

Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects: Stakeholder Partnering



Stakeholder Partnering provides local public agencies (LPAs), state departments of transportation (DOTs), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with an effective means of working together to increase program compliance and integrity and streamline the Federal-Aid project delivery process.

The Federal-Aid Highway Program helps fund construction, maintenance and operation of the nation's 3.9 million-mile highway network. For the local agencies that own and operate the majority of these roads, about 2.9 million miles, clarity of the requirements for using these federal funds is critical.



Stakeholder Partnering offers LPAs an opportunity to join with their state and federal colleagues in navigating the complexities of the Federal-Aid program and successfully delivering projects. This collaboration among representatives at each government level helps ensure that the program encompasses the needs of all involved.

Stakeholder Partnering was one of three strategies promoted under FHWA's Every Day Counts-2 initiative on Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects, an effort specifically designed to assist local agencies in administering their federally funded projects, and it is continuing into EDC-3.

A stakeholder partnership is a committee or working group that meets periodically and works from a defined set of goals, roles and responsibilities. Together, members identify program-level issues and they review and refine project development processes. They work on solutions through a defined decision-making process, plans for action and follow-up.

The collaboration process is open, inclusive, and promotes the exchange of ideas, concerns, risks and opportunities. As members share information and perspectives, they build mutual understanding and trust that provides leverage for streamlining efforts and launching new initiatives, such as training or certification programs, that can promote greater control of project delivery schedules at the local level.

WHY CREATE A STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP?

- ▶ To promote transparency and integrity
- ▶ To clarify state and federal project requirements
- ▶ To promote consistency in LPA program administration
- ▶ To improve and streamline processes
- ▶ To promote local ownership of project and delivery schedule
- ▶ To efficiently use staff resources

Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects: Stakeholder Partnering

BENEFITS

- ▶ **Improves Communication and Trust.** Stakeholder Partnering produces an open flow of communication that can be used to clarify and resolve local program issues and achieve better understanding of federal and state project development requirements.
- ▶ **Increases Consistency.** Stakeholder Partnering establishes a cooperative environment for reviewing and refining project development compliance requirements and policies that can be used to ensure consistency across the state.
- ▶ **Provides a Launching Platform.** The partnership enables the type of collaboration that can be used to initiate process improvements, training, and other new initiatives to improve program integrity.

CURRENT STATE OF THE PRACTICE

Stakeholder partnerships are in place and proving effective in improving communication, coordination, and cooperation among agencies in several states. Missouri and Wisconsin are states that have model programs. Champion states include Arizona, California, Florida and Virginia. California, Florida and Virginia have had successful programs in place for several years, with Virginia recently expanding theirs.

A newly established partnership was launched by Arizona in 2013. Arizona's Local Public Agency Stakeholder Council includes broad representation from local agencies, councils of government, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), the Arizona Department of Transportation (DOT) and FHWA.

Ohio recently launched their Local Public Agency Advisory Group. The group brings together local, state and federal stakeholders to discuss policies and procedures related to the Ohio DOT's program. The group's purpose is to strengthen relationships among stakeholders and improve performance on locally administered projects through information sharing, streamlining efforts and training. Twenty-four representatives of cities, counties, MPOs, contractors, Ohio DOT and FHWA participated in the June 3, 2014 inaugural meeting.

More recently, the Michigan DOT, local public agencies, County Road Association of Michigan and FHWA held a partnering workshop to kick off the state's new Stakeholder Partnering Committee on August 28. The group will focus on locally administered Federal-Aid projects. They agreed on the framework of a draft committee charter and set a goal of having a formal charter written and signed by the end of 2014.

SUPPORT AND AVAILABLE TOOLS

- ▶ More information on stakeholder partnering, including case studies and links to news articles, is available on the FHWA EDC-3 website at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc-3/partnering.cfm>
- ▶ FHWA's Every Day Counts-2 initiative on Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc-2/lpa.cfm>

For additional information, please contact:

Michael Smith, FHWA
Resource Center /EDC-3 Team Lead
404-562-3694
Michael.Smith@dot.gov

Robert Wright, FHWA
National LPA Program Manager
202-366-4630
Robert.Wright@dot.gov



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Every Day Counts (EDC), a State-based initiative of FHWA's Center for Accelerating Innovation, works with State, local and private sector partners to encourage the adoption of proven technologies and innovations aimed at shortening and enhancing project delivery

FHWA-14-CAI-042