



HSIP Noteworthy Practice Series

Use of the HSIP Flexible Funding Provision

About the HSIP Noteworthy Practice Series

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core Federal-aid highway program with the primary purpose of achieving a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Many states and local agencies are successfully implementing innovative approaches to HSIP planning, implementation, and evaluation. The HSIP Noteworthy Practices Series presents case studies of these successful practices organized by specific HSIP topics. The individual case studies provide summaries of each practice, key accomplishments, results, and contact information for those interested in learning more.

Use of the HSIP Flexible Funding Provision

Highway safety funds should be spent where they will have the highest payoff in terms of saving lives and reducing serious injuries. Flexibility in the use of HSIP funds is an important tool in the delivery of an overall safety strategy.

The HSIP, codified by SAFETEA-LU as section 148 of Title 23 U.S.C., apportions funds to states under section 104(b)(5) for a range of eligible safety activities focused primarily on infrastructure-related safety improvements. Section 148(e) addresses the opportunity to use these financial resources where they can make the greatest impact, as identified in a state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). This provision allows a state department of transportation (DOT) to use up to 10 percent annually of its HSIP funds for other types of safety projects under Title 23, as long as the state meets certain conditions.

To be eligible to use the 10 percent flexibility provision in a fiscal year a state must have an approved SHSP, certify it has met its railway-highway grade crossing and infrastructure safety needs, and submit a written request to the state Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Office.

FHWA has provided extensive guidance on the implementation of the flexibility provision, including details on the process to

follow, implementation and project eligibility, financing, reporting, and subsequent fiscal year approvals. This information can be found at: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/gen_info.

A decision on whether to flex funds is something the state must decide based on its needs and circumstances. As with all HSIP projects, a guiding principle should be the potential to improve safety. Through collaboration with safety partners, the SHSP process identifies statewide emphasis areas with the greatest potential for reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Linking HSIP projects, including flex funded activities, with the SHSP ensures the HSIP addresses priorities identified through the broader statewide strategic approach.

States have used HSIP flex funds to support a range of enforcement and education strategies identified in the SHSP. Examples include overtime safety enforcement, ignition interlock programs, work zone safety messages, safe ride home programs to prevent impaired driving, and outreach programs on the use of car seats. Participation in the SHSP has also led states to multidisciplinary approaches to leverage resources, such as combining speed enforcement programs and infrastructure improvements for reducing roadway departure crashes.

Noteworthy Practices

The following cases demonstrate noteworthy practices several states are using to apply the HSIP flexible funding provision:

- The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) flexed HSIP funds to pay for targeted enforcement efforts on the state highway system. ALDOT identified areas where fatal and serious injury crashes were occurring in a process aligned with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Agency staff identified major factors such as speeding and roadway departures, and provided crash maps to the state patrol. Flex funds were used to pay for overtime enforcement, with close coordination between the State Patrol and the DOT. ([read more](#))
- The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) flexed HSIP funds for a statewide radio public service announcement (PSA) campaign on safe winter driving to reduce the number of winter weather-related crashes. The *Ice and Snow, Take It Slow* campaign focuses in part on speed reduction linking it to the speeding element identified in the State's SHSP emphasis area on driver behavior and awareness. The program, based on an existing Clear Roads campaign, leveraged a partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. ([read more](#))
- The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) used flex funding to expand and strengthen several behavioral safety programs linked to the SHSP critical emphasis areas. Activities included expanding existing seat belt and impaired driving campaigns, developing a comprehensive Latino highway safety awareness and education program, rolling out a statewide teen program on safe driving, developing educational tip cards on topics related to the SHSP emphasis areas, and conducting a program for safe rides home on New Year's Eve and St. Patrick's Day. ([read more](#))
- The Utah DOT (UDOT) used HSIP flex funds to support education and outreach programs linked to Utah's Comprehensive Safety Plan (the State's strategic highway safety plan). Programs are managed by several partner agencies and include developing a teen memorial yearbook, expanding the Safe Kids Campaign to increase the use of car seats and booster seats, and supporting a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor position. ([read more](#))

To access these full case studies, click on the individual links above or visit the FHWA Office of Safety on-line at: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip>.



Alabama Flexes HSIP Funds for Increased Enforcement

Alabama

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Thirty percent of speeding crashes and 60 percent of roadway departure crashes occur on the 11,000 miles of Alabama's state highway system. According to Wes Elrod, Transportation Planning and Modal Programs Assistant Bureau Chief, a review of the data and current countermeasures indicated a need for increased enforcement.

Until the flex funding option became available in FY 2006, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) did not have a mechanism to provide direct financial assistance to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for increased enforcement on the state system. The Highway Safety Office (HSO) distributes a significant proportion of its National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funds to local governments and only a limited amount to DPS. Recognizing limited resources for traffic enforcement, ALDOT used HSIP flex funds to increase enforcement strategies identified in the strategic highway safety plan (SHSP) addressing behavior to complement infrastructure improvements and more effectively reduce roadway departure crashes. ALDOT flexed between five and eight percent of its HSIP funds annually from FY 2007 to FY 2010, resulting in \$1.5 to \$2.8 million spent on noninfrastructure safety projects each of the past four years.

The majority of the flex funds paid for overtime for state police troopers to conduct speed enforcement activities, which is a strategy in the state SHSP Risky Driving Emphasis Area. ALDOT worked with the state police to determine how much overtime enforcement they could handle given personnel levels and agreed on an appropriate amount of HSIP funds to flex each year.

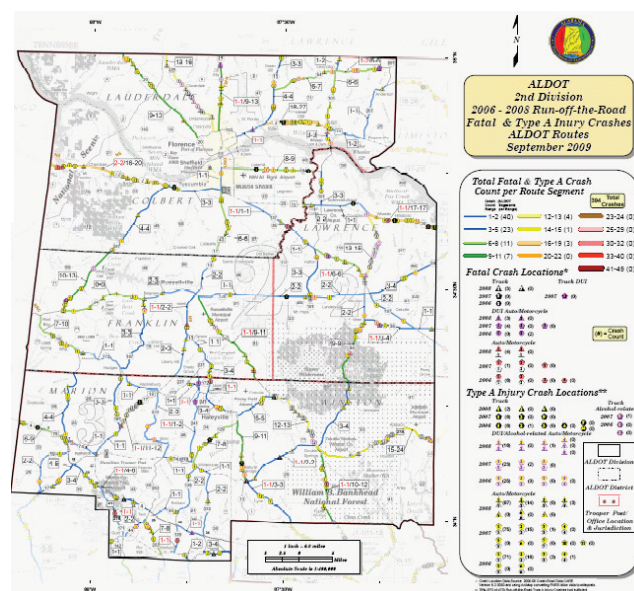
ALDOT identified fatal and serious injury crash locations and provided crash maps to the state police. Using the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) crash records system ALDOT identified the time of day and the type of crashes. Troopers then focused their overtime efforts on those times and locations. ALDOT divided HSIP funds among the 12 state police trooper posts proportionally based on the number of high-crash corridors in each area.

Use of the HSIP Flexible Funding Provision

Key Accomplishments

- Strengthened the partnership with Department of Public Safety, which is a member of the SHSP Executive Committee.
- Implemented an enhanced data-driven program of enforcement on the state highway system.
- Took advantage of joint crash data system to provide crash maps and time of day information to DPS.
- Increased the efficiency of state law enforcement by funding improved radar and GPS devices.

ALDOT closely monitored enforcement results and made adjustments as necessary. In quarterly reports, the state police provided the hours worked by each trooper and citations issued during overtime enforcement periods. ALDOT continuously evaluated results to ensure safety goals were met and whether the effort was a successful countermeasure for reducing both speeding and lane departure crashes.



Results

Flexing HSIP funds for use by DPS for enforcement has resulted in a strong partnership between the state police and ALDOT staff, while addressing noninfrastructure emphasis areas from the SHSP. This effort has resulted in increased deployment of enforcement resources on the state highway system based on crash data. From 2007 to 2009 the number of fatal crashes involving speeding decreased 31 percent, from 369 in 2007 to 255 in 2009.

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Michigan Uses HSIP Flex Funds for Winter Safe Driving Campaign

Michigan

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The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) flexed \$45,000 of its Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds in FY 2008 to launch a radio public service announcement (PSA) campaign on safe winter driving, which was conducted from December 2007 through March 2008.

The MDOT Communications Department successfully used earned media (news coverage, editorials, etc.) to promote past campaigns, but the number of winter weather-related crashes and the launch of a new slogan and logo – *Ice & Snow, Take It Slow* – called for increased media exposure. The problem of winter-related crashes also resulted in support for the increased public outreach from the county road commissions around the State.

The MDOT Communications Department oversaw the implementation of the *Ice and Snow, Take It Slow* campaign, which in the past was supported by state funds. Support for this type of program was in jeopardy based on efforts to direct all state funding toward matching Federal monies on construction projects.

The *Ice and Snow, Take It Slow* campaign was developed by Clear Roads, a national winter maintenance program with 14 member states. Public information officers from 12 of the state DOTs, including Michigan, contributed time and effort to develop the message based on four top winter safety issues:

- Speed reduction;
- Safe travel around snowplows;
- Safe driving maneuvers; and
- Trip preparedness.

Speeding is part of Michigan's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) emphasis area on driver behavior and awareness, providing an important link for the *Ice and Snow, Take It Slow* campaign.

Key Accomplishments

- Used HSIP flex funds to conduct a radio PSA campaign that focused on a high-crash situation, i.e., winter driving.
- Leveraged a partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters for improved return on investment.
- Took advantage of existing Clear Roads campaign.

During the winter of 2008, MDOT, which designed the logo for use by 20 states, included the campaign tagline in all news releases, put winter driving safety tips on-line, displayed posters in all Michigan rest areas, and ran a state-wide radio campaign. A partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters enabled a wider distribution of the radio PSA, which resulted in securing more than four times the value of the media purchased and greatly extending the campaign's reach throughout the State.



Results

Because of the flex provision, Michigan has been able to sustain the campaign on safe winter driving, resulting in increased public awareness. Michigan fatal crashes in snow have decreased from a five-year rolling average of 77 in 2005 to 63 in 2009. Serious injury crashes involving snow have decreased from a five-year rolling average of 537 in 2005 to 413 in 2009.

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Nevada Funds Education and Outreach Programs with HSIP Flex Funds

Nevada

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The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) flexed \$800,000 of its Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds in FY 2009 (seven percent of the total) to fund a range of outreach and education campaigns linked to the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) emphasis areas.

SHSP partners actively participated in identification of the flex projects. SHSP critical emphasis area (CEA) teams identified several projects focusing on seat belts, impaired driving, lane departures, intersections, and pedestrians. Other flex projects involving marketing and communications were identified by the Nevada Strategic Communications Alliance (SCA), comprised of public information officers from state agencies and private sector organizations with an interest in safety. The SCA manages communications and marketing related to the SHSP, and recommended strategies within the SHSP emphasis areas. The list of recommendations from the SCA and the CEA teams was reviewed by the SHSP Technical Working Group and then by the Nevada Executive Committee on Traffic Safety.

The increased communications among partners from the SHSP process resulted in several key developments. The Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) reported a reduction in funding for safety belt and impaired driving media campaigns. It is doubtful that without the SHSP forum NDOT and others would have been aware of this situation. The \$300,000 in flex funds, which were used to increase media buys, extended these campaigns and augmented the outreach already underway.

The creation of the SCA resulted in innovative programs receiving much-needed support and expansion of successful programs statewide. NDOT invested \$114,000 in flex funds in Nevada's *Prevent All Crashes Every Day* (PACE) program, which increases awareness of seatbelt use and the dangers of impaired and distracted driving among teens through presentations on the program at assemblies, teacher meetings, and other events. The flex funds enabled OTS to roll out the program beyond the Las Vegas area to other teens statewide.

Key Accomplishments

- Used Emphasis Area teams to identify safety projects for flex funding.
- Used HSIP flexible funding provision to expand successful and proven programs.
- Initiated a new education program to reach the Latino population.
- Strengthened relationships with safety partner agencies.

To reach the Latino population, NDOT invested \$310,000 to hire regional coordinators and develop a comprehensive Latino community highway safety awareness and education program. The objective was to engage Latino audiences, particularly first- and second-generation Latinos, through culturally responsive media campaigns, enforcement operations, and educational programming targeting highway safety messages in the areas of seat belts, impaired driving, and pedestrian safety.

NDOT used \$20,000 in flex funds to support the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in publishing up to 150,000 educational tip cards on topics related to the SHSP emphasis areas, including teen driving, impaired driving, seat belts and child safety seats, pedestrian and bicycle safety, lane departures (move over law), and other new legislation. This project was an update and revitalization of the DMV's existing "Quick Tip" series.



NDOT allocated an additional \$56,000 to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Washoe County to provide and promote a “Safe Ride Home” with free public transportation on New Year’s Eve and St. Patrick’s Day in Reno/Sparks along with a “Don’t Drink and Drive/Safe Ride Home” education campaign.

NDOT staff found the flex fund application process to be fairly simple since the agency met the requirement of obligating funds for the infrastructure projects it had identified for the year. Additionally, given the FHWA division office’s participation in SHSP implementation activities, the Nevada Division Office FHWA representative was familiar with the proposed projects.

Performance measures and tracking mechanisms are included in funding agreements with each of the implementing agencies. For example, process measures for tracking successful implementation include, among others, the number of materials distributed, the number of active partners, and the number of news stories about the issue. Outcome measures include changes in target audience behavior and attitude on seat belts, impaired driving, and pedestrian safety.

Results

Flexing of HSIP funding enabled NDOT to support multiple education and outreach programs related to the SHSP that would not have received funding or support otherwise. Included with efforts targeting the general population are programs to reduce fatalities and serious injuries among two high-risk groups – young drivers and Latinos. The successful PACE program was expanded from just one area to students all over the State. The proven effective *Click It or Ticket* and *Over the Limit Under Arrest* campaigns were also expanded. The RTC free ride program provided 7,326 rides between 7 p.m. and 4 a.m. on New Year’s Eve in 2009. While data is not available for the specific day, the number of crashes involving driving under the influence (DUI) in December 2009 was 30 percent lower than in December 2008.

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Utah Flexes HSIP Funds to Enhance Partners' Safety Efforts

Utah

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Overall, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) spends about \$20 million per year on roadway safety, one-half of which is funded via a state funding mechanism and one-half via the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The State receives about \$4 million per year in Federal highway safety grant funding (i.e., Sections 402, 405, 408, 410, etc.). According to crash data, the majority of fatal and serious injury crashes in Utah are behavior related. However, the state funding mechanism is limited to infrastructure investments. Given the level of behavior related crashes, UDOT decided to take full advantage of the HSIP flexibility provision to fund noninfrastructure safety programs. "There is a lot of talk about an integrated approach to safety – the 4Es (enforcement, education, engineering, and emergency response). We are utilizing the flex funds to address the other Es beyond engineering," said Utah Director of Traffic and Safety Robert Hull.

UDOT has flexed approximately 10 percent of its HSIP funds each year for an annual investment of approximately \$900,000 in safety funds for noninfrastructure programs between FY 2006 and FY 2009. This has enabled UDOT to support its overall safety program – *Zero Fatalities* – and reinforce partnerships with new and existing safety partners through support of their programs. Partners include the Department of Public Safety (DPS); Highway Safety Office (HSO); Utah Department of Health (DOH) Violence and Injury Prevention Program; Utah Safety Council (USC); and Utah Attorney General's Office. Programs were identified by the partner agencies and then reviewed by UDOT as potential HSIP flex projects, considering their link to the Utah's Comprehensive Safety Plan (the State's strategic highway safety plan).

UDOT used flex funds for informational safety and public outreach materials as well as to support the implementation of a multidisciplinary safety summit. One of the projects identified by DPS and DOH was a teen memorial yearbook, which includes stories from families about teens that have died in crashes. Funding from UDOT pays for the creative development and production while the DOH and DPS work with the families to develop the

Key Accomplishments

- Strengthened relationships in the safety community through funding partner programs.
- Enabled improved creativity in addressing safety issues.
- Demonstrated greater levels of success through collaboration.

stories. The book has been used in teen driver education classes for the past two years.

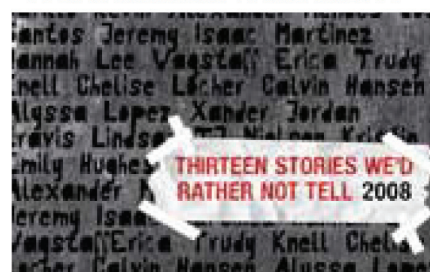
Additional education and outreach programs supported by flex funds include the *Operation Lifesaver* program to reduce pedestrian crashes at rail crossings and support for USC's *Alive@25* program that promotes safe driving among youth. The 14 Safe Kids chapters across the State receive funding to buy car and booster seats that are given away during Safe Kids Week.

UDOT also contributes flex funds to support a Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor position. This attorney, who is housed in the Attorney General's office, works with county and city prosecuting attorneys to help them handle impaired driving-related court cases. The resource prosecutor provides quarterly reports of their activities to ensure objectives of the program are met.

"Applying for flex funds is not difficult given that all the data needed is assembled in other annual reports, including those on the HSIP program, railroad program, Safe Routes to School, and the 5% Report," said Hull.

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Teen Memorial Yearbook 2008



Results

Since 2000 Utah has experienced a reduction in fatal crashes of 34 percent. In 2009, fatalities were the lowest in 34 years. Overall, flex funding has been used to strengthen the *Zero Fatalities* Program, the overarching safety effort in Utah. Since *Zero Fatalities* was initiated in 2005, all of the safety campaigns in the State have been branded with the logo. The last market survey in 2009 showed that Utah residents had a 75 percent awareness rate of the *Zero Fatalities* campaign and the related safety programs. In addition, the flex funded Traffic Safety Prosecutor has helped cities and counties without experience in impaired driving-related court cases reduce the number of dismissals or reduced charges.

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