Anyone can benefit from professional and job skills development, and so do their employers. The Kansas Roads Scholar Program is designed to do just that—for employees of public works agencies in local governments. The program enhances skills and knowledge of equipment operators as well as those who supervise others, or aspire to management in public works operations.

What is it?
The Kansas Roads Scholar Program is a professional and skills development program of the Kansas County Highway Association and the American Public Works Association Kansas Chapter. The courses are designed to be affordable for local agencies in Kansas.

Who can participate?
Any Kansas public works employee is invited to participate.

Does this program certify qualifications?
No. Completion does not certify a standard of performance. However, each certificate states that the participant attended the required courses.

What are the different certificate levels and what is needed to earn a certificate?
The Program has three levels, detailed below. The list of courses required for each certificate are developed by a committee of Kansas public works professionals. The courses, offered by Kansas LTAF, the Kansas Association of Counties, and KDOT, are designed to give a comprehensive overview of the level’s specific area of expertise, whether technical, supervisory, or administrative/executive skills.

A certificate is awarded to an individual who participates in all required courses for that level within 6 years of the date of enrollment for that level. (Courses completed 3 years prior to enrollment can be grandfathered-in.)

A person can be enrolled for more than one level at the same time, if desired. Courses may be taken in any order, at any time.

In general, a certificate must be earned for the preceding level in order to obtain a certificate at the next level.

1 Roads Scholar—Technical Skills. Enhances the knowledge of general public works maintenance and construction methods, safety practices, and how local government is organized and operated as it applies to quality public service.

Courses:
1. Culverts, Drainage and Levee Maintenance
2. Risk and Liability Issues
3. MUTCD for Technicians
4. Snow and Ice Control
5. Road Maintenance (choose 2 of the following 3)
   —Gravel Road and Street Maintenance
   —Asphalt Road and Street Maintenance
   —Concrete Road and Street Maintenance
6. Workplace, Equipment and Job Site Safety
7. Foundations in Customer Service
8. Government 101 (choose 1 of the following 2)
   —County Government 101
   —City Government 101

2 Advanced Roads Scholar—Supervisory Skills. Develops supervisory skills for persons engaged in public works maintenance and construction activities.

Pre-requisite: Level 1 Roads Scholar certificate

Courses:
1. The Fundamentals of Supervision
2. Legal Aspects of Management
3. Problem Solving for Effective Supervision
4. Communication Skills for Effective Supervision
5. Managing Employee Performance
6. Providing Employee Safety
7. Enhancing Cooperative Work Relationships
8. Public Works Issues I & II
Master Roads Scholar—Executive Development.
Enhances management and administrative skills for those who are, or aspire to be, a county highway administrator, county or city engineer, or public works director.

Required Courses:
1. Fundamentals of Leadership
2. Budgeting and Finances
3. Overview of Human Resource Management
4. Effective Community and Media Communication
5. Project Planning and Management
6. Effective Management of Intergovernmental Relations
7. Legal, Permitting and Regulatory Processes
8. Asset Management and Cost Accounting
9. Local/State Project Coordination
10. Overview of Engineering Functions in Public Works

Elective Courses: (choose one, or select one of your own choice and request approval from the Kansas Roads Scholar Program Review Committee):
—Fleet Management and Equipment Maintenance
—Solid Waste Management
—National Highway Institute classes
—Appropriate class provided by KS LTAP
—Appropriate class provided by KDOT
—Appropriate class provided by KDHE

Master Roads Scholar recognition is awarded to individuals who have either: 1) completed Levels I and II of the Roads Scholar Program and the courses listed above; or 2) have 5 years of experience in public works administration and have completed Level II and the courses listed above in the required 6-year time period. Level II and Level III may be taken simultaneously.

How to apply for each level?
It’s easy. Complete the application form and pay a one-time nonrefundable application fee of $35 (required for each level). The fee provides funds to monitor the progress of enrollee.
Enroll online or download an application at: http://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/cgi-bin/ltap/master_new.php.

How often are courses taught and what do they cost?
Courses are offered in an ongoing basis across the State. Roads Scholar partner Kansas LTAP maintains a master calendar for the Program that shows when a course was last taught and when it will be taught next. Go to http://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/cgi-bin/ltap/rs_index.php.

Level 1, for all courses combined for certificate completion, runs about $620 per person and $1,100 for Levels 2 and 3. Each course is paid separately, so costs are spread over a few years.

How are the courses tracked?
Kansas LTAP tracks attendance and reports participant completions to KCHA and APWA for program recognition. For questions about course completion, or the Roads Scholar Program in general, contact Kristin Kelly at LTAP, (785) 864-2594, kbkelly@ku.edu.
Learn more at http://www.ksroadscholar.org.

The Roads Scholar Story in Kansas
In 2000, a committee of Kansas Chapter of the American Public Works Association members began meeting to consider a roads scholar program for Kansas. They enlisted the help of Kansas LTAP, KDOT and Kansas Association of Counties, all of whom provided some training to local agencies. The committee selected certain of these courses to create what was considered a reasonable and thorough curriculum for skills development. The Program started with technical skills and then was expanded to supervisory and management skills.

In 2004 the Kansas Chapter of the American Public Works Association jumped on board, to reach cities as well as counties.
To date (through 2014), approximately 45 counties and 10 cities and over 500 individuals have participated or are currently enrolled in the program.

“The information and the courses in the Roads Scholar Program are aligned with everything that we come in contact on a regular basis in Public Works. Whether it is new products on the market or the best way to get the job done, all are discussed thoroughly so we can do the best job possible with our resources. The Supervisory courses in the Level 2 program really give insight on the best way to get the most out of our employees and how to be a real asset to our organization from a leadership standpoint. The course discussions open your eyes to the right way to be a leader/mentor in the workings of public service. I feel the courses offered through the Roads Scholar Program are a great investment in our people, and people in all levels in a department can benefit from taking all levels of the training (even through the top ranks of management) to get a good feel for all the different aspects of what we do in providing public service.”
— Ryan Fine, Heavy Equipment Operator, Franklin County

“The Kansas Roads Scholar Program is a real benefit to me and our county. The class materials are well organized and the little flip books come in handy when needing a quick reference whether it’s the do’s and don’ts of a road supervisor or needing to know the weights for materials used in paving and sealing. The instructors are not “talking heads” but rather explain things by real life experiences. You gain an understanding about all of the funding that is out there, explained by KDOT Local Projects. The Kansas Roads Scholar Program also lets you meet personnel from other counties and learn how they do things in their counties.”
— Darren Williams, Assistant County Engineer, Barton County

“The Kansas Roads Scholar Program has been a very valuable tool for the City of Burlington’s street department. It is very affordable and provides all of the employees a chance to better understand the functions of public works from differing perspectives. I personally have been able to go through the complete program and have acquired my Level 3 certificate. Taking Roads Scholar classes is a part of each employee annual work plan in the department, and I have seen the value that it provides with more of a buy-in from the employees. I would highly recommend this program to any city or county personnel that can attend.”
— Doug Mast, Street Superintendent, City of Burlington