

What Federal assistance is available for implementing 511 systems?

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offers grants of up to \$100,000 to States to develop 511 implementation plans. Forty-four States have received grants. States that already have plans can use the funds to cover the costs of converting to 511 or developing 511 services. FHWA offers technical assistance through its division offices in every State. FHWA also is funding a model deployment program in Arizona.

How do States fund 511 programs?

Implementation expenses for 511 systems, like other traveler information services, are eligible for regular Federal-aid highway funding. Local or State transportation funds also are used to pay for 511 systems, and in general, are the only funds used to pay for day-to-day system operations.

How does a typical 511 program work?

A 511 system relies on intelligent transportation systems technologies to collect and disseminate traveler information. Callers access the service by dialing 511 from any telephone. They hear a menu of available information on highways and public transit and indicate their choices by using the telephone's touch pad or, for systems with voice recognition technology, by voice. Some 511 systems offer premium services such as personal routing instructions or reservation services, which may involve additional charges.

Successful Applications: Research shows 511 increases use of traveler information services

Research indicates that public demand and use of telephone services for traveler information increase when systems use 511 instead of other numbers. Systems that have converted existing telephone numbers to 511 have experienced a 300–500 percent increase in call volume.

One study showed that 45 percent of San Francisco, CA travelers who received information from the area's Travel Advisory Telephone System changed their travel plans, compared to 25 percent of travelers altering their plans based on television or radio broadcasts.

Benefits

- Provides an easy way to obtain travel information anywhere in the country.
- Helps travelers make better decisions on travel routes and modes.
- Promotes safety by directing motorists away from incidents and congestion.

Additional Resources

The 511 Deployment Coalition has developed quality and service guidelines for 511 systems. The guidelines and other tools for 511 deployment are available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/511.htm.

For more information, contact:

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