



Navigating the Federal Process

next steps for projects with federally funded construction

Securing funding is only one of many steps in implementing a project. Now that your project has been awarded funding, you might be wondering about the next steps that need to be taken. This document aims to guide sponsors through those steps to ensure your project reaches its anticipated milestones and letting date.

Projects that leverage federal funds have a set of requirements that must be fulfilled to be able to use those funds for the implementation of that project. Now that your project has been awarded surface transportation funds (STP) from your local council for construction, it is required that you follow federal guidelines. By understanding these requirements and anticipating the type of coordination that is needed to meet these requirements, early in the process, sponsors are better able to successfully implement their projects on schedule and on budget. Not know-

ing these federal requirements and the timing that is involved between each, increases the risk that your project is delayed or that the funding is withdrawn all together.

The following steps are tailored specifically to projects receiving federal funds for construction. If construction is the first phase your project is leveraging federal funding for, there are actions the project will need to take prior to commencing construction to maintain eligibility for the awarded funds. The steps included in this document walk through the actions that will need to be taken before, during, and after using your federally awarded funds. While most of these steps are required, it does not mean that your project is subject to other guidelines under specific circumstances. Please work with your project team to identify particular circumstances early on in the process.

Attention: This information is current as of **October 18th, 2022**, and is meant to be general guidance on the processes that apply to most federally-funded projects within the CMAP region. This document is not a substitute for the IDOT BLRS manual or any IDOT or other regulatory agencies' policies and procedures.

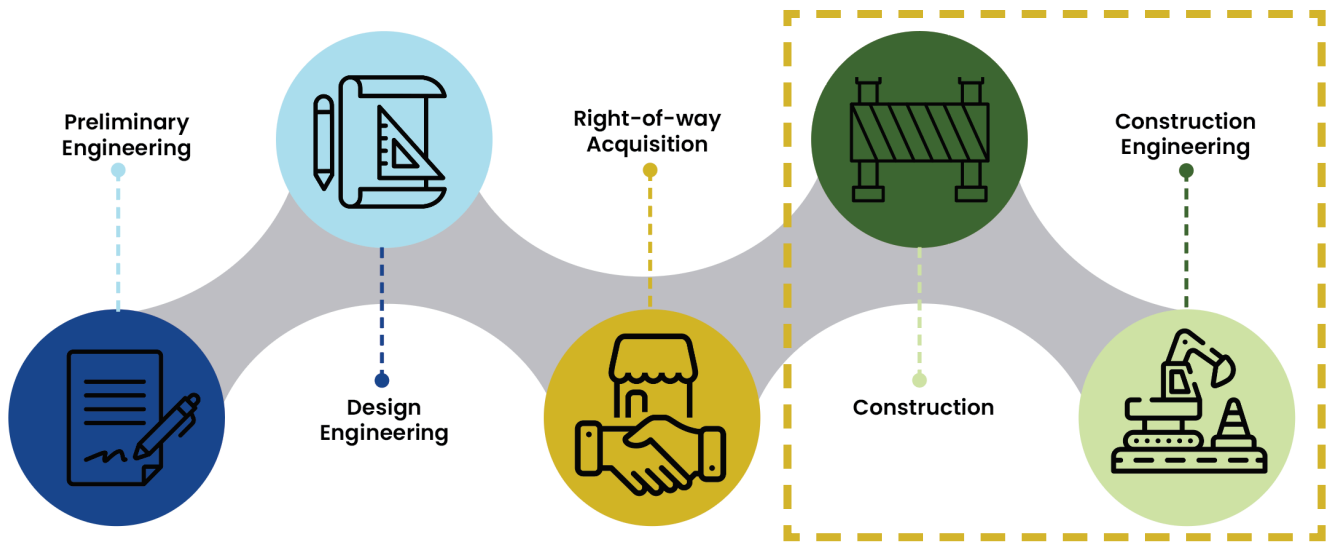


Figure 1: Project implementation consists of five interconnected phases. This document focuses on the steps that need to be taken to complete construction and construction engineering.

Program Requirements for all Projects

Before your project tackles the federal process, it will first need to fulfill actions that are required under the STP programs active program management (APM) policies. Additionally, there are various deadlines outlined in APM policies that project staff should be aware of to avoid project delays. Lastly, no matter the phase being federally funded, all projects will need to have an approved PPI.

Quarterly Status Updates (QSU)

Project updates are required quarterly as outlined in both CMAQ/TAP-L and STP active program management (APM) policies. After a project has been awarded CMAQ, TAP-L, STP-SF, or STP-L funding, an initial quarterly status update is required to be submitted to CMAP with estimated dates of project milestones. When a milestone is reached, or there is a change in a milestone estimate, the next status update should reflect these dates. QSU's are required every March, June, September, and December until the project has been financially closed out. For STP, QSU's must be submitted by the technical or financial managers. Failure to submit a QSU can result in removal or deferral of project funding. More information on QSU's can be found on the [QSU instructions](#).

Project Manager Form

Received with your notice of award letter, this form designates a technical and financial manager for the project. The technical manager is the point of contact for the project ensuring implementation of the project, including the managing of consultants hired. The financial manager, among other things, ensures the correct local match is included in the Local Public Agency's (LPA) budget. These designations are required by the region's STP active program management policies.

Project Programming Information Form (PPI)

Discussed further in step 1 of the federal process, the PPI is the first step to initiate a project at IDOT District 1 and must be approved before initiating any funding agreements. The PPI must match the CMAP TIP in order to be approved and for federal funds to be authorized.

Construction

1 Project Programming Information Form

Prior to initiating ROW, a PPI must be completed and approved. A PPI is the first step to initiate a project at IDOT District 1 and must be approved before initiating any funding agreements. The PPI is what activates your project in the IDOT financial database. A PPI summarizes the scope and funding, including phase allocations and local match requirements, of a project. The initial PPI for a project establishes the state job and federal project numbers for each phase of the project. It is the project sponsor's responsibility to complete the initial PPI and any subsequent revisions.

The PPI must match the CMAP TIP in order to be approved and for federal funds to be authorized. All PPI's must be submitted and processed through the appropriate Planning Liaison (PL) or TIP Programmer, who will then submit on to IDOT. PPI's submitted directly from the project sponsor or their consultants will not be accepted by IDOT.

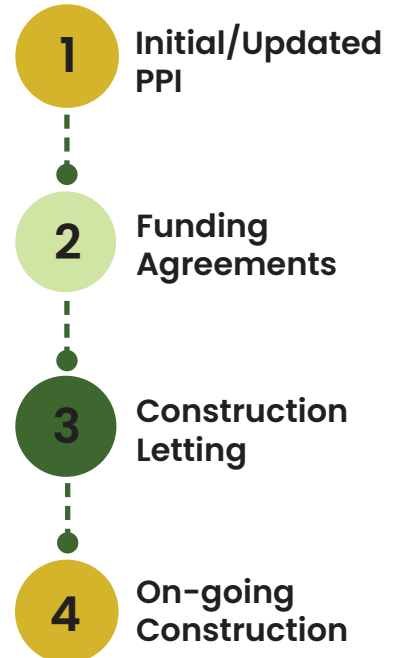
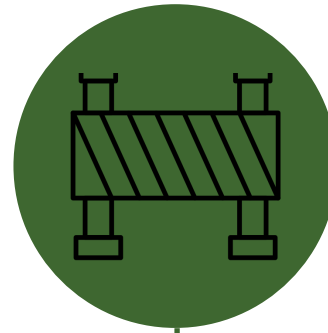
Any time a project change is made that impacts information detailed on the PPI, the project sponsor needs to update and resubmit the PPI to their PL or TIP programmer for transmittal to IDOT. Be sure to always obtain the current version of the PPI form from the IDOT website. Submitting an old version of the form will cause it to be rejected by IDOT and may delay the project.

Note: for projects located in Kendall, Grundy, or DeKalb counties with IDOT District 3, PPI forms are not required.

Timeline to prepare: Immediately following award notice

Timeline for approval: Approximately two weeks

Final Deliverable: Approved copy from IDOT



2 Funding Agreements

Following the PPI approval by IDOT, project sponsors should prepare the appropriate BLRS 5310 form for submittal and send it to their PL for review and final submittal to IDOT. Funding agreements are project sub-award agreements between the State DOT and the local public agency that makes funding available. For construction and construction engineering, form BLR 05310C should be used. Like the PPI, engineering agreements need to be submitted to IDOT directly from the appropriate Planning Liaison.

Timeline to prepare: Draft agreements must be submitted approximately 3.5 months prior to the target construction letting (refer to the Region One Letting

Schedule for exact dates for projects within District 1. For projects within IDOT District 3, contact District staff for submittal deadlines). Final agreements must be submitted approximately 2 months prior to the target letting.

Timeline for approval: Approximately 7 weeks

3 Construction Letting

The majority of federally funded projects are let for construction by the state following the procedures discussed below. For projects that will be let locally, refer to [Chapter 24-2 of the BLRS Manual](#).

Pre-Final Plans

Local agencies are responsible for submitting draft PS&Es, referred to as “Pre-Final” plans to IDOT for review approximately 5.5 to 6 months before the targeted letting date. Prior to submitting pre-final plans, the local agency should have down the following:

- Coordinated with the Bureau of Land Acquisition
- Completed any required soils report, pavement design, traffic signal plans, lighting design, and location drainage studies
- Completed any need phase 1 addenda or design exception approvals, Environmental Survey Requests, PESA Response Forms, or expired clearance updates

New pre-final plans review may be required for previously reviewed projects if the project has been delayed for a year or more after the initial review.

Final Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E)

Final PS&Es must be submitted approximately 3.5 months before the targeted letting date. Final plans cannot be forwarded to IDOT Central Office without all necessary permits, railroad agreements, ICC orders, or intergovernmental agreements executed. Phase 1 Design Approval with valid environmental clearances is also required.

ROW Certification

All right-of-way must be secured before the project is authorized by FHWA and advertised for a letting. For the right-of-way to be clear, the right-of-way must be secured, paid for, and vacated. Prior to each letting, the district must submit a right-of-way certification letter to the Central BLRS for each project involving right-of-way at least 2 days before authorization.

Award/Execution of Contracts

An award is the decision of IDOT to accept the proposal of the lowest responsible bidder. The local agency must concur with the award.

4 On-going Construction

Construction engineering, or Engineering 3, is processed using BLR 05530. Construction engineering does not have a standard deliverable and instead represents ongoing engineering services during the construction phase. Post-award engineering may include design alterations due to changing site conditions, construction management, and inspection services.

Prior to construction commencing, all Federal-aid projects are required to be publicly advertised for bidding through IDOT’s Transportation Bulletin. Contractors who wish to bid must be prequalified which gives them authorization to bid. However, sub-contractors such as material suppliers are not required to be preauthorized. The lowest responsible qualified bidder that fulfills all project requirements will be awarded and given a contract to execute. Any work or costs incurred prior to federal authorization and IDOT approval will not be eligible for federal reimbursement or be allowed to use those costs as a part of the local match. Finally, a resident construction supervisor should be established for the project. If the individual is not a registered professional engineer, the LPA will be required to submit Form BC-775 to the district for approval of the qualified full time publicly employed individual or consulting engineer to serve as the resident construction supervisor.

Once construction has begun, any work outside the scope of the original agreement will require the LPA to submit a written statement to the district providing explanation of the change. As invoices are paid out, the LPA will be reimbursed by the state for the federal share of construction work periodic billings. Upon completion of the construction work, the LPA will ensure all provisions of the agreement have been completed before release of the consultant. All copies of payment estimates, and documentation of the project must be kept on file by the LPA for three years after the final voucher payment was paid out.