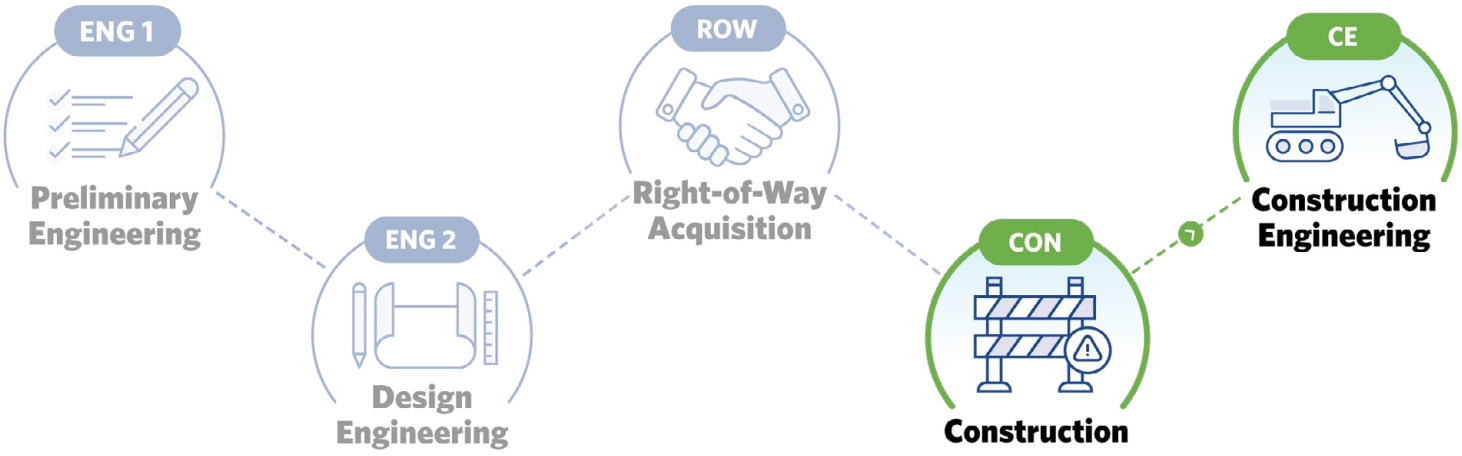
Navigating the federal process

Next steps for projects with federally funded Construction and Construction Engineering phases

Securing funding is only one of many steps when implementing a project. Now that your project has been awarded funding, you might be wondering about what's next. This document will guide you through the process 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 in order to use those funds for implementation. Now that your project has been awarded Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program, or Transportation Alternative Program Local (TAP-L) funds from CMAP for Construction, you must follow federal guidelines. By understanding these requirements and coordinating early in the process, sponsors can implement their projects on schedule and on budget. Not knowing these federal requirements and their requisite timing increases the risk that your project may be delayed or that the funding may be withdrawn all together.

If construction is the first phase your project is leveraging federal funding for, there are actions that need to be taken first to maintain eligibility. This document includes many of the actions that need to be taken before, during, and after using your federally awarded funds. While most of these steps are required, they are not exhaustive. Under certain circumstances, your project may be subject to additional guidelines. Please work with your project team to identify these circumstances early on in the process.



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Note: This information is current as of August 2025 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.

Program requirements for all projects

Before your project tackles the federal process, it must first fulfill requirements detailed under each program's active program management (APM) policies. There are also various deadlines outlined in the APM policies that project staff should be aware of to avoid delays. Lastly, no matter the phase being federally funded, all projects need to have an approved project program information form from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Quarterly status update (QSU)

Project updates are required quarterly as outlined in both CMAQ/TAP-L and STP-SF/STP-L APM policies. After a project has been awarded this funding, an initial quarterly status must be submitted to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) with estimated project milestone dates. When a milestone is reached, or there is a change in a milestone estimate, the next status update should reflect these dates. QSUs are required every March, June, September, and December until the project has been financially closed out. QSUs 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 can be found on the QSU instructions.

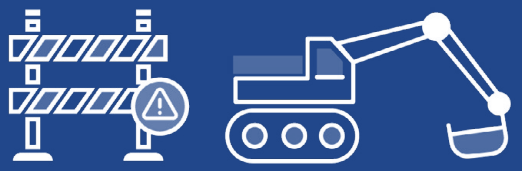
Project manager form

The project manager form accompanies your notice of award letter and designates a technical and financial manager for the project. The technical manager is the point of contact for ensuring implementation of the project, including the management of consultants. 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 for all projects that receive funds from CMAP.

Project programming information (PPI) form

The PPI form is the first step to initiate a project at IDOT District 1 and must be approved before initiating any funding agreements. The form must match the CMAP Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to be approved and for federal funds to be authorized. More information about the PPI form can be found in step 1 below.

Construction



1 Project programming information form

Prior to initiating Construction, a PPI form must be completed and approved. The form activates your project in the IDOT financial database. It summarizes a project's scope and funding, including phase allocations and local match requirements. The initial PPI form 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 form and any subsequent revisions.

The PPI form must match the CMAP TIP in order to be approved and for federal funds to be authorized. All PPI forms must be submitted and processed through the appropriate planning liaison (PL) or TIP programmer, who will then submit to IDOT. PPI forms submitted directly from the project sponsor or their consultants will not be accepted by IDOT.

Any time a project change that impacts information detailed on the PPI form is made, the project sponsor needs to update and resubmit the PPI to their PL or TIP programmer for transmittal to IDOT. Always use the latest 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: After award notice and prior to the start of the year in which federal funds are programmed
Timeline for approval: Approximately two weeks
Final deliverable: Approved copy from IDOT

2 Funding and engineering agreements

Following the PPI form approval by IDOT, project sponsors should prepare the appropriate funding agreements using the Bureau of Local Roads (BLR) 5310 form and send it to their PL for review and final submittal to IDOT. Funding agreements are project subaward agreements between the state DOT and the LPA that makes the funding available. For Construction and Construction Engineering phases, use form BLR 05310C. Like the PPI form, funding 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. 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 plans, specifications, and estimates (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 done 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 needed Phase 1 addenda or design exception approvals, environmental survey requests, PS&E response forms, or expired clearance updates

Review of new pre-final plans 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

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, Illinois Commerce Commission orders, or intergovernmental agreements executed. Phase 1 Design Approval with valid environmental clearances is also required.

Right-of-way (ROW) certification

All ROW certifications must be secured before the project is authorized by the Federal Highway Administration and advertised for a letting. For the ROW to be clear, it must be secured, paid for, and vacated. Prior to each letting, the district must submit a ROW certification letter to the Central BLRS for each project involving ROW at least two days before authorization.

Award/execution of contracts

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

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Ongoing construction

Construction Engineering, or Engineering 3, is processed using IDOT form 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 must be publicly advertised for bidding through IDOT's Transportation Bulletin. Contractors must be prequalified to be authorized to bid. However, sub-contractors such as material suppliers do not have to be preauthorized. The lowest responsible qualified bidder that fulfills all project requirements will be awarded and given a contract. 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 with IDOT, the LPA must submit IDOT 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 an explanation of the change. As invoices are paid out, the LPA will be reimbursed by the state for the federal share of construction work through 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 project documentation must be kept on file by the LPA for three years after the final voucher payment is paid out.



Questions?
Transportation@cmap.illinois.gov

Visit cmap.illinois.gov for more information

If you have questions on implementing your project, contact your council's PL, whose contact information can be found at cmap.is/CouncilofMayors.