

Montana Local Technical Assistance Program

Quarterly Progress Report

MDT Project No. 02443

SFY 2024 Q1

July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023

Prepared by:

Matthew Ulberg, PE

Director

Montana Local Technical Assistance Program

Western Transportation Institute

College of Engineering

Montana State University – Bozeman, MT

Prepared for the

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

in cooperation with the

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

November 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary/Major Accomplishments2
Training Overview3
Focus Area: Safety3
Focus Area: Infrastructure Management4
Focus Area: Workforce Development4
Focus Area: Organizational Excellence4
General Highlights5
Challenges5
Planned Activities (October-December 2023).....5
Financial Summary6

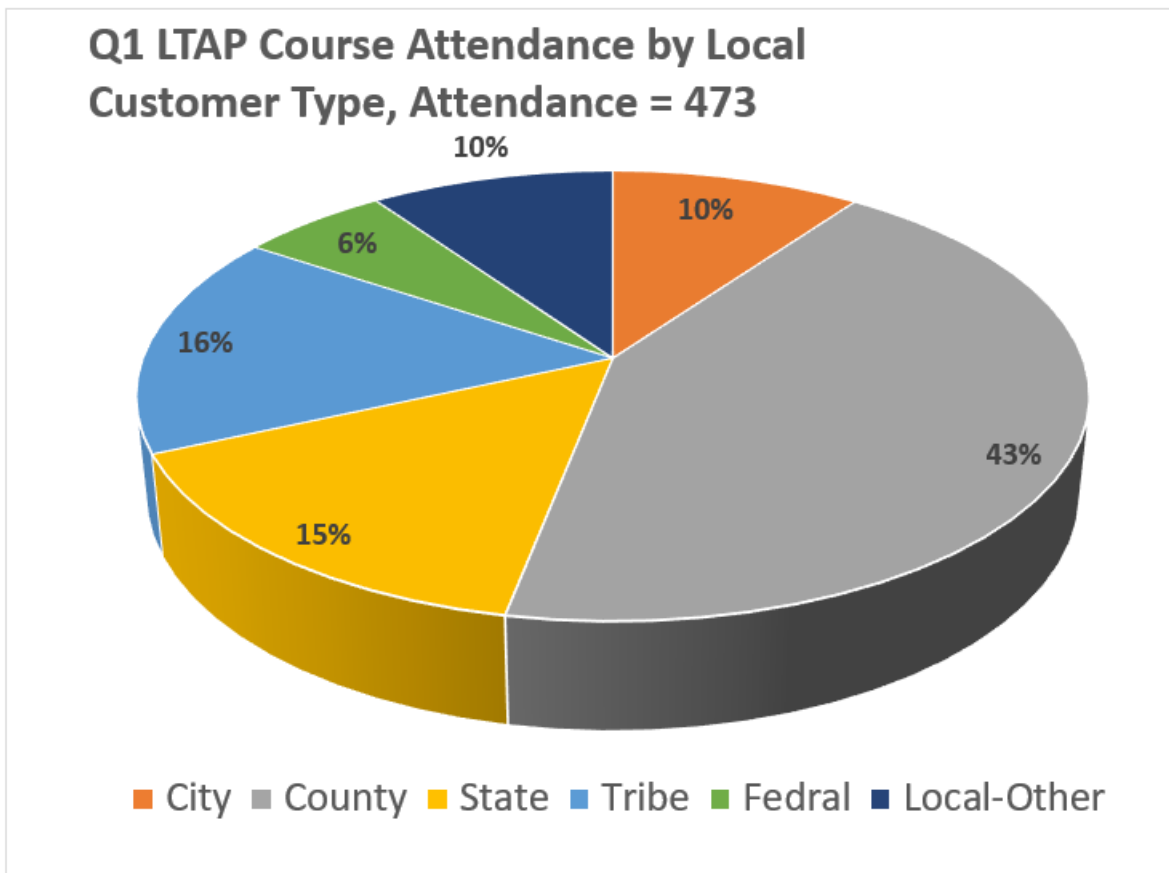
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Year to Date Budget Summary, Q1 SFY 2024..... 6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This State Fiscal Year (SFY 2024) 1st 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.

At the heart of what LTAP does is provide instructor hours to our local customers. During Q1 LTAP’s activities hosted a total of 473 in-class participants, 103 instruction hours, and 1,992 contact hours across the state.

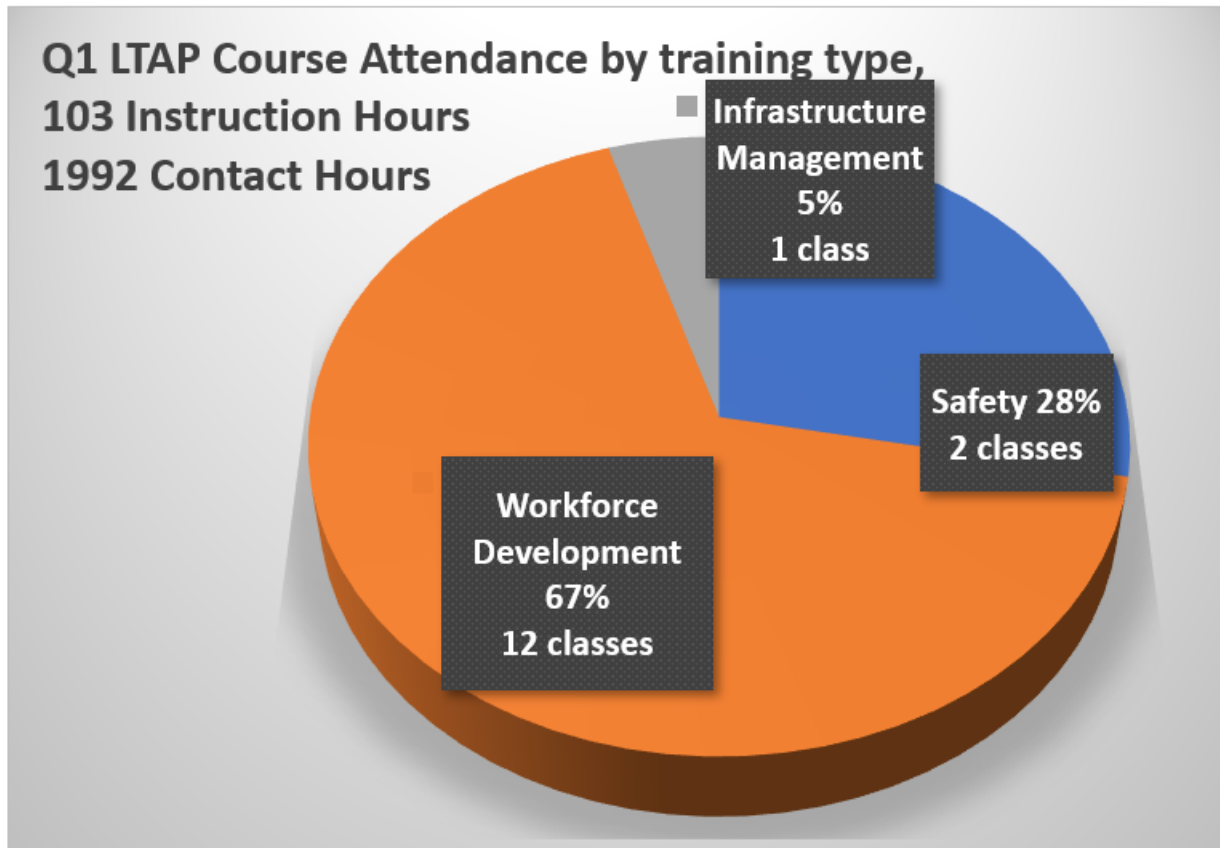


This progress report further details these activities and is organized following the four LTAP focus areas:

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

TRAINING OVERVIEW

During Q1, LTAP’s activities hosted a total of 473 in-class participants, 103 instruction hours, and 1,992 classroom contact hours across the state. Trainings included Workforce Development, Safety, and Infrastructure Management focus areas.



FOCUS AREA: SAFETY

Safety-focused classes accounted for 28% of our class delivery this quarter.

Safety is incorporated into all of our activities, technical assistance, and trainings. This includes personal safety classes, as well as roadway and operations/maintenance safety. Working with the National Center for Rural Road Safety at the Western Transportation Institute, FHWA Peer Exchanges, and other partnerships allows Montana LTAP to bring more attention to safety and deliver relevant training and technical assistance.

FOCUS AREA: INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Infrastructure Management comprised 5% of our LTAP Course offerings this quarter. L

TAP will continue to offer more opportunities for classes on keeping good culvert, cattleguard, and sign inventories, and pavement management and assessment methods, as this is an area we see a need based on discussions with road supervisors and crew members around the State.

The Infrastructure Management area of focus is an included component of most of our classes, including our regular Spring and Fall 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.

FOCUS AREA: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development comprised 67% of our class delivery this quarter. This reflects the need for worker skills development and general or basic trainings. LTAP will continue to work toward offering more in-house Motor Grader Operation trainings. This includes offered instruction on unpaved roadway management. Blaine County has requested a grader class, and we are planning to deliver this in July or August.

Our program delivery in Workforce Development continues to improve due largely to the communicated needs of our customers. The program is supported through our funding partners, as Workforce Development is an area of focus in the current Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and we expect to enhance this part of our program moving forward. Workforce training is a foundational training for our locals and when combined with personal safety, we can successfully reach most of our locals at all levels of the agency. We continue to receive 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.

FOCUS AREA: 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.

Matt Ulberg participated in the FHWA TTAP Tribal Peer Exchange in August, hosted in Great Falls by Northern TTAP and MT LTAP. Much of this peer exchange focused on safety and funding opportunities for a portion of our Locals, our Tribal road agencies.

The once-every-4-years Summer Meeting of TRB AKD30, Low Volume Roads Committee was held in Cedar Falls, IA in July. Matt Ulberg was able to attend and participate as a TRB committee member.

The annual NLTTAPA meeting was held in July in Columbus, MO, and both Shawna Page and Matt Ulberg attended and participated in multiple sessions that covered topics such as professional development, administration, and sharing teaching/training resources.

GENERAL HIGHLIGHTS

Other highlights of Montana LTAP's accomplishments during Q1 include:

- In September we hosted snow rodeos in both Missoula and Richland Counties.
- LTAP training was conducted in Bozeman, Anaconda, Belgrade, Helena, Bozeman, Chinook, Great Falls, Missoula, and Sidney.
- Our trainings are well received, and attendance was excellent. Attendee feedback was very positive. We are following up with the location hosts to determine how to make our next round of training even better.
- LTAP hosted two monthly webinars: The August webinar was on the topic of Mower Safety, and the September Webinar was on Un-paving Rural roads. These are uploaded at <http://www.coe.montana.edu/ltap2/resources/webinars/index.html>
- LTAP Instructor-led classes included:
 - 4 Flagger Certification classes
 - 1 Forklift/Skid Steer Certification class in Bozeman
 - 1 Grader Operations Basics class in Chinook
 - 2 Snow Rodeo Operations Safety course days
 - 2 Snow Rodeo Equipment Operations Days
 - One 2-Day Traffic Control Supervisor course
 - One Traffic Control Technician course in Helena

CHALLENGES

PLANNED ACTIVITIES (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023)

- The Fall MACRS-hosted trainings will be held October through November (SFY 24 Q2), with **TOPICS** including:
 1. **Leadership** [*Organizational Excellence* Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]
 2. **Personal Safety and Safety Culture** [*Worker Safety* Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]
 3. **Equipment and Workplace Safety** [*Worker Safety* Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]
 4. **Gravel Roads** [Infrastructure Management Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]
 5. **Truck and Loader Operations** [Optional/Elective Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]
 6. **OTHER** [Road Scholar Class Credit Requirement]

Schedule:

October 3, Bozeman | *Topics: 1,2*
 October 4, Boulder | *Topics: 1,2*
 October 5, Kalispell | *Topics: 6 (as requested)*

October 17, Billings | *Topics: 2,3*
 October 18, Lewistown | *Topics: 2,3*

October 31, Sidney | *Topics: 4,5*
 November 1, Miles City | *Topics: 1,2*
 November 2, Chinook | *Topics: 2,3*

- We continue to work with Blaine County in their search for more effective ways to source and produce gravel through a Technical Assist. They have asked for guidance on finding suitable sources and processing methods to get the best products that can be made from the materials that they have access to in the County.
- 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 participates with the MDT/FHWA Roadway Departure & Intersection-related Crashes CHSP Emphasis Area focus group.
- LTAP webinars will continue in SFY 2024 on a monthly schedule.
- We are nearing completion of our Road Scholar database integration and implementation of the ESX Database, as well as the remainder of the scope for the STIC Grant. This should be “live” the end of November.
- We plan to participate in TRB committee meetings (Member of AKD 30 Low Volume Roads) and Matt plans to complete a few technical paper reviews for the upcoming annual TRB meeting in January 2024.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The year to date budget summary for Q1 SFY 2024 is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Year to Date Budget Summary, Q1 SFY 2024

SUMMARY:				
Cost Categories	Quarterly Budget	Costs-this-Quarter	Annual Budget	Costs-to-Date
Salaries/Benefits	73,803.00	57,357.56	295,212.00	57,357.56
Prof. Services	5,750.00	-	23,000.00	-
Travel	4,250.00	-	17,000.00	-
Supplies/Comm.	4,442.25	-	17,769.00	-
Equipment	9,387.50	-	37,550.00	-
Total	97,632.75	57,357.56	390,531.00	57,357.56
IDC's	27,367.25	16,339.52	109,469.00	16,339.52
	125,000.000	73,697.08	500,000.00	73,697.08