

# Top 10 Characteristics of a Successful State HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core Federal-aid program with the purpose to achieve a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. Similar to other Federal-aid programs, the HSIP is a federally-funded, State-administered program. While FHWA establishes the general program requirements, State DOTs have the flexibility to develop and implement an HSIP that best meets the needs of their program. However, successful State HSIPs share a number of common characteristics in the areas of program management, analysis, project selection and evaluation. State DOTs should consider adopting the following HSIP practices and program elements to ensure successful implementation of the HSIP across the State.



1. **Document HSIP Processes** – Many States have developed clear documentation of the processes they use to administer the HSIP. These processes typically define how to identify, evaluate, prioritize, and fund safety improvement projects. This documentation not only helps to ensure implementation consistency across an agency, but it also helps stakeholders understand the requirements for using these funds.
2. **Coordinate with Internal and External Partners** – In highly successful programs, the HSIP is fully coordinated and integrated with the work of other organizations, associations, and stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement, safety advocates) that play a role in reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Within the DOT, internal stakeholders (e.g. maintenance, design, and finance) hold a shared commitment towards placing safety first and working together to facilitate and accelerate the planning, design, and construction of HSIP projects.
3. **Understand the Relationship between the SHSP and HSIP** – One of the basic foundations of the HSIP is the direct linkage between the data-driven priorities established in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and the identification, development and implementation of HSIP projects. Understanding the contribution of HSIP projects towards achieving the goals and objectives of the SHSP can help guide program decisions and project selections.
4. **Make Data-Driven Safety Decisions** – A complete, consistent, and comprehensive data collection process is in place to assess potential safety issues on all roadways in the State. Successful States maintain a statewide inventory of crash, roadway and traffic characteristics to locate and evaluate a comprehensive program of potential spot and systemic safety projects. A quantitative project prioritization process enables the selection of HSIP projects that provide the greatest opportunity for reducing fatalities and serious injuries crashes.



5. **Use Advanced Safety Analysis Methods and Tools** – The Highway Safety Manual provides States with new tools to more effectively predict the effectiveness of alternative safety strategies and countermeasures. High-performing States are not only using these tools, but are incorporating them into their processes for evaluating and prioritizing potential HSIP projects.
6. **Address Local Road Needs** – Where a high percentage of crashes occur off the State system, DOTs with high-performing HSIPs work with local jurisdictions to help them develop and implement HSIP projects that address priority safety issues on locally-owned roadways. In some States this is done by allocating safety funds to local organizations. In other States, the State DOT leads the design and construction of these projects.
7. **Consider all “4E’s”** – Highly successful programs look beyond just engineering solutions to address safety issues. When appropriate, consideration is given to possible solutions and countermeasures in all “4E’s” (i.e. Enforcement, Education, Emergency Response, and Engineering). In some cases, States have developed alternate procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of these projects so they can be included in the overall ranking of HSIP projects.
8. **Establish A Multi-Year Plan and Budget** – The HSIP is a multi-year program that in any one year simultaneously supports the collection and analysis of data, the identification of highway safety improvement projects, the evaluation of countermeasures, and the design and construction of projects. States that plan and budget for the program on a multi-year basis can better coordinate and leverage all opportunities to advance HSIP implementation efforts and use all available funds efficiently and effectively to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.
9. **Identify Opportunities to Streamline Project Delivery** – Many States face challenges in advancing HSIP-funded projects through design and construction in a timely manner. In highly successful programs, processes have been implemented to streamline and expedite the design and construction of HSIP-funded safety improvements on State and local roads. Examples of these processes include programmatic environmental agreements, use of consultants to support the design and construction of highway safety improvement projects and multiple agency partnerships.
10. **Evaluate the Success of the Program** – By regularly evaluating their programs, States can continuously improve their strategies for achieving their SHSP goals and targets, as well as their own efficiency and effectiveness. Tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of completed HSIP projects is also a means to determine if those improvements are providing their predicted benefits. States with highly successful programs also “benchmark” themselves against other States, adopting new practices they find promising.

For additional information about the HSIP, visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip>.



Highway Safety Improvement Program  
Data Driven Decisions

