

1 Background

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Community of Practice (CoP) facilitates the exchange of insights, experiences, and noteworthy practices among SS4A grant recipients to identify context-sensitive solutions and enhance safety-related outcomes. To achieve that goal, SS4A hosts regular peer exchange meetings for grant recipients to share information with one another. The peer exchange meetings are designed to facilitate mutual learning and collaborative problem solving.

The September 2025 peer exchange meeting focused on engagement strategies for various stakeholder groups. Below is a summary of key takeaways from the meeting.

2 Main Takeaways from Breakout Room Sessions

Engaging with community organizations, State Departments of Transportation (DOT), and the general public helps build trust and align safety priorities. It also improves the likelihood that roadway safety solutions reflect real community needs. Strong stakeholder collaboration can unlock potential funding and technical expertise and create shared ownership of safety outcomes, making initiatives more sustainable and impactful.

Below are high-level takeaways that SS4A grant recipients can use when engaging with different stakeholder groups.

Community-based Organizations

- **Collaborate Early and Often:** Engage with community organizations from the start, as they have an in-depth understanding of their target audience and can help you get to know them and amplify your impact.
- **Explore Creative Engagement Opportunities [Within the Confines of your Grant Agreement]:** Try unique engagement strategies, such as tabling at community-based events, like a 5k race, film screening, music festival, etc.
- **Strengthen Trust:** Identify gaps in community relations and collaborate with organizations that can help bridge them.
- **Understand Lived Experience:** Invest time in understanding daily realities to design solutions that reflect community priorities. This might include gaining knowledge through a ride-along with a transit operator, getting a new perspective from tourists, or even taking a walk around your project area.
- **Define Success:** Define clear metrics for success so engagement efforts can lead to measurable outcomes.
- **Bring Organizations Together:** Organize meetings that bring together multiple community-based organizations and community members to shape shared solutions. 'Meet people where they are' by using a variety of times, communication methods, and dates (including weekends) to get the best variety of feedback.

General Public

- **Create Visual Materials:** Develop visually driven materials, such as postcards, maps of major roadways or street crossings, or handouts, that make it easy to share safety information. Examples of postcards and handouts can be found on page 15, 16, and 18 of the [Dedham, MA Local Road Safety Plan](#).
- **Collect Feedback:** Use surveys, polls, and open houses to learn community priorities, and pair in-person engagement with online options for broader reach.

- **Meet People Where They Are:** Engage with people in everyday spaces like schools, libraries, and food pantries, and provide printed materials for those without digital access.
- **Expand Your Circle:** Invest time and effort building new relationships to learn about different perspectives and needs.
- **Turn Feedback into Action:** Develop processes to prioritize feedback and create well-informed and efficient decision making.
- **Leverage Partnerships:** Work with local businesses and organizations to learn their priorities, gather community input, and share information and resources with the community.
- **Map what Matters:** Invite community members to review maps and provide feedback to pinpoint areas of concern in the community.
- **Measure Impact:** Track engagement metrics and adjust strategies as needed; define what success looks like for your community.
- **Expand Outreach:** Use multiple channels for engagement, such as social media, local news, and community spaces, to reach different audiences and maintain momentum. Do not get discouraged if one event or question does not receive much input; keep trying other methods.
- **Build Your Team:** Hire consultants (if included in your grant agreement) or recruit volunteers to strengthen community engagement efforts.

State DOT

- **Align Strategies:** Learn what initiatives your State DOT is undertaking to address roadway safety and identify areas of collaboration, whether that's facilitating engagement strategies with the public or coordinating efforts on State-owned roadways.
- **Explore Funding Partnerships:** Leverage your State and local partner relationships to identify potential funding opportunities for future projects. Developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the State DOT can help formalize such a partnership.
- **Consider a Possible Subrecipient Role:** If appropriate for your project, consider coordinating with your State DOT to serve as a subrecipient for portions of your SS4A grant funding. This can help enhance safety efforts on shared roadways.
- **Tell a Compelling Safety Story:** Frame your roadway safety story as an opportunity to achieve shared goals, turning local challenges into potential statewide wins that advance both community well-being and State priorities.
- **Discuss Crash Data:** Provide your State DOT with local crash data to demonstrate the severity of the roadway safety issue in the community and encourage coordination to address immediate areas of need.
- **Connect with Local Partners:** Coordinate with stakeholders in the community to align priorities and communicate your local roadway safety issues to your State DOT.