

Chapter III Project Development

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III. Project Development

Chapter III describes the process used by the Alaska Highway Safety Office (AHSO) for the development and selection of statewide and local traffic safety grant proposals.

A. Overview

This section provides an overview of the project development and selection process used by the AHSO.

In alignment with the problem identification, performance goals and key strategies identified in the annual Performance Plan section of the Highway Safety Performance Plan (HSPP), the AHSO solicits proposals and awards grants to fund projects designed to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes on Alaska roads.

Traffic safety projects are initiated as a result of several types of “needs” including:

- Statewide and local problem identification
- State agency initiative
- Community initiative
- Key events

In Alaska the development of grant agreements is a two-step process. Project proposals are first submitted to the AHSO by potential grantees following a prescribed process and deadlines. For successful applicants, the proposal form then becomes the grant application and final project agreement. This chapter describes the project proposal process.

The AHSO grant agreement is a legally binding document when fully executed by both parties. It has as attachments other documents such as terms and conditions, detailed project descriptions, the approved budget, and certain required certifications and assurances.

Proposals must include the most current data available to identify a traffic safety problem, a workable solution linked to the identified problem, detailed action plans, and budgets that demonstrate an understanding of the various issues to be resolved and a reasonable approach to resolving the identified problem. Projects must be closely related to problem identification results.

RESOURCES:

[Partnering with Highway Safety Offices: Tips and Tactics for Success](#)

B. Grant Guidebook, Grant Application, and Deadlines

This section provides an overview of the Grant Guidebook which is produced, posted on the AHSO website, and circulated by the AHSO annually to prospective grantees and other interested parties.

The AHSO annually develops a Grant Guidebook for use by interested applicants. The purpose of the Grant Guidebook is to establish program and grant management procedures and provide guidance to sub grantees for the development and administration of grant agreements. The guidance should assist sub grantees in understanding grant development requirements including an outline of the specific objectives of the project, budget, performance measures and commitment of responsibility by the HSO and the sub grantee. Each year the AHSO updates and revises the Grant Guidebook document used during the previous grant year to include any changes which may have been made to the process and to update the deadlines for the current year. The Grant Guidebook explains what information is required by the AHSO to be included in Grant Applications, and consists of four sections:

1. Project Budget
2. Budget Narrative
3. Project Narrative
4. General Information

In the event it becomes necessary to change or revise any part of the Grant Guidebook, those changes or revisions will be posted on the AHSO web site.

After both parties have signed, the agreements are public records as defined in the State's "Public Records Act".

The responsibility for compiling the necessary information to revise and finalize the annual Grant Guidebook is assigned to the Grant Administrators. The Grant Guidebook, the Grant Application, and the grant award process deadlines are posted on the AHSO web site by the Research Analyst.

C. Project/Grant Development Calendar

This section establishes a process and timeline for the development of project proposals and grants.

The AHSO highway safety grant application process is comprised of three steps:

Generally undertaken during the month of April, project solicitation notices, containing the issues intended to be addressed, are sent by the AHSO to public and private agencies who will best be able to help attain the AHSO goals.

Potential grantees are asked to submit to the AHSO a Grant Application containing a problem statement, a description of proposed activities and a complete budget. It is emphasized that to be funded, projects must have a direct link to the AHSO identified problems and goals, and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan located on the DOT&PF website.

After the Grant Review Team scores the proposals, the AHSO Grant Administrators resolve any remaining questions. The AHSO Grant Administrators review each application to verify that it does address the identified problems and meets all of the application requirements. If necessary, the Grant Administrators work with the potential grantee to resolve any questions and develop a fully detailed and complete project proposal prior. The AHSO Administrator then makes the final grant selection determination and approval.

NOTE: The AHSO will identify project proposals which require priority handling in order to ensure an October 1 start up date. An example of this would be a project which *must* begin the grant work in the month of October (and no later) to ensure the completion of the required activities. Most grants should have an October 1 start date. It is possible to have a later start date, however all grants must conclude on or before September 30 without exception.

Table 7. Project/Grant Development Calendar (for all funding except Section 408)

Month	Activity
Mid April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post Grant Guidebook and Grant Application on AHSO web site
April - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and review project proposals and contact applicants for clarification or missing information
June – July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop AHSO in-house grants Invite AHSO Grant Advisory Review Team to review project proposals
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of project proposals by Grant Review Team and identify agreements for potential funding
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete grant negotiations and make final selection
September 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHSO submits HSPP to NHTSA Regional Office
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify successful applicants and finalize grant agreements Obtain approval for grants and contracts from the appropriate Department officials Submit AHSO in-house grants for Department approval
October 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement grant agreements

The following table illustrates a sample timeline for the AHSO grant award schedule. This schedule is adjusted slightly each year.

Table 8. Sample AHSO Grant Award Schedule

Issue Request for Proposals	2 nd Monday in April
Application Question Period	April – June 1
Proposals Due	June 1 5:00 pm AST
Evaluate Proposals, Work with Grant Review Team and resolve questions	June 1 – August 1
Applicant Notification	September 1
Notify successful applicants and finalize grant agreements	September
Project Start Date	October 1
Project End Date	September 30

It is important to note that Section 408 *State Traffic Safety Information System Improvement* funding has a much earlier award process schedule. Section 408 Grant applications are not reviewed as stated above by a Grant Review Team, but rather are evaluated and scored by the [Alaska Traffic Records Coordinating Committee \(ATRCC\)](#). These grants should reflect the goals of the ATRCC as stated in the Annual Traffic Records Strategic Plan, and the 2007 Alaska Traffic Records Assessment. Grant applications are scored using the 408 Grant Evaluation form which reflects the necessary criteria.

Table 9. Sample AHSO 408 (only) Grant Award Schedule

Project Abstracts Due	January 11
Grant Applications Due	February
ATRCC Evaluates Applications	February - March
Requested Revised Applications Due	March
Evaluate Revisions and Prioritization of Funds	March - April
Final Approval on Revisions	April
Project Start Date	October 1
Project End Date	September 30

D. Grant Proposal Preparation Process

This section describes the grant proposal development process and explains some of the associated factors and requirements.

Proposed grant projects will support the goals and strategies established for the emphasis program areas in the AHSO Highway Safety Performance Plan (HSPP) which is created in July or August of each year. The project proposal development process begins with the submission of Grant Applications to the AHSO by applicants.

The purposes for developing project proposals are to:

- Produce a clearly defined problem statement
- Produce a clearly specified work statement
- Clearly define goals and performance measures
- Clearly define respective roles and responsibilities
- Achieve understanding among all parties
- Reach consensus
- Ensure accountability

The key elements of a project proposal are:

1. Authorization
2. Project Budget
3. Budget Narrative
4. Project Narrative
5. Certifications and assurances (general and special terms and conditions)

1) The Authorization cover page requires the applicant to identify the primary emphasis area described by their proposal and provide their agency name, address and authorizing official signature.

2) In the Project Budget, every expense anticipated must be listed under the appropriate category. It is important to include everything. After the document is signed, expenses requested which have not been included will NOT be reimbursable. All items must be allowable per Federal and State requirements.

3) In the Budget Narrative, explain exactly what each expense is, how it will be used, who will use it, and how it will contribute toward the project.

4) The Project Narrative is the description of activity which describes seven elements in narrative form:

- A. Executive Summary
- B. Problem/Needs Statement
- C. Goals & Objectives
- D. Implementation Plan
- E. Evaluation & Internal Assessment, including Performance Measures
- F. Future Funding Plan (if project is to be continued)
- G. Attachments
 - i. List of current Board of Directors (if applicable)
 - ii. Organization Chart
 - iii. Organization Resume
 - iv. Job duties of the applicable personnel and their respective resumes

Grant Applications should include the most current data available to identify a traffic safety problem, a workable solution linked to the identified problem, and detailed action plans and budgets that demonstrate an understanding of the various issues to be resolved and a reasonable approach to resolving the identified problem.

Projects must be closely related to the AHSO priority problem issues. The AHSO review of proposed grant applications will be conducted on the basis of the issues identified in the proposal including problem identification, the reasonableness of the problem solution, and other factors pertinent to the resolution of the identified problem.

5) These final pages must be signed by the applying authorized individuals to acknowledge lobbying restrictions and certifications and assurances.

i. Time Period

The grant period is the time during which the sub grantee may incur reimbursable costs to carry out the project. The grant period should be long enough to allow the project to be completed. The typical time period for projects is October 1 through September 30. Based on specific circumstances and project goals the AHSO may also approve other grant time periods. It is possible to have a later start date, however all grants must conclude on or before September 30 without exception. AHSO only issues one year grant agreements. Agencies interested in submitting multiple year proposals must resubmit their proposal on an annual basis. See also Section xii below on Self-Sufficiency.

ii. Problem/Need Identification Statement

The problem identification section of each project proposal should include a problem statement which is supported by crash data analysis, program and community needs assessment information or other relevant, current data. AHSO may assist potential applicants with obtaining the necessary data.

Applicants should review the key funding priorities and problem areas identified in by AHSO for the upcoming grant year. All projects must support the primary goal of reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from traffic crashes. The problem identification section must focus on one or more of the primary or secondary goals and emphasis areas described by AHSO.

The proposal's problem identification section is a very important element of the final grant agreement. Additional guidance for preparation of the problem identification statement can be found in Chapter II. Planning, Section E. Identification of State and local problems (data analysis procedure) and should be referenced by applicants and AHSO staff.

iii. Agency Qualifications

The AHSO must determine if the applicant agency is qualified to receive Federal highway safety grant funds, and, is the appropriate agency to conduct the proposed project activity based on past experience, education, skills and/or community or statewide leadership authority. The applicant must provide information in the grant proposal regarding the agency's background and staff qualifications, such as, funds managed, relevant project experience, etc. This is especially important if the AHSO has no past experience working with the applicant.

Eligible agencies must be able to perform the following:

- Deliver services promptly
- Manage public funds efficiently and ethically
- Collaborate with other community, governmental and private organizations

- Develop data-driven problem solving plans, and,
- Adequately evaluate the success of a project

iv. Project Goals & Objectives

Project proposals must address one or more of the AHSO primary or secondary goals in order to receive consideration. The project goals stated in the Grant Application's Project Narrative should clearly state the ultimate outcome the applicant hopes to accomplish and in measurable terms. For example, "increase enforcement of DUI laws as measured by..." or "reduce the incidence of incorrect use of child safety seats as measured by..."

A guideline called the SMART principle to assess performance goals is recommended. SMART stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-framed

It is generally preferred that project goals be based on outcomes (i.e. safety belt use rate) rather than be output or activity based (i.e. number of tickets written). Depending on the exact nature of the funded activity in some cases a combination of outcome and output based goals or even just output goals may be most appropriate.

v. Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan must be identified in the project proposal and must clearly explain in detail the anticipated activities that will be funded by the project. This explanation should show a logical sequence of events that will take place to accomplish the project goal(s). The proposed activity must be either a best practice/proven strategy supported by research, or, a demonstration project to test an innovative approach.

In selecting countermeasure activities, the project proposal should clearly identify both the target audience and the target area (See following examples).

Table 10. Target Audiences and Target Areas

Target Audiences:	Target Areas:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impaired drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific segment of roadway during nighttime, on weekends, or during daylight hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding motorists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast quadrant of city
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbuckled vehicle occupants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdiction-wide during daylight hours

Countermeasures should be such that a "reasonably prudent mind" would believe that it would produce effective results. Countermeasures should relate directly to the proposal's project goals and the goals and emphasis areas provided by the AHSO.

Some activities have multiple applicants such as the *Alaska Strategic Traffic Enforcement Partnership* (ASTEP). For these activities the AHSO has developed and distributed pro forma project descriptions and budget formats for use by those sub grantees.

vi. Performance Measures/Evaluation

Performance measures and standards are required to be clearly defined in each project proposal. Sub grantees should detail how they will evaluate and measure the effectiveness of their project toward achieving its goals. Evaluation should be expressed in terms of what they intend to measure (numbers, attitudes, knowledge, etc.), what they plan to accomplish, or a measure of what will change. These measures and standards provide guidelines to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of projects. Performance measures must be negotiated and acceptable to all project personnel. A well thought-out project evaluation process is critical.

Performance measures may be shown as specific requirements, for example:

- “Improve seat belt usage by X percentage points from (date) to (date) ”
- “Increase child safety seat use by X percentage points from (date) to (date)”

For some types of projects, however, the work unit must be specific, for example:

- “Submit one report”
- “Produce one public service announcement”

Additional guidance for preparation of performance measures can be found in Chapter II. Planning, Section G. Performance Measures and should be referenced by applicants and AHSO staff.

Project evaluation brings the traffic safety process full circle as the results help the AHSO determine whether any of the preceding steps need adjustments. For this reason, evaluation is an ongoing process in the management of the State’s traffic safety program. To evaluate a project performance measures must have been identified, as they will comprise the basis for the evaluation design. Evaluation allows all involved to:

- Assess project or program effectiveness
- Improve countermeasures
- Allocate scarce resources more efficiently.

The following should be considered by the AHSO when considering project evaluation:

- Require all grants and contracts contain an evaluation component
- Select scientific evaluation vs. process evaluation (size of project, type of activity)
- Select evaluator, objectives and project length
- Determine baseline and timing of data collection
- Develop an overall program evaluation process to assess long-term impact

The AHSO will review and analyze grant progress reports and evaluation reports and interpret analysis results to determine the appropriate application of the information within the program.

The results of the evaluation can be used to:

- Summarize findings for distribution to appropriate persons and organizations i.e. web site publication
- Incorporate results into future program planning
- Publish, distribute and encourage use of the Annual Evaluation Report
- Present information to the media and elected officials

vii. Budget

The Grand Administrators and the applicant may negotiate the content of the project budget during grant development. This section explains some of the considerations and requirements involved in preparing the project budget.

The AHSO Grant Application includes a Budget Summary form which must be completed and submitted with the proposal. A detailed cost breakdown must be negotiated to justify proposed project costs.

The approved project budget should be as detailed as appropriate for fiscal control of the project.

The AHSO Budget Summary form includes the following line items:

1. Personnel Services
2. Travel
3. Contractual Services
4. Commodities
5. Equipment
6. Indirect Costs (10% of total budget maximum allowed ONLY with a current cognizant Federal Agency letter)

For each line item, the applicant is required to identify both the AHSO Share requested and the Applicant Matching Share (if applicable). Local or applicant resources used and in-kind contributions such as personnel costs, etc., should be itemized and added in the total project cost.

The method of payment is a negotiated item, within the constraints of Federal or State guidelines. No reimbursement is allowed before work has been performed or costs have been incurred.

The following deviations from the approved budget require PRIOR approval from the AHSO:

- a. A specific item of cost not included in the approved budget.
- b. An increase in the number of a specific item over and above the total authorized.
- c. A transfer between major budget categories in excess of a total of 10 percent of the category being increased. (For transfers of less than a total of 10 percent of the category being increased an email notification describing the action being taken shall be sent to the AHSO by the sub grantee.)

If a sub grantee begins work before receiving a grant award notification from the AHSO Administrator, the sub grantee does so at its own cost. Costs incurred before the grant agreement is signed by the AHSO are not eligible for reimbursement.

Costs incurred after the grant agreement expires are also not eligible for reimbursement.

Sub grantees may be reimbursed on the basis of actual cost, cost per unit, specific rates, fixed costs, or a combination of these. Explanations of these methods of payment follow.

Actual Cost. Actual cost agreements authorize the AHSO to reimburse the grantee for all costs incurred under the project, subject to cost principles included in OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State and Local Governments." Traffic safety grants are limited to amounts and items authorized in the project budget. Adjustments between cost categories within the budget are allowed with prior written approval from the AHSO.

Cost Per Unit of Work. Some agreements are reimbursed on the basis of units of work performed. This method of payment uses a negotiated per-unit cost, with each component documented and approved in a detailed cost proposal. This method of payment eliminates the need to document each element included in the sub grantee invoice, requiring instead that the *performance* of work be documented. However, the negotiated rate must be based on documented actual costs and experience in performing the proscribed task.

EXAMPLES: \$100 per person trained *or* \$40 per car seat distributed.

Specific Rates. Grants may authorize payment on the basis of specific rates. This method uses a composite of all or selected costs.

EXAMPLES:

Salary: \$50 per hour

Travel and per diem: \$85 per day, \$0.32 per mile

Fixed Cost: The grant may authorize payment of an agreed upon fixed amount not subject to modification. Payments are made periodically at agreed upon intervals or once, upon completion of the project. If this method is used, there must be a detailed and thorough cost analysis made during the negotiating process.

Overtime Rate: The majority of projects involving increased enforcement of traffic laws rely on the payment of overtime hours for patrol officers. The overtime pay rate for officers is based on actual cost per employee in accordance with the grantee's policy for payroll and salary rate.

When a project includes overtime salary or wages, traffic safety funds can pay for the additional cost of fringe benefits directly associated with the overtime hours not covered by the employee's basic benefit package (an example of an eligible fringe benefit cost associated with overtime would be an employer's contribution to a retirement plan). The costs of fringe benefits are allowable to the extent that the benefits are reasonable and are required by law, employee agreement, or an established policy.

Allowable Costs: Reference should be made to Chapter VI. Fiscal Procedures, Section E. Allowable Costs for discussion of sub grantee allowable costs.

Proportionate Funding: For all activities and equipment to be funded, which have components both related and unrelated to a highway safety grant, the Federal share shall be based proportionately on the projected utilization for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) grant purposes. For example, the NHTSA participation in the cost of Gas Chromatograph Mass Spectrometers for quantitative testing of drug evidential samples shall be on a pro rata basis. If a police department plans to use this equipment 20 percent of the time to identify drugged driving evidence and 80 percent of the time to identify evidence for the narcotics squad, the Federal participation must not exceed 20 percent of the total cost of the equipment.

viii. Contractual Services

Contractual services are services of individual consultants or consulting firms engaged in performing special service pertinent to traffic safety. All sub grantees awarding subcontracts shall comply with the terms and conditions of Title 49 CFR, Part 18 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grant and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, Section 18.36 Procurement.

A sub grantee shall not enter into any subcontract without prior written concurrence by the AHSO. The costs of such services are identified under the category of “contractual services” in the Section 2 Budget Narrative of the Grant Guidebook.

Subcontracts shall contain all required provisions of the sub grantee’s grant agreement terms and conditions. No subcontract will relieve the sub grantee of its responsibilities under the grant agreement. Subcontracts can be between governmental agencies as well as with non-government entities for professional services.

Per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Funding Policy for Field-Administrated Grants, “Costs are allowable for highway safety consultant services from universities, public agencies, non-government organizations and individuals for State or local highway safety support services or products consistent with the applicable OMB Circular, provided applicable State procurement procedures are followed and the State’s official contract and procurement manual is maintained in the State’s Highway Safety Office.”

ix. Travel and Subsistence

Travel directly related to traffic safety and linked to the project objective(s) is allowable at prevailing State rates and subject to State travel regulations (AAM 60).

The Department’s reimbursement for airfare, car rental, per diem, and other travel costs will be based on the sub grantee’s travel policy, but reimbursement of travel costs cannot exceed established State rates, unless negotiated in the grant agreement.

See Chapter V. Grant Administration and Management, Section G. Sub Grantee Travel.

x. Grant Extensions

If both the AHSO and the sub grantee agree that the project has demonstrated great merit and has potential long-range benefit, or if the project scope is modified or expanded, the sub grantee may apply for continued funding assistance. The *Grant Administrator* should explain this requirement to the potential sub grantee during project negotiations.

Although not mandatory, a general rule is to limit grant projects to not more than three years. Any project being considered for extension beyond three years should be reviewed for exceptional project performance and:

- Include revisions or expansions to the scope of the project (assuming that the sub grantee will continue the portion of the project previously supported with Federal funds)
- Document a continued need for the project
- Receive specific approval from the AHSO Administrator

Like any grant agreement, multi-year projects may be stopped or cancelled for cause or convenience, including termination for poor or non-performance. A letter to the sub grantee is required if funds are not available to continue the project.

xi. Sub Grantee Matching Funds

Some States require that sub grantees provide a minimum soft or hard match for certain grants. Other States, such as Alaska, do not require any match to be provided by sub grantees but instead provide the required Federal matching funds by directly soliciting match from State and local agencies in a consolidated manner. Both methods are acceptable as long as the minimum Federal matching requirements are met.

See Chapter IV. Grant Selection and Execution, Section H. Development of Highway Safety Office Internal Grants.

xii. Self-Sufficiency

Federal traffic safety funds are “seed money” and are generally intended to provide start-up assistance to support innovative strategies or demonstration projects. This is typically the case with community-based projects designed to address a specific problem. Grant agreements are limited to the length of the grant period with the intention that they should become self-sufficient when the funding terminates. Agencies are expected to assume a larger share of the project costs each year. Grant agreements usually do not receive extended funding beyond three years.

If both the AHSO and the sub grantee agree that the project has demonstrated great merit and has potential long-range benefits, or if the project scope is modified or expanded, the sub grantee may apply for continued funding assistance beyond the three-year limit. The Grant Administrators should explain this requirement to the potential sub grantee during project negotiations.

Any project being considered for extension beyond three years must be based on exceptional project performance and:

- Include significant revisions or expansions to the scope of the project (assuming that the grantee will continue the portion of the project previously supported with Federal funds)
- Document a continued need for the project
- Receive specific approval from the AHSO Administrator

Like any grant agreement, multi-year projects may be stopped or cancelled for cause or convenience, including termination for poor or non-performance. A letter to the sub grantee is required if funds are *not* available to continue the project.

E. Reimbursable Service Agreements

This section provides information on the preparation of Reimbursable Service Agreements (RSA) for grants between the AHSO and State agencies for traffic safety grant activities.

The RSA should be used in addition to a grant agreement when the project involves the Department's purchase of goods or services through a grant from another State agency.

The RSA document is a standard form. The RSA is prepared by the AHSO. At the time the RSA is initiated the AHSO must have verified that funding is available for the grant.

*AHSO should initiate all Dept. of Public Safety RSAs, unless notified, as soon as the notice to proceed is approved. (DPS requires the RSA in order to have a collocation code in which to charge expenses.)

Because AHSO is purchasing goods or services, the RSA is a direct expenditure of funds rather than a "pass-through" of Federal funds as with a grant agreement.

In preparing the RSA document, the requesting agency will fill in the information described in the following table.

Please make sure that work does not start until the RSA is signed.

Table 11. Information Required for RSA

Blank on Document	Information Needed
I. Project or Program Title	<i>The Requesting Agency:</i> The name of the department / division / section <i>The Servicing Agency:</i> The name of the department / division
II. Statement of Services to be performed	The servicing agency will undertake and carry out services described here
III. Terms and mechanics of reimbursement	The payment terms and billing address of the requesting agency
IV. Servicing agency cost based on	The basis is either itemized costs or cost allocation schedule
V. Schedule of maximum costs to be incurred	The amount of the contract by budget category and total
VI. Budgeting and Accounting Information/ Authorization	The requesting agency appropriation, financial coding to be charged, appropriate cite, date funds lapse, federal funds designation
VII. Approvals and Certification	Complete as indicated with legal name of the requesting agency, signature of person authorized to sign for the servicing agency, printed name, title, and date.

Any amendment to the terms of the RSA requires that another RSA be completed by the AHSO with the amendment number completed at the top of the form. The revised budget information is provided in section V of the form.