

Safe Routes to School Application Deadline Extended!

Submitted by: Pat Pieratte

When the first Safe Routes to School Call for Applications was originally announced, the deadline was February 28, 2007. The statewide applications deadline is now extended to **March 15, 2007**, to give everyone a little more time to complete their applications. Please note that this extended deadline replaces an earlier plan to issue a second Call for Applications this spring.

With the March 15, 2007 deadline, most of the seven Districts of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) should receive enough applications to be able to select Safe Routes to School projects and activities through Fiscal Year 2009, in compliance with a request from the Work Program Office. Those Districts that feel they need even more time to accomplish this goal, have the option of extending this first Call for Applications even further. At this time, Districts Four and Six are planning for a later deadline. Check with your District Safe Routes to School contact (see chart on page 3) to be sure you meet the appropriate deadline.

Frequently Asked Questions about Florida's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

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*What is the Florida Safe Routes to School Program?

Florida's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is part of a new federal program designed to make it safer, easier, and more fun for children in grades K-8 to walk or bicycle to and from schools. It is a comprehensive program including 5 E's: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation.

*What types of projects and activities are included in SRTS?

SRTS funds are earmarked for both infrastructure projects (engineering projects such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic engineering improvements) and non-infrastructure activities (such as educational programs and promoting walking and biking to school). Generally, in Florida, 90 % of the money will go toward infrastructure projects, and

10% will be spent on non-infrastructure activities. At the discretion of the District, the non-infrastructure portion can be increased up to 30%.

*How much money is involved in Florida's SRTS Program?

Florida's SRTS Program will provide approximately \$28.7 million throughout Florida, through fiscal year 2009.

*Why do I have to apply now for SRTS funds through Fiscal Year 2009?

Florida plans in advance for major transportation projects and activities, using a Five-Year Work Program. At the request of the Work Program Office, we are soliciting projects and activities which will be implemented through fiscal year 2009.

*How is Florida's SRTS Program Administered?

Florida's program is administered by the FDOT, under the oversight of Florida's new SRTS Coordinator, Pat Pieratte. Since Florida is such a large state, FDOT decided to have most of the funds distributed to the Districts, which will accept applications, rank them, and submit the final selections to the State Safe Routes to School Coordinator for review. Funds are distributed to the Districts based on the number of children in K-8 grades in each District.

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*Why is the SRTS Program important?

SRTS Programs have many benefits, including:

- Children today are not getting the exercise they need to stay healthy. SRTS activities encourage children to walk or bicycle to and from school to get the 60 minutes of exercise they need every day.
- More and more children are obese and in danger of developing diabetes. Walking or bicycling on a regular basis helps keep children at their ideal weight and prevent illnesses such as diabetes that are partially caused by inactivity.

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- Traffic congestion is a challenge around every school. When the children who live close enough walk or bicycle to school, this frees up roadway space for bused students and others who live too far away to walk or bicycle.
- Increased traffic and fear of predators keep many parents from feeling comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school. SRTS activities such as Walking School Buses or Bike Trains, give children the adult supervision they need to walk or bicycle safely to and from school, and decrease the traffic around schools.
- Many neighborhoods around schools were built without sidewalks or traffic engineering supports. SRTS projects can help to fill in some of these gaps and supply the supports necessary for children to walk or bicycle safely to and from school.

***Who can apply for SRTS funds?**

The official applicants for SRTS projects and activities are school boards, private schools, or Community Traffic Safety Teams. However, most projects will also need the support of a Sponsor (a city, county or MPO) who can enter formal agreements with FDOT to build infrastructure projects. In the case of non-infrastructure activities, sponsors could also include non-profits, health departments, and so on. In reality, the application can start with either the Applicant or the Sponsor. The important point is that a coordinated approach is needed to make a SRTS project a success.

***What is involved in a SRTS Application?**

The first steps are to select a school, perform an analysis of the routes to school, and identify one or more safety deficiencies preventing children from walking or bicycling to school safely. The Safe Ways to School Toolkit provides a step-by-step process for doing this analysis, as well as many other helpful tools. It can be ordered from the Florida T² Center by e-mailing your request to mediacenter@ce.ufl.edu, or it can be downloaded from http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficSafetyEd/html_safe-ways.html

Next, fill in the information requested on the application and submit it to your FDOT District SRTS representative (see the chart on page 3), by March 15, 2007 (unless you receive assurance of a later date from your District SRTS contact).

Applications received by the deadline will be reviewed and prioritized by District personnel based on considerations such as the seriousness of the problem and likelihood that the proposed solution will solve the problem.

***Why should I apply if funds are limited?**

Solving any problem begins with analyzing it. Even though SRTS funds will not address all identified problems, it is still worthwhile to go through the process. The results can't help but be positive: there is the potential for a federally-funded project, a clearer vision of how to address problems, and better communication with important local partners.

***When will Florida's next Call for Applications be?**

The next Call for Applications is anticipated to be announced sometime next fall, for the 2010 fiscal year.

***Won't all the SRTS funds be committed by then?**

Even though the current Call for Applications covers all of the funds appropriated under SAFETEA-LU (the current federal transportation law), we are very hopeful that the program will be continued in the next six-year transportation law. As a result, we plan to issue an annual Call for Applications each fall, based on fiscal year 2009 funding levels, until we know what the future brings.



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***Where can I find out more information about Florida's SRTS Program?**

Florida's SRTS guidelines and applications are on the SRTS website, along with District SRTS contact information. Check the SRTS website (www.srtsfl.org) often to stay abreast of future developments. We plan to issue electronic SRTS newsletters on a quarterly basis, so get on the e-mail list of your District SRTS contact to receive these updates. It is also a good idea to attend your local Community Traffic Safety Team meetings and keep in touch with your District SRTS contacts to stay abreast of developments or to schedule local meetings or presentations on SRTS.

For general SRTS questions or to arrange a presentation at a statewide conference or meeting, you can contact Pat Pieratte, Safe Routes to School Coordinator at 850-245-1529 or pat.pieratte@dot.state.fl.us.

FDOT District Safe Routes to School Contacts

District		Contact	Title	E-mail Address	Phone
1	Infrastructure	Gary Amig	Safety Program Manager	gary.amig@dot.state.fl.us	863-519-2666
1	Non-infrastructure	Sarita Taylor	Pedestrian/Bicycle Coordinator	sarita.taylor@dot.state.fl.us	863-519-2216
2	Infrastructure	Holly Walker, P.E.	Safety Engineer	holly.walker@dot.state.fl.us	904-360-5629
2	Infrastructure*	Randy Warden	Pedestrian/Bicycle Coord.	randy.warden@dot.state.fl.us	904-360-5631
3	Infrastructure	Craig Gavin	Planning Manager	craig.gavin@dot.state.fl.us	850-415-9536
3	Non-infrastructure	Barbara Lee	CTST Coordinator	barbara.lee@dot.state.fl.us	850-415-9231
4	Infrastructure	Gilbert Soles	Safety Program Manager	gilbert.soles@dot.state.fl.us	954-777-4358
4	Non-infrastructure	Carmen Pullins	CTST Coordinator	carmen.pullins@dot.state.fl.us	954-777-4361
5	Infrastructure	Tony Nosse, P.E.	Safety Engineer	anthony.nosse@dot.state.fl.us	386-943-5334
5	Non-infrastructure	Joan Carter	Pedestrian/Bicycle Coord.	joan.carter@dot.state.fl.us	386-943-5335
6	Infrastructure	Misleidys Leon	Traffic Operations Analyst	misleidys.leon@dot.state.fl.us	305-470-5345
6	Infrastructure & Non-infrastructure	Carlos Francis	Senior Traffic Engineer	carlos.francis@dot.state.fl.us	305-470-5212
6	Non-infrastructure	Lewis Sayre	CTST Coordinator	lewis.sayre@dot.state.fl.us	305-470-5346
7	Infrastructure	Peter Hsu, P.E.	Safety Program Engineer	ping.hsu@dot.state.fl.us	813-975-6251
7	Non-infrastructure	Jeanette Rouse	CTST Coordinator	jeanette.rouse@dot.state.fl.us	813-975-6256

* Note: District Two is not accepting non-infrastructure applications, but is planning their non-infrastructure activities from the District Office



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