

**Federal Funding 101 Webinar**  
**Thursday, May 3, 2012**  
**2-3pm Eastern**

**Speakers:**

**Robert Ping** – technical assistance director, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

**Deb Hubsmith** - director, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

**Sam Shelton** – project manager, Solano County Transportation Authority

**Julie Yip** – coordinator, Oregon Safe Routes to School program, Oregon Department of Transportation

**Q & A: Audience questions and speaker responses**

Q. But there's no dedicated funding specifically in the MAP 21 bill for SRTS? Are there requirements for DOTs to spend a portion of the dedicated money on SRTS specifically?

- Deb Hubsmith: MAP-21 doesn't have dedicated funding for SRTS, it's eligible. If we are organized [within a state], we could potentially get more funding for SRTS as it's included with other prior pots of funding.

Q. Does SRTS funding cover traffic calming measures such as speed bumps on busy streets?

- Deb Hubsmith: SRTS funding needs to have a direct nexus to schools and needs to have serving the needs of school children as the priority. Generally schools and engineers and parents do a walkabout around schools to assess conditions and develop an application that serves the needs - traffic calming could be included in many cases, but all projects must be within 2 miles of schools. Projects must increase walking and bicycling so most successful projects include sidewalks or pathways or safer street crossings.

Q. Does 402 Safety Funds fall under the Transportation Funding umbrella?

- Deb Hubsmith: 402 funding is a separate pot of money that each state gets. As far as I know, this would not be rolled into the Additional Activities of MAP-21. Many communities use 402 money for SRTS-like projects. The Chicago Junior Ambassador program, for example, uses 402 funding.

Q. Our DOT's SRTS Coordinator leaves a lot to be desired...no passion or assertiveness for the programs. Every inquiry is like pulling teeth with an opponent rather than working with an ally. Advice?

- Robert Ping – Not all coordinators are passionate about SRTS. They may be bureaucrats who just want to get through their work day. In addition, the state DOT may not be managing or promoting the coordinators excellence, often it is because the DOT doesn't view bicycling and walking as important transportation modes. In this case, an advocacy campaign that shows how much the public and elected officials want SRTS may be the only way to get the agency to step up the game. If the coordinator is incompetent, then there could be an advocacy push to replace the person.

Q. Are SRTS funds available exclusively for areas near public schools or are private schools also included?

- Julie Yip: I have been contacted by private schools. Typically they want to know if people can assist with bike safety education, and we have provided some resources, but we have not had them take us up on it.
- Robert Ping: Yes, private schools can be eligible – check with your state SRTS program.

Q- In my state, all eligible SRTS funding from July 2012 on is in suspense at the state level - only allocated on a case by case basis. Is this widespread? Is there anything else that can be done besides contact legislators?

- Robert Ping- Decisions are based upon each state. Some states may not have enough money for big call of applications, may be other factors, political factors or stalling points. This is not widespread though.
- Julie- You must be in contact with your local coordinators and local DOT to try and figure out what is going on and ask their advice on the situation.
- Robert Ping – Find out what the culture is within the DOT. Find out if there are political reasons for not moving forward. Find out who the decision makers are at the DOT (Governor? Transportation board or Secretary/Commissioner? Committee? Staff members?). Get advocates and champions together to figure out what steps should be taken based on where the delay is within the DOT. IF there isn't much money left, there may not be much to do. If there is enough money left to put out a call for applications, a campaign to pressure the DOT to release funds may be necessary.

Q- Is it possible for non-school person to do a school plan? One of our school system thinks they don't have the staff resources to do the plan itself...

- Sam Shelton - Yes, that is very common. Solano picked up the planning end of things for many schools. The SRTS grants also allow others to begin the planning process when the school district might not necessarily have the resources. Just make sure they are involved, do not just go off and do it on your own.
- Robert Ping- The principal is in charge and make sure that the principal is on board. The best practices for SRTS are to make sure there is community involvement with the schools, so outside planning and help is beneficial.
- Julie Yip- Several health departments have been very involved with the planning and education on bicycle safety. A person from the Local Public health department might be the right person to lead the charge.
- Tera Bloom: Amy have them contact their Public Services Dept. I work for a LG and we are more than willing to work on these projects.
- Amy Paulson: City is willing to do it - but we thought only the school system could do the transportation plan.
- Gabe Lewis: We are the MPO and an RPC, and have put together the school travel plan for our twin city school districts each cycle, and have been hired by one of the member agencies to write two SRTS plans and grant applications. The first grant application was successful, the second hasn't been submitted yet (the call for applications hasn't been announced yet).
- Amy Paulson: that is great. Our local schools are strapped for resources and busy with educational priorities.

Q. How do we get our state added to the Partnership if we're not part of the current 20 or so [of the National Partnership's State Network Project; which is operating in seven states in 2012/2013]?

- Robert Ping – Go to our website – [saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org) – to become an affiliate; it is free. Go to our state section and TA section to learn how to build a state network of advocates who can push to build momentum for SRTS in your state and create enough awareness and support to make SRTS a permanent part of transportation planning and funding in your state. We have a document called “Establishing a Safe Routes to School State Network: A 10-Step Guide”: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/network/network-resources>

Q. Is there any hope that dedicated SRTS funding will be kept in the transportation bill? Several people in my area fear that unless it is dedicated it won't be used on SRTS projects. In other words do you think it will move to a pot of TE funds only with SRTS projects listed as eligible?

- Robert Ping - Unfortunately, we think that there will NOT be a standalone federal Safe Routes to School program in the next federal transportation bill being negotiated right now. That is why it is critical to form or join a statewide group to advocate for SRTS. Also, you can apply for SRTS within the eligible pot of funding, so make sure that you establish a relationship with the DOT, and submit a very strong application, following their instructions to the letter.

Q. The NY Metro Transportation Council has had success in developing recommendations for developing SRTS at the schools using a stakeholder workshop approach to develop recommendations. Anyone else using this approach to develop school specific plans?

- Robert Ping – That approach is considered a best practice for building a local school team and plan to lead the SRTS program at a school.

Q- Are we (SRTS) going to survive the next transportation bill?

- Deb Hubsmith - Anything is possible with Congress. If there is an agreement that comes out of the conference committee and it is out by June 30, SRTS will be merged with other programs. If for some reason there is another extension, then there will have to be entirely new bills in both the House and Senate and we could be starting all over.
- Robert Ping - An extension would mean that we continue to have a standalone SRTS program in each state, though. But the state DOT would need to be willing to actually spend the money – you may have to advocate for that.