

Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund

Formula Fund Reporting Requirements

Webinar Questions and Answers

The questions and answers below are from the STIF Formula Fund Reporting Overview Webinar held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019. Questions were asked by transportation providers from throughout Oregon. Answers were compiled by ODOT staff.

1. Do you have a cheat sheet on the acronyms?

Answer: Yes, ODOT has created a document with all the acronyms used in the webinar and the relevant guidance documents (see [STIF Formula Fund Reporting Requirements Acronyms](#)).

2. If we start providing student transportation after we start receiving money, will we be required to spend 1% this year, or is this flexible?

Answer: Qualified Entities (QEs) are required to meet this spending requirement based on the contents of its Oregon Transportation Commission-approved STIF Plan. Below are examples of when 1% spending is required or not required:

Required: If the QE budgeted for 1% of spending to improve transit for students in grade 9-12 during the first fiscal year, and the OTC approved the Plan, then the QE will need to meet this requirement.

Not Required: If the QE stated that it was not Practicable to allocate 1% of funding to improve transit for students in grades 9-12 during the first fiscal year of the STIF Plan period, and the OTC approved Plan, then the QE would not need to meet this requirement in the first fiscal year.

3. What if a project doesn't flow the way an agency expected when completing their STIF plan? Will changes be difficult to handle?

Answer: It depends on the magnitude of the changes to the project. If the project is being implemented more slowly than planned or the outcomes do not meet expected estimates, then the QE should use the comment boxes on the STIF Periodic Report (SPR) to notify ODOT of any deviations and the rationale for those deviations, if known. Some changes to project scope or budget may be consistent with a QE's approved STIF Plan and others may be inconsistent. QEs should refer to the [STIF Guidance for Determining Whether Expenditures are Substantially Compliant and Consistent with STIF Plan, May 2019](#) to determine whether proposed changes are consistent. Any questions about whether proposed changes would be interpreted by ODOT as inconsistent with an approved STIF Plan should be directed to the QEs Regional Transit Coordinator (RTC) or the STIF Formula Fund Coordinator.

4. If we have multiple projects, will we report on each project separately?

Answer: Yes, within the SPR there will be a field or an update item for every project and task listed in a QE's approved STIF Plan.

5. If an agency requested match for capital but not for the capital project itself do you report it in Capital or Operating?

Answer: Capital. Any STIF funds used for a Capital project, regardless of the amount, requires the recipient to complete quarterly capital asset reporting.

6. We utilized demographics and other tools to estimate how we will serve the 9-12 students for various projects. Our agency doesn't have a student fare, so how specific does the information need to be regarding serving the student populations?

Answer: Agencies should follow ODOT's guidance on the methods for estimating student rides in the reporting requirements document. Agencies should refer to the [STIF Formula Fund Reporting Requirements Overview, May 2019](#).

7. If a STIF Plan was submitted on May 1, 2019, does the QE need to submit to ODOT both the FY18-19 adopted budget and FY 19-20 budget?

Answer: A STIF Plan submitted in May 2019 will not be approved until fiscal year 2020, therefore, the QE is only required to submit its fiscal year 2019-2020 budget.

8. To confirm, for operation projects, we report quarterly metrics even though metrics in the plan are based on a fiscal year?

Answer: Correct. All agencies are already required to report revenue miles and revenue hours in the Agency Periodic Report (APR). Similar to the APR, an agency will report on those metrics in the SPR if they are a specified outcome in its STIF Plan. In addition to quarterly reporting in the SPR, agencies will be required to submit annual reports in the 4th quarter. Outcomes, such as access to transit, are reported on an annual basis because the data is unlikely to change much each quarter due to the timing of updates to Census and related data sources. ODOT requires quarterly reports to meet legislative and other progress reporting requirements. Quarterly reporting is also part of ODOT's oversight responsibility which requires ODOT to ensure funds are being expended consistently with STIF Plans. Finally, quarterly reporting can help ODOT's RTCs and other technical experts to determine whether an agency may need additional technical assistance.

9. What are the requirements for spending "Contingency Funds" identified in a project?

Answer: ODOT assumes that "contingency fund" has the same meaning as a Program Reserve. STIF projects or tasks are categorized using the Program Reserve activity line item. Such a task or project is intended to fund unanticipated or emergency needs during a STIF Plan period. There is not a requirement to provide advance notice or request authorization to expend funds for Program Reserve tasks as they are part of a QE's approved STIF Plan. The QE is required to include a narrative in the comments section of the SPR describing the rationale and need for the expenditure.

10. Can you explain a scenario when STIF funds may be shifted between two different QE's?

Answer: Shifting STIF funds between QE's can only occur if one QE was listed on another QE's approved STIF Plan as a Public Transportation Service Provider (PTSP). For example, if Columbia County is listed

on TriMet's STIF Plan as a PTSP and TriMet decided it wanted to shift funding from one of its operations projects to expand operations on one of Columbia County's projects and Columbia County agreed to do so. This would be consistent spending so long as both TriMet and Columbia County agree to the transfer of funding between projects and QEs.

11. Should vehicles purchased with formula STIF funds be shown on a QE or PTSP's APR?

Answer: Either the QE or the PTSP, depending on who is the operator. ODOT will enter all STIF-funded capital assets into OPTIS as these assets are State funded (not local). Per OAR 732-042-0040(2) and OAR 732-044-0050 (6)(f), STIF-funded or partially funded capital assets must be inventoried and titled with the DMV and ODOT as a security interest holder. This is required if capital assets are purchased with either STIF Formula or Discretionary funds. The operator of the STIF-funded capital assets listed in the APR is required to do the reporting. Either a QE or PTSP could be listed as the operator. This will likely be the provider listed in the project who will be reporting in the APR.

12. Can I add a new task to an existing project and move funds from a task within the same project?

Answer: No. Tasks may not be added to a STIF Plan after it has been approved by the OTC. There is currently no process to amend an approved STIF Plan within the STIF Oregon Administrative Rules. There are many process requirements in the statute and the Oregon Administrative Rules that make STIF unlike any other transit section funding program. These steps must be completed for the OTC to approve a STIF Plan. These requirements include QE consultation with its Advisory Committee, approval of a STIF Plan by the QEs governing body, Public Transportation Advisory Committee review and recommendation to the OTC, and OTC action on a STIF Plan. As ODOT developed the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) for STIF, ODOT determined that the same level of rigor would likely be required to amend a STIF Plan. Given the level of effort and time it would take to process an amendment, it is unlikely that such a procedure would be used. ODOT also noted that a QE could suspend a project and transfer any unused funds to a future STIF Plan period.

13. Should STIF service data be included in both the APR and SPRs?

Answer: Yes. The APR is intended to capture service data at an agency level. The SPR captures service data on a fund level. The service data provided in the SPR will enable ODOT to report on STIF outcomes so that the legislature has a clear picture of the benefits that are directly attributable to STIF.

14. What outcomes or reporting is required on reserves? Can the reserves be maintained and only reported on when used?

Answer: Agencies should report outcomes from reserve project or task expenditures as they occur and as is appropriate to the type of expenditure.

15. There were some unknowns when we prepared our initial STIF plan and now that we know how the reporting is going to work there are some things we would have handled differently. Is it possible prior to the first report to change anything?

Answer: Unfortunately, no, QEs are required to report on their OTC-approved STIF Plans.

16. Could there be a short window that would allow agencies to shift funds from one project to a new project, for example, moving money from an operating project to reserve. This could help with the lack of a crystal ball when the applications were submitted.

Answer: No new projects or tasks may be added to an approved STIF Plan. It would not be consistent with an approved STIF Plan to move funds to a Program Reserve task and then use those funds for a new project or task not already included in an approved STIF Plan within the same Plan period.

17. Do we submit an annual organization wide budget or one specific to the STIF Plan/Projects?

Answer: Yes. A QE will submit its organizational budget each year.

18. Are there methods to limit double-counting for rides and miles across the APR and SPR?

Answer: No. Agencies are required to report rides and miles in both the APR and the SPR. The APR will report agency-wide metrics. The SPR will report metrics specifically for programs funded by STIF. The SPR allows ODOT to report to the legislature specifically on the outcomes and benefits attributed to the STIF Formula funds and also on the STIF Discretionary and Intercommunity funds.

19. If a QE provided optional measures, will they be required to report on them in the SPR? Or will reporting also be optional?

Answer: If these optional measures are on the QE's STIF Plan, then they are required to report on it. QE's can choose to additional metrics in the optional measures section.

20. Is the QE responsible for getting all of the PTSP's annual budgets or are they responsible for submitting these directly? Or does the QE only need to submit their own budget?

Answer: As it is written in statute and the OARs, the QEs are the only entities required to submit the annual budgets.

21. Can you touch briefly on "mitigating the impact of the tax on low income passengers"?

Answer: Per OAR 732-040-0025, low income mitigation reports describe any actions taken by the PTSP to mitigate the tax on passengers who reside in low-income communities. The report will explain how the PTSP defines and identifies passengers in low-income communities and how they mitigate the tax on those passengers. There is a time frame under which the report must be submitted. This report is due as part of the 4th quarter SPR reporting. ODOT will develop a form for this report in OPTIS. This reporting requirement applies to all PTSPs, including those that will be receiving only STIF discretionary funds. The QEs will collect those reports from PTSPs, compile them and submit them to ODOT. PTSPs should refer to the [STIF Formula Fund Reporting Requirements Overview, May 2019](#).

22. Outcome measures, such as ridership, were estimates. When reporting on those targets, what are the implications if those estimates are off? If there is substantial variance when will non-compliance be determined?

Answer: Variances between an agency's estimated and actual outcome measures is not a potential compliance issue, nor is it cause for potential future rejection of a STIF Plan by the OTC. ODOT is

collecting outcome data to measure program effectiveness. The ongoing intent is not to penalize the provider if they do not meet their performance goals. ODOT is aware that it is very difficult to estimate ridership when adding routes or increasing the frequency of service. ODOT expects that estimates will likely become more accurate in future Plan periods.

23. Will the data be reported cumulatively across all new routes or will each project need to be reported on separately across all data metrics?

Answer: Each project task will be reported on separately based on what was entered in the STIF Plan.