

Montana LTAP Progress Report

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Quarterly Progress Report

MDT Project No. 02443

SFY 2023 Q2

OCT 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022

Prepared for the

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

in cooperation with the

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

January 25, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This State Fiscal Year (SFY 2023) 2nd Quarter Report is submitted to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide details on the activities and project work of Montana LTAP in support of MDT Project No. 02443, Montana Local Technical Assistance Program, during the period October 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022.

Highlights of Montana LTAP's accomplishments during that period include the following:

- LTAP-MACRS District trainings were conducted in Billings, Conrad, Hamilton, Kalispell, and Boulder. These were well received, and the attendance was excellent. Feedback was very positive as well.
- LTAP hosted three monthly webinars
- Our instructor-led classes included the following:
 - 4 Flagger Certification classes
 - 5 MACRS District Meetings in-person trainings
 - 2 OSHA 10 classes,
 - 1 Traffic Control Technician classes
 - 1 Confined Space class
 - 1 First Aid certification class
 - 1 Winter Maintenance class

Reaching our audience in the months of October through December is always a challenge, due to customers taking time off for hunting, variability in weather and customer schedules that are disrupted by precipitation events. We had to reschedule a few trainings due to weather and roads.

Newsletter: LTAP produces a newsletter at least 2 times a year. We focus on including material that is relevant and timely for our newsletter. We solicit this information from our customers and use information shared by our partners. A draft newsletter is in progress, and we expect to distribute it in early spring. We generally distribute this via email, but we do print some copies to accommodate any customer requests for a printed LTAP newsletter.

This progress report further details these activities and is organized following the four LTAP focus areas:

1. Safety
2. Infrastructure Management
3. Workforce Development
4. Organizational Excellence

SAFETY

The Safety area of focus gets incorporated into many of our activities, technical assistance, and is a very common dedicated area of training focus. This includes Personal Safety classes, as well as roadway and operations/maintenance safety. Montana LTAP is promoting more attention on Safety area of focus through partnerships with the National Rural Road Safety Center at WTI, and through delivering relevant training and technical assistance. We also participate in FHWA Peer Exchanges regularly.

Activities: Q2 State Fiscal Year 2023

Proactive safety training initiatives for local governments are key objectives in this focus area. Our regular delivery of safety trainings given in-person reach our customers across the State and are intentionally geographically spread out. Focused delivery to the 5 MACRS Districts at least twice a year accommodates a broad reach while allowing regular interaction among multiple agencies at our trainings. Technology transfer is accomplished through direct outreach, relaying FHWA EDC initiatives, safety-related articles in LTAP’s quarterly newsletter, staff responses to phone and email inquiries, and on-site technical assistance. In the projected LTAP budget, 48 percent of funding is allocated to the Safety focus area. Table 1 shows the safety focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 1: Safety Area Budget Summary, Q2 SFY 2023

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	34,085.16	29,747.32	136,340.64	58,001.01
Prof. Services	300.00	-	1,200.00	-
Travel	600.00	1,004.76	2,400.00	1,004.76
Supplies/Comm.	477.60	114.06	1,910.40	114.06
Minor Equip	-	-	-	-
SubTotals	35,462.76	30,866.14	141,851.04	59,119.82
IDC's	10,017.24	8,772.67	40,068.96	16,729.23
Totals	\$45,480.00	\$39,638.81	\$181,920.00	\$75,849.06

Note: Not all travel expenses are charged to the Gas Tax, FHWA or MDT SPR accounts. Our internal revolving account helps offset our travel expenditures.

LTAP’s Reach: LTAP’s safety-related activities this quarter reached a total of 225 in-class participants.

Our center-directed Safety trainings and workshops included:

- LTAP Conducted 3 webinars this quarter. One webinar was focused on Safety: Winter Preparations. The webinar recordings can be accessed via the LTAP website link: <http://www.coe.montana.edu/ltapv2/resources/webinars/index.html>. Webinar attendance is not tracked and is not counted in our reach.

- LTAP Administers the State of Montana Flagger Certification program. In addition to the records keeping for MDT and other flagger trainers, LTAP conducted 4 in-person Flagger Certification classes this quarter. Topics include flagging duties and responsibilities, safety, uniformity, and liability issues.
- 5 MACRS District Training Meetings in Billings, Conrad, Hamilton, Kalispell, and Boulder reaching a total of 107 attendees. This training also covered Infrastructure Management as a focus area.
- 1 Traffic Control Technician classes (Safety and Workforce Development)
- 1 Confined Space Class
- 1 First Aid certification class
- 1 Winter Maintenance class (Infrastructure Management)

Challenges

- We continue to see issues with turnover within our local agencies and this means that we need to offer some more basic safety trainings in addition to what we have been taking out on the road to our customers. This change in needs is not reflected in our annual needs assessments, and we are adjusting to the call for basic PPE, equipment safety and excavation safety classes. While this is a little bit of a challenge, we are very good at adjusting to the needs of our local agencies (locals) and will accommodate as many requests as we can.
- Flagger Certification workshops are being both delivered and requested statewide. In general, refreshers are being scheduled as soon as we can fit them into the schedule. With Shawna Page providing the LTAP flagger trainings, at $\frac{3}{4}$ time (0.75 FTE) and a busy schedule of MACRS trainings that include both Shawna and Matt's participation that extend through the spring, scheduling these to fit our customers' scheduling needs can sometimes be challenging. We are glad to have the high level of interest. We are training new flagger trainers annually and hope they can relieve some of the pressure on our schedules.

Planned Activities (January through March 2023)

- We have invited 4 local agency representatives to participate in a FHWA Peer Exchange in New Orleans this April. We hope they can all commit and attend.
- We are currently scheduling courses and MACRS trainings well into the spring, and our calendars are even reflecting commitments into July. We continue to work to satisfy on-demand training and technical assist requests, as well as flagger and work zone safety classes.
- The 42nd Annual MACRS Conference will be the end of March 2023. We are deep into the planning stages and will have another fantastic conference agenda. LTAP leadership class will be scheduled the Monday prior to the conference, and we expect a large graduating class of Road Scholars again this year.

- We continue to promote the circulation of online training options outside of our own center, drawing attention to AASHTO TC3, ITE and NHI courses available to our customers. These continue to come online at an irregular interval. Information on these items will be included in our listserv emails and newsletters as appropriate and available.
- LTAP webinars focused primarily on safety will continue in SFY 2023 on a monthly schedule.

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

The Infrastructure Management area of focus gets included as a part of many of our classes, including our Gravel Roads/ Basics of Good Gravel class that are offered in regular MACRS trainings. It is also included in many other classes and meetings in whole or in part. Montana LTAP is promoting more attention on Infrastructure Management through partnerships with the Asphalt Institute, and through delivering relevant training and technical assistance.

Activities: Q2 State Fiscal Year 2023

In the projected LTAP budget, 18 percent of funding is allocated to the infrastructure management focus area. Table 2 shows the infrastructure management focus area budget and costs-to-date. Infrastructure Management activities this quarter reached a total of 107 in-class participants.

Table 2: Infrastructure Management Area Budget Summary, Q2 SFY 2023

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	12,781.94	11,155.25	51,127.74	21,750.38
Prof. Services	112.50	-	450.00	-
Travel	225.00	376.79	900.00	376.79
Supplies/Comm.	179.10	42.77	716.40	42.77
Minor Equipment	-	-	-	-
SubTotals	13,298.54	11,574.80	53,194.14	22,169.93
IDC's	3,756.47	3,289.75	15,025.86	6,273.46
Totals	\$17,055.00	\$14,864.55	\$68,220.00	\$28,443.40

Note: Not all travel expenses are charged to the Gas Tax, FHWA or MDT SPR accounts. Our internal revolving account helps offset our travel expenditures.

- Four Infrastructure Management related classes were conducted through the MACRS District meetings, in Billings, Conrad, Kalispell and Boulder this quarter. 107 classroom students were reached in these efforts. MACRS trainings included Gravel Roads Basics, Working in traffic – Safety in the Work Zone, equipment management and maintenance.
- LTAP Conducted 3 webinars this quarter. One webinar ad an Infrastructure Management focus: Stormwater Basics. The webinar recordings can be accessed via the LTAP website link:
<http://www.coe.montana.edu/ltapv2/resources/webinars/index.html>.
- Matt Ulberg conducted an on-site field review and technical assist for Prairie County Road department to look at and document their innovative shop processes and look over some roads with the County Road Supervisor. This was a great opportunity to also

document their innovative Cattle Guard Construction jig that they use for in-house manufacture of cattle guards.

- LTAP also provided technical assistance to the CSKT Tribal Roads Supervisor and a Private Road maintenance groups in Gallatin and Missoula County.
- LTAP conducted MACRS Fall trainings that included Infrastructure Management as a focus are throughout Montana in October.
- Outreach continues and technical assistance continues in Infrastructure Management throughout the year.

Challenges

- Due to the variety of customer needs. We try to offer something relevant to all those in attendance and remind them that someday it may be more relevant to them than it is today. Also, a customer's level of interest and actual need for training are sometimes unrelated.
- We continue to encourage good Inventory Management systems to be implemented, but these efforts get limited traction. The challenge is to continually offer best practices with options even when our customers are sometimes not very receptive.

Planned Activities (January thru March 2023)

- LTAP is in the planning process for the annual Asphalt Conference that will be held in Missoula, MT, and coordinated with the MDT District construction conference. Our partner in this effort is the Asphalt Institute, and MDT Materials Bureau. We look forward to another great conference.
- We are currently scheduling courses and MACRS trainings well into the spring, and our calendars are even reflecting commitments into July.
- We continue to promote the circulation of online training options outside of our own center, drawing attention to AASHTO TC3, ITE and NHI courses available to our customers. These continue to come online at an irregular interval. Information on these items will be included in our listserv emails and newsletters as appropriate and available.
- LTAP will continue to work toward offering more in-house Motor Grader Operation trainings. This includes instruction on unpaved roadway management.
- LTAP will also continue to offer more opportunities for classes on guardrail installation and management, cattleguard, sign inventory and pavement management.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our program delivery in Workforce Development continues to improve due largely to communicated needs of our customers. Also, it is supported through our funding partners, as Workforce Development is an area of focus in the current Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). We expect it to be a big part of our program focus as we move ahead the next few years. We continue to get positive feedback from our City, County and Tribal customers regarding our ability to help prepare the workforce to meet the regular challenges of owning, operating and maintaining their roadways. The large amount of worker turnover and worker shortages in the public sector throughout the State will continue to make this an important part of our program delivery.

Activities: Q2 State Fiscal Year 2023

In the projected LTAP budget, 22 percent of funding is allocated to the workforce development focus area. Table 3 shows the workforce development focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 3: Workforce Development Budget Summary, Q2 SFY 2023

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	15,622.37	13,634.19	62,489.46	26,583.79
Prof Services	137.50	-	550.00	-
Travel	275.00	460.52	1,100.00	460.52
Supplies/Comm.	218.90	52.28	875.60	52.28
Minor Equipment	-	-	-	-
SubTotals	16,253.77	14,146.98	65,015.06	27,096.59
IDC's	4,591.24	4,020.81	18,364.94	7,667.57
Totals	\$20,845.00	\$18,167.79	\$83,380.00	\$34,764.15

Note: Not all travel expenses are charged to the Gas Tax, FHWA or MDT SPR accounts. Our internal revolving account helps offset our travel expenditures.

LTAP Conducted 3 webinars this quarter. One webinar was Workforce Development related, and the topic was: CDL Regulation changes. The webinar recordings can be accessed via the LTAP website link: <http://www.coe.montana.edu/ltapv2/resources/webinars/index.html>.

Workforce Development activities this quarter reached a total of 141 in-class participants. This was accomplished partially through the 4 Workforce Development related workshops and classes were conducted through the MACRS District meetings, in Billings, Conrad, Kalispell and Boulder this quarter.

Our instructor-led Workforce Development efforts also included the following:

- 4 Flagger Certification classes in Butte, Kalispell, Lewistown and Shelby
- 1 Confined Space training in Livingston

- 1 Traffic Control Technician class for the City of Missoula
- 1 Forklift training for the City of Bozeman
- 1 Winter Maintenance class for Missoula County

Challenges

- Loss of experienced workforce to industry, retirement and other factors continues to cause our customers to have significant workforce deficits. LTAP helps by offering demand-responsive workforce development classes and assisting with distribution of vacancy announcements when asked.
- We continue to have more demand than ability to deliver program in the area of workforce development. We hope that the FHWA new strategic plan for LTAP helps us focus on this area and that there is some vision in that document to help us expand on this area of service.
- We would like to expand our offerings for equipment trainings in both frequency and geography (across the State of MT). Finding qualified instructors to help us increase our ability to reach our customers is a priority for us. We are currently reaching out to some new instructors for equipment classes that may be available through retirements from Montana Counties.

Planned Activities (January thru March 2023)

- The 42nd Annual MACRS Conference will be the end of March 2023. We are deep into the planning stages and will have another fantastic conference agenda. LTAP leadership class will be scheduled the Monday prior to the conference, and we expect a large graduating class of Road Scholars again this year.
- We are working with Miles City Community College to get some more Workforce Development and CDL-related and equipment trainings hosted at MCCC.
- LTAP is in the planning process for the annual Asphalt Conference that will be held in Missoula, MT, and coordinated with the MDT District construction conference. Our partner in this effort is the Asphalt Institute, and MDT Materials Bureau. We look forward to another great conference.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

To provide the best service possible to constituents, LTAP personnel seek and attend training and other professional development opportunities to improve their outreach capabilities. Activity in NLTAPA, APWA, NACE, and other organizations are supported and encouraged by FHWA CLAS and our partners. Organizational excellence addresses professional development and leadership training for LTAP personnel, as well as our partnering efforts with sponsoring agencies, professional support of our staff through activity in Nationally significant organizations and efforts, and support of our customers and partners.

Activities: Q2 State Fiscal Year 2023

In the projected LTAP budget, 22 percent of funding is allocated to the organizational excellence focus area. Table 4 shows the organizational excellence focus area budget and costs-to-date.

Table 4: Organizational Excellence Budget Summary, Q2 SFY 2023

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	8,521.29	7,436.83	34,085.16	14,500.25
Prof. Services	75.00	-	300.00	-
Travel	150.00	251.19	600.00	251.19
Supplies/Comm.	119.40	28.51	477.60	28.51
Minor Equipment	-	-	-	-
SubTotals	8,865.69	7,716.54	35,462.76	14,779.96
IDC's	2,504.31	2,193.17	10,017.24	4,182.31
Totals	\$11,370.00	\$9,909.70	\$45,480.00	\$18,962.26

Note: Not all travel expenses are charged to the Gas Tax, FHWA or MDT SPR accounts. Our internal revolving account helps offset our travel expenditures.

Activities in this area of focus this quarter included:

- Planning Support for MACRS Annual meeting
- Planning Support for Annual Asphalt Conference
- Participation with the MDT CHSP Roadway Departure & Intersection Crashes Emphasis Area meetings
- MDT Safety Research Technical Panel participation
- NLTAPA North Central Region Zoom meeting
- TRB Standing Committee on Workforce Development and Organizational Excellence (TRB Committee AJE15) - Review of materials for upcoming meetings
- TRB Standing Committee on Low Volume Roads (TRB Committee AKD30) Committee; virtual meeting and paper reviews for upcoming TRB meeting presentations
- Monthly NLTAPA Executive Committee (MS Teams) meetings

Evaluations are generally collected at the end of LTAP courses to determine whether participants are using workshop information in their jobs, their satisfaction in the material presented and in the instructors. Evaluations were collected in our many of the trainings. Numerical response to questions 5-9 are summarized in Table 5. These evaluations are confidential, and it is common for students stay after a class to discuss the training, their needs, and/or their appreciation for the class. As an aggregate, Table 5 shows that we are presenting the right materials in the right ways. A few comments in our evaluations have been very informative and help us to be in the mode of constant improvement.

A sample evaluation is included on pages 11-12.

Table 5: Q2 SFY 2023 Workshop Evaluation Summary

Workshop Evaluations	
Topics	Rating
ALL	4.7/5

Challenges

LTAP has made a lot of progress in late December on the STIC grant. We expect Q3 to be our most productive quarter with this effort.

Montana LTAP TRAINING EVALUATION

Course Subject or Title: _____

Date _____ Location: _____

1. Were the course objectives stated? Yes _____ No _____ Were they met? Yes _____ No _____
2. Did the course organization help you learn the material? Yes _____ No _____

Please Explain:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 0% | 50% | 75% | 100% |
| 3. How much of the program did you understand? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

4. What topics do you think should be:

Added or expanded upon? _____

Removed or eliminated? _____

5. How relevant was the course to your learning needs?

1. Irrelevant 2. Slightly relevant 3. Somewhat relevant 4. Very relevant 5. Extremely relevant

6. Did you learn something that will help you in your job?

1. None 2. A little bit 3. Some 4. Quite a bit 5. Lots!

7. The learning from the course that I am most likely to apply to my work is: (explain briefly)

8. How useful and appropriate are the following training methods to this course?

(Please circle response)

		Quantity				
Not enough = 1	Lecture	1	3	5	0	
Too much = 1	Video Presentation	1	3	5	0	
Needs improvement = 3	Exercises	1	3	5	0	
Just the right amount = 5	Role Play/Interaction	1	3	5	0	
Not applicable = 0	Group Discussions	1	3	5	0	

		Quality					
Poor = 1	Lecture	1	2	3	4	5	0
Below average = 2	Video Presentation	1	2	3	4	5	0
Average = 3	Role Play/Interaction	1	2	3	4	5	0
Above average = 4	Group Discussion	1	2	3	4	5	0
Excellent = 5	Exercises	1	2	3	4	5	0

Not applicable

Other (specify): _____

(OVER)

9. What was your overall reaction to this program? Circle ONE
Quite negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Quite positive

Please comment: _____

Name of Trainer (s) _____

Please Rate the trainer on the following areas.

	Poor = 1	Fair = 2	Average = 3	Good = 4	Excellent =5
• Knowledge of subject	1	2	3	4	5
• Organization and preparation	1	2	3	4	5
• Style and delivery	1	2	3	4	5
• Responsiveness to participants	1	2	3	4	5
• Creating appropriate learning climate	1	2	3	4	5
• Encouraging participation by all members of the class	1	2	3	4	5
• Provision of good feedback	1	2	3	4	5
• Clear presentation of learning points	1	2	3	4	5
• Enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
• Pace and amount of learning	1	2	3	4	5
• Handling questions and interruptions	1	2	3	4	5
• Maintaining interest	1	2	3	4	5

Name of Trainer (s) _____

Please Rate the trainer on the following areas.

	Poor = 1	Fair = 2	Average = 3	Good = 4	Excellent =5
• Knowledge of subject	1	2	3	4	5
• Organization and preparation	1	2	3	4	5
• Style and delivery	1	2	3	4	5
• Responsiveness to participants	1	2	3	4	5
• Creating appropriate learning climate	1	2	3	4	5
• Encouraging participation by all members of the class	1	2	3	4	5
• Provision of good feedback	1	2	3	4	5
• Clear presentation of learning points	1	2	3	4	5
• Enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
• Pace and amount of learning	1	2	3	4	5
• Handling questions and interruptions	1	2	3	4	5
• Maintaining interest	1	2	3	4	5

10. How could the instructor’s technique(s) be improved? _____

11. What other courses/training would you like to see offered? _____

Thank you for completing this form!

Planned Activities (January thru March 2023)

- Director Matt Ulberg continues activities to review TRB papers and participate with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Standing Committee on Low-Volume Roads — AKD30 (was AFB30). This TRB committee provides strategic planning for research and serves as a clearinghouse for information and resources pertaining to all aspects of low-volume roads including planning, design, construction, safety, maintenance operations, environmental, and social issues.
- We plan to participate in TRB committee meetings (Member of AKD 30 Low Volume Roads) and is providing several technical reviews for the upcoming annual TRB meeting in January 2023.
- LTAP plans to participate in the National Association of LTAPs and TTAPs (NLTAPA), as supported by FHWA and contained within our work plan. This includes:
 - Winter Meeting in conjunction with TRB in January 2023.
 - Quarterly North Central Regional meetings (virtual)
 - Annual North Central Regional meeting in person (Spring 2023)
 - Annual National Meeting (Summer 2023)
 - Participation in planning of the Annual NLTAPA meeting as needed
 - Quarterly Work Group meetings (virtual)
- LTAP will continue participation with MDT research committees and technical panels. Director Matt Ulberg is currently on the Technical Panel (TP) for the *Safety Evaluation of Sinusoidal Centerline Rumble Strips* research project.
- LTAP attends MDT Research Review Committee meetings when our schedule allows.

Financial Summary

Table 6: Year to Date Budget Summary, Q2 SFY 2023

Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	71,010.75	61,973.59	284,043.00	120,835.43
Prof. Services	625.00	-	2,500.00	-
Travel	1,250.00	2,093.25	5,000.00	2,093.25
Supplies/Comm.	995.00	237.62	3,980.00	237.62
Equipment	-	-	-	-
SubTotals	73,880.75	64,304.46	295,523.00	123,166.30
IDC's	20,869.25	18,276.40	83,477.00	34,852.57
Totals	\$94,750.00	\$82,580.86	\$379,000.00	\$158,018.87

Table 7: Budget Summary by Focus Area, Q2 SFY 2023

Focus Areas	Salary/Benefits	Prof. Services	Travel	Supplies/Comm	Minor Equip	Subtotal	IDC's	Total
Safety - 48%	29,747.32	-	1,004.76	114.06	-	30,866.14	8,772.67	39,638.81
Infrastructure Management - 18%	11,155.25	-	376.79	42.77	0.00	11,574.80	3,289.75	14,864.55
Workforce Development 22%	13,634.19	-	460.52	52.28	0.00	14,146.98	4,020.81	18,167.79
Organizational Excellence - 12%	7,436.83	0.00	251.19	28.51	-	7,716.54	2,193.17	9,909.70
TOTAL COSTS	\$61,973.59	\$0.00	\$2,093.25	\$237.62	\$0.00	\$64,304.46	\$18,276.40	\$82,580.86