



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of Highways Project Implementation / Bureau of Local Roads & Streets
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Room 205 / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

June 22, 2026

CIRCULAR LETTER 2026-07

FY 2028 LOCAL HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP) NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS / MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS / METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS - DIRECTORS / TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS / CONSULTING ENGINEERS

PURPOSE & INTRODUCTION:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) intends to add a FY 2028 local increment to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) when we develop the overall proposed FY2028-2033 Multi-Year Highway Improvement Program. Recognizing that 50% of the fatal and serious crashes occur on the local highway system, and the critical role that funding plays in meeting those safety goals, IDOT intends to commit \$33.57 million for the FY 2028 cycle.

Applications for this funding program will be received through **Friday, August 14, 2026, at 5:00 PM CT**, and the announcement of the selected projects for funding will be made in late fall. In addition to the information contained within this Circular Letter, applicants are directed to explore the [HSIP website](#), which contains information on the IDOT HSIP Policy and analysis tools, that may be used to guide the applicant through the application process. Additional information is also provided in the "Submission Requirements" and "Resources" sections of this Circular Letter.

PROGRAM PURPOSE, DETAILS, AND IMPORTANT CRITERIA:

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the HSIP eligibility has been expanded to address the increase in fatalities and meet the "moving toward zero" initiative. Achieving a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries is paramount to IDOT. With each application, a strong consideration must be articulated that should focus upon specific safety strategies that offer significant benefit to the reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes. A principal component of the HSIP is to identify the issue(s) contributing to the fatal and serious injury crashes, and how the safety strategy will address and resolve these issues.

Applicants should be aware of these critical items:

- **IDOT encourages projects that protect Vulnerable Road Users** The term, Vulnerable Road User (VRU), is used to describe bicyclists and pedestrians, as they sustain a greater risk of injury in any collision with a vehicle, and are therefore highly in need of protection against such collisions. The IIJA introduced the VRU Special Rule, which requires states to obligate no less than 15 percent of its HSIP on VRU projects if

the total annual fatalities of vulnerable road users in the State represents no less than 15 percent of the total annual crash fatalities in the State. The Department is currently under the VRU penalty.

- **IDOT will prioritize High Risk Rural Road (HRRR) projects** – The IIJA continued the HRRR Special Rule, which requires states in which the fatality rate on rural roads increased over the most recent two-year period, to obligate a specified amount of funds toward HRRR safety projects in the next fiscal year. HRRR projects are located on rural major collector, rural minor collector, or rural local roads. The Department is currently under the HRRR penalty.

IDOT will also prioritize the selection of projects that address the 2022 Illinois Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis areas, such as roadway departures, hazardous intersections, and pedestrians' conflicts. To meet the legislative intent of the broadened eligibility requirements under IIJA, IDOT will also consider system-wide and systemic safety improvements. These may include items such as signage, high friction surface treatment, new pavement markings and projects to maintain minimum level retro reflectivity, rumble strips, chevrons, etc. Please note the Department will not fund systemic guardrail improvements as part of the FY28 Local HSIP cycle. However, a Local Public Agency can still receive HSIP funds for location specific guardrail projects. The FHWA also provides guidance on the HSIP, including systemic approaches, which can be found via the following link [FHWA Highway Safety Programs](#).

HSIP funds may be used for a total reconstruction when required for a safety improvement or also to address safety issues without completely reconstructing entire roadway segments or intersections to the latest policies and standards. Projects where other sources of funding are included for non-safety components are favorable and should also be submitted.

The federal funding level per project is a maximum 90 percent of the total eligible improvement cost for the project with the local public agency responsible for the ten (10) percent matching funds and any non-participating items. All phases of a safety improvement project are eligible for this program, including preliminary engineering, design, construction, and construction engineering. Right-of-way costs are typically not eligible to be covered by this funding program. Projects requesting multiple phases may initially only have the preliminary phases funded. Local public agencies shall obligate these funds within two (2) years of the Fiscal Year for which they are announced, or funds will be rescinded.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Application materials can be accessed on the [HSIP website](#) under Local HSIP. Each candidate project must have a cover letter, completed LRS grant application, Local HSIP proposal form, benefit to cost ratio form, raw crash data in an Excel spreadsheet, project location map, photographs of the project location, estimated project cost breakdown (including contingencies and non-participating items), estimated project timeline, a project narrative, LRS Risk Assessment, and a Conflict of Interest Form. Please note the benefit to cost ratio form has recently been updated.

The project narrative should be a brief one-to-two-page summary of the project

history, crash locations, and desired safety improvements. The project narrative should not include information on every aspect of every crash on the project, every aspect of the desired improvement, or letters of support from other entities concerned about the project.

The Local HSIP Proposal form should be completed with as much information as possible about the subject project. The crash table should be filled in with crash totals or zeros if no crash types were present. Data should be used from the most current 5-year period as reported to IDOT. For the FY28 Cycle, please use 2020-2024 crash data. Updated data should be used on an application that is resubmitted from a prior year. The estimated project cost should be the total cost for the completed project. If a lesser amount should be used to calculate the HSIP funding (due to contingencies and non-participating items), please indicate this reduced amount on the application form.

The project location map should include information as to where all crashes occurred within the project limits during the crash evaluation period. The estimated project timeline should include information on time requirements for Phase I engineering, Phase II design, a target letting date, and an estimated construction completion date.

To aid in the application process, examples of successfully completed applications are included on the [HSIP website](#). Please refer to these examples as you complete the paperwork required for the FY 2028 HSIP application.

RESOURCES:

2026 Local HSIP Informational Webinar:

The Bureau of Local Roads & Streets and the Bureau of Safety Programs & Engineering will be hosting a webinar on **Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 10:00 AM** to discuss the priorities of HSIP and how to submit a quality application. The webinar can be accessed using the following link: [FY28 Local HSIP Webinar](#). To join the audio by phone, dial (312) 535-8110. The webinar access code is 2631 307 8860, and the webinar password is 83894662.

Data Resources:

Several resources have been developed to aid Local Public Agencies in identifying locations and emphasis areas in the [IDOT Safety Portal](#). These include county emphasis area tables, pedestrian corridors, top 50 curves, Local Intersection Initiative, 2025 High Risk Rural Roads, and the 2024 Local Safety Tier List. These resources are available to be used to develop your HSIP application. The Safety Tiers are broken out in different categories such as High, Medium, Low for both intersection and segment locations. Safety Tiers allow transportation officials to understand relative performance of a location compared to similar types of roadways or intersections. The Safety Tiers allow more locations to be identified and analyzed for similar roadway features and potential crash trends.

IDOT also encourages candidates with projects on two lane rural roads with run off the road crashes to utilize the Run-Off the Road Initiative (RORI) tool. This tool assists with the selection of the proper safety treatment needed to improve the hazardous location.

The RORI tool and the 2024 local Safety Tiers are available in the Tools section of

the Safety Portal in the area for Safety Tools and Documents. For access to the Safety Portal, please contact DOT.SafetyPortalHelpDesk@illinois.gov. For additional questions related to accessing any of the above HSIP resources, please contact Katherine Beckett at Katherine.Beckett@illinois.gov.

There are additional resources available in the Safety Portal, and we strongly encourage potential applicants to attend the webinar and explore the resources available.

The FHWA also has a dedicated website with [Proven Safety Countermeasures](#) that we encourage reviewing.

Completed applications should be sent electronically to the appropriate District Local Roads and Streets Engineer no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, August 14, 2026.

Questions concerning the safety data and project eligibility for the Local HSIP may be directed to Steve Letsky at Stephen.Letsky@Illinois.gov. Questions about the Local HSIP application may be directed to Melinda Kos at Melinda.Kos@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,



Holly Bieneman
Acting Bureau Chief of Local Roads and Streets
Director, Office of Planning & Programming

cc: Vershun Tolliver, FHWA Illinois Division Administrator
Russ Renner, Illinois Association of County Engineers
Molly Rockford, Illinois Association of County Engineers
Brad Cole, Illinois Municipal League
Jerry Crabtree, Township Officials of Illinois
Craig Smith, Township Highway Commissioners of Illinois