



HIGHWAY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (HRD)

Fiscal year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Authorization	\$125 M				

Program purpose

The FAST Act continues the HRD program, which funds strategic investment in research activities that address current and emerging highway transportation needs.

Statutory citations: FAST Act § 6002; 23 U.S.C. 502-503

Funding features

Type of budget authority

Funded by contract authority from the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund. Funds are available until expended. The funds may not be transferred except that, at the request of a State, the Secretary may transfer funds apportioned or allocated to that State to another State or to FHWA to fund research, development and technology transfer activities of mutual interest on a pooled fund basis. Funds are subject to the overall Federal-aid obligation limitation and the obligation limitation associated with these funds is available for four fiscal years.

Set-asides

Of the total authorized for the HRD Program, the FAST Act requires DOT to set aside—

- not more than \$5 million for FY 2016 for the Future Interstate Study (described below) [FAST Act § 6021];
- \$15 million for FY 2016, and \$20 million for each of FYs 2017-2020, for Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (see separate fact sheet); [FAST Act § 6020]
- an unspecified amount for each of FYs 2016-2020 as one component of the \$60 million in funding for the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (see separate fact sheet) [FAST Act § 6004]; and
- up to \$10 million for each of FYs 2016-2020 for Performance Management Data Support (described below) [FAST Act § 6028].

Federal share: The Federal share of a project or activity carried out with funds authorized under section 6002 of the FAST Act shall be 80% unless expressly provided by the Act or otherwise determined by the Secretary. [FAST Act § 6002(c)(1)]

Eligible activities

The FAST Act continues without change the broad range of activities eligible under HRD, including—

- activities to improve highway safety;
- activities to improve infrastructure integrity;
- activities to strengthen transportation planning and environmental decision-making;
- activities to reduce congestion, improve highway operations, and enhance freight productivity;
- exploratory advanced research; and
- operation of FHWA’s Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center. [23 U.S.C. 503(b)]

The FAST Act also continues to require DOT to report to Congress every two years on estimates of the Nation’s future highway and bridge needs and backlog of current highway and bridge needs (often referred to as the “Conditions and Performance” report). This report remains an eligible use of HRD funding. [23 U.S.C. 503(b)(8)]

Program features

Future Interstate Study

The FAST Act requires DOT to contract with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment, for a study on the actions needed to upgrade and restore the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways to its role as a premier system that meets the growing and shifting demands of the 21st century. TRB will convene and consult a panel of national experts, including operators and users of the Interstate System and private sector stakeholders. Not later than three years after the date of enactment, the TRB will report on the results of the study, including recommendations regarding—

- Interstate capacity needs, and features and standards required to upgrade the Interstate System;
- the application of technologies, and intergovernmental roles, to upgrade the System; and
- revisions to related law (including regulations). [FAST Act § 6021]

Performance Management Data Support

The FAST Act requires FHWA to develop, use, and maintain data sets and data analysis tools to assist metropolitan planning organizations, States, and the Agency itself in carrying out performance management analyses. These activities may include—

- collecting and distributing vehicle probe data describing traffic on Federal-aid highways;
- collecting household travel behavior data to assess local and cross-jurisdictional travel;
- enhancing existing data collection and analysis tools to accommodate performance measures, targets, and related data;
- enhancing existing data analysis tools to improve performance predictions and travel models in transportation performance management reports [23 U.S.C. 150(e)]; and
- developing tools to improve performance analysis and evaluate the effects of project investments on performance. [FAST Act § 6028]