

# Traffic Calming Grants for Radar Speed Signs: Funding Sources & Success Stories

Speeding drivers is one of the primary concerns facing communities and municipalities around the country. With declining traffic safety stats, civic leaders may consider a number of solutions, including vertical, horizontal and digital technologies.

While each of these can be both attractive and effective, vertical and horizontal options require construction, which is costly and disruptive. Only radar speed signs as a digital technology offer a scalable option that works within all budgets. These driver feedback signs are scientifically proven to be effective and can be installed quickly and used immediately. And because drivers, bicyclists, public transit and law enforcement like them, communities across the U.S. are using grant funds to add them to their overall traffic calming plan.

Communities hoping to implement radar speed signs can run into challenges related to funding. When local municipal budgets can't cover the cost, even the most well-planned efforts will face delays or cancellation. However, there are alternative funding sources that can close this gap, for example: federal and state government grants and corporate benevolent funds, including monies from nonprofit organizations.

## FUNDING SOURCES

### FEDERAL FUNDING

In December 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law. This law provides long-term federal funding for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. Consistent with other federal transportation funds, a significant portion of these funds are directed to and administered by [each state's department of transportation](#). As such, these state DOTs should be the first point of contact regarding federal funds.

Below are three federal funding options that have been continuously funded and reauthorized year after year.

#### 1. Community Highway Safety Grant Program / Section 402 Grants

The [Section 402 program](#) through the FAST Act provides grants to states to improve driver behavior and reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle-related crashes. It is jointly administered by the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) and

the [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) at the federal level and by the [State Highway Safety Offices](#) (SHSO) at the state level. Among other purposes, funds can be spent in accordance with national guidelines for programs to [reduce speeding](#) and [improve pedestrian and bicycle safety](#).

- Both of these objectives can be accomplished with driver feedback signs from Radarsign.

To qualify for funding, states must submit an annual [Highway Safety Plan](#) (HSP) that must be data-driven and must set quantifiable, annual performance targets for 15 performance measures.

- *Radarsign StreetSmart* traffic data reporting software can provide the quantifiable data required.
- Driver feedback signs from Radarsign are not only effective at slowing speeding drivers and capturing data about them, they are also well received by the community. A National Highway Transportation Safety Administration study regarding [consumer attitudes toward speeding and traffic calming](#) found that these electronic feedback signs are the most preferred speeding countermeasure with 89 percent of drivers giving them the highest approval rating of all speeding countermeasures.

## 2. Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program

The TIGER grant program, which is very competitive, supports multimodal and multijurisdictional projects that are difficult to fund through traditional federal programs. Funds can be used for programs to reduce injuries and deaths resulting from motor vehicles being driven in excess of posted speed limits.

- Driver feedback signs from Radarsign are scientifically proven to reduce speeds, which also reduces injuries and deaths associated with speeding.
- **Apply for TIGER grants here:** <https://www.transportation.gov/tiger/apply>

## 3. Additional federal grant and funding opportunities may be available through these federal agencies:

- a. **Department of Transportation** (DOT) intermittently offers project-specific funding.
  - **Find more DOT grants here:** <http://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?agencyCode%3DDOT>
- b. **Department of Agriculture** (USDA) offers Rural Development Grant Funds to communities meeting specific population and/or population density criteria. These monies can provide funding to improve roadways and community safety.
  - **Find USDA grants here:** <http://www.grants.gov/search-grants.html?agencyCode%3DUSDA>

## STATE & COUNTY FUNDING

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There are a variety of **state and county funding** options available, often as part of a larger project. Many of these are associated with state DOT agencies. Separately, the [Governors Highway Safety Association](#) (GHSA) provides an excellent clickable listing of all state highway safety offices. Each office provides an online overview of the projects and funding sources with which it associates. To find out how your traffic calming project can fit into these, contact your state coordinator.

- **Find your state DOT agency here:**  
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/webstate.cfm>
  
- **Find your State Highway Safety Office here:**  
<http://www.ghsa.org/about/shsos>

**State-specific grants vary from state to state.** However, the transportation grant programs available in Massachusetts are exceptionally well organized and can provide some insights into programs that may be available in other states. **Review Massachusetts' programs here:**

- [Complete Streets Program](#) - Complete Streets is a voluntary policy (not federal legislation) that can be adopted by state and local governments. The policy encourages a focus on infrastructure and land use (new developments or reconstruction of old ones) to incorporate accommodations for walking, cycling and mass transit. While fewer than 20 states have adopted Complete Streets policies, many communities have voluntarily embraced the goals. In Massachusetts, Complete Streets funds contribute “toward the safety, health, economic viability and quality of life in a community by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments. Providing safer, more accessible and comfortable means of travel between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations helps promote more livable communities.” Radar speed signs support these goals.
  
- Find additional information about Massachusetts' funding considerations here:  
<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/planning/Main/PlanningProcess/FundingConsiderations.aspx>

## CORPORATE BENEVOLENT FUNDS & FUNDING FROM NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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Historically, MUTCD compliance prevented the addition of any promotional signage on traffic signs, including radar speed signs. However, recently community leaders facing traffic calming problems and limited budgets have been looking at corporate sponsorships for funding. With these arrangements, a company purchases a radar speed sign and the city or county agrees to install and maintain it. A simple acknowledgement plaque is used to identify the sponsor. It is a creative funding option for local traffic calming when there are no state or federal roadways involved.

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BID) FUNDING

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BIDs are defined areas where businesses are required to pay an additional tax to fund development for improvement projects within the district's boundaries. BIDs may go by other names: **business improvement area (BIA)**, **business revitalization zone (BRZ)**, **community improvement district (CID)**, **special services area (SSA)** or **special improvement district (SID)**.

Funds are used to augment municipal government services to market the area for new business investment. This includes street development and improvements for pedestrian areas. Your local traffic problem may already be on the radar of a BID in your area, but a simple phone call can verify whether the project falls within its purview.

Finding a local BID requires a simple Google search or may be listed under a state-specific BID organization. **Review examples of BIDs here:**

- **Portland Clean and Safe** - <http://cleanandsafepdx.com/about/about-the-district.html>
- **New York City Business Improvement Districts Organization** - <http://nycbids.org/>
- **North Fulton Community Improvement District** - <http://northfultoncid.com/>

## INNOVATIVE STRATEGY: USING RADAR SPEED SIGNS TO SECURE FUTURE GRANTS

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*As with all grant applications, a need must be documented with data that corroborates that need. Radarsign StreetSmart software helps secure grants in Waveland, Mississippi, by capturing data about speeding drivers.*

After a young woman in Waveland, Mississippi, was killed by a hit-and-run driver in an area with no sidewalks, the city launched a larger effort to make streets safer. The plan, which includes the installation of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, is dependant on grant funding. Documenting the need for those funds—with data from driver speeds—was a driving factor behind the city's purchase of a TC-400 from Radarsign.

According to Lt. Mac Cowand, head of patrol at the Waveland Police Department, the sign was first used in stealth mode to gather data. Then the sign was turned “on” to slow speeding drivers. “The city plans to use the traffic data to secure grants for sidewalks and other street improvements,” said Cowand. “It has been very helpful with gathering traffic information for city operations to develop grant proposals for sidewalks and other improvements.”

# PROFILES OF SUCCESS

Here are some profiles of model communities that have successfully used grants and driver feedback signs to make their communities safer.

## STATE GRANT

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*Funds from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services were granted to the Town of North Hempstead to purchase radar speed signs.*

In 2016, North Hempstead worked with other nearby villages to organize a joint application to secure a \$100,000 state grant to purchase 29 radar speed signs from Radarsign. The grant application solicited funding for signs that could be shared and rotated amongst 16 villages and unincorporated parts of North Hempstead.

State Sen. Jack Martins (R-Old Westbury), secured the grant after he “heard from a number of communities” about speeding. “We went to the town and told them about our concerns and asked if they would coordinate for the entire town,” Martins said.

The grant required the town to purchase traffic calming devices to serve the group of villages. Twenty-nine radar speed signs from Radarsign were purchased: 24 are portable and five can be permanently secured to poles or other structures. These signs will be shared amongst 16 villages and unincorporated parts of North Hempstead including: East Hills, East Williston, Flower Hill, Great Neck, Great Neck Plaza, Lake Success, Manorhaven, Mineola, New Hyde Park, Port Washington North, Roslyn, Roslyn Estates, Roslyn Harbor, Saddle Rock, Westbury, and Williston Park.

“In a perfect world, it would be nice to have a police officer on every corner and enforcement the way that we’d like to see it happen,” said City Supervisor Judi Bosworth. “But these speed signs really serve as a wonderful deterrent. So it’s our hope that these signs, placed in the appropriate places where they could do the most good, will remind our drivers to slow down.” Bosworth’s assessment reflects that of a growing number of municipal leaders. The presence of a uniformed police officer is the most desired traffic calming solution, but tight budgets and personnel shortages often prohibit that scenario. Increasingly, [law enforcement and city officials](#) are turning to driver feedback signs to fill the gap when resources are limited.

The long-term, documented success of radar speed signs is compelling. “These signs have been so successful in other areas, and we’re hoping that the Town of North Hempstead will see that success as well,” Bosworth said. In [one study](#), the reduction in speeding drivers had consistently dropped by more than 25% two years after the installation of a radar sign. In a [Bellevue, Washington, study](#), the radar signs had not lost effectiveness even six to eight years after installation. This research gives decision-makers confidence that they can expect long-term benefits from their investment.

North Hempstead saw such great success with the first 29 signs that the county purchased 18 more in 2017.



## COUNTY GRANT

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*Humboldt County in California secured funding through a special tax measure to support safety initiatives for law enforcement officers.*

After Humboldt County was denied federal and state funding for the purchase of some much needed radar speed signs, county leaders turned to a new option. The county had implemented a special tax measure to fund safety initiatives for law enforcement officers. According to Art Reeve, deputy public works director of the County of Humboldt, “Controlling driver speeds helps ensure the safety of our officers. Therefore, radar speed signs qualified for the grant.”

The county was able to secure \$60,000 to purchase 20 signs.

## CORPORATE AND BENEVOLENT FUNDING AND NONPROFIT FUNDING

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*Funds from AAA Minnesota/Iowa were granted to La Crescent Police Department.*

When La Crescent, Minnesota—a small town of 4,830 located south of Minneapolis along the Mississippi River—faced a speeding problem, Police Chief Doug Stavenau sought a solution that was affordable and qualified for grant funds. He found that in the TC-600 from Radarsign, which qualified for grant funding from AAA of Minnesota/Iowa.

Radar speed signs from Radarsign can replicate vital traffic calming efforts for law enforcement agencies which make them especially attractive solutions for smaller towns on tighter budgets. A typical portable radar sign sold to law enforcement agencies costs about \$3,300, or \$275/month over a 12-month time period. The median salary for a police officer in the U.S. is \$48,815/year or \$4,068/month. This means that one of these signs—which typically operates 24/7, 365 days a year—would be monitoring and assisting in driver speed reductions for 8,760 hours each year, non-stop. One sign would see a COMPLETE return on investment in just 26 days ( $\$3,300/\$4,068 = 81.1\% \times 31 \text{ days} = 25.2 \text{ days}$ ).

With a complete return on investment in less than four weeks, the project, which required some municipal funding, received unanimous support from the city council.

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*One Oklahoma company partnered with the county to address speeding concerns in their community.*

In Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Holliday Sand and Gravel shares 129th East Avenue with residential neighborhoods, horse stables and bus stops. After fielding complaints that their gravel trucks were speeding, the sand and rock supply company partnered with the county to resolve residents’ safety concerns. With a focus on corporate responsibility, Holliday Sand donated a Radarsign TC-600 to Tulsa County.



The county offered to install and maintain the driver feedback sign. In return, the county added a sign of acknowledgement to the bottom of the “Your Speed” faceplate that says: “Donated by Holliday Sand.”

The sign has generated a very positive response from both the community and the donor, who describes the improvements like this: “Really, everyone we talked to said the sign has had a positive impact on speeders, and they are so grateful for them.”



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## About Radarsign

In 2004, Atlanta-based Radarsign® established new industry standards for traffic calming solutions with the debut of the world’s first armored radar speed signs, which are vandal, weather and bullet-resistant. The industry’s most durable radar speed signs are also the most ecological and energy efficient. Engineered and manufactured in the USA, Radarsign products are MUTCD-compliant and utilize recycled aluminum, innovative LED reflector technology, minimal battery power and solar panels to deliver bright, easy-to-read feedback to drivers. Radarsign products are scientifically proven to reduce drivers’ speeds and have been entrusted to provide safe and effective traffic-calming solutions for: municipalities, treasured national parks, schools, neighborhoods, military bases, and private and public development projects across the U.S., Canada and overseas. [www.Radarsign.com](http://www.Radarsign.com).