



WisDOT Safe Transportation Alternatives for Rural Schools (STARS) Application Instructions

A Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Supplemental Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Initiative

IMPORTANT: A complete application is required for each project proposal. WisDOT recommends applications are specific to one activity and applicant may submit multiple project proposals. Review and utilize these instructions when completing the application.

Due to funding availability, WisDOT is primarily seeking applications from rural non-urbanized communities (**i.e., applicants not within an MPO urbanized boundary who have a population less than 5,000**). If you are not certain whether your community is within an MPO urbanized area, visit our WisDOT MPO webpage: <https://wisconsindot.gov/pages/doing-bus/local-gov/plning-orgs/mpo.aspx>

WisDOT will accept applications from communities within other population areas (5,000-50,000 & 50,000-200,000). Please note funding availability in these areas is limited.

What is STARS?

Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), a significant increase in federal funding has been allocated to the TAP program in the State of Wisconsin, which must be sub-allocated based on recipient population.

The STARS initiative is designed to simplify both the application and delivery of TAP projects in rural (population less than 5,000) areas of the Wisconsin. The application has been enhanced to include non-infrastructure options in the form of project packages.

Population-area specific allocations must be approved through the state budget process, but below are reasonable estimates for each fiscal year

STARS Project Eligibility

Applicants must:

- (1) Comply with all WisDOT TAP policies as outlined in WisDOT TAP guidelines;
- (2) The project must relate to surface transportation;
- (3) The project must have an eligible sponsor; and
- (4) The project must be selected through a competitive process.

Please note that WisDOT region staff may request revised or additional information from project applicants in order to resolve any eligibility issues prior to submitting applications for funding consideration. **Failure to provide a complete application or to provide supplementary information requested by WisDOT may preclude an application from consideration for receipt of TAP funding.**

WisDOT reserves the right to deny ineligible budget line items. Applicants can minimize potential eligibility issues by submitting applications and attachments as early as possible to allow WisDOT region staff to provide substantive technical assistance.

Direct questions regarding the application process to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) regional contact.

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WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
SE Region	Jacob Varnes	(262) 548-8789	jacob.varnes@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	Michael Erickson	(608) 246-5361	michael.erickson@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	Randy Kirk	(715) 392-7860	randall.kirk@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	Ben Roskoskey	(715) 365-5783	benjamin.roskoskey@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	Kelsey Lorenz	(920) 492-0142	kelsey.lorenz@dot.wi.gov

Application Submission and Deadline

Project application deadline is no later than **5:00 pm on Friday, March 24, 2023**. However, submitting applications prior to the deadline will allow WisDOT to review applications and communicate with locals regarding outstanding questions. *Late applications will not be accepted.*

Include the name of the local unit of government in the file name and email completed application(s) to the appropriate WisDOT Region email address. If your project is within the boundaries of an MPO you also need to email your application to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Please visit the Wisconsin.gov MPO webpage (<https://wisconsin.gov/pages/doing-bus/local-gov/planning-orgs/mpo.aspx>) determine whether your agency falls within an MPO boundary.

WisDOT Region	Email
SE Region	DOTDTSDETEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
SW Region	DOTDTSWSWTEBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NW Region	DOTDTSNWTBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NC Region	DOTDTSNCTBPFP@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	DOTDTSNETAP@dot.wi.gov

Application Highlights & Tips

- Project sponsors must fund a portion of total project costs. TAP project costs are funded with maximum 80% federal and minimum 20% local funds.
- Only one primary project sponsor is allowed per project. Ineligible sponsors may coordinate with eligible applicants to submit project funding requests, but the State Municipal Agreement (SMA) is with the primary project sponsor.
- Print and use instructions to assist in completion of application(s).

Application Format

WisDOT only accepts applications in Microsoft Word format. **Applications saved in PDF format will not be accepted**, as handwritten signatures are not required. Sponsors should send any necessary attachments in Microsoft Word, Excel or Adobe PDF format.

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Completing Your Application

Due to funding availability, the STARS Solicitation and this application are exclusively seeking applications from rural (< 5,000 Population), non-urbanized (i.e., not within an MPO urbanized boundary) communities. If you are not certain whether your community is within an MPO urbanized area, visit our WisDOT MPO webpage: <https://wisconsindot.gov/pages/doing-bus/local-gov/plning-orgs/mpo.aspx>

Applicants within Transportation Management Areas (TMA): See the WisDOT TAP Page for more information about revised TMA application procedures <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/tap.aspx>

Project Applicant and Application Type

Geographic Population Area: Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, TAP funds are distributed proportionally based on adjusted census-defined population areas. Competitive selection will occur amongst these population areas.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) larger than 200,000 in population receive a sub-allocation as determined by FHWA. Under the BIL, eligible TAP sponsors located within an MPO urbanized boundary are only eligible to receive MPO-apportioned funds and may not compete in the 0 - 5,000 population category. Please contact your Regional Local Program Manager if you have questions about this requirement.

Name, Location of Public Sponsor and Sponsor Type: Include the Primary Sponsor name and type.

Project Title: Brief Description of your Project

Project Location: Describe project boundaries and geographic location if located on a highway or road.

Project Contacts

Project Primary Public Sponsor Agency Contact Information: Provide contact information for the primary public sponsor agency.

Secondary Public Sponsor Agency or Private Organization Contact Information: In cases where the public sponsor is acting on behalf of a private organization, also provide contact information for the secondary organization on the project application form.

Head of the Local Public Sponsor Agency or Private Organization Contact Information: Also provide contact information for the official head of government who would formally receive notification of any potential award.

Project Activity

Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails, and bikeways.

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Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

Engagement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.

Encouragement – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.

Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

Planning Study – Providing applicant with assistance to generate SRTS or other non-motorized transportation safety planning documents, or to identify future SRTS programming needs

Project Benefit

Indicate the project benefit. Make sure that this benefit is fully supported in the project narrative.

Local Resolution of Support

There must be a local resolution of support for the proposed project, executed by a governing body that has the authority to make financial commitment on behalf of the project sponsor (i.e., County Board, City Council, or Regional Planning Commission Policy Board). This resolution must be submitted prior to award. Applicants must indicate there is a resolution or that there will be a resolution. **A copy of the resolution is due to the region no later than October 20, 2023.**

Existing Facilities and Projects

Does a County, State, or Federal Highway exist within 1,000 feet of the project limits? Check *Yes* or *No*.

Known safety issues? Check *Yes* or *No*. **If yes, specify**, and consider applying for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding. Please refer to the following link for additional information on HSIP: <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/highway/hsip.aspx>.

NOTE: SRTS Project applicants may request HSIP funds for safety-related improvements

Does a railroad facility exist within 1,000 feet of the project limits? Check *Yes* or *No*. **If yes, specify** by selecting: *At-grade Crossing, Roadway Underpass/Overpass, Longitudinal Encroachment, or Parallel*.

NOTE: Provide accurate project limits or boundaries on page A-1 of the application

Does the project physically cross an existing railroad facility? Check *Yes* or *No*.

If Yes, include the name of the railroad facility owner in the provided field

To ensure compliance with both state and federal law and policy, all projects with any of the following conditions must be evaluated for rail issues:

- A railroad crossing located within the project limits or within 1,000 feet of the project location

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and/or on the designated detour route.

- Grade separations between a highway and a railroad.
- Projects that parallel a railroad on adjacent right of way.
- Projects that use railroad properties.
- Projects that involve adjustments to railroad facilities.
- Projects that will impact a corridor reserved under an applicable recreational trails program.

Other Concept Notes: Provide any additional relevant project information that has not been covered in another section of the application.

Miscellaneous Issues

Other Concept Notes: Provide any additional relevant project information that has not been covered in another section of the application.

School Demographics and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan

Complete these two sections only if applying within the TAP Safe Routes to School eligibility category. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website may be accessed for certain demographic information: Wisconsin DPI Database - <https://apps6.dpi.wi.gov/SchDirPublic/home>

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Project Costs and Dates

Application Project Costs Guidelines: Applicants must demonstrate an ability to provide 20% in matching funds and finance the entire project until the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reimburses the federal share of 80% of project costs. Total dollar amounts must correlate to percentage totals.

Most projects are reimbursed monthly or quarterly on the basis of progress invoices.

Minimum / Maximum Project Funding Amounts: To ensure efficient utilization of local and state administrative resources and promote projects with significant impacts, WisDOT established the following minimum project funding amounts for TAP projects:

- **Engineering (Infrastructure) projects - \$150,000 or more.**
 - Design & Construction Projects
 - Construction-Only Projects
- **Safe Routes to School Programming Projects - \$20,000 or more.**
 - **Education** - Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.
 - **Encouragement** - Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.
 - **Engagement** - All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.
 - **Evaluation** - Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).
- **Planning Studies - \$20,000 or more.**
 - Planning Studies to generate SRTS or other non-motorized transportation safety planning documents, or to identify future SRTS programming needs.

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Complete the Project Costs and Dates table for the appropriate fiscal years of the application/project cycle. In addition to the application table, Sponsors must include a detailed breakdown of project costs. Attach a detailed breakdown of project costs in Microsoft Excel. This detailed breakdown must clarify assumptions made in creating the budget such that a third-party reviewer would be able to substantiate the assumptions.

Some important things to remember when completing a detailed cost breakdown are to make sure to:

- Check your math more than once.
- Your project costs are accurate and realistic.
- Your cost estimate detail attachment totals match your Project Cost Table Totals.

All estimates will be reviewed by WisDOT Region staff for consistency with current practices and approaches. WisDOT Region staff may revise estimates in these categories due to the complexity of the project or other factors. WisDOT will notify the sponsor of any changes to estimates within the application and determine whether the sponsor wishes to continue with the application with the revised estimate.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programing Projects Planning, Administration, etc.)

Engineering (Infrastructure) Projects

Check the Federal Fiscal Year for Design, if applicable. Check the Federal Fiscal Year for Construction in which you request the phase be scheduled (i.e., FFY 2023 is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023). Please note that WisDOT has final authority to select the year in which the project is scheduled.

Provide cost estimates for total, federal, and local participation.

Planning Studies (Including SRTS Planning Studies)

Check the Federal Fiscal Year in which you request the phase be scheduled (i.e., FFY 2023 is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023). Please note that WisDOT has final authority to select the year in which the project is scheduled.

Provide cost estimates for total, federal, and local participation.

SRTS Programing Projects

NEW For this solicitation, applicants are invited to consider one of the provided SRTS program packages as a high-level guide. See the application for in-depth option breakdowns.

Check the Federal Fiscal Year in which you request the phase be scheduled (i.e., FFY 2023 is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023). Please note that WisDOT has final authority to select the year in which the project is scheduled.

- **Education** - Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.
- **Encouragement** - Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.
- **Engagement** - All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.

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- **Evaluation** – Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach

Select One Option:

- Option 1** – Safe Routes to School Action Plan
- Option 2** – Safe Routes to School Action Plan and Events
- Option 3** – Safe Routes to School Action Plan, Events, and Programs
- Option 4** – Safe Routes to School Action Plan, Events, and Programs
- Option 5** – Safe Routes to School Action Plan, Events, Programs and Curriculum
- Option 6** - Build your own

Provide cost estimates for total, federal, and local participation.

Total Other Cost: Provide total cost for the planning, administration, or other non-infrastructure project.

REQUIRED: Application Grand Total – Provide the sum of all project proposal costs (engineering, programing, planning study) this section of the table

Narrative Response/Attachment

Provide up to **three double-spaced pages** of narrative (**minimum 11-point font size, 1-inch margins**) in response to questions 1 - 5. Review committees will rely upon these narrative responses to rate and rank applications.

Key Program Requirements Confirmation

Confirm understanding of project condition(s) by typing a name, title, and initials in the boxes at the bottom of the page. The individual providing initials and signature on the application (i.e., Head of Government or Designee, not a consultant) **must have fiscal authority** for the project sponsor.

Fiscal Authorization and Signature

Application prepared by a consultant? Check *Yes* or *No*.

If *Yes*, please provide the **Consultant Company Name** and **Company Location (City, State)**, **Consultant Signature**, and signature **Date**. An electronic typed signature is all that is required to submit an application. A handwritten signature in PDF format is NOT necessary.

NOTE: On Local Program projects, it is not permissible for a consultant to fill out applications gratis (or for a small fee) for a municipality and then be selected to do the design work on a project unless the municipality either:

- a.)** uses a one-step QBS process with the scope of work to include the grant application and the design services, if authorized; or
- b.)** uses a two-step QBS process with the scope of work for the first selection for the preparation of the grant application(s) and the second selection for the actual design(s).

In either case, all costs incurred prior to WisDOT project authorization are the responsibility of the municipality. See FDM 8-5-3 for additional information: <https://wisconsindot.gov/rdw/fdm/fd-08-05.pdf#fd8-5-3>

Sponsor Agency responsible for completing application. The Sponsor Agency is the local unit of government that is financially responsible for the federal-aid improvement.

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Contact Person: Must be a Head of Government or Designee (e.g., County Highway Commissioner).

Title of the Contact Person.

Address of the Contact Person.

Telephone number of the Contact Person.

Email address of the Contact Person.

Head of Government/Designee Signature: A local official, not a consultant, must sign the application. An electronic typed signature is all that is required to submit an application. A handwritten signature in PDF format is NOT necessary.

Date the application was signed.

Attachments Checklist

Refer to application form for details. Check the appropriate boxes to indicate that attachments are annexed to the application.

WisDOT Information – Shaded area to be completed by WisDOT staff only

WisDOT staff will enter the information in the top portion at application review and enter the project ID(s) after project approval.

