

MCSAP Formula Working Group Summary of Accomplishments

» Origins

Congress enacted the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), Pub. Law No. 114-94, on December 4, 2015. Under Section 5106 of the FAST Act, Congress required the Secretary of the Department of Transportation to establish a Working Group to analyze requirements and factors for the establishment of a new allocation formula and to make a recommendation to the Secretary.

The Secretary established the Working Group in March 2016, composed of representatives from State CMV safety agencies, an organization representing state CMV enforcement agencies, and FMCSA.

» Working Group Guiding Principles

Initial Working Group meetings began in April 2016, and one of the first actions taken was to establish guiding principles for designing a new allocation formula. The Working Group established that the formula should:

- Improve upon the previous MCSAP formula, using it as a baseline for improvement.
- Address FAST Act changes to grant consolidation.
- Meet specific FAST Act formula requirements.
- Promote stability in funding.
- Respond to changes in overall funding levels.
- Be safety-based (primary objective), with crash risk at the forefront of analysis.
- Respond to changes in crash risk to continually reflect current trends.
- Use high-quality, regularly updated data sources.

One of the primary guiding principles of the Working Group was that the new formula had to be based on safety. Throughout its endeavor, the Working Group considered FMCSA's primary mission to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks and buses. To design a formula that reflects today's safety challenges and maintains valuable safety gains, the Working Group put CMV crash risk at the forefront of their analysis, especially when choosing factors to include in the formula.

» Working Group Analysis Process

To design the recommendations, Working Group members gathered and analyzed information, discussed issues relevant to the MCSAP formula, and deliberated on appropriate formula elements and structure. The development process included various methods of research and analysis to:

- Identify areas in the formula to improve.
- Create alternative formula designs.
- Evaluate impacts with respect to the guiding principles.

» Working Group Analysis Process (Continued)

The Working Group began by understanding and evaluating the current MCSAP formula, studying design considerations, and conducting research to make informed recommended changes to the formula. Member expertise was leveraged to identify areas for improvement in the previous formula, as were other grant formulas and relevant scientific literature.

To create alternative formula designs, the Working Group followed a rigorous analysis process, consisting of qualitative and quantitative research into each area of improvement. The guiding principles were then used to evaluate the alternative formula designs in each area of improvement.

This collaborative decision-making process was used in an effort to obtain the viewpoints of all States and programs for representation and consideration.

» Working Group Recommendation

The new formula that emerged as a result of this evaluation and vetting process included a number of changes from the previous iteration. The most impactful changes include:

Provisions to stabilize funding from year to year

Under the Working Group's proposed formula, no State's share of total MCSAP funding will decrease by more than 3% or increase by more than 5% each year. In particular, this will prevent drastic changes in funding in the first year that the formula is implemented and will allow for a smoother transition.

Removing the previous Incentive Formula

In alignment with the guiding principles to promote stability and keep the formula based on safety and crash risk, the Working Group recommended removing the previous Incentive Formula. Additionally, the FAST Act increased FMCSA's flexibility to enforce requirements for participation in MCSAP, which diminishes the need to use an incentive formula for this purpose.

New Border Component

To proportionally allocate funding to border States based on personnel needs for enforcement at each point of entry, a new Border Component was added. This was also added to address the consolidation of grants brought about by the FAST Act.

Adding carrier registrations

Along with highway miles, vehicle miles traveled, population, and special fuel consumption, the proposed formula adds carrier registrations to the data used to estimate crash risk. This new factor is intended to reflect the New Entrant Safety Audit workload.

In general, States may see a small but manageable year-to-year change in their funding levels under the proposed formula, from a loss of 3% to a gain of 5%.

» MCSAP Allocation Formula – Next Steps

The Office of the Secretary of Transportation has completed its review of the proposed formula. A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) seeking public comment on the establishment of a new formula is forthcoming. Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments on the NPRM, and FMCSA and the Office of the Secretary will review public comments before issuing the Final Rule.

To learn more: Read the FAQs document on the website and review the Working Group's report.

Share your feedback: Members of the public are encouraged to submit comments in the NPRM.