State Safety Oversight (SSO) Certification

Fact Sheet   Deadline: April 15, 2019

Background

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) safety program has changed how the Federal government and States work together to keep rail transit agencies (RTAs) safe. By law, FTA is required to certify whether each State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program meets Federal requirements for safety oversight of RTAs.

Certification Deadline

By **April 15, 2019**, each eligible State with an RTA must have an FTA-approved and FTA-certified SSO program.

By law, FTA is not permitted to grant extensions to the April 2019 deadline. FTA strongly recommends that SSO Agencies (SSOA) submit certification applications as soon as possible to allow time for review.

If a State fails to meet the certification deadline, FTA must withhold all FTA funds from all recipients of FTA funding within the entire State. This means no new FTA grants can be awarded in the State, whether for urbanized areas, rural areas, or specialized transit.

Why Must States Be Certified?

The SSO final rule, which took effect April 15, 2016, requires States to attain certification of their SSO programs. The rule strengthens an SSOA's authority to conduct inspections and investigate accidents, approve corrective action plans, and oversee an RTA's implementation of its safety plan. The rule also gives FTA the authority to take enforcement actions against those States with non-existent or non-compliant safety oversight programs.

Funding

Congress has authorized grant funds for States to use to develop, implement, and operate an SSO Program.

SSOA Requirements for Compliance

Every eligible State must establish an SSO program with an SSOA that:

- Is financially and legally independent from any RTA it oversees;

- Does not directly provide public transportation services in an area with an RTA that the SSOA oversees;

- Does not employ any individual responsible for administering an RTA;

- Has authority to review, approve, oversee, and enforce a safety plan for an RTA;

- Has investigative and enforcement authority with respect to the safety of the RTA;

- Audits every RTA's compliance with safety plan requirements at least once every three years; and

- Reports the status of RTA safety to the Governor, the FTA, and the RTA board of directors or equivalent entity at least once a year

Additional Resources

Certification Toolkit and Application

FTA's Certification Toolkit provides guidance to States in managing the new SSO certification process. The toolkit guides States through each section of the certification application.

SSO Program Page

For more information on the SSO rule, safety training, SSO Formula Grant Program, SSO certification, and advisories and technical assistance, please visit the SSO Program page on FTA's website.

Check Status: Dashboard

FTA will make available on its website a dashboard to show the status of States' progress toward certification.
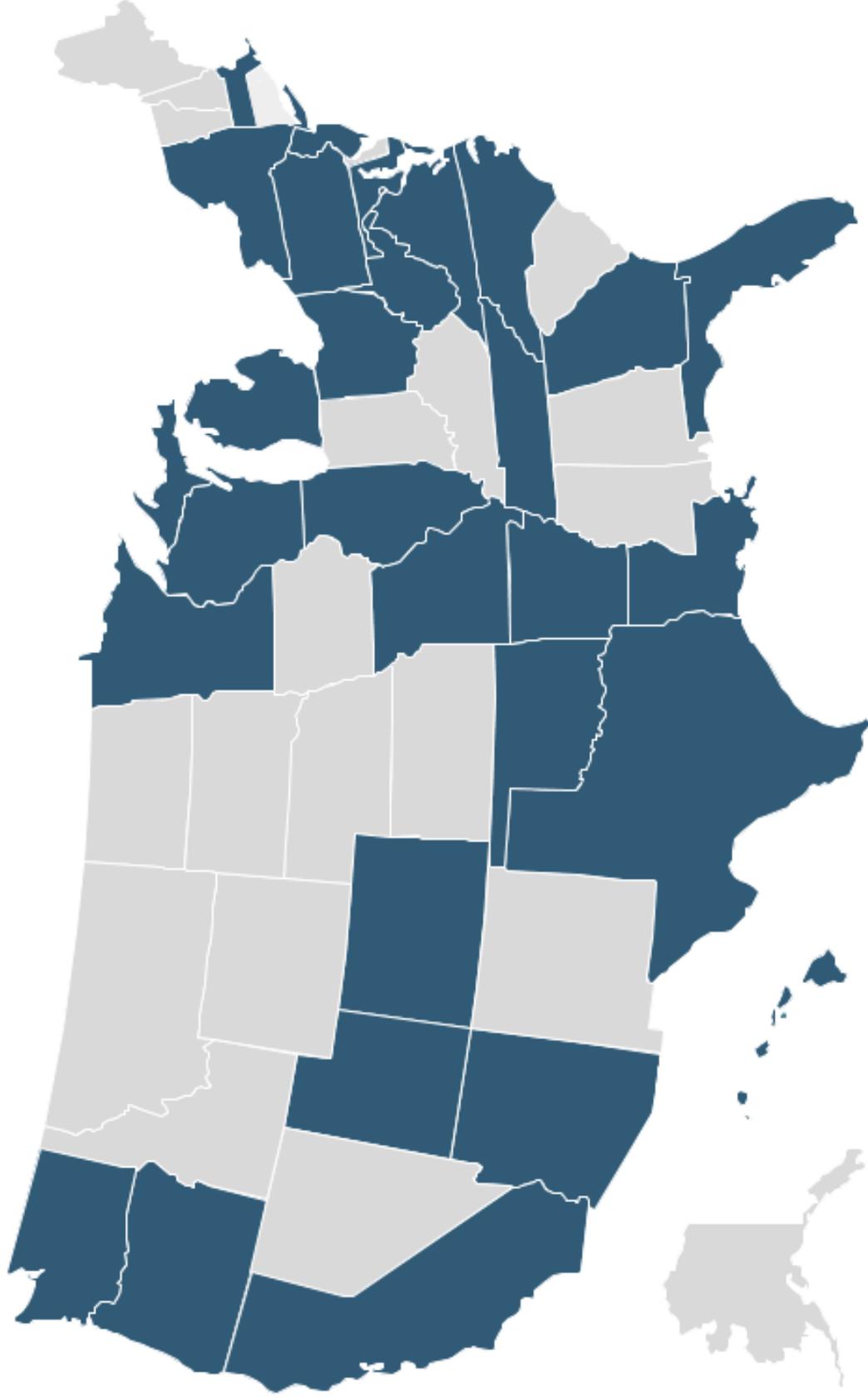
Contact

States and RTAs should contact their SSOA regarding their State's certification progress. For questions on the FTA certification process, contact FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

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States with Rail Transit Affected by State Safety Oversight Certification Deadline

Required to have a Federally-compliant SSO Program by April 15, 2019