

Dept. of Transportation: Resources help communities tap into historic infrastructure funding

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The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) announces online resources to help local communities compete for federal grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). WisDOT's new Summary Guide of Discretionary Grants, Letter of Support request form, and other items help guide local governments through the grant application process so they can take full advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve infrastructure across Wisconsin through federal funding.

"Grants are available to fund everything from building safer streets to reducing traffic congestion to improving school bus fleets to recycling electric vehicle batteries," WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said. "These grants cover a wide range of transportation modes and activities, so it pays for communities and institutions to find out if they're eligible for these programs."

While much of the BIL funding Wisconsin receives is administered by WisDOT, other programs, known as discretionary grants, must be applied for directly through the federal government by local governments and other institutions. The path to accessing federal funding includes finding open grants, determining qualifications, gathering required documentation, and meeting deadlines. WisDOT collected all of these resources into one succinct site to help navigate this competitive grant process: wisconsindot.gov/discretionarygrants.

Identifying and accessing discretionary grants

WisDOT's experts curated key information and compiled direct links to the most

valuable resources to identify funding opportunities for local entities. This Summary Guide of BIL Discretionary Grants includes information on the federal agency offering the grant, who is eligible, the overall amount available nationwide, and when applications are due.

Assistance through Letters of Support

A strong grant application shows backing from stakeholders as demonstrated by a breadth of Letters of Support from community groups, elected officials and other organizations. WisDOT's website provides a sample Letter of Support and a template for this important supplement to a USDOT Federal Grant application.

Other services

Timing is another critical factor. With Federal grants rapidly becoming available, WisDOT has developed an At-A-Glance calendar to show the cadence of past and current releases. This tool can help communities' grant developers anticipate grant releases to ensure their project is ready and the necessary documentation is prepared to meet Federal deadlines. This calendar is now also on the website.

These discretionary grants are highly competitive against projects in communities across the country and are awarded based on qualifications and merit. The applications are submitted to the specific federal agency offering the grant via [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

In addition, WisDOT's streamlined main BIL webpage (wisconsindot.gov/BIL) has tips for communities on the application process and links to federal resources available through other programs.