

Municipal Resources

ARLE Grants: Turning Transportation Safety Needs into Funded Projects

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Safety projects like traffic calming are eligible for ARLE funding. Photo: PennDOT Municipal Resources



Objective

To inform and guide Pennsylvania municipalities in identifying, developing, and securing Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) funding for transportation safety projects by explaining program eligibility, application strategies, funding opportunities, and best practices for creating competitive, safety-focused grant applications.

Municipalities across Pennsylvania face increasing demands to improve transportation safety while dealing with limited local budgets and increasing costs to maintain existing infrastructure. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) Funding Program continues to be a valuable funding source available to local governments seeking to improve roadway safety, modernize infrastructure, and enhance mobility.

While Automated Red Light Enforcement may improve safety at signalized intersections in the communities where the technology is deployed, its impact extends far beyond those locations. Revenue generated from red light enforcement violations is reinvested into transportation safety projects throughout Pennsylvania. In recent years, funding available through the program has continued to grow, and additional revenue generated through Automated Speed Enforcement programs is helping support even more safety improvements across the Commonwealth.

The program's impact is substantial. During the 2025 funding cycle, PennDOT awarded approximately \$27 Million to 51 transportation safety projects statewide. As automated enforcement programs continue to expand, ARLE grants are expected to remain a significant source of transportation funding for years to come.

Understanding ARLE's Purpose

At its core, ARLE is a transportation safety program. PennDOT evaluates applications based on factors including safety benefits, mobility improvements, congestion reduction, cost effectiveness, local and regional impact, project readiness, and overall public benefit.

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School projects like establishing school zones are eligible for ARLE funding. Photo: PennDOT Municipal Resources

While many municipalities associate ARLE solely with traffic signal improvements, the program supports a wide variety of transportation safety initiatives, including:

- Traffic signal modernization and upgrades
- Pedestrian safety improvements
- ADA accessibility enhancements
- Corridor and intersection safety improvements
- School area safety projects
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies
- Traffic calming measures
- Multimodal transportation improvements
- Planning and engineering studies that lead to implementable safety projects
- Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) recommended projects

One of ARLE's greatest strengths is its flexibility. Eligible funding may be applied not only towards construction but also for preliminary studies, engineering design, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, inspection services, temporary traffic control, and other project-related costs necessary to bring a safety improvement from concept through construction. Conversely, projects primarily driven by private development obligations, routine maintenance activities, decorative streetscape improvements, or major highway expansion projects such as new roadways, interchanges, and bridges are generally not eligible for ARLE grant funding.

ARLE and Green Light-Go: Understanding the Relationship

One of the most common misconceptions among municipalities is that a project should be submitted to only one PennDOT funding program. In practice, ARLE and Green Light-Go (GLG) often work hand in hand. While ARLE focuses primarily on safety, mobility, and congestion reduction, Green Light-Go is generally aimed at traffic signal modernization, operations, coordination, and technology improvements.

Because the programs are administered by many of the same PennDOT traffic and transportation professionals

and are typically offered within months of one another, municipalities may receive feedback that a project may be better suited for a different funding source. Municipal officials should not view this feedback as a rejection. Rather, it provides valuable insight into how PennDOT evaluates projects and can significantly strengthen future submissions. Municipalities that incorporate reviewer comments into subsequent applications often develop stronger projects and become more competitive over time. Simply put, there is value in participating in the application process, receiving feedback, and refining project concepts for future funding opportunities.

Preparation Begins Long Before the Application Deadline

Although ARLE applications are typically due on June 30 each year, successful applications often begin planning months in advance.

Recognizing the importance of project development in delivering effective solutions in a timely manner, PennDOT introduced a pre-application scoping process beginning with the 2025 funding cycle. Applicants are now required to submit a project scoping form in advance of the final application deadline to allow for early feedback, identify potential concerns, and help applicants better define project scope and costs before preparing a full application submission.

(03/26)

Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation
www.pa.gov/pennidot

ARLE FUNDING PROGRAM PRE-APPLICATION SCOPING FORM

A - PROJECT OVERVIEW

COUNTY	PRIMARY MUNICIPALITY	DISTRICT
Adams	Abbotstown Borough	08
PROJECT NAME		
PROJECT TYPE (CHECK ONE)		
☐ Access Management ☐ Advanced Technology and ITS ☐ Alignment ☐ Bicyclists ☐ Delineation ☐ Highway Lighting ☐ Intersection Geometry ☐ On-Street Parking ☐ Pedestrians ☐ Railroad Grade Crossings ☐ Roadside ☐ Roadway ☐ Shoulder Treatments ☐ Signs ☐ Speed Management ☐ Intersection Traffic Control ☐ Traffic Signal Modernization ☐ Traffic Signal Adaptive System ☐ Traffic Signal Battery Backup Upgrade ☐ Traffic Signal Detection Upgrade ☐ Emergency Preemption System ☐ LED Upgrade (Signals or Flash Signs) ☐ Isolated Signal(s) ☐ Signal System Installation		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (INCLUDE NARRATIVE TO DESCRIBE THE PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK)		
PROJECT JUSTIFICATION (BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHY THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED AND THE EXPECTED BENEFITS)		
POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT'S (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT'S UPON PROJECT COMPLETION)		
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (DESCRIBE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT HELPS TO JUSTIFY THE PROJECT)		

B - CRASH MODIFICATION FACTOR

Purpose: The crash modification factor (CMF) identifies the anticipated safety benefits of the proposed project. For example, a CMF of 0.875 indicates a countermeasure is expected to reduce the indicated type of crashes by 12.5%. Projects with a lower CMF (higher crash reduction) will score more points in the safety evaluation for the ARLE Funding Program. The CMF Clearinghouse website (<http://www.cmfclearinghouse.org/>) contains thousands of studies on safety benefits of various types of projects. Use the CMF Clearinghouse website to identify the countermeasure which is most closely aligned with your proposed project by entering search terms, and enter the information for the most relevant study below.

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Municipalities considering projects such as traffic signal upgrades, pedestrian improvements, auxiliary turn lanes, medians, curb extensions, communications infrastructure, emergency preemption systems, battery backup installations, or corridor-wide safety improvements should begin evaluating project costs well before the application period opens.

Successful applications include realistic estimates for engineering, right-of-way acquisition, utility impacts, construction, inspection, and project administration costs. The more complete the planning effort, the stronger the resulting application. For example, if the benefits of signal upgrades have already been verified through analysis, or safety improvements have been identified through an LTAP Technical Assistance request, and the scope of the project is well defined with project costs defined prior to the application submission, reviewers will look more favorably at the application.

Build a Strong Project Narrative Focused on Safety

The strongest ARLE applications tell a story. One of the most important lessons municipalities have learned is that successful ARLE applications focus on safety outcomes rather than simply requesting equipment.

Rather than focusing solely on equipment or construction, successful applications explain:

- The transportation problem being addressed.
- Existing crash history or documented safety concerns.
- Impacts on motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and emergency responders.
- Expected safety improvements and operational benefits.
- How the project aligns with broader community safety goals.
- Why the project represents a cost-effective investment in public safety.

Municipalities should utilize crash data, traffic studies, speed concerns, pedestrian activity, school-related issues, and emergency response considerations whenever possible to support their applications. For example, emergency vehicle preemption systems should

not be presented solely as operational enhancements. Instead, municipalities should explain how reducing emergency response times supports the safe system approach, improves incident response, and helps emergency personnel respond to life-threatening situations quicker.

Projects that demonstrate clear, measurable benefits to public safety consistently perform better during the review process. The project itself may remain unchanged, but the way it is connected to measurable safety outcomes can significantly influence how reviewers evaluate the request.

Think Strategically About Project Size

ARLE funding remains highly competitive, and available funding dollars must support projects across the Commonwealth.

While larger projects are occasionally funded, many successful municipal awards involve targeted, relatively low-cost safety improvements. Numerous awarded projects fall below \$300,000, while larger corridor improvements and signal modernization initiatives are funded when supported by strong safety justifications.

Municipalities may wish to consider bundling several related safety improvements into a single application rather than pursuing one large-scale project. Combining multiple intersections, pedestrian crossings, school zones, or safety locations into a coordinated package can often create a stronger overall safety narrative while maintaining a manageable project scope.

Consider Multi-Municipal Opportunities

Transportation challenges rarely stop at municipal boundaries. PennDOT encourages multi-municipal applications because many safety and operational concerns occur along shared corridors that serve multiple communities. Collaborative projects can improve regional mobility, strengthen safety benefits, and demonstrate broader public impact.

Municipal officials should consider opportunities to partner with neighboring communities when addressing corridor-wide safety concerns, coordinated signal systems, or regional transportation improvements.

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Local Match Is Not Required— But It Can Help

Unlike many transportation funding programs, ARLE does not require a local funding match. Municipalities may request funding for all eligible project costs.

However, municipalities should not overlook the advantages of contributing local funds when feasible. PennDOT scoring criteria generally favor projects that leverage multiple funding sources and demonstrate local commitment. ARLE funding can often be combined with local contributions or other transportation funding programs to deliver larger safety improvements.

A local contribution demonstrates investment in the project's success and can strengthen an application's competitiveness. Some municipalities have successfully leveraged developer contributions, transportation impact fees, private partnerships, or other local funding sources to provide matching funds without significantly impacting local budgets.

Start Early and Learn from Every Application

Perhaps the most valuable advice for municipalities is to begin planning now.

Municipalities should also view every application cycle as an opportunity to learn. Even when a project is

not selected, reviewer feedback can provide valuable guidance that strengthens future submissions.

Because many of the same PennDOT professionals review applications across multiple funding programs, municipalities that consistently develop thoughtful, safety-focused projects often build stronger applications and improve their competitiveness over time.

Looking Ahead

With each annual ARLE funding cycle, municipalities have an opportunity to advance projects that improve safety, mobility, accessibility, and quality of life within their communities.

The most successful applications are not necessarily those requesting the most funding. They are the projects that clearly demonstrate how targeted investments will make Pennsylvania's roads safer for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and emergency responders alike.

With the annual application cycle closing each June, it's always a great time for municipalities to begin identifying transportation safety needs, developing project concepts, and coordinating with PennDOT and their professional consultants. The groundwork established today will position communities for success in future funding cycles and help deliver meaningful safety improvements for years to come.

Additional Resources

PennDOT's ARLE Program Guidelines, https://docs.penndot.pa.gov/Public/Bureaus/BOO/ARLE/ARLE_Info.pdf

Chapter 233 of Title 67 of the Pennsylvania Code, <https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/067/chapter233/chap233toc.html&d=reduce>

PennDOT's Traffic Signal Portal, www.penndot.pa.gov/signals

ARLE Funding Program Selection Guide

The PennDOT ARLE Program Guidelines include a section titled Selection Criteria. Review this section before beginning project development, as it outlines key evaluation criteria and provides guidance on the information that should be incorporated into the project's scope. Careful consideration of the Selection Criteria will help ensure that the application addresses the most important elements to the review process.

