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Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Secure Rural Schools - Categories

The Secure Rural Schools Act breaks payments into three distinct categories, or Titles:

- **Title I** for roads and schools
- **Title II** for projects on Federal lands
- **Title III** for county projects.

Below is an explanation of each:

Title I - Roads & Schools

Counties generally receive the majority of Secure Rural Schools funds under Title I, which is designated for the benefit of public schools and public roads. In years when the Secure Rural Schools Act is reauthorized by Congress, Title I payments are made from the USDA Forest Service to states. States then distribute the payment to all eligible counties. The funds must be passed through to local governmental entities for use at the county level (but not necessarily to county governments themselves). Each state must spend the funds on road and school programs, and state law sets forth how the payments are to be allocated between road and school projects. The state laws differ widely, generally ranging from 30% to 100% for school programs.

Title II - Special Projects on Federal Lands

Counties typically receive 20% or less of Secure Rural Schools funds under Title II, which are used by willing Federal agencies, State and local governments, private and nonprofit entities, and landowners for protection, restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, and other natural resource objectives on Federal land and on non-Federal land where projects would benefit these resources on Federal land.

Rather than being distributed to the State, Title II funds are retained by the Forest Service and are allocated to specific projects that have been reviewed and recommended by a local

Resource Advisory Committee.

Resource Advisory Committees must initiate (recommend) Title II projects by September 30, 2025. Project funds must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2026

Title III - County Projects

Funds received under Title III are used to:

- carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program
- reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting and law enforcement patrols
- cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency service
- develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans.
- provide or expand access to broadband telecommunications services

In years when the Secure Rural Schools Act is reauthorized by Congress, Title III payments are made from the Forest Service to states. States then distribute the payment to all eligible counties.

There is a required 45-day public comment period before using Title III funds. Eligible counties must first publish in a publication of local record a proposal that describes the intended use of the county funds. The county also must submit the proposal to any Resource Advisory Committee for the participating county. Counties are required to certify use of Title III funds. Please see our FAQs on the certification process.

Find out more about Title III with our FAQs.

Secure Rural Schools

Payments

Archived Payments

The Act

Title Categories

Payments to Counties Bankhead-Jones

Contact