

FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM

The Federal Lands Access Program (Access Program) provides Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds for projects on publicly owned roadways that are located on or adjacent to, or that provide access to Federal lands.

BACKGROUND:

FHWA administers federal highway funding through State transportation departments (SDOT). It is the responsibility of a roadway owning authority (State, county, local, etc.) to manage their highway programs to include the management of individual projects. FHWA authority for highway funding is established in multi-year transportation authorizations. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law by the President on July 6, 2012 and establishes funding programs under FHWA for 2013 and 2014. MAP-21 consolidated and simplified previous highway funding programs which included funding opportunities for access to military facilities. One of the consolidations under MAP-21 is the creation of the Access Program.

The Access Program provides FHWA funding for roads owned by a State or local entity that provide access to or through a Federal land. The program distributes \$250 million for both FY2013 and FY2014 to all states. 80% of this funding is distributed by legislative formula among twelve western states based upon the amount of federal land owned by the following agencies: National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers (civil works). The remainder is distributed to the other 38 states according to the infrastructure data reported by those five agencies. This funding is not limited to those five agencies and DoD is one of the other federal agencies that can benefit from this program.

The intent of the program is to fund projects accessing those lands that are high recreational use facilities or high economic generators. The funding is to be used on roads owned by state or local agency and requires a local or state funding match of no more than 20%. The funds are allocated to projects through a competitive program established by each SDOT. The Access program as a new program is very similar to previous FHWA programs such as the Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) program. Project selection is made at the SDOT level and will be administered through them or through the FHWA.

PROJECT SELECTION:

Project selection is decided through a Programming Decision Committee (PDC) composed of one FHWA representative, one SDOT representative, and one local transportation representative. The selection of projects requires coordination between the federal agencies and the selection committee. Each state is responsible for developing their procedures for project submittal and selection. The PDC will issue calls for projects to county or local transportation organizations and receive project candidates from those agencies or the State DOT themselves. The PDC does not accept project nominations directly from Federal Agencies. The Federal Agency must work with their local transportation authority or SDOT to coordinate and develop project submittals. The PDC will review the project submittals and eliminate those not meeting the minimum criteria. The selection of projects requires coordination between the federal agencies and the selection

committee. Each federal agency will be required to assist the PDC to rack-and-stack project submittals applicable to their agencies. Federal Agencies may coordinate this through their internal programs prior to project submittal.

Though specific project guidance has not been established for the Access Program, these past programs were generally more receptive to smaller projects in order for the program to provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people. PLHD projects rarely exceeded \$2 million and most were below \$1 million. From past FHWA programs, successful project selection will most likely be based upon but not limited to the size/cost of the project; the type of facility accessed; the joint benefits of the project; the cooperation amongst relevant agencies; and engineering based need. Favorable projects would be smaller in cost and work would include such things as turn lane additions or signal improvements that reduce congestion and/or improve safety to reduce crashes involving serious injuries or fatalities.

INSTALLATION INVOLVEMENT:

This program can potentially benefit DOD but it must be noted DOD is one of several Federal Agencies competing for this funding and decisions are ultimately made by the SDOT and its PDC for funding depending upon their prioritized needs. Installations can facilitate project submittal through proactive collaboration with State and local transportation officials.

For those installations that have already established relationships and communication with you SDOT, your local transportation authority, your regional or metropolitan planning authority, continue with that network and discuss this funding opportunity with those organizations. Project submittals must be a part of the required transportation planning processes at the local and State level.

If your installation does not have an established communication network with your SDOT, start by contacting your SDOT District or Regional office or your local or county highway agency, depending upon roadway ownership. These avenues will be the primary means for project submittal.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Internally to DOD, the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, Transportation Engineering Agency (SDDCTEA), Highways for National Defense (HND) program managers can provide information.

External to DOD, information can be found on the FHWA website or within one of the Divisions of its Office of Federal Lands Highways. These websites will also post links to individual SDOT information as it is established and made available.

LINKS:

HND: <https://www.tea.army.mil/DODProg/HND/default.htm>

FHWA: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/>

This document will be updated as more information becomes available.