

### **D&I Las Vegas YMF Scholarship Essay**

Distributing a budget amongst a large, diverse nation with areas of vastly different needs is nothing short of a complex issue to tackle. Arguably one of the most crucial aspects of this undertaking is ensuring that the funds are dispersed in the fairest manner possible. There are many approaches to this problem that seem as though they could be appropriate at first glance. Perhaps each state gets an equal amount of funding, and they can choose thereafter on how to distribute the funds to the various regions within. Another approach could be one that takes the population of different regions into consideration, divvying up the money for each area based on the number of people who live there. In theory, this provides everyone with an equal slice of the pie. The key to fairness is not equality, however; it is equity. Resources should be distributed where they are needed rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach. Doing so gives particularly disadvantaged areas, such as tribal lands or low income regions, an equal opportunity in creating sustainable infrastructure and a better quality of life overall.

With that being said, the first policy should be one that establishes which infrastructure improvements are priorities nationwide, and where they are needed most. Once it is determined what the most critical needs of the country are, a clearer path to successfully improving the country's overall infrastructure will reveal itself. According to the 2021 Infrastructure Report Card, 11 of the 17 categories, including roads, levees, and dams, are rated as "D" for poor (ASCE). These grades are given based on several factors like public safety and condition. The most efficient way to successfully enhance the country's overall infrastructure would undoubtedly be tackling these key problem areas first.

Accountability is one of the most essential components of this whole process. As such, a clear policy establishing the baseline for accountability is necessary. This is something that can take many shapes, but one of the most pressing matters would be establishing an entity to oversee the overall program. This organization should be in charge of making sure that only an appropriate amount of funds go to the areas in which they are needed for necessary projects only. Frequent auditing to prevent fraud, waste,

or otherwise abuse of the grants or money given can help make certain that everything is being done as fairly as possible each step of the way. Transparency is something that goes hand-in-hand with the previous policy. As such, a clear guideline with intent to provide the public with information on how these funds are both distributed and utilized to each area is needed. This allows the citizens to hold its government officials liable for the state's, county's, and community's needs.

While there is no perfect solution to guaranteeing complete fairness in how the Department of Transportation proceeds with fixing the United State's at-risk infrastructure, there are certainly policies that can be implemented to ensure that honest efforts are continually being made to achieve just that. Emphasizing need-based funding, transparency, and accountability are actions that can continue to help the nation invest in both itself and its people.

**Works Cited:**

ASCE. "2021 Infrastructure Grades." Infrastructure Report Card, 2021,  
[infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2021-Grades-Chart.jpg](https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2021-Grades-Chart.jpg).