Federal-Aid Local Project Delivery

Training And Development Guide

Oregon Department of Transportation

LOCAL PROGRAM LEADERSHIP TEAM | 2016

Federal-Aid Local Project Delivery: Training and Development

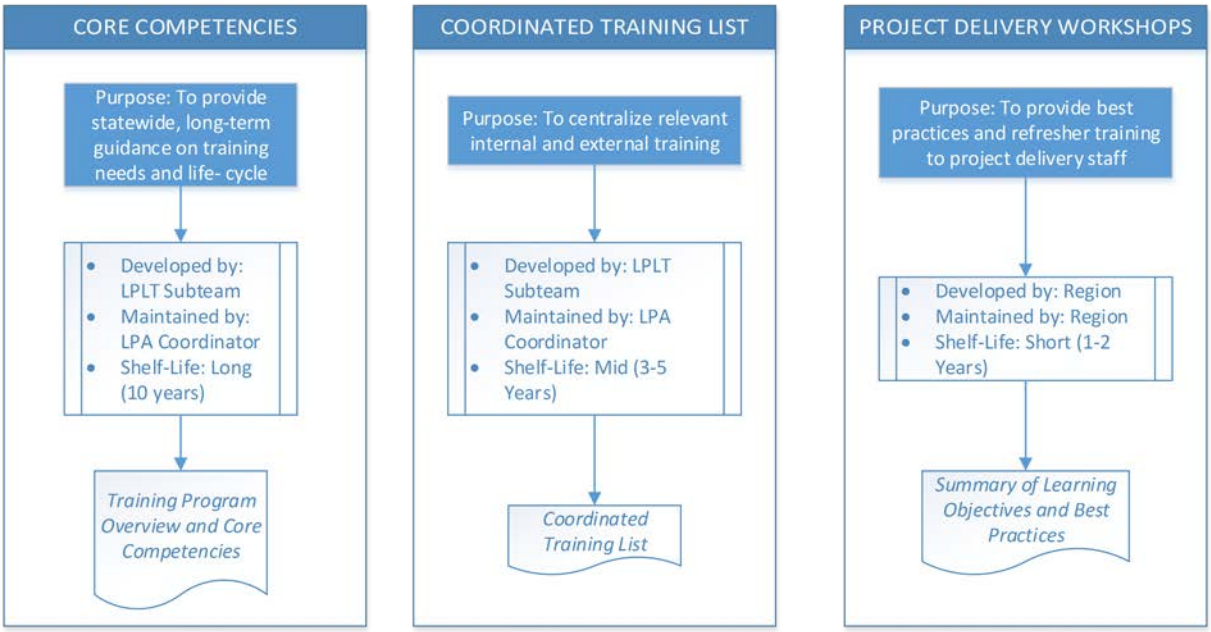
Purpose

To provide flexible and coordinated training resources for local public agency, consultant, and ODOT staff who deliver federal-aid local transportation projects.

This guide provides general guidance for federal-aid project delivery based on local, state, federal, and consultant input. This guide is not intended to replace existing discipline-specific training programs but instead link users to key resources.

Scope

The Training and Development Guide is organized into three sections: (1) Core Competencies, (2) Coordinated Training List, and (3) Region Workshop Guidance. Together, these three sections provide high-level guidance, introductory information, and on-going training, respectively, on federal-aid project delivery. The purpose, owner, and outcomes for each are shown below.



Project Team

Sonny Chickering, *Sponsor*
Cole Grisham, *Lead*
Mark Foster
Butch Hansen
Daniel Hauser
Marilynn Merritt
Lisa Nell
Holly Winston
Susan White
John Huestis
Satvinder Sandhu
Scott Adams
Sam Hunaidi

1. Core Competencies

Purpose: To provide long-term, statewide guidance on training needs and life cycle. Core competencies are strengths common to successful federal-aid local project delivery and reflect the breadth of skills required.

1. Partnering: Communication and collaborations with local, state, federal, and private stakeholders is essential to local project delivery. Key areas include:
    a. Communication
    b. Conflict Resolution
    c. Customer Service
    d. Negotiation
    e. Public Outreach Planning
2. Project Management: The complex, multi-faceted nature of local project delivery requires adept project managers that can handle multiple priorities. Key areas include:
    a. Process
    b. Scope, Schedule, and Budget
    c. Technical Discipline Coordination
    d. Project Management Institute Best Practices
3. Professional Knowledge: Local project delivery incorporates technical aspects of many different disciplines, requiring project managers to have a general understanding of multiple fields. Key areas include:
    a. Technical Disciplines
    b. Plans, Specifications, and Estimate Coordination
4. Contract Administration: Contract management is central to effective local project delivery and ensuring federal funds are being spent appropriately. Key areas include:
    a. Consultant Contracts
    b. Construction Contracts
    c. General Contract Management
5. Stewardship & Oversight: At its core, federal-aid project delivery is about ensuring federal funds are being used in a legal and effective manner. Key areas include:
    a. Governance
    b. Process
    c. Legal Framework
    d. Funding Program Requirements

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2. Coordinated Training List [RESERVED]

Purpose: To make existing internal and external training that is relevant to federal-aid local project delivery publicly available in a user-friendly manner.

The Coordinated Training List is organized by Core Competency with provider, cost, location, frequency, and format provided where possible.

Partnering

Communication:

Conflict Resolution:

Customer Service:

Negotiation:

Public Outreach Planning:

Project Management

Process:

Scope, Schedule, and Budget:

Technical Discipline Coordination:

Project Management Institute Best Practices: [1]

- Oregon Project Management Certification (Oregon DAS)
- Introduction to Managing Projects (Oregon DAS)
- Introduction to Portfolios & Programs (Oregon DAS)
- How to Manage Integrated Programs (Oregon DAS)
- Portfolio Management (Oregon DAS)
- MS Project 2010/2013 Hands-on-Lab (Oregon DAS)

Professional Knowledge

Technical and Policy Disciplines:

[1] The Oregon Department of Administrative Services offers multiple project and portfolio management training opportunities. Visit the DAS website for information on these and other courses.

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- Local Public Agency Real Estate Acquisition (NHI: Web Based)
- Real Estate Acquisition under the Uniform Act: An Overview (NHI: Web Based)
- Introduction to NEPA and Transportation Decisionmaking (NHI: Web Based)
- Introduction to Utility Coordination for Highway Projects (NHI: Web Based)
- Plan Reading Series (NHI: Web Based)[2]

Plans, Specifications, and Estimate Coordination:

Contract Administration

Consultant Contracts:

Construction Contracts:

General Contract Management:

Stewardship & Oversight

Governance: Policies and structure to administer Oregon's federal-aid local project delivery program. Examples training opportunities include:

Process: How Oregon delivers federal-aid projects. Examples training opportunities include:

Legal Framework: Laws, regulations, policies, and guidance governing federal-aid local project delivery. Examples training opportunities include:

Funding Program Requirements: Special requirements for specific federal-aid programs. Examples training opportunities include:

[2] Series includes separate highway, grading, traffic control, erosion and sediment, right of way, county, bridge, and culvert plans courses.

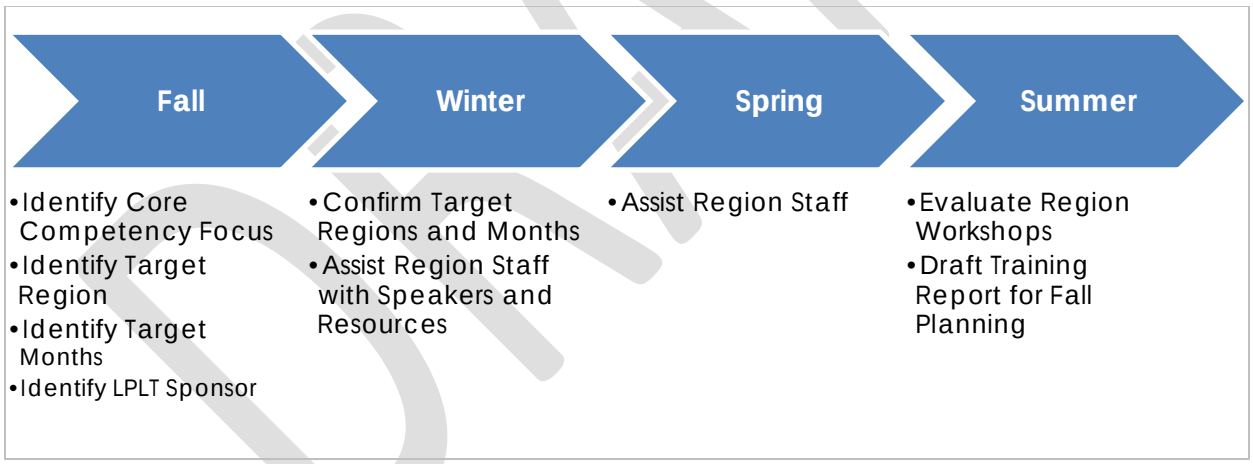
3. Region Workshop Guidance

Region workshops are designed to provide timely, relevant information to state and local staff on federal-aid local project delivery. The workshops are intended to be a cooperative forum for state and local project delivery staff to engage each other on recent projects, new regulations, and best practices. Based on survey and focus group feedback, the Local Program Leadership Team (LPLT) provides the following guidance to region staff to plan, host, and evaluate future region workshops.

The region workshop guidance is organized in the following parts: **Headquarters Coordination, Region Workshop Planning, Hosting, and Evaluating**.

Headquarters Coordination

Headquarters staff can play a key role in scheduling and coordinating region workshops. Region staff said they would prefer LPLT identify target months, a general outline of the topics to cover, and build relationships with disciplines that region staff can draw on. A general timeline is provided below for LPLT's planning:



Fall

- Identify Core Competencies Focus: LPLT members will use feedback from the previous training cycle to identify federal-aid core competencies regions should focus on. In the first year of implementation
- Identify Target Regions: LPLT members will discuss and identify region(s) best suited for holding a workshop. Criteria may include:
    - Expressed interest
    - Time since last training was help in the region
    - Staff and resource availability

    - Availability of region-specific topics
    - Opportunity to partner with other training providers
- Identify Target Months: LPLT members will identify the number of workshops and target month(s) to hold them. The number of workshops may vary; Region staff recommend annually at a minimum, while local agency partners recommend twice yearly.
- Identify LPLT Sponsor: LPLT members will identify a member to serve as the sponsor and primary link between the workshop and LPLT.

Winter

- Confirm Target Regions and Months: After identifying regions for host region and month, LPLT members will work with region staff to confirm dates and location.
- Assist Region Staff with Speakers and Resources: Region staff will be responsible to solicit speakers, apply for resources, and determine logistics. LPLT members, specifically the sponsor, should connect region staff with appropriate resources and speakers as applicable.

Spring

- Assist Region Staff: LPLT members will provide ongoing headquarters support to region staff as they develop individual workshops.

Summer

- Evaluate Region Workshops: Region staff will provide a post-workshop summary to LPLT, including attendance, attendee feedback, and any lessons learned for future workshops or the training program generally. LPLT members will evaluate possible focus areas for the following year and areas for improvement in the training program.
- Draft Training Report for Fall Planning: The Local Public Agency Coordinator will prepare a short report (1-2 pages) on the training program's progress for the year, including stakeholders engaged, topics and core competencies covered, and focus areas for the following year. The training report will be used as an informational baseline for the fall workshop planning meetings.

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Region Workshop Planning

Once a host region has been decided, region staff should begin planning the workshop. While it is never too early to start planning a workshop, region staff say three months is the minimum time needed to prepare. The following section covers staff resourcing, topics and speakers, logistics, and other key considerations for region staff as they plan a workshop.

What does a Region Workshop look like?

The structure and format of a region workshop will vary depending on the region. For example, Region's 1 and 2 have hosted full or multiple day workshops featuring a mixture of lectures, updates, case studies, and site visits. Workshops like this put most of the planning and coordination work on region staff and are intended for many and diverse local agency staff. Regions 3, 4, and 5 may not see the value in holding similar events in their regions due to smaller audiences and longer travel times. Instead, Regions 3-5 may hold more tailored training to smaller audiences, perhaps in partnership with APWA, ACEC, or ODOT's T2 Center, or partner with Region's 1 or 2 to hold joint workshops in a mutually beneficial location.

Remember, the primary goal is to provide timely, relevant information to state and local staff on federal-aid local project delivery. The best forum is whichever reflects the local audiences' need.

Staff Resourcing

Region staff should decide early on what role each person will perform on the workshop planning team. The roles are shown below:

- Project Manager: Responsible for planning and developing workshop. The manager delegates tasks to other team members and ensures team reaches necessary milestones.
- Master of Ceremonies (MC): Responsible for the welcome and opening remarks on the day of the event. The MC also introduces speakers and provides any logistical announcements throughout the day. The MC may also be the Project Manager or LPLT Sponsor.
- Speaker and Topics: Responsible for developing topics, contacting speakers, and developing the agenda.
- Food and Venue: Responsible for booking the venue space and coordinating snacks, lunch, or lunch options.

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- Parking: Responsible for finding appropriate parking, transit, shuttle, or other transportation options for workshop attendees.
- Registration and Communication: Responsible for scheduling workshop on iLearn and other training websites. This person also prepares any marketing materials, email announcements, and calendar invites as necessary.
- Information Technology: Responsible for ensuring any computer, microphone, or other technology necessary for the workshop is available. This person should be available on the day of the workshop to troubleshoot any technical issues, or work with venue staff on technical issues.

Topics and Speakers

The team member in charge of speakers and topics has an important task. This task includes developing topics, contacting speakers, and building the agenda. Topics and speakers should focus on projects, policy changes, and project delivery best practices. Regions may also want to provide a broad introduction to programs that have frequent challenges or confusing processes.

Topics: To start, survey your potential audience and ODOT staff on the issues, opportunities, or changes they might want to hear about. This can include sending out a short email survey to LPA staff in your region or brainstorming ideas in a small group. Region 2 had LALs brainstorm topics to build their workshop, for example.

Considerations:

- Is there a specific theme?
- Were there core competencies identified as a priority by LPLT?
- Have there been major policy changes LPA staff would want to hear about?
- Are there specific projects in your region that provide good lessons learned?
- Are any local, state, or federal initiatives ready to present to LPA staff?
- Is there a local, state, or federal program that LPA staff often have trouble with (Bridge project selection, NEPA, or others)?
- Do you want presentations, panel discussions, breakout sessions, site tours, or a mix?

Contacting Speakers: Finding speakers and getting them to commit time to preparing a presentation can be difficult. Once you have a list of topics identified (ideally more than you will need), prepare a draft agenda[3] with topics and tentative speakers. Focus groups said that contacting speakers with a draft agenda and their topic and name already shown helped secure speakers. Also, LPLT members can assist identifying and contacting potential speakers.

[3] Agenda example provided on page 12

Considerations:

- Schedule speakers well in advance (3 months)
- Prepare a draft and final agenda
- Send a couple reminders throughout the planning and development stage to speakers, including one week before
- Send out a 'save the date' invite 3 months in advance, telling potential speakers that the workshop is happening and more details to follow
- Have speakers provide a substitute if they cannot attend that is capable of deliver presentation and answering questions
- Make the speaker cancellation policy and deadline clear

Venue and Food

The team member in charge of venue and food must begin early in the planning process. Without a venue, there is no workshop.

Venue: LPLT will identify the region to hold the workshop and target weeks, but region staff must find and reserve the venue.

Considerations:

- **Schedule venue well in advance!**
- Hold workshop before construction season
- Hold the event in the spring, not summer, to avoid vacations
- Ensure workshop does not overlap other conferences
- Hold workshop before school gets out and before Memorial Day
- Having the workshop at the same location each year reduces planning resources ('we've already done this once') and helps institutionalize the event
- Does the venue provide a government discount (Some venues provide discounts to government agencies on certain days of the week)?

Food: Coffee and snacks, at the very least, are essential to the success of a training event. Working with the agenda developer, decide what break and meal times you will provide. If no meal is to be provided, you should provide a list of restaurants within walking or driving distance.

Considerations:

- Does the venue offer coffee, snacks, and/or meal options? Many provide options when you reserve the space.
- Will the event start early enough to need breakfast options?
- Are lunch options available nearby attendees can walk to?
- Are breaks long enough to warrant more than coffee?

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- Does ODOT policy allow for you to provide food?

Logistics

The Parking, Registration and Communication, and Information Technology team members have the task of ensuring the workshop runs smoothly.

Parking: Parking and transportation plays an important factor in whether your audience will attend at all. The lack of free parking at the Region 1 office was a concern for staff holding a workshop there, so ODOT staff paid for attendee parking and provided valet service.

Considerations:

- Does the venue offer free parking?
- How much does street parking cost?
- Are there free or paid parking structures nearby?
- What transit options serve the venue?
- Is a shuttle available?

Registration and Communications: As soon as dates and venue are set, you should set the training up on iLearn. Once attendees have registered, the communications lead can email all attendees through iLearn as the workshop is developed. The communications lead should work closely with the Topics and Speakers lead to develop clear, concise, and attractive marketing materials, including agendas, speaker bios, presentation descriptions, name tags, and attendee packets.

Considerations:

- Send a couple reminders throughout the planning and development stage to attendees, including one week before
- Send out a 'save the date' invite 3 months in advance, telling potential attendees that the workshop is happening and more details to follow

Information Technology: The one thing you can be certain of is that there will be technical difficulties. The Information Technology lead should ensure all IT-related preparations are made and that someone is on hand at the conference to troubleshoot any issue.

Considerations:

- Does the venue have a projector, screen, and microphones?
- Do you need to bring a laptop?
- Have all the presentations been provided in PDF or another format?

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- Have you opened and ran all the presentations to ensure they work properly?

Other Considerations

Regions should look for partnering opportunities with groups like ODOT's Technology Transfer (T2) Center, the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES), American Public Works Association (APWA) Oregon Chapter, ODOT's Technical Disciplines, and the League of Oregon Cities.

Groups like these often hold semiannual conferences throughout the state on a variety of project delivery topics. They all share audiences with the Region Workshops and can provide shared resources.

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Hosting

The following section provides more information on agenda structure, workshop format, and food and logistics considerations.

Agenda

Based on your region context, needs, and desired topics the workshop format will look a little different from one workshop to the next. The example agenda and following discussion provide a basis for region staff to build from.

Region # Local Project Delivery Workshop
"What is the topic…?"
555 13th St NE, Salem, Oregon 97301
March 15th, 2016 8:00AM-3:00PM

AGENDA

Time	Topic	Speaker	Duration
7:00	*Breakfast*	--	*1 hour*
8:00	Welcome & Overview	MC	15 min
8:15	General Session 1	Speaker 1	30 min
8:45	General Session 2	Speaker 2	30 min
9:15	*Break & Networking*	--	*15 min*
10:00	General Session 3	Speaker 3	30 min
10:30	General Session 4	Speaker 4	30 min
11:00	*Lunch*	--	*1 hour*
12:00	Breakout Sessions 1-2	Speaker 5 & 6	1 hour
1:00	Breakout Sessions 3-4	Speaker 7 & 8	1 hour
2:00	*Break & Networking*	--	*15 min*
2:15	Panel Discussion	Facilitator	1 hour
3:15	Closing Remarks	MC	15 min
3:30	Adjourn	--	--

Example Agenda for Region Workshop

The agenda above provides an example format for the workshop but your region may adopt a different model. The morning begins with a breakfast and overview of the day from the MC. This is a good opportunity to give an overview of the training goals, topic and structure of the sessions, and information about the speakers.

In this example, the morning consists of topics generally applicable to all attendees. Topics could include general policy and programmatic issues or changes everyone will encounter.

The afternoon is split into longer breakout sessions with attendees picking their preferred session. Breakout sessions would be smaller groups on a narrow topic, focusing more on the details of a topic. Breakout sessions are a better format to interactively discuss policies or procedures, challenges in implementation, and share best practices. Attendees will want to know how the topic affects them and how they are to use the information they receive in their daily work.

The last session is a facilitated panel discussion. Panel discussions focus on a specific topic or project, comparing multiple viewpoints. The panel provides a wrap up discussion of the workshop's themes, objectives, and sessions as applied to a specific project or case study. This is a good opportunity for attendees to ask questions and apply what they have learned throughout the workshop.

Food and Logistics

Food: If it is an all-day event, always provide coffee and light snacks at the start, breaks, and lunch at a minimum. ODOT's policy on providing food should be reviewed when planning the event.

Logistics: Have a sign-in table to greet attendees and answer questions. You may want to provide name tags and informational packets with agenda, session materials, lunch options, and workshop evaluations.

Parking and Transportation: Clearly identify how parking and transportation is to be handled and whether transit options exist. Some regions have provided valet service for venues with limited parking.

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Evaluating

Evaluating how the event went, what topics were covered, and attendee feedback is critical to improving the training program and future workshops. This section outlines the post workshop reporting and evaluation guidance.

Feedback Forms

Feedback forms should provide an overview of who attended, how they valued the training and venue, and areas for future improvement. Some areas to cover include:

Demographics	Topics Covered	Speakers	Venue
• Agency? • Years of experience? • Work title?	• Appropriate skill level? • Appropriate breadth and depth? • Areas for improvement?	• Knowledgeable ? • Engaged? • Areas for improvement?	• Appropriate size? • Space? • Food? • Areas for improvement?

Compiling Information and Presenting to LPLT

After attendees have completed the evaluation forms, you should prepare a presentation for LPLT to discuss how the workshop went. Some key questions to answer include:

- Who planned and held the event?
- What topics were covered?
- Who attended?
- What feedback did they have?
- What areas for improvement areas are there?
- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- Anything else LPLT should know to improve the training program?

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