

**New York State Department of Transportation  
Highway Safety Improvement Program Funding  
Safety Funds Project Eligibility**

**Updated – December 2017**

**Eligibility**

The information in this document should be used in conjunction with the criteria in section 148 of Title 23 US Code (23USC148) to identify the type of projects that have been approved by FHWA for the use of safety funds. While the project criteria listed in Section 148 are flexible, FHWA has stressed the need for data driven problem identification, project prioritization and consistency with a State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). In general, safety projects should be considered in the following order of priority:

**1. Targeted Locations**

- **PIL Locations** – The Department's network screening process results in the annual creation of the Priority Investigation Location (PIL) List. This PIL list is core to NYSDOT's annual work program that studies locations on this list. The PIL list provides a data driven approach that identifies sites with the potential to reduce crashes. Projects resulting from PIL studies include effective countermeasures to address the safety needs at these locations. This program directly correlates a high crash safety investigation to a safety project as specified in the legislation. Therefore, projects developed using this method are eligible for HSIP funds.

In addition, PILs that are addressed by projects whose primary purpose is not safety are eligible for HSIP funding. The safety share of these projects must be limited to those costs associated with reducing crashes and NYSDOT's Highway Safety Investigation methodology must be used to evaluate the PIL.

**2. Targeted Crash Types**

- **Systemic Treatments**
  - As outlined in New York's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, standalone or project shares that install pedestrian improvements at uncontrolled crosswalks or signalized intersections are eligible for HSIP funding.
  - Standalone projects or project shares that install Centerline Rumble Strips (CARDS) or pedestrian countdown timers are eligible for HSIP funding.

- As outlined in Engineering Instruction (EI) 16-014, standalone projects or projects shares that install Secondary Highway Audible Roadway Delineators (SHARDS) are eligible for HSIP funding.
  - These specific countermeasures were approved by the FHWA Division Office as systemic improvements because of their proven effectiveness and the direct connection to emphasis areas in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).
- **Specialty PILs** – Each year the Department analyzes the crash data to identify locations that may not meet the criteria to be identified as a regular PIL, but rather identify locations where specific types of accidents are overrepresented. This analysis results in the creation of “Specialty PIL” lists. The SKARP (wet weather accidents) program is a successful application of this approach.

Specialty PILs can be used to target various crash types and may be helpful to prioritize systemic improvements or consider enhancements for other non-safety projects. To qualify for safety funding, projects need to demonstrate a performance based result (i.e. fatal, injury, accident reduction and benefit/cost ratio). FHWA indicates that projects identified through this process will be eligible for HSIP funds.

### 3. Other Regionally Identified Safety Need Locations

Off-system safety projects (i.e. projects on roads that are not under NYSDOT maintenance jurisdiction) are also eligible for HSIP funding, but must demonstrate a clear safety need and meet the criteria outlined in 23USC148. Because off-system sites cannot be included in the PIL analysis, project documentation should detail how crash data was used to determine location (i.e. high crash frequency, higher than average crash rate, etc.). NYSDOT’s Highway Safety Investigation methodology including a B/C ratio must be used to evaluate the project. B/C ratios for these projects should be > 1.

Specific locations often come to the attention of the Regional Office as problem safety areas. Locations cited are not usually part of the PIL list or part of a specialty PIL list; however, they are often represented as needing safety improvement. Projects developed for these locations that will address a safety deficiency must demonstrate a performance based result (i.e. fatal, injury, accident reduction; benefit/cost ratio) in order to be eligible for HSIP funds. NYSDOT’s Highway Safety Investigation methodology including a B/C ratio must be used to evaluate the project. B/C ratios for these projects should be > 1.

## **Nominal Safety Projects**

The purpose of HSIP funds is to reduce severe crashes on public roads. Projects that maintain or upgrade existing roadway features such as guiderail, pavement markings, pavements, bridges, etc. are generally considered nominal safety projects and are not eligible for HSIP funding. However, requirement type contracts for items such as traffic signals, signs and pavement markings **MAY** be eligible for safety funds, **IF** the contracts are used as a result of a specific safety investigation where the items under a requirements contract are considered the appropriate countermeasure for a Targeted location (PIL), Targeted Crash Type (Specialty PIL or approved systemic treatment), or Regionally Identified Safety Need Location. Advance approval should be in place before programming HSIP funds for these projects.

## **Financial Management Information System (FMIS) Authorizations**

### **1. Approval Required Prior to Requesting Authorization**

FHWA requires that all projects requesting HSIP funding be checked for eligibility before being submitted for approval. There must be concurrence by the Safety Evaluation Engineer (SEE) and the Regional Traffic Engineer (RTE) that the project is eligible for HSIP funding before a Project Authorization using HSIP is submitted. To accomplish this the following is required:

- All FMIS entries using HSIP must include the statement below:  
  
***“The State certifies that this project has been approved by the Regional Safety Evaluation Engineer and signed off by the Regional Traffic Engineer”***
- An email or memo from the Safety Evaluation Engineer or the Regional Traffic Engineer that includes the statement above must accompany the Request for Authorization form that is sent from the Regions to the Project Management Bureau in the Main Office. If written certification from the SEE/RTE is not included, the Request for Federal Authorization will not be submitted.

### **2. Project Titles and Descriptions**

Projects that use Highway Safety Improvement program (HSIP) funds must include an explanation of the HSIP eligible work in the project title and description fields in FMIS otherwise the HSIP funds may not get authorized. For example, a project that includes the installation of CARDS (which is HSIP eligible) with a project title and description of “Durable Pavement Markings 6” may get rejected since maintaining pavement markings is considered nominal safety work and not fundable with HSIP. A better choice for a title would have been “Durable Pavement Markings and CARDS 6” with a description of

“Pavement Marking and Center Line Audible Roadway Delineators at several locations in County A and County B.”

This guidance was developed in coordination with and approved by FHWA’s Division Office Safety Engineer. If you have any questions related to HSIP funding eligibility, please contact the NYSDOT Safety Program Management and Coordination Bureau at 518-457-0271.