

STATE PLANNING AND RESEARCH (SP&R)

Program purpose

The State Planning and Research Program funds States' statewide planning and research activities. The funds are used to establish a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions and to carryout transportation research activities throughout the State.

Statutory citation(s): MAP-21 §52005; 23 USC 505

Funding features

Funding is provided for SP&R by a 2% set-aside from each State's apportionments of four programs: the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP); the Surface Transportation Program (STP); the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP); and the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) Program.

Of the funds that are set aside, a minimum of 25% must be used for research purposes, unless the State certifies that more than 75% of the funds are needed for statewide and metropolitan planning and the Secretary accepts such certification.

In addition, transportation planning, research and development, and technology transfer activities are eligible for funding under the Surface Transportation Program.

Eligible activities

Eligible activities include—

- Engineering and economic surveys and investigations
- Planning of future highway programs and local public transportation systems and planning of the financing of such programs and systems, including metropolitan and statewide planning
- Development and implementation of management systems, plans and processes under the NHPP, HSIP, CMAQ, and the National Freight Policy
- Studies of the economy, safety, and convenience of surface transportation systems and the desirable regulation and equitable taxation of such systems
- Research, development, and technology transfer activities necessary in connection with the planning, design, construction, management, and maintenance of highway, public transportation, and intermodal transportation systems
- Study, research, and training on the engineering standards and construction materials for transportation systems described in the previous bullet, including the evaluation and accreditation of inspection and testing and the regulation and taxation of their use
- Conduct of activities relating to the planning of real-time monitoring elements
- Implementation by the Secretary of the findings and results of the Future Strategic Highway Research Program¹

Federal share: The Federal share of the cost of a project carried out with SP&R funds shall be 80% unless the Secretary determines that the interests of the Federal-aid highway program would be best served by decreasing or eliminating the non-Federal share.

SP&R funds may be used by States as the non-Federal share for the Local Technical Assistance Program and the University Transportation Centers program.

¹ This is subject to three-fourths of the States agreeing on a percentage of SP&R funds to be made available to the Secretary for such purpose.

