

5 winning strategies for tackling inequity through Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) applications

Top recommendations from Michele Jolin, CEO and Co-founder of Results for America

#1 Ask yourself the right questions.

Applying an equity lens only happens when the right questions are being asked: How are the traffic safety risks distributed in my community? Are there disparate risks and burdens based on race, income, age, and geography? What are my city's social vulnerabilities? How do my city's environmental vulnerabilities compare to other cities?

Analyze existing conditions and historical trends, and determine an action plan based on the real needs of communities.

#2 Data must drive equity considerations – but it has to be the RIGHT data.

Truly [tackling inequity](#) requires robust engagement with the public, private sector, and community groups – and strong SS4A proposals will use an inclusive and representative process to get input from residents and gather data. While government databases and other resources can be used to collect data on crashes, consider non-traditional ways of collecting community input and perspectives, such as online surveys, having kiosks in the community, or pushing out PSAs into communities.

Demonstrate the connection between your equity plan, existing safety action plans, and your city's or town's goals – then determine how progress will be measured over time. Establish a baseline for evaluation so that you can track your progress in real time and ensure you're delivering results for your community.

#3 Identify and engage impacted communities.

[Equity and data-driven decision making](#) are at the core of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) – so the most competitive SS4A applications will identify road safety issues that disproportionately impact communities in your city or town – like crashes involving fatalities and serious injuries – and prioritize projects that address these vulnerabilities and invest in underserved communities.

#4 Use proven, evidence-based intervention.

The DOT will be looking for applications that leverage proven, evidence-based, and effective safety countermeasures to significantly improve existing roadways. The highest rated projects will be based on [evidence](#), use [systematic approaches](#), and have benefits that persist over time – such as speed cameras and roadside design improvements at curves.

#5 Leverage partnerships.

Your partners will have insights that will strengthen your application, so [leverage your relationships](#) with other government entities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, community based organizations, and/or other relevant stakeholders to achieve safety benefits – while also ensuring that your proposal benefits everyone in your city or town and drives your community forward.

SS4A application deadline: July 10, 2023

Michele Jolin is a national leader in social innovation and civic engagement. She was appointed to the White House Council for Community Solutions in 2010 and helped create the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation under President Obama.