



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM:

Date: July 1, 2021

To: Oregon Transportation Safety Committee (OTSC)

From: Safe Routes to School – Transportation Safety Office-Education Program

RE: Recommendation for 2023-2025 funding structure

Action: Decision

In May, 2021 the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee (SRAC) recommended a new program funding structure split for the ODOT Safe Routes to School program's (SRTS) Education (Non-infrastructure) 2023-2025 competitive grant cycle. The Transportation Safety Office (TSO) is seeking the OTSC's approval of the SRAC's recommendation to change the ODOT SRTS Education funding structure to a 50/50 split. This split would mean that 50% of the annual TSO SRTS funding would fund SRTS Education local competitive grants, while the other 50% will fund the ODOT SRTS Statewide Services program work, such as providing SRTS technical assistance to local communities. This is a shift from the current program funding structure which is set at a 60/40 split, where 60% of the funding is dedicated to local competitive grants and 40% is for Statewide Services work.

Explanation behind revised grant/program funding split:

This next round of funding and call for applications for the SRTS Education competitive grant opportunities will be available in the spring of 2022; the new grant awards will start in October of 2022 for the 2023 federal fiscal year. In order to prepare for this next grant cycle, one of the goals this year for the TSO Safe Routes to School program was to work with the SRAC to review the educational side of the program and determine possible steps to improve grant opportunities and statewide services to communities of need in Oregon. Focus was also on efforts to improve successful grant projects to become *sustainable* community programming.

This revised 50/50 split was the ODOT TSO staff recommendation to the SRAC in the May meeting based on previous SRAC breakout work sessions on different themes held in SRAC meetings this year. In summary, these themes were program challenges to deliver equitable funding opportunities for diverse needs of communities statewide; and to identify opportunities to offer more sustainable technical assistance services to help communities of need prepare, organize, and be grant ready and successful when they do receive grant funding. The balancing of annual SRTS Education funds (competitive grant program funding) and the Statewide Services funding means that ODOT can offer more consultant technical assistance services statewide to communities who may and do need the extra help forming a successful SRTS program and plan without the barrier of having to fund, start up and organize the needed capacity themselves. TSO believes that this extra statewide service support is an equitable approach to help boost communities of need to a position where they are better prepared to be successful on planned SRTS education programming.

Respectfully, TSO requests your consideration and support for the proposed 50/50 funding structure split between grant awards, and program services for the 2023-2025 TSO SRTS Education program.