

Eligibility of Federal-aid Funds for Safety Countermeasures

As the division offices focus with States to identify their State's priority safety initiatives, a number of questions have been raised regarding the use of Federal-aid funds for certain countermeasures. This paper provides guidance on the use of funds for those activities.

Federal-aid highway and State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program (23 U.S.C. Section 402) funds may be used to improve intersection and highway-rail grade crossing safety through better identification of such problem locations and compliance with traffic control devices, such as traffic and highway-rail signals, signs, and pavement markings. The following are examples of activities eligible for Federal funds:

- Identification of intersections or crossings that have a history of poor driver compliance or accident records demonstrating risk taking.
- Project planning, data collection, analysis and project evaluations of any engineering improvements or driver compliance countermeasures.
- Analyses of traffic data and crash records to determine appropriate or recommended actions.

In addition, Federal-aid funds can be used for the following activities:

- Highway design improvements including turning lanes, storage lanes, improved curve radii or improved sight distance.
- Operational improvements, such as capital improvements for traffic surveillance and control equipment; upgrading equipment; vehicle detectors; multi-phase controllers and computerized signal systems; and improved signal system timing. These items are eligible since noncompliance may be caused by inappropriately timed signals or signals that are technically incapable of providing the appropriate phase times needed to achieve good compliance.
- Red-light-running (RLR) countermeasure equipment, since it furthers the goals (i.e. to reduce traffic crashes and death, injuries and property damage) and constitutes a necessary expense that is consistent with the purpose of the State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program. Therefore, RLR countermeasure equipment such as video cameras, monitoring systems, electronic ticketing systems or other data collection and processing equipment may be funded with Federal-aid.

If electronic RLR countermeasures capital investment is undertaken, we recommend that the initiative be continued for a minimum of 2 years, or sooner, if the investment meets its intended purpose. Federal-aid funds can not be used to pay enforcement personnel employed in the issuing or processing of RLR traffic tickets. As with all safety countermeasure efforts, agencies using Federal-aid STP funds for the purchase of RLR equipment should demonstrate--during the project development stage--how the information gathered will be used to improve driver compliance and reduce the number and/or severity of traffic crashes.

In addition, changes in traffic control systems at one intersection or highway-rail grade crossing often result in shifting or creating a new problem at other locations. Therefore, agencies interested in implementing RLR countermeasures are encouraged to develop system-wide implementation plans and evaluations.

Hope this information is useful in support of your highway safety programs.