

Frequently Asked Questions:

ODOT's 2027 Call for Projects in the Transportation Safety Office

2027 Call for Projects Summary: ODOT had about 10 different funding sources condensed into one “Call for Projects”. This “Call for Projects” opened in February and closed in March. Each of the available funding sources had a different amount of funding and different criteria for how it can be used. For some funding sources we were able to fund all that applied and who were eligible. Unfortunately, ODOT could not fund all applications during this “Call for Projects” as some requests outpaced the funds available.

- Total funds requested for projects: \$33.9 Million, 176 applications
- Awarded: \$22.9 Million, 110 applications, (68% of applications were awarded)
- Not Awarded: \$10.9M, 66 applications

Additional Background: The State of Oregon’s designated Highway Safety Office, TSO relies on comprehensive state and federal data to understand priority safety challenges. Historically, TSO used this data to develop projects internally or to work directly with agencies and communities to create targeted safety activities. In recent years, and in alignment with national best practices, TSO has shifted toward a competitive application process. This framework allows applicants to propose activities that meet local needs while giving TSO the ability to fund projects that show the greatest likelihood of reducing fatalities and serious injuries.

The financial picture for this “Call for Projects” was also shaped by unusual conditions. During the COVID period, many partners were unable to participate in projects at typical levels. This led to several years of accumulated funding that TSO then worked hard to deploy to avoid federal de-obligation. Strong participation in recent years allowed Oregon to successfully spend down those balances. As a result, the current cycle reflects a return to only a single year of new funding, rather than multiple years of accumulated resources. This created a much more competitive environment than applicants may have experienced in the past.

TSO also receives federal funding through the National Priority Safety Program, which is divided into several distinct topic areas. Each of the related funding sources has narrow eligibility rules that outline which types of activities can be supported. In addition, these programs are funded at different levels. For example, Section 405b (Occupant Protection) and Section 405d (Impaired Driving) do not receive the same annual funding amounts, which affects how much TSO can allocate to eligible projects in each category. These limitations shaped both the number and the types of projects we were able to fund this year.

Updated: 5.12.26

TSO remains committed to supporting communities and partner agencies across Oregon in advancing transportation safety. We appreciate your continued engagement and look forward to working with you toward shared safety goals in upcoming cycles.

FAQ TOPIC: Grant Requirements

Current TSO Agreements & Assurances define that TSO grants are for 1 year:

This Agreement is effective on the date that it is fully executed and approved as required by applicable law or October 1, 2025, whichever is later (the “Effective Date”).

Reimbursements will be made for Project Costs incurred on or after **the Effective Date**, through and including **September 30, 2026** (the “Grant Period”). No Grant Funds are available for expenditures incurred before or after the Grant Period.

FAQ TOPIC: Application Review and Prioritization

Was performance on an agency’s current or prior TSO funded grants considered during FY2027 award decisions? If so, how?

Yes. Past performance was reviewed from a risk assessment standpoint to help identify projects that might face challenges achieving intended outcomes. This factor played a limited role and was not a primary driver of prioritization. The prioritization process focused mainly on the extent to which the application identified a traffic safety problem and proposed effective strategies to address it.

Who decided which projects were funded, and what criteria were used to make those decisions?

TSO program staff reviewed and prioritized all applications using a standardized matrix. The matrix evaluated how well each project aligned with TSO priorities, its expected impact on safety performance measures, the soundness of the budget, and the applicant’s ability to implement the project. Applications were then grouped according to eligible federal funding categories. Projects that were prioritized highest within each category were funded first, followed by a secondary review to ensure federal requirements were met, including the requirement that a portion of funds directly support local political subdivisions. Some projects were considered under additional federal or state programs when eligible, but these options were limited. Multi-year projects were also prioritized; however, not all multi-year projects were able to be funded due to other constraints.

Our agency has prior experience with TSO grant projects. Was our history of partnership considered?

Prior experience was considered. Recent project performance helped inform the assessment of each applicant’s ability to successfully implement the proposed work. However, federal guidance requires each new application to be evaluated on its own merits. This means that a strong problem identification process and effective strategies must be demonstrated each year, even by long-standing partners.

Denial or reduction of our award will affect our ability to provide expected services to our community. How does TSO take community impact into account?

TSO understands the importance of the services our partners provide and appreciates the positive outcomes these efforts create in communities across Oregon. Although community benefit is taken into consideration, TSO grants are not intended to serve as permanent funding sources. Grant programs are structured to support activities for a defined period and to help demonstrate value so that long-term support can be sought from other funding streams once a project is established.

FAQ TOPIC: Available Funding, Awards and Denials, Transition Fund

Is there a process to request reconsideration of TSO’s decision to deny an application or reduce the funding amount from what was requested?

Yes. TSO has a small amount of funding set aside that may be used to support projects that were awarded a reduced amount of funding or denied for funding causing a high level of hardship in limited circumstances. Applicants who wish to pursue this option may follow the process outlined on the [Grantee Resources webpage](#). Space is limited and reconsideration is not guaranteed.

The “Call for Projects” stated that grant funding availability was not impacted by ODOT’s budget challenges. Why wasn’t there enough funding to award my full request?

TSO grant programs are funded through federal highway safety grants, not State Highway Funds. ODOT’s state budget issues did not reduce the amount of TSO funding available. However, the total amount of federal funding has remained largely flat in recent years while the number of applicants and the cost of project delivery have increased. In addition, TSO no longer has unspent funds from prior years to supplement current-year awards, as those temporary reserves were fully used after the COVID pandemic. This resulted in a highly competitive “Call for Projects.”

Our agency relies on TSO grant funding to support staff positions. How should we plan for staffing when a project is denied or funded at a reduced level?

Federal rules generally do not allow TSO to fund dedicated positions. Instead, TSO may reimburse hours spent performing eligible grant activities. While we recognize that agencies may hire staff to perform this work, TSO cannot commit to funding positions on an ongoing basis. Staffing decisions should be made with the understanding that grant funding may vary from year to year.

FAQ TOPIC: Projects that Received Fewer Funds than Requested

If our project received a reduced award, can we modify our deliverables to match the available funding?

Yes. Awarded projects will be assigned to a TSO program manager who will work with the grantee to adjust the scope of work. Reduced award amounts often require corresponding changes to planned activities and deliverables. TSO expects that performance expectations will align with the final funding level.

FAQ TOPIC: Multi-Year Projects

Our agency was previously awarded funds for a multi-year project. Why weren't we funded for FY2027, or why was funding reduced, when the project was planned as a multi-year effort?

Some projects awarded in recent years were designed as one-year grants that could be renewed annually if applicants continued to demonstrate a defined traffic safety problem and effective strategies to address it. These projects often used a step-down model, with TSO support reducing over time while the grantee's share increased as the project matured. Because funding was especially limited this year, TSO had to apply the step-down model more strictly and could not continue all previously funded projects.

How many multi-year projects were awarded reduced funding or declined?

- 2 Sustained DUII Enforcement reduced
- 1 Sustained DUII Enforcement declined
- 3 Data projects reduced
- 3 Community Traffic Safety project declined

Were any new DUII enforcement projects funded instead of multi-year DUII enforcement project?

Yes. 2 new multi-year sustained DUII enforcement projects funded.
1 sustained DUII enforcement project in its 3rd year not funded.

FAQ TOPIC: Grant Denial Analysis

How many projects were awarded reduced funding or declined funding?

18 projects were awarded reduced funding and 66 projects were declined.

The following table summarizes the distribution of applications, reductions in funding, and denials for FY2027.

| Fund | # Applicants | # Approved Applications | Requested | Awarded | Difference | % |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 164 | 5 | 5 | 772,847 | 681,692 | 91,155 | 88% |
| 1906 | 1 | 1 | 405,000 | 405,000 | - | 100% |
| 402 | 109 | 46 | 15,486,596 | 6,658,291 | 8,828,305 | 43% |
| 405b | 14 | 14 | 1,309,718 | 999,000 | 310,718 | 76% |
| 405c | 3 | 3 | 1,987,200 | 785,000 | 1,202,200 | 40% |
| 405d | 21 | 20 | 5,203,219 | 4,727,769 | 475,450 | 91% |
| 405e | 2 | 2 | 775,000 | 775,000 | - | 100% |
| 405f | 3 | 3 | 230,000 | 230,000 | - | 100% |
| 405g | 4 | 3 | 1,150,000 | 1,100,000 | 50,000 | 96% |
| 405i | 1 | 1 | 300,000 | 300,000 | - | 100% |
| NHTSA total | 163 | 98 | 27,619,580 | 16,661,752 | 10,957,828 | 60% |
| | | | | | | |
| FHWA | 5 | 5 | 2,868,000 | 2,868,000 | - | 100% |
| STF | 6 | 6 | 3,352,459 | 3,352,459 | - | 100% |
| STF - TOF | 1 | 1 | 86,100 | 86,100 | - | 100% |
| Ineligible App | 1 | | | | | |
| Other total | 13 | 12 | 6,306,559 | 6,306,559 | - | 100% |
| | | | | | | |
| Grand Totals | 176 | 110 | 33,926,139 | 22,968,311 | 10,957,828 | 68% |

TOPIC: Future Applications

How can I improve my application for the future?

We're always happy to help applicants strengthen future submissions. While the next grant solicitation is expected to open in early 2027, we'll begin working with prospective applicants and offering guidance in the fall of 2026. When that timeframe approaches, please feel free to reach out with your questions. We will be glad to provide feedback to help you prepare a stronger application. We also want to help applicants be as competitive as possible in future cycles. One of the strongest factors in project selection is the presence of local expenditure. Applications submitted directly by a local political subdivision or those that include a formal partnership with such a subdivision tend to be more competitive because they align with federal requirements. We encourage agencies to consider local partnerships when planning future highway safety activities. This approach can strengthen applications and increase the likelihood of funding in subsequent years.

FAQ TOPIC: Communication

Why were denial notifications sent by email rather than delivered in person or by phone?

The number of applications received made it impractical to notify each applicant individually by phone or in person. Even so, we recognize the importance of delivering sensitive news with care and understand that the timing and method of communication may have felt abrupt. We are reviewing this year's process and will work to provide a better experience in future cycles.

Applicants were not given advance notice of denials to seek alternative funding. Why was notice provided on this timeline?

The scoring and award selection process took longer than anticipated. Our office worked to make responsible funding decisions with limited resources and explored several alternative funding paths for many projects, which required additional time. While we were unable to notify applicants before May 1, the new grant year for federally funded projects begins October 1. This provides a period for applicants to adjust budgets and explore other options before the new cycle begins.

Who can I contact for more information?

- For general program or funding-priority questions, please contact the appropriate Program Manager or Region staff listed on our contact page:
<https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Safety/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx>
- For application process or technical questions contact us at:
sgms.support@odot.oregon.gov

Can I get a list of awarded projects?

Yes. We will post a list of awarded projects after our annual grant application is approved by our federal partners. This approval typically occurs in late summer and must be received by September 30 each year.