

# Locally Administered Federal-Aid Projects

## Stakeholder Partnering: Florida



### Florida's Local Agency Program Community of Practice

Stakeholder Partnering can provide State Transportation Agencies (STAs), Local Public Agencies (LPAs), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with an effective means of working together to improve Federal-aid project delivery. The **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)** is employing this strategy through their Local Agency Program Community of Practice (LAP CoP). The LAP CoP allows opportunities for collaboration among representatives from all three levels of government and other local partners.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

**Q: How many members does the LAP CoP have, and how did FDOT decide whom to include in the group?**

**FDOT:** There are currently 19 members. It was decided that the LAP CoP should be composed of members with differing areas of expertise, with the idea that they would disseminate information or questions that arise from the LAP CoP among their colleagues, and then bring that accumulated knowledge back to the LAP CoP. The FDOT staff members on the LAP CoP include some of those directly responsible for the implementation of the LAP and some with expertise in technical areas associated with the development of the Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) on LAP projects.

**Q: How did FDOT approach local agencies to provide representatives on the LAP CoP?**

**FDOT:** The Florida Association of County Engineers and Road Superintendents (FACERS) helped get the LAP CoP started by providing suggestions for local representatives. They provided names of County Engineers, Construction Managers, Engineering Directors, etc., in some of the state's most active local agencies.

**Q: Are consultants a part of the LAP CoP?**

**FDOT:** The Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers has a representative on the LAP CoP.

**Q: Are any metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) or regional councils of government eligible to become LPAs in Florida, or is the LPA designation reserved for municipal and county governments?**

**FDOT:** MPOs in Florida are not considered Local Agencies. They typically do not undertake projects, but there may be instances where they receive funds to perform a specific planning study.

### The Stakeholder Partnering Initiative

Stakeholder Partnering can be used to augment and improve the collaborative relationship among those involved in locally administered Federal-aid programs and projects. These partnerships provide for face-to-face communication that can increase understanding of program responsibilities at each level of government and clarify project development requirements and policies. This enables process reviews and refinement and increases training opportunities.

### Q: How long do representatives serve on the committee?

**FDOT:** LAP CoP representatives are long-standing members who do not rotate off. At one point, the group became too large to be conducive to what they were trying to achieve. FDOT kept all the initial FACERS participants, but adjusted the number of DOT participants.

### Q: What was the time required to get the group up and running?

**FDOT:** It was less than a year from concept until the first meetings, although the first meetings were mostly planning sessions.

### Q: Who manages the LAP CoP communications, meeting arrangements, agendas, etc.?

**FDOT:** Most of the LAP CoP communications and meeting arrangements are handled by a small group of staff in the Florida DOT's Office of Design. Face-to-face meetings are held at a centrally located FDOT office, supplemented by teleconferences as needed. The majority of communication, including document reviews, takes place via email.

### Q: What are some examples of solutions that the LAP CoP has generated?

**FDOT:** As a result of the LAP CoP, FDOT has modified the set of flexible specifications for off-system LAP projects, created a local agency section in the Division's Specs on the Web file server that enables local agencies to access and download specifications for local agency projects, and streamlined construction project closeout requirements. They are currently reviewing process maps for design and construction to help local representatives understand how they correlate to Federal requirements.

### Q: How does the LAP CoP disseminate information from the meetings to local agencies?

**FDOT:** The FACERS representatives bring information from the LAP CoP back to their regular meetings, and it is disseminated from there. An FDOT representative also attends FACERS quarterly meetings to provide updates on LAP issues and bring concerns back to the LAP CoP. The LAP CoP web page provides links to previous discussion topics and their statuses. FDOT also created a questions "Asked & Answered" web page as an easily accessible repository for LAP topics that arose or were answered through the LAP CoP. This includes guidance on project selection, documentation, specifications, and federal requirements such as Buy America.

### Q. Is any training associated with LAP CoP?

**FDOT:** Some internal education and training was provided for members who were not familiar with programing and funding processes.

### Q. How has the LAP CoP benefited local public agencies and FDOT?

**FDOT:** Aside from better communication and understanding, feedback from the LAP CoP helps FDOT identify big-picture, systemic issues and find ways to streamline processes for the locals.

For additional information about this EDC Initiative, please contact:

EDC2 Locally Administered Federal-aid  
Projects Innovation Lead

**Michael R. Smith**

Project Management Engineer/Team Leader  
Construction Project Management Technical Service Team  
FHWA Office of Technical Services/Resource Center  
[michael.smith@dot.gov](mailto:michael.smith@dot.gov)

EDC2 Stakeholder Partnering  
Strategy Lead

**Robert S. Wright**

National LPA Coordinator  
FHWA/Office of Infrastructure/Office of Program Administration  
[robert.wright@dot.gov](mailto:robert.wright@dot.gov)



*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*



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway Administration**

[www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts)