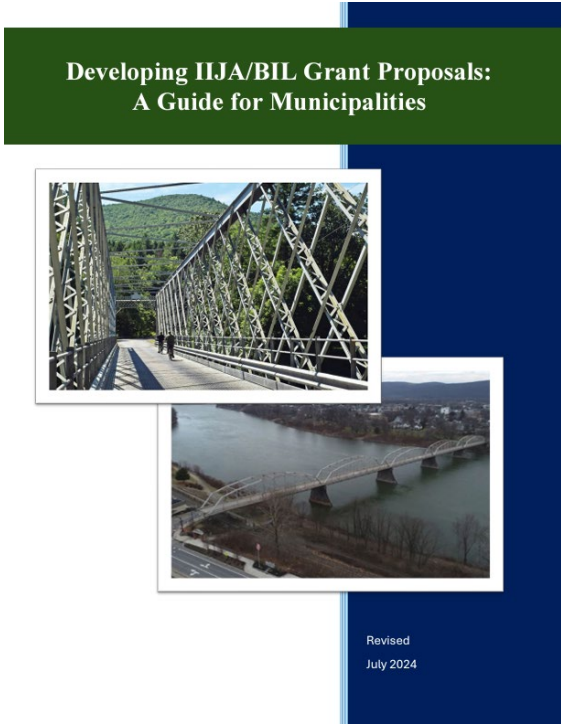


PennDOT Connects October 2024 Newsletter

Developing IIJA/BIL Grant Proposals: A Guide for Municipalities

Updated Guide Released in July 2024

With the passage in 2021 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) – the landscape for transportation funding has changed significantly. While enormous opportunity has been afforded by the Act, the volume and level of competition has also increased nationwide. In this new landscape, grant applications must differentiate themselves through innovation, sound benefit-cost rationale, and a compelling case for the value of the project to diverse stakeholders. In April 2023, the initial Guide for Developing IIJA/BIL Grant Proposals was released to aid municipalities in developing high-quality, competitive IIJA/BIL grant proposals. It identified key steps and defined relevant roles and responsibilities in the grant development process. It also addressed key considerations for the common components of most Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) applications.



The 2024 [Developing IIJA/BIL Grant Proposals: A Guide for Municipalities](#) (Guide) is a revised interactive version that allows users to navigate the guide through internal links. Municipalities and their partners have learned valuable lessons that served as the basis for this updated Guide. Content was informed and enhanced through discussions with experienced representatives from Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations (MPOs/RPOs), the Pennsylvania Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), subject matter experts within PennDOT, various municipal associations, and other stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth. This Guide is built upon the five stages in the grant development process:

- 1) Positioning for Success,
- 2) Organizing the Effort,
- 3) Building Support,
- 4) Making the Case, and
- 5) Performing Post-Submission Activities.

Collectively, these stages and their associated process considerations integrate the lessons learned with elements of the initial version. In using the Guide, applicants should also be mindful of federal emphasis areas and priorities that may include factors such as equity, innovation, safety, sustainability, resiliency, and environmental impacts. These focus areas must be recognized as key competitive factors to be addressed strategically in proposal development. The Guide narrative also incorporates process steps with links to tools and external resources to use in approaching a grant application and post-submission activities. Overall, the design is intended to ensure a shared understanding among those involved and to promote efficient and orderly grant applications.

Link to the guide:

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Documents/Municipal%20Grant%20Guide%208-24.pdf>

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program – Already Making an Impact Nationwide – Get Ready for 2025 NOFO

Program Overview

The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL) established the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over 5 years, 2022-2026. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. Over \$2 billion is still available for future funding rounds.

[View the SS4A fact sheet.](#)

The SS4A program supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#) and our goal of zero roadway deaths using a [Safe System Approach](#).

Combining the [FY22](#), [FY23](#), and [FY24](#) awards to date, SS4A has provided \$2.7 billion in Federal funding to over 1,400 communities in all 50 States and Puerto Rico. Through this important funding source, USDOT is empowering Tribal, local, and regional efforts to save lives and reduce serious injuries on our roadways.

Award Announcements

Over \$1 Billion Awarded to 354 Communities

[Read the press release](#) and learn about the selected [FY24 projects](#).

Funding Opportunities

The FY25 NOFO is expected to be released in early 2025, and by statute must be released on or before March 30, 2025.

Applicant Guidance

For more information and SS4A applicant guidance, view the following pages:

- [FY24 SS4A Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [How to Apply](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Webinars](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [SS4A Grants.gov Posting](#)

[Subscribe to email updates](#) to be notified when additional information is available.

Eligibility

The following groups of applicants are eligible for the SS4A grant program:

- Political subdivisions of a State, which includes counties, cities, towns, transit agencies, and other special districts.
- Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).
- Federally recognized Tribal governments.

Learn more about [eligible applicants for SS4A](#).

Grant Types

The SS4A program supports the development of a [comprehensive safety action plan](#) (referred to as an “Action Plan”) that identifies the most significant roadway safety concerns in a community and the implementation of projects and strategies to address roadway safety issues. Action Plans are the foundation of the SS4A grant program.

SS4A requires an eligible Action Plan to be in place before applying to implement projects and strategies.

The SS4A program provides funding for **two types of grants**: Planning and Demonstration Grants and Implementation Grants.

Learn more about these grant types in the brief descriptions below and see the following pages for more details:

- [Eligible Uses of SS4A Funding](#)
- [Comprehensive Safety Action Plans](#)
- [Planning and Demonstration Activities](#)
- [Implementation Grants](#)

Planning and Demonstration Grants

Planning and Demonstration Grants provide Federal funds to develop, complete, or supplement an Action Plan. 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.

Planning and Demonstration Grants also fund [supplemental planning activities](#) in support of an Action Plan and [demonstration activities](#) in support of an Action Plan.

Implementation Grants

Implementation Grants provide Federal funds to implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan to address a roadway safety problem. Eligible projects and strategies can be **infrastructural**, **behavioral**, and/or **operational** activities.

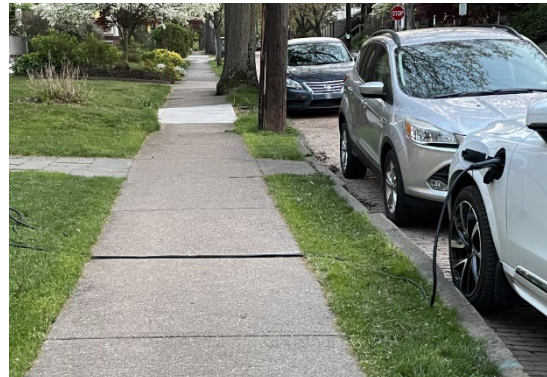
Applicants must have an eligible [comprehensive safety action plan](#) (referred to as an “Action Plan”) to apply for an Implementation Grant.

Do you need assistance with an “**Action Plan**”? PennDOT Connects offers **free** assistance to municipalities.

Any municipal staff member, government official or planning partner is eligible to request **free** planning assistance. Simply fill out the PennDOT Connects Training/Assistance request form by [clicking here](#).

Managing On-Street, At-Home EV Charging: Guidance for Pennsylvania Municipalities

As electric vehicles (EVs) become more common across Pennsylvania, municipalities are increasingly faced with a new challenge: helping residents who lack off-street parking—like a garage or driveway—safely charge their EVs at home. Often, these residents park their EVs on the street in front of their house and run a charging cord over the sidewalk to their vehicle. Ensuring that this type of charging setup is both safe and accessible is crucial for supporting sustainable transportation and maintaining mobility on sidewalks for all users, including pedestrians, wheelchair users, and stroller users. To help local governments navigate this, PennDOT offers practical, safety-focused advice for municipalities managing at-home EV charging when it involves crossing the public right-of-way (ROW) with a charging cord.



While PennDOT provides technical expertise, it’s important to note that the department’s role in sidewalk charging is advisory. PennDOT’s maintenance responsibility is curb to curb and PennDOT typically does not take any maintenance or regulatory authority over sidewalks. The responsibility for creating and enforcing sidewalk charging guidelines primarily rests with the municipality, and Pennsylvania municipalities are not required to allow charging in the ROW.

First Steps

In developing guidance for residents, start by reviewing your local ordinances and policies, referring to the Municipal Planning Code (MPC) as necessary. Federal and Pennsylvania law do not prohibit residential non-commercial EV charging in the ROW, provided it adheres to specific practices. However, it's crucial to check for any existing local prohibitions or conflicts. Updates to local laws, permit processes, or zoning regulations may be necessary to accommodate this type of charging. Additionally, consider the different housing and ROW configurations within your community. For instance, in areas with limited sidewalks or where most properties have off-street parking, issuing specific guidance may not be necessary. Historic districts may also have unique restrictions that require special attention before implementing any guidelines.

Managing Charging Cords

When allowing charging in the ROW, focus on Level 1 charging, which is permitted and involves using a standard 120V outlet with up to 20A service and a maximum output of up to 1.9kW—in other words, a typical wall outlet. Cords should run along the ground and be covered when crossing sidewalks to prevent tripping hazards. Cord covers must be stable, span the full width of the sidewalk, and meet specific gradient requirements to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For example:

- If the cord cover is under ½ inch high, the ramp should have a slope no steeper than 50% (1 inch rise per 2 inches of run).
- If the cover is between ½ inch and 6 inches high, the slope should be no steeper than 8.3% (1 inch rise per 12 inches of run).
- Note: Cord covers taller than 6 inches are not allowed.

Preventing Misuse

Municipal guidelines should also include specific prohibitions to prevent misuse. Charging equipment should not be used to reserve parking spaces in the ROW, and residents should not install signage suggesting that a space is reserved. Additionally, parking on sidewalks or running charging cords across bike lanes or vehicle lanes is prohibited, regardless of whether an electric car, truck, or motorcycle is being charged. Safety is paramount, so residents should be reminded to follow all manufacturer instructions for their charging equipment and to avoid using extension cords unless they've consulted with a qualified electrician.

Municipalities should clearly communicate how violations of these guidelines will be handled. Public outreach is also important—consider including the topic in community meetings, distributing informational materials, and using social media to ensure residents are informed about the new guidelines and understand the importance of safe EV charging practices.

Charging Ahead

By considering these factors, Pennsylvania municipalities can develop guidelines that balance the needs of EV owners with the safety and accessibility of public spaces. Adapting these recommendations to fit your community's specific needs will help ensure a smooth and sustainable transition to electric vehicles. As an example of an existing municipal guidance document on this topic, you may be interested in reviewing the City of Pittsburgh's Best Practices for Electric Vehicle Charging in the Public

Right-Of-Way. For more information and technical assistance, please contact PennDOT at ra-pdevcorridors@pa.gov.

PennDOT Connects Educational Opportunities

Go to the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#) to learn more about upcoming educational opportunities. Click the down arrows next to the Drop-Ins and Workshops tabs to view the current offering and past recorded sessions.

Recorded Drop-Ins

Did you miss the drop-in below? Click on the title to watch the recording. All drop-ins are on the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#).

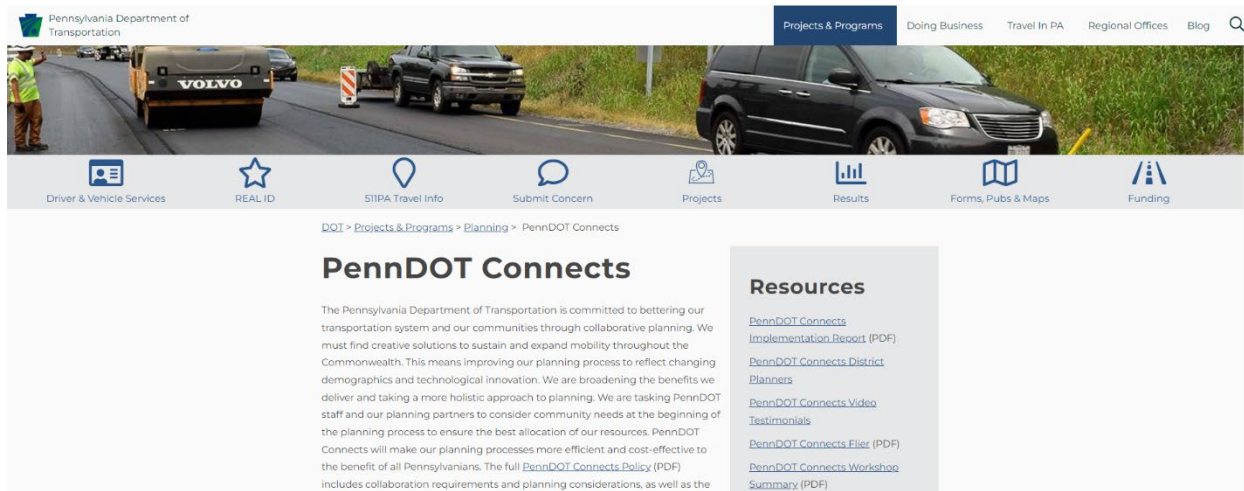
[Coordination with Utilities: We're All in the Right-Of-Way Together](#)

This practical drop-in session covered the keys to effective coordination between communities and the utilities that serve them. It included some of the common causes of breakdown, and how to prevent such communication and coordination mishaps (and avoid the consequences).



PennDOT Connects Resources

Go to the [PennDOT Connects webpage](#) to access tech sheets, recorded training, and other resources.



Discretionary Grants Spotlight

PennDOT's [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\) webpage](#) offers the latest news and information on federal grant opportunities available through the IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Grant opportunities, application guides and other resources on federal grant funding are added as they become available, so please visit often to see if any of these grant funding programs are an opportunity that would benefit your community.

The following is a list of federal grant programs currently accepting applications:

BIP – Planning and Bridge Project Grants

The goals of the [BIP - Planning and Bridge Project](#) grants are to:

- Enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of transporting people and freight across bridges.
- Upgrade the overall condition of bridges throughout the United States.
- Offer financial support that incentivizes and leverages non-federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders for planning, designing, and constructing eligible projects that will cost under \$100 million.

Bridge Project grant deadlines for FY 2025:

- The deadline for requesting PennDOT support has passed.
- The deadline for applying for funds in the rolling application process* is Friday, Nov. 1, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST.

*Submissions will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until program funding is expended or the notice of availability is superseded.

Low Carbon Transportation Materials Program

The [Low Carbon Transportation Materials \(LCTM\) Program](#) aims to reduce pollution by using low-carbon construction materials in projects. This program will promote technology transfer and workforce development and encourage the development of effective systems for identifying these low-carbon materials. State Department of Transportation agencies are not eligible for this funding.

If you plan to submit a project for the LCTM Program, please email RA@PDTRANSFEDFUNDOPP@pa.gov to ensure PennDOT is informed.

The deadline to apply is Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, 11:59 p.m. EST.

BIP – Large Bridge

The goals of the [BIP - Large Bridge](#) grants are to:

- Enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of transporting people and freight across bridges.
- Upgrade the overall condition of bridges throughout the United States.
- Offer financial support that incentivizes and leverages non-federal contributions from sponsors and stakeholders for planning, designing, and constructing eligible projects that will cost more than \$100 million.

The deadline for applying for FY 2026 funds in this rolling application process* is Friday, Aug. 1, 2025, 11:59 p.m. EST.

* Submissions will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until program funding is expended or the notice of availability is superseded.

Guide for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Grant Applications

PennDOT has added a [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) guide for grant applications](#) to the website dedicated to the IJJA, and specifically the federal discretionary programs. Also, included are Grant Alerts that provide background on these opportunities including eligibility, application deadlines, and federal and Department of Transportation (USDOT) resources and guides to assist in applying for the specific programs.

Grants Resources

USDOT Discretionary Grant Resources

The USDOT has developed a discretionary grant preparation checklist for federal fiscal year 2024 to help applicants prepare and chart a strategic pathway to apply for infrastructure investments. More than \$32 billion is available to the USDOT this fiscal year to provide competitive grant funding to local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, Tribal governments, U.S. Territories and state departments of transportation. The USDOT has published a list of anticipated dates for upcoming Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for key programs within the BIL and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), as well as adjacent programs that support BIL and IRA objectives. This list is not comprehensive, and the agency will periodically update it with additional programs and revised dates as appropriate. Both resources can be found on PennDOT's IJJA page at <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/Doing-Business/Pages/IJJA.aspx>.

USDOT Navigator: <https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator>

Federal Transit Administration BIL Website: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/BIL>

Key Notices of Funding Opportunity: <https://www.transportation.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/key-notices-funding-opportunity>

FREE Transportation and Land Use Planning – Assistance and Training

PennDOT Connects offers **free** assistance and training to municipalities to better integrate local land use development and transportation goals into the state transportation planning process.

Any municipal staff member, government official or planning partner is eligible to request **free** planning assistance or personalized training. Simply fill out the PennDOT Connects Training/Assistance request form by [clicking here](#).



Do You Know Your MPO or RPO?

PennDOT and its Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) partners have a long-standing relationship jointly preparing transportation studies, plans, and programs to make the best transportation project investments possible with available resources. This strategic alliance is now of even greater importance for PennDOT Connects implementation. Together, the MPO/RPO planning partners and PennDOT can effectively collaborate and communicate with municipalities — and other community stakeholders (e.g., transit operators, economic development agencies, etc.) — to improve transportation system performance and achieve more livable communities. The collaborative effort of municipalities, MPO/RPO planning partners, and PennDOT is key to ensuring that opportunities to improve transportation and communities are realized.

MPO/RPO contacts can be found [here](#).

PennDOT Connects

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is committed to bettering our transportation system and our communities through collaborative planning. We must find creative solutions to sustain and expand mobility throughout the commonwealth. This means improving our planning process to reflect changing demographics and technological innovation. We are broadening the benefits we deliver and taking a more holistic approach to planning. We are tasking PennDOT staff and our planning partners to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process to ensure the best allocation of our resources. This approach, PennDOT Connects, will make our planning processes more efficient and cost-effective to the benefit of all Pennsylvanians. The full [PennDOT Connects Policy \(PDF\)](#) includes collaboration requirements and planning considerations, as well as the implementation timeline and more.

PennDOT Connects Newsletter

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