



NATIONAL HIGHWAY INSTITUTE

## Acquiring Real Estate for Highway Projects

By John J. Sullivan, IV

**B**uilding an effective transportation system requires the skills of people from all sorts of backgrounds and professions, from design engineers and pavement specialists to bankers and communications personnel. Recognizing the contributions of these myriad professionals, the National Highway Institute (NHI) offers training opportunities for engineering as well as non-engineering staff. For example, real estate specialists can take advantage of an NHI seminar that covers fairness and just compensation for property owners whose lands are acquired for the purposes of roadway creation or expansion.







Government programs designed to benefit the public as a whole—such as constructing the Nation’s surface transportation system—sometimes require purchasing private property and displacing people from their residences, businesses, or farms. Known as the power of eminent domain, acquisition of this kind is a long-recognized right of government. The fifth amendment of the U.S. Constitution acknowledges this right, but states that private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation.

To protect the rights of property owners and displaced individuals whose properties are acquired for public use, the U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, amended. Known as the Uniform Act, the law seeks to provide “uniform, fair, and equitable treatment to persons whose property is acquired or who are displaced in connection with a federally funded project.”








To help highway professionals conform with the requirements of the Uniform Act, NHI offers a seminar entitled *Real Estate Acquisition Under the Uniform Act: An Overview* (FHWA-NHI-141045). The six-hour, Web-based training seminar targets Federal, State, and local government employees and consultants who acquire real estate, serve as program or project managers, grant administrators, or grant recipients. This audience includes acquisition and relocation agents, appraisers, realty specialists, attorneys, engineers, planners, and others. The seminar’s basic overview of the Uniform Act covers three key elements: valuation/appraisal, acquisition, and relocation. Upon completion of the seminar, participants will be able to: explain how to develop an estimate of just compensation through the use of the appraisal

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process or appraisal waiver procedure(s); identify relocation benefits and services required by the Uniform Act; and list places to obtain relevant resource documents and materials.



This seminar is available online or on a CD-ROM. Copies of the CD-ROM can be ordered through the NHI Store. Participants can register online at [www.nhi.dot.gov](http://www.nhi.dot.gov). For FHWA employees and those who have an UPACS account, please log in using the UPACS user ID and password. New NHI Web site users should complete the NHI user profile that will create an NHI user ID and password. Once you login to the NHI Web site, you can add the course to your shopping cart and proceed to checkout. After the checkout process is completed, you will receive an e-mail with detailed instructions for accessing this Web-based course.

*For a complete description of these and other NHI courses, please visit [www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov). To schedule a session or for technical questions about enrolling, please contact the NHI Training Team at [NHITraining@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:NHITraining@fhwa.dot.gov).*

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