

SCDOT's Office of Local Government Services Is Open for Business

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Office Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities

The S.C. Department of Transportation's (SCDOT's) Office of Local Government Services was established in December 2021. Agency leadership recognized a need to consolidate various financial and administrative management activities associated with local governments under one roof; thus, the office was created.

The following offices and program areas fall under the guidance of the Office of Local Government Services:

- "C" Program
 - "C" Funds come from the state gas tax, and are provided annually to the 46 counties based on a formula: 1/3 population, 1/3 land area, and 1/3 rural road mileage. Sometimes, the General Assembly provides one-time, non-recurring "C" funds to counties.
 - "C" Funds are used for local transportation projects and improvements to state and county roads and city streets; projects must be on public property, and accessible to the public. These funds can also be used as local

match for federal grants. The vast majority of "C" Funds are spent on resurfacing secondary and local roads.

- The "C" Fund Law requires a certain percentage of "C" Funds be spent on the state highway system. In State Fiscal Year 2022, 25 percent of a county's "C" funds must be spent on state roads, while the remainder (75 percent) can be spent on locally owned transportation infrastructure.
- County Transportation Committees (CTCs) select and approve projects to be funded. Most CTCs are appointed by their county's legislative delegation; in some instances, the appointment authority has been transferred to the county.
- CTCs can choose to be self-administered, or SCDOT will administer a county's "C" program on its behalf.
- Local Public Agency (LPA) Program
 - An LPA is a county, municipality, board, commission, agency, department, or political subdivision created under the authority of the state.
 - Based on its qualifications, SCDOT may delegate a federal-aid or state-funded project or phase of a project to an adequately staffed, suitably equipped, qualified entity (LPA).
 - Examples of LPA projects include, but are not limited to, Transportation Alternative projects (i.e., sidewalks;



bike/pedestrian shared use paths), safety projects (i.e., installation of a roundabout; intersection improvement), or a state or congressional earmark.

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
 - The TAP program, previously known as “Transportation Enhancements,” is a federally funded grant reimbursement program used for community connectivity projects, including sidewalks, bikeways, multipurpose trails, greenways, and Safe Routes to Schools.
 - TAP projects focus on safely and efficiently expanding non-motorized transportation choices for communities.
 - Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, local governments, school districts, regional transportation authorities, and Councils of Government.
 - TAP grants require a 20 percent local match, and lapse three years after award.
- Contract Assurance
 - The Office of Contract Assurance provides confirmation to SC-



DOT and federal agencies that funds awarded by SCDOT are expended in accordance with applicable agreement provisions and state and federal requirements.

- Staff review consultants’ annual indirect costs rates and audits of indirect costs rates for compliance with federal cost principles. Rates are approved for use if they are found to be compliant.
- The office also completes annual reviews of Single Audit Compliance, federal cost reporting, and, as needed, procurement and indirect cost rates / allocation plans.

Office staff provide specialized financial and administrative support, assisting entities with TAP, LPA, and CTC project and program guidelines, responsibilities, and processes from inception through completion. Engineering-related items associated with these local projects and programs remain within SCDOT’s engineering divisions.

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Forthcoming TAP and LPA Program Revisions

The TAP and LPA programs are currently being reviewed and revised. Since December 2021, multiple “listening sessions” have occurred with both internal and external stakeholders, including the South Carolina Association of Counties and Municipal Association of South Carolina. Feedback is being incorporated into the program revisions, along with an emphasis on SCDOT’s Complete Streets policy and new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requirements.

The goal of the TAP and LPA revisions is to streamline both programs to make them more efficient and user friendly. Because these programs will look much different than they do today, we will have a robust educational component as part of the roll-out, so stay tuned for more information as we introduce the new and improved LPA and TAP programs.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Discretionary Grants

A hot topic right now is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the substantial amount of discretionary grants available to state and local governments. The Office of Local Government Services will be responsible for identifying what grants SCDOT will seek to benefit its program, but will also coordinate with local governments on grants they are seeking

on the State Highway System.

SCDOT understands the desire of local governments to pursue federal grants, and we recognize that the current USDOT Administration is actively seeking opportunities to provide federal grant funding to our municipal and county partners outside of the normal transportation planning process. We also recognize the challenges many local governments face with regards to funding desired infrastructure improvements and enhancements within their communities.

Therefore, what should local governments be prepared to do if pursuing discretionary grants?

- Independently seek grant opportunities and prepare all grant applications in their entirety.
- Enter into grant agreements with the relevant federal funding agency.
- Manage all aspects of the project including PE, ROW, and construction.*
- Assume all financial risk, including any overruns.
- Enter into a maintenance agreement with any improvements above SCDOT’s maintenance standard.

*To assist local governments, SCDOT is working to establish a qualified list of on-call consultants to provide local governments assistance with project management support for awarded grants. Usage of the list is not mandatory.

Local governments submitting transportation grant applications for work on the State Highway System should provide

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a proposed high-level project scope to the Office of Local Government Services as soon as possible. Please email this information to IIJAGrants@scdot.org.

The Office will provide a preliminary review of the scope and notify relevant SCDOT staff as applicable. Based upon the cursory review, the Secretary of Transportation will provide a letter to the local government's chief administrative officer regarding project impacts to the State Highway System, and its status in terms of planning stage, environmental review, and design. Please provide notice of proposed grant projects 30 days in advance of the grant application deadline in order to provide adequate time for a response.

For questions or additional information regarding the Office of Local Government Services, please contact Roxanne Ancheta, Director, Office of Local Government Services, at AnchetaRM@scdot.org or (803) 737-1232. 

SCAC's 2022 Directory of County Officials

SCAC's *2022 Directory of County Officials* was published and distributed in February. So, order a copy if you want to know "Who's Who" in South Carolina county government.

The *Directory* identifies all elected and appointed county officials in the state. This popular, award-winning publication also identifies SCAC's Officers, Board of Directors and Corporate Partners; Regional Councils of Government; Federal and State Officials; and State Senators and Representatives. Addresses and telephone numbers are included for all county officials, state officials and members of the S.C. General Assembly.

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