

Program Purpose

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has developed the Focused Approach to Safety in order to better address the most critical safety challenges by devoting additional attention to high priority States. The purpose of the Focused Approach is to further decrease the number of fatalities and serious injuries on the Nation's highways through a more targeted delivery of technical assistance and resources. FHWA's safety focus also calls for the transportation community to think beyond traditional approaches and to consider low-cost, comprehensive, systemic safety solutions. This approach allows focus States to achieve dramatic results and to take advantage of the lessons learned across the country from States and localities that have demonstrated safety improvements on their highways.

Program Benefits

Overall Benefits:

- Increases awareness of critical severe crash types.
- Provides data analysis and action plan development for focus areas from initiation to implementation.
- Leads to critical safety infrastructure improvements by promoting the use of effective safety countermeasures.
- Assists FHWA, State DOTs, and local agencies when prioritizing resources.
- Creates positive organizational changes in safety culture, policies, and procedures.

Benefits to the Focus States:

- Assists with existing Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) fatality reduction goals in the Focus Areas of Roadway Departures, Intersections, and Pedestrians.
- Provides additional access to FHWA Resource Center technical experts to further advance safety programs.
- Provides additional training and technical assistance, individualized to meet the State needs, to support deployment of effective safety countermeasures.
- Identifies and implements research on proven safety countermeasures.
- Provides additional tools and technologies to identify and address safety problems.
- Improves awareness and understanding of infrastructure-related crash factors.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the background regarding the Focused Approach to Safety?

In 2005, FHWA launched the Focused Approach to Safety to better direct resources where there is greatest opportunity to save lives and prevent serious injuries. The Focused Approach is a unique data-driven and



State-specific approach to safety. In 2011, changes were made to improve the Focused Approach to better meet the needs of the focus States. These changes and highlights include:

- Three focus areas - Roadway Departure Safety, Intersection Safety, and Pedestrian Safety.
- Preferred access for focus States to additional FHWA resources.
- A tailored approach to conform to each State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and specific needs.
- New criteria for eligibility to become a focus State. The eligibility process uses a data-driven analysis process. Further information about eligibility in the Focused Approach can be found under the "How can a State be eligible to participate in the Focused Approach?" FAQ, or by contacting Melonie Barrington at (202) 366-8029.

What is the Focused Approach to Safety?

The Focused Approach to Safety provides resources (people, time, tools, and training) where it is needed the most. A focus State participates in the Focused Approach areas after meeting the eligibility criteria in one or more of the following safety focus areas: Intersection, Roadway Departure, and/or Pedestrians. A focus State receives additional resources to help achieve its SHSP fatality goals in its eligible focus areas. A tailored approach is used to meet the focus States' needs.

How can a State be eligible to participate in the Focused Approach?

The criteria and methodology for determining focus State eligibility were revised in 2011. Each focus area has its own data-driven process for determining eligibility. In general, eligibility is based on States with the greatest potential for safety improvement. More detailed explanations of the criteria are available in the Focused Approach to Safety Guidebook available from FHWA. States who met the eligibility criteria are invited by FHWA to participate in the Focused Approach. All eligibility criteria use a three-year average of the most recent available State and national fatality data.

Intersections: Intersection Focus States are eligible based on their average number of intersection fatalities over a three year period. In addition, FHWA considers the urban and rural roadway percentages within these States and the ratio of their actual intersection fatality rate versus the expected intersection fatality rate per vehicle miles traveled (VMT) based on national urban and rural rates. Based on these criteria, States are eligible to become Intersection Focus States if their intersection fatalities were more than the national average (154 intersection fatalities), and had an actual-to-expected ratio greater than 1.0. States with a ratio higher than 1.0 have more fatalities than expected.

Roadway Departure: Roadway departure States are eligible based on their number of roadway departure fatalities and the fatality rate per centerline mile and per VMT over a three period. Based on these criteria, States are eligible to be Roadway Departure Focus States if they: 1) annually averaged more than the national average (393 roadway departure fatalities) and had a roadway departure fatality rate per mile greater than the national average (0.52 fatalities per centerline mile), OR 2) annually averaged more than the national average and had a roadway departure fatality rate per VMT greater than the national average (0.73 per 100M VMT).

Pedestrians: For the pedestrian focus area, FHWA designates focus cities and focus States. Cities are eligible to participate as Pedestrian focus cities based on the number of pedestrian fatalities or the pedestrian fatality rate per population over a three year period. Based on these criteria, cities are identified for eligibility if they had more than the national average (20 average annual pedestrian fatalities per city) or a pedestrian



fatality rate greater than the national average (2.33 per 100,000 population). States that contain a pedestrian focus city are automatically eligible to be considered pedestrian focus States.

What were the results of the 2010/2011 Focused Approach to Safety Evaluation?

An evaluation of the Focused Approach was completed by the Volpe Center in 2010. FHWA followed that report with further analysis, consideration, and redesign. The findings have been considered in the enhancements to the Focused Approach. According to the Volpe findings, it is still early in the program to fully evaluate the success as plans in each focus State are at various stages of implementation. The report states that the availability and application of Focused Approach resources enabled many of the actions that have occurred to reduce severe crashes in the three focus areas.

If our State is a new focus State, what does it mean for our safety program?

Welcome to the Focused Approach to Safety. There will be additional resources and options available to assist your State as you participate in the Focused Approach. These resources can be found in the Focused Approach to Safety Toolbox. The first step will be to create a tailored approach to find the right mix of resources (people, time, and training) to assist you and meet your SHSP fatality and serious injury reduction goals. Your primary coordinator and advocate will be the safety specialist from your local FHWA Division Office. FHWA will assemble a team consisting of your Division Office safety specialist, FHWA Resource Center Staff, FHWA Office of Safety Staff and contract support; to work directly with you and your partners. Working together will result in additional lives saved and injuries prevented.

If I am no longer a focus State, what does it mean for our safety program?

First, FHWA support will still be provided. Second, as a prior focus State, FHWA wants to hear and share your valuable feedback, lessons learned, or success stories that can assist other focus States as they participate in the Focused Approach to Safety. Be sure to stay in touch with the safety specialist in your local FHWA Division Office and provide any feedback you may have regarding the Focused Approach to Safety.

How does Focused Approach fit into my State's Strategic Highway Safety Planning (SHSP) process?

The adopted State SHSP is the overall plan to meet the State's safety goals. The Focused Approach is another support resource that a focus State can count on to achieve those goals. As part of the Focused Approach, FHWA will provide additional resources (people, time, tools, and training) to help implement the SHSP.

How does the Focused Approach help with my State's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)?

The Focused Approach provides participating States with additional safety analysis for better countermeasure selection and deployment through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The additional safety analysis will determine which method (traditional, comprehensive, or systemic) addresses the most severe crash types. It also identifies the roadways and their features that have the biggest safety challenges. The Focused Approach provides the most cost-effective method to deliver HSIP safety projects.

What are the benefits of utilizing FHWA safety resources?

- Assists with existing SHSP fatality reduction goals in Roadway Departures, Intersections, and Pedestrians.
- Provides additional access to FHWA Resource Center technical experts to further advance safety programs.
- Provides additional training and technical assistance, individualized to meet the State needs, to support deployment of effective safety measures.



- Identifies and implements research on proven safety measures.
- Provides additional tools and technologies to identify and address safety problems.
- Improves awareness and understanding of infrastructure-related crash factors.
- Aids in streamlining the process of receiving Federal funding for HSIP projects.

What kind of support and partnership can I expect from FHWA?

Your primary Focused Approach support will be the safety specialist from your local FHWA Division Office. He or she will help tailor a Focused Approach strategy for your State that will maximize the benefits to the State and achieve the best results. He or she will assemble a team consisting of FHWA Division staff, FHWA Resource Center staff, FHWA Office of Safety staff and contract support to work directly with you and your partners. The Focused Approach to Safety allows significant FHWA resources to support a comprehensive safety management approach involving the 4 E's: engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency services. Working together will result in additional lives saved and injuries prevented.

What are other States and local governments saying about the Focused Approach to Safety?

- “At a time when INDOT was still forming our local safety program, being a Focus State for Intersections provided us with resources to help educate local agencies, develop a focus on safety initiatives geared to them, and provided training and leadership in conducting successful Road Safety Audits. Additionally, when INDOT and the Indiana LTAP launched HELPERS (Hazard Elimination Local Project for Roads and Streets) to provide outreach to local agencies regarding safety, the Focus State status again allowed for valuable advice and assistance to the staff of that program. The end result is that we were able to deploy HELPERS as an effective local assistance program in a much shorter time frame.” – **Mr. Michael Holowaty, State Safety Engineer, Indiana DOT**
- “The overall training opened my eyes to pedestrians needs and the efforts that must be taken in order to provide a safe passageway. This training will no doubt have a positive effect on how I design traffic signals going forward.” – **Mr. Jeff Lindgren, Nassau County, Department of Public Works***
- “The training was useful in raising the level of discussion about pedestrian safety issues within the New York City context by providing a baseline of information to a large number of DOT and other city employees.” – **Mr. Matthew Roe, New York City DOT***
- “At a time when our safety office was in the process of implementing a more systematic approach to highway safety, we had the opportunity as an FHWA focus state for intersections to receive assistance from FHWA. This effort led to the development of a project to systematically improve safety through low cost strategies at over 2200 intersections across the state. These intersections represented only 2% of the state-maintained intersections in the state but accounted for nearly 50% of all intersection fatalities and intersection crashes. FHWA was very instrumental in the success of the project. They not only provided a comprehensive review and analysis of the statewide crash data but also provided two-day workshops to our headquarters staff in addition to each of our seven district field offices. These workshops provided nearly 200 SCDOT employees with valuable training.” – **Mr. Brett Harrelson, State Traffic Safety Engineer, South Carolina DOT**



Are there any fees or costs for my State to participate in Focused Approach?

While most resources available from the FHWA come at no cost to the State, it is best to anticipate ways to leverage State and Federal resources in order to maximize benefits. For instance, a focus State would be expected to identify the best approach to use the resources provided, work with FHWA Division Offices and contractors to provide data to expedite the safety goals, implement pertinent results, and evaluate results periodically and adjust their strategy accordingly. However, if applied well, the Focused Approach would help States to focus their time and attention on the specific priorities and activities that can make the biggest difference in their safety goals. In many cases FHWA can provide a considerable amount of detailed and State-specific data analysis, training, technical assistance, and other resources which the State might have to otherwise perform on their own.

If I am not eligible to be a focus State, can I still utilize the services, assistance and guidance developed for the Focused Approach?

All of the guidance, planning tools, training, technical guidebooks, and printed resources created by the Focused Approach are available to all States. FHWA is committed to applying these resources and tools in the focus States. Focus States will receive priority in response to requests for safety resources to address their safety challenges in one or more of the focus areas. However, non-focus States can use the tools and materials for their own safety efforts. FHWA may be able to apply some technical assistance to non-focus States once the needs of the focus States have been met.

How do I get more information regarding the Focused Approach?

FHWA representatives will be proactively engaging eligible focus cities and States to begin talking to them about inclusion in the Focused Approach. However, you may contact the safety specialist at the FHWA Division Office or the following experts:

<u>Focused Approach Coordinator:</u> Ray Krammes	ray.krammes@dot.gov	(202) 366-2175
<u>Intersection Focus Area Team Leader:</u> Jeff Shaw	jeffrey.shaw@dot.gov	(708) 283-3524
<u>Roadway Departure Focus Area Team Leader:</u> Joseph Cheung	joseph.cheung@dot.gov	(202) 366-6994
<u>Pedestrian Focus Area Team Leader:</u> Tamara Redmon	tamara.redmon@dot.gov	(202) 366-4077



Internal Deployment Checklist

The following checklist will serve as a general guide for all involved to successfully deploy the Focused Approach to Safety Program in the focus States. It is important to tailor the approach to meet the focus States' capabilities and needs.

FHWA	Focus States	Deployment Activity
<input type="checkbox"/>	--	Participate in Focused Approach to Safety Webinar 1: Kick-off with FHWA (September 2011).
<input type="checkbox"/>	--	Invite focus State to Webinar 2.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in Focused Approach to Safety Webinar 2: Kick-off with focus States (September 2011).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a tailored approach with the focus State through the Division Office with Resource Center and Office of Safety using the Strategic Highway Safety Plan as the starting point.
<input type="checkbox"/>	--	Match resources to needs and deliver Focused Approach analysis and implementation plan in the focus State.
--	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement the safety projects/activities identified over the years recommended.
--	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor and report challenges and success stories to FHWA Office of Safety.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maximize return on investment by evaluating program effectiveness.

Additional information specifically for State DOT Executives and other officials:

1. As a focus State, there are additional federal resources that become available to assist each State to achieve established Strategic Highway Safety Plan goals.
2. The approach that will be used is tailored to the specific focus State and is based on collaboration with the State and their partners.
3. Many focus States have shown improvement in saving lives and preventing serious injuries through the program resources.
4. The detailed data analysis assistance allows States to focus in on more specific strategies and focus their resources on the best priorities.
5. The Focused Approach can help States better allocate money spent on safety needs from having greater access to the latest technology and support.

