

North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) Non-Infrastructure Transportation Alternatives Program Executive Summary

Background

The Jackson County Department of Public Health has housed the Active Routes to School (ARTS) program, which is under the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program for the past 5 years. ARTS has worked to promote walking/biking programs before and during school hours in eight counties in our region. As a result of this program, Jackson, Haywood, and Swain Counties all have sustainable (in policy or procedure) at-school walking programs for the public school students. The ARTS grant will be ending May 31, 2019. This new SRTS grant could take pedestrian safety to the next level in our community and contribute to the goals in our county's Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Funding

Funding from this new grant is intended to support programs and activities that focus on education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation elements of a SRTS initiative. This is a cost reimbursement program, with 80% federally funded (up to \$100,000 per year for 3 years) and a required 20% local match. If this SRTS grant were awarded to Jackson County it would require a new position to be created. Salary and fringe are covered in allowable costs.

Program Purpose

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safe and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age
- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools
- Must benefit Kindergarten-8th grade children

Program Proposal

For Education and Encouragement– continue to teach children and parents about pedestrian/traffic safety through community Bike Rodeo and Walk to School Day

For Enforcement – Intergenerational partnership between K-8 students and senior citizens. This could be carried out by training volunteer adults to act as crossing guards, initiating "walk with a cop," etc.

For Evaluation – Evaluate current conditions and behaviors, conduct walkability and bikeability checklists, and work with DOT for walkability assessment to lead to infrastructure improvement.

Our request is to approve moving forward with the development of a grant proposal with Jackson County acting as lead agency along with three other counties served by the grant. The expectation is that Jackson County could provide an in-kind match with each of the three counties contributing actual dollar match to meet the requirement of a 20% match. The ultimate goal would be for Jackson County citizens and visitors to benefit from a walkability assessment and for pedestrian safety to be increased.