

NEBRASKA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jim Pillen, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ICYMI: Nebraska Department of Transportation holds first-ever Transportation Summit focused on securing additional federal funding to support enhanced mobility and economic growth

Aug. 30, 2023 (Lincoln, Neb.) – On August 23, more than 225 state, federal, and local government officials gathered in Kearney for the state’s first-ever Transportation Summit. The event was hosted by the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and focused on discretionary grant opportunities made available through the Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021.

The IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, serves as guidance for the distribution of federal formula and discretionary funding through 2026. It brought changes to the distribution of federal funding, creating opportunities for state Departments of Transportation and Local Public Agencies (LPAs) to gain access to additional federal funding. These new discretionary grant opportunities bring updated processes and require deliberate approaches to how agencies develop projects.

NDOT partnered with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide an overview of the opportunities through the IIJA before diving into how to match transportation needs to grant programs, draft and submit grant applications, navigate federal funding requirements and execute grant agreements. The FHWA presented alongside the NDOT and provided information on technical assistance available to responsible charges and the process involved for direct recipient grants. The NDOT was open with the LPAs in attendance about the challenges of competing for and executing projects with federal discretionary funds but pointed to the level of opportunity and their commitment to partnerships to assist Nebraska communities with the administration of projects.

“The opportunity is there, and we need do everything we can to deliver for our communities,” said NDOT Director Vicki Kramer. “The Transportation Summit built off NDOT’s previous information-sharing efforts to deliberately identify the process of competing for and administering federal funds while focusing on best practices. I’m thankful to the LPAs who participated and our NDOT staff for coming together to discuss the resources needed to confidently compete for federal discretionary grants.”

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As part of the program, four Nebraska community leaders from the City of York, Lancaster County and Jefferson County participated in a panel discussion to share valuable, first-hand insights into the lessons learned when previously competing for federal discretionary funds. In 2022, York won a \$15.6 million IIJA “Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity” (RAISE) Grant to expand trails and build a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 80 (I-80).

"The Transportation Summit was a unique opportunity for community leaders across the state to connect with DOT leadership and learn about the wide range of funding opportunities available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, " Michael Helgerson, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) said. "This collaborative approach will help set communities up for success in pursuing federal funding opportunities for transportation projects."

NDOT's [Local Assistance Division](#) supports Nebraska's LPAs in maintaining transportation assets by overseeing federal and state funds on behalf of those agencies and providing required regulatory oversight of those funds in accordance with the FHWA and the State of Nebraska by coordinating with partners including members of NDOT, FHWA and stakeholders. This includes four main areas of focus: Liaison Services, Local Projects, Rail and Transit.

Information on the [Transportation Summit](#) can be found by visiting the NDOT website, including the agenda, information about presenters and a digital toolkit for LPAs to reference.

#NDOT#

Pictures from this event can be viewed here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjASb9D>

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20230830-Comm-Summit