

Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program (VHSIP) Proactive Systemic Initiatives for Locally Owned/Maintained Roads: High-Visibility Signal Backplates



High visibility signal backplates in Virginia.

VDOT works hard to provide a roadway network that operates safely, efficiently, and effectively. In 2019, the Commonwealth Transportation Board approved the deployment of highly effective, low-cost safety improvements to help reduce serious injury and fatal crashes across the Commonwealth. This data-driven strategy focuses on proactively targeting locations with higher crash risk. The goal is not to wait for crashes to occur before we proactively treat high-risk locations on the roadway network!

High-Visibility Signal Backplates (HVSBs) added to a traffic signal head improve visibility of the illuminated signal face through a controlled-contrast background.¹ HVSB's improve visibility, conspicuity, and orientation for both older and color vision deficient drivers. This countermeasure also remains effective during power outages, providing a visible cue for motorists to stop at the intersection ahead while the traffic lights are not operating. A retroreflective border can be incorporated by adding retroreflective tape to an existing backplate or purchasing a new backplate with a retroreflective border.

Through Virginia's Highway Safety Improvement Program (VHSIP), local agencies are eligible to apply for HVSB funding. Locations that need signal pole upgrades are not eligible for this round of HVSB installation funding. Pole upgrades include signal structure replacement or major signal structure modifications.

Local projects will be selected and funded based on a variety of criteria, including return on investment (ROI), a project's potential to meet Virginia's Highway Safety Investment Strategy goals, and project scope and feasibility.

Localities shall follow the locally administered project procedures described in the [LAP Manual](#)². All contract work is required to be eligible for federal funding.

For any questions on inquiries on VHSIP, please email: hsiprogram@vdot.virginia.gov

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¹ <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/backplate.cfm>

² https://www.virginiadot.org/business/locally_administered_projects_manual.asp