

Planning Safe Streets for All

On January 30, 2024, the Local Infrastructure Hub hosted a session to discuss strategies for submitting competitive Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant applications. The session featured **Mayor Abdullah Hammoud** of Dearborn, Michigan; **Mayor Beverly Burks** of Clarkston, Georgia; **Mayor Jim Ross** of Arlington, Texas; **Nicole Hefty**, Dearborn's Director of Philanthropy and Grants; and **Ann Foss**, Arlington's Planning and Programming Manager, who discussed their cities' application process and projects. This session also featured **Jeff Price**, Transportation Policy Analyst at the U.S. Department of Transportation; and **Ryan Russo**, Principal at Together Project LLC, who emphasized the impact that Planning and Demonstration Grants can have on cities.

Key Insights

Rethink the non-federal matching fund requirements.

Jeff Price discussed how the SS4A application's matching requirement does not have to come from a city's local community treasury, applications just have to be matched by non-federal funds. This can mean in-kind contributions such as staff time or safety activities in your community.

Cities can have a quick impact on safety with Planning and Demonstration Grants.

Ryan Russo encouraged cities to think of Demonstration Grants as smaller-scale Implementation Grants, explaining that demonstration activities could be a city-wide program. Additionally, Jeff Price emphasized that DOT has streamlined the SS4A application process, particularly for Planning and Demonstration Grants, to make it easier for cities to access these funds. Good Planning and Demonstration Grant applications have a high likelihood of receiving funding compared to the average discretionary grant program. Cities applying for a grant for demonstration activities should include supplemental planning activities in their application so that they have the capacity to incorporate their learnings into a revised safety action plan.

Cities can be creative about safety improvements.

In his remarks, Jeff Price emphasized that cities should think broadly about roadway safety. For example, cities should consider behavioral strategies in addition to traditional infrastructure approaches. Additionally, SS4A grants can also be used to improve outcomes by making it easier for emergency services like EMS and the fire department to reach a crash site.

There is no such thing as too much information in an application.

Dearborn, Michigan received a nearly [\\$25 million implementation grant](#) to increase safety for pedestrians and drivers along Warren Avenue, one of the city's main business corridors. The funds will be used to reduce speeds and include the construction of pedestrian walkways and bike paths. Mayor Hammoud stated that the key to a competitive application is to include extensive research and details to create a compelling story backed by data.

[Spokane, Washington's winning application](#) for an implementation grant is another good example of using data to inform an application and make a compelling case for the need for grant funding.

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Ask others for help.

The [City of Arlington](#) was awarded [\\$385,000 through a SS4A Planning and Demonstration Grant](#) to update its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. The city asked the University of Texas at Arlington for support throughout the completion of the application. Mayor Ross encouraged other mayors to be collaborative in their application process. Cities should not reinvent the wheel—engage with other mayors and counties who have already had successful projects. Lastly, cities should engage with their community in meaningful ways, listen to their ideas for improving pedestrian safety and give them a role in the decision making process throughout the project life cycle.

Small cities have an opportunity to make big infrastructure changes.

Clarkston, Georgia is only 1.8 square miles with a population under 15,000; however, the city was awarded [\\$1 million to develop a comprehensive street safety plan](#). Mayor Burks credited Clarkston's success to a robust partnership with the county and support from the Local Infrastructure Hub. Clarkston may be a small city, but the planning grant will benefit the entire region.

Resources Shared During the Webinar and in Discussion

- [SS4A Winning Applications](#)
- [SS4A Grant Summary](#)
- [SS4A Winning Strategies](#)
- [SS4A Bootcamp Registration](#)
- [Asphalt Art](#)

Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamp Materials

The Local Infrastructure Hub is here to support cities in communicating the success of BIL-funded projects through a mix of webinars, practical tools, and templates. Our webinars and Grant Application Bootcamps can guide you through different application processes and actionable steps to submit a strong application.

Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamps are especially helpful for cities as they provide technical assistance for city staff on relevant tools and templates that can be applied to grant applications; how to build community engagement plans; how to leverage community assets; how to effectively incorporate data into the grant application process; and how to construct a strong budget and grant narrative. [Register for our bootcamps now](#) and receive expert assistance to construct your next federal grant application!