

OHIO TRAFFIC SAFETY OFFICE

FFY 2026 Proposal Guidelines Presentation

FFY 2026 Solicitation Package

The FFY 2026 Solicitation Package is available in PDF format online at <https://otso.ohio.gov/>

At the top, click on “Grants”. Click on the “Federal Funding” on the left. Under FFY 2026 Grants, click on “Grant Solicitation Package”.

- All grants - Pages 3 – 30
- General Grant – Pages 60 - 64

This presentation will cover highlights of the package, review the entire package before submitting your proposal.

All 2024 data referenced in this document is preliminary.

Traffic Safety Grant Program Overview

- The Federal Highway Safety Act of 1966 directed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation to jointly administer various highway safety projects. This federal grant program provides federal funds administered through the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS)/ Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) to eligible entities to be used in part for, but not limited to, traffic safety education, enforcement and awareness.

Traffic Safety Grant Program Overview

- Funds are to be used for short-term highway safety support, with the intent that other sources of funding will sustain programs over the long term.
- The federal grant program operates on a reimbursement basis.
- OTSO will use the following criteria to determine each grant proposal's funding eligibility:
 - Met the submission deadline
 - Met the minimum proposal requirements
 - Explained how the proposal specifically helps reduce Ohio's traffic-related fatal crashes

Traffic Safety Grant Program Overview

- OTSO will award grants based on:
 - The amount of funding available to OTSO
 - The total number of proposals submitted to OTSO
 - Past performance of the sub-grantee (if applicable)
- OTSO reserves the right to limit the number of grants awarded and the awarded amounts at any time based on available funding, ability to impact statewide goals and performance.

Traffic Safety Grant Program Overview

- FFY 2026 Traffic Safety Grant Proposals must be submitted via the website no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2025.
- Late proposals will not be considered for funding. OTSO is not responsible for an applicant's personal computer or internet access failure occurring at the proposal deadline. In the event that OTSO experiences an internal server malfunction, OTSO will notify Proposal Administrators of an updated submission deadline.

Competitive Grants Funding Priorities

- Ohio has joined the national effort, *Toward Zero Deaths: A National Strategy on Highway Safety*.
- According to preliminary 2024 data, there were 1,157 fatalities on Ohio's roads. Ohio's current fatality rate is 1.02 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
- Competitive grants will be directed toward those state and local community traffic safety activities that will have the greatest impact toward fatal crash reduction.
- Each proposal should focus on one or more of these issues:
 - Alcohol/drug-impaired driving
 - Occupant protection
 - And/or Speed management

Problem Identification Process

- For FFY 2026, OTSO worked with the University of Akron to conduct an in-depth analysis of traffic crash data to identify and prioritize traffic safety problems and to target fatal crash locations for traffic safety programming. OTSO focuses the majority of its grant funding on these areas. They have been identified as locations where programming may have the most impact on a statewide level.
- The data used in this process include traffic crash data from 2022, 2023, and preliminary 2024.

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Reimbursement Only Policy

- This federal grant program operates on a reimbursement basis. The administering agency must first incur the cost for approved expenditures and then apply for the reimbursement. Appropriate and accurate documentation will be required for each expense.

Food

- Costs relating to food for meetings, award banquets, etc. are not allowable.

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Eligible Entities

- To be eligible to receive funds under this federal grant program, the proposing agency must be one of the following:
 - Local unit of government or council of government (e.g., county, city, township, village, law enforcement agency, board of education, health department, metropolitan planning organization, etc.)
 - State agency
 - Non-profit organization, church, hospital, educational service center, college or university

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Required Personnel

- Each proposal is required to have at least one of each of the following:
 - **Authorizing Official** – the authorizing official is usually the head of an organization/agency. This individual must possess or have the ability to obtain the legislative authority to enter into an agreement with OTSO, should the proposal be approved for funding.
 - **Project Director** – The project director is designated as the agency's liaison with OTSO by the authorizing official. Should the proposal be approved for OTSO funding, this individual will oversee the daily activities of the grant and ensure that the scope of work and evaluation are completed as proposed. This individual will also serve as the primary contact person for the grant.
 - **Fiscal Officer** – The fiscal officer is responsible for the fiscal activities of the agency. This individual is responsible for overseeing the grant's budget, as well as submitting properly prepared claims for reimbursement to OTSO.

GRANTS Plus System and Document Access

- **Each proposal must identify the personnel on the General Information page in the GRANTS Plus system. Sub-recipient staff that will need access to the grant, will need to be added to the proposal on the Add/Edit People page under Management Tools.**
- See either the “Grantee Manual” located under “My Training Materials” in GRANTS Plus for additional instructions on creating user accounts and adding staff to the grant or “See Instructions” link under Sub-Recipient Staff Access on the Applicant Assurances page.

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Grant Period and Project Commencement

- This federal grant period has a 12-month cycle (October 1 – September 30).
- Each approved proposal will begin grant activity based upon the assigned Authorized to Proceed Date and an executed agreement between OTSO and the administering agency.
- It will terminate at the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30, 2026), unless otherwise specified in the agreement.

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Grant Period and Project Commencement

- No costs will be reimbursed for any activity performed prior to the designated authorized to proceed date or after the termination date of the agreement.
- Unspent funds that remain at the end of the grant period will be retained by OTSO.

Standard Proposal Guidelines for All Grants

Preparing the Grant Proposal

- Adhere to the requirements described in each section. Periodically reviewing the instructions as the proposal is prepared will ensure full compliance with the requirements.
- Submitting a proposal that does not comply with the requirements could adversely affect the consideration that the proposal receives in the review and/or award process.
- Write a clear concise grant proposal that can be easily understood. Do not include past grant award activities and/or accomplishments.

Proposal Types

- Impaired Driving Enforcement Program/Selective Traffic Enforcement Program
- Ohio State Highway Patrol High Visibility Enforcement Program
- OVI Task Force
- Safe Communities
- Summer Holiday Enforcement
- General (for all other traffic safety activities not listed)

Traffic Safety Grant Funding Policies

- All agencies receiving grants must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including those mentioned in this section, as well as those noted in the Terms and Conditions (pages 10 – 30 of the FFY 2026 Grant Solicitation Package).

Funding Limitations

- The basic funding eligibility factors listed in this document will apply to NHTSA grants in accordance with 23 USC Chapter 4 Section 402, 23 USC Section 164, and 23 USC Section 405. They should be implemented in conjunction with the appropriate Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circular:
 - State and Local Governments – 2 CFR Part 225
 - Educational Institutions – 2 CFR Part 220
 - Non-Profit Organizations – 2 CFR Part 230
 - Hospitals – 2 CFR Part 215

Traffic Safety Grant Funding Policies

Funding Limitations

- To be allowable, costs must be necessary and reasonable.
- If in doubt, contact OTSO to determine if a particular cost item is fundable prior to submission of the proposal.

Auditing Requirements

- You are required to retain a copy of your most recent Audit Report, Management Letter and/or single Audit Report and provide it to OTSO upon request.

Terms and Conditions

The complete Terms and Conditions is on pages 10 - 30 of the FFY 2026 Grant Solicitation Package. In these Terms and Conditions, the term “sub-recipient”, “state”, “state highway safety agency” refers/applies to the Administering Agency of the project.

- 1) Agreement

Any inconsistencies between agreements and any attached documents shall be resolved in favor of the most current revised agreement on the online system, which shall be the controlling document.

- 3) Nondiscrimination (applies to subrecipients as well as States)

The State highway safety agency [and its subrecipients] will comply with all Federal statutes and implementing regulations relating to nondiscrimination (“Federal Nondiscrimination Authorities”). See pages 10 - 13 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full requirements.

Terms and Conditions

- 4) The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. 8103)
The State will provide a drug-free workplace. See pages 13 - 14 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full requirements.
- 5) Political Activity (Hatch Act) (applies to subrecipients as well as States)
The State will comply with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508), which limits the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.
- 6) Certification Regarding Federal Lobbying (applies to subrecipients as well as States)
Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements. See page 14 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full requirements.

Terms and Conditions

- **7) Restriction on State Lobbying** (applies to subrecipients as well as States)

None of the funds under this program will be used for any activity specifically designed to urge or influence a State or local legislator to favor or oppose the adoption of any specific legislative proposal pending before any State or local legislative body. Such activities include both direct and indirect (e.g., "grassroots") lobbying activities, with one exception. This does not preclude a State official whose salary is supported with NHTSA funds from engaging in direct communications with State or local legislative officials, in accordance with customary State practice, even if such communications urge legislative officials to favor or oppose the adoption of a specific pending legislative proposal.

- **8) Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension** (applies to Subrecipients as well as States)

See pages 15 – 18 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full requirements.

Terms and Conditions

- 9) **Buy America Act** (applies to subrecipients as well as States)

The State and each subrecipient will comply with the Buy America requirement (23 U.S.C. 313) when purchasing items using Federal funds. Buy America requires a State, or subrecipient, to purchase with Federal funds only steel, iron and manufactured products produced in the United States, unless the Secretary of Transportation determines that such domestically produced items would be inconsistent with the public interest, that such materials are not reasonably available and of a satisfactory quality, or that inclusion of domestic materials will increase the cost of the overall project contract by more than 25 percent. In order to use Federal funds to purchase foreign produced items, the State must submit a waiver request that provides an adequate basis and justification to and approved by the Secretary of Transportation.

Terms and Conditions

- **10) CERTIFICATION ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST** (applies to subrecipients as well as States)

General Requirements

No employee, officer or agent of a State or its subrecipient who is authorized in an official capacity to negotiate, make, accept or approve, or to take part in negotiating, making, accepting or approving any subaward, including contracts or subcontracts, in connection with this grant shall have, directly or indirectly, any financial or personal interest in any such subaward. Such a financial or personal interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or personal interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an entity considered for a subaward. See pages 18 - 19 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full details.

Terms and Conditions

- **10) CERTIFICATION ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST
CONT.**

Disclosure Requirements

No State or its subrecipient, including its officers, employees or agents, shall perform or continue to perform under a grant or cooperative agreement, whose objectivity may be impaired because of any related past, present, or currently planned interest, financial or otherwise, in organizations regulated by NHTSA or in organizations whose interests may be substantially affected by NHTSA activities. See pages 18 – 19 of the Grant Solicitation Package for full details.

Terms and Conditions

- 11) Prohibition on Using Grant Funds to Check for Helmet
Helmet Usage (applies to subrecipients as well as States)

The State and each subrecipient will not use 23 U.S.C. Chapter 4 grant funds for programs to check helmet usage or to create checkpoints that specifically target motorcyclists.

- 12) Policy on Seat Belt Use

In accordance with Executive Order 13043, Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States, dated April 16, 1997, the Grantee is encouraged to adopt and enforce on-the-job seat belt use policies and programs for its employees when operating company-owned, rented, or personally-owned vehicles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is responsible for providing leadership and guidance in support of this Presidential initiative. For information and resources on traffic safety programs and policies for employers, please contact the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), a public-private partnership dedicated to improving the traffic safety practices of employers and employees. You can download information on seat belt programs, costs of motor vehicle crashes to employers, and other traffic safety initiatives at www.trafficsafety.org. The NHTSA website (www.nhtsa.gov) also provides information on statistics, campaigns, and program evaluations and references.

Terms and Conditions

- 13) Policy on Banning Text Messaging While Driving

In accordance with Executive Order 13513, Federal Leadership On Reducing Text Messaging While Driving, and DOT Order 3902.10, Text Messaging While Driving, States are encouraged to adopt and enforce workplace safety policies to decrease crashes caused by distracted driving, including policies to ban text messaging while driving company-owned or -rented vehicles, Government-owned, leased or rented vehicles, or privately-owned vehicles when on official Government business or when performing any work on or behalf of the Government. States are also encouraged to conduct workplace safety initiatives in a manner commensurate with the size of the business, such as establishment of new rules and programs or re-evaluation of existing programs to prohibit text messaging while driving, and education, awareness, and other outreach to employees about the safety risks associated with texting while driving.

Terms and Conditions

- 15) Supplanting

Grant funds must not be used to supplant state or local funds, meaning that grant funds must not be used to replace routine or local expenditures for costs of activities that constitute general expenses required to carry out the overall responsibilities of the sub-recipient and/or its sub-recipients.

- 18) OTSO/Sub-recipient Meetings

Sub-recipients must attend all scheduled OTSO/Sub-recipient meetings to coordinate and review activity including current crash data throughout the region to achieve high visibility enforcement, education and awareness.

Terms and Conditions

- 19) Press Release

Each sub-recipient is required to submit a press release to their local media announcing the grant award, including amount and purpose of award.

- 21) Required Personnel

Each proposal/grant is required to have, at a minimum, an authorizing official, a project director and a fiscal officer. See page 7 of the Grant Solicitation Package for a description of each. This information must be kept current.

- 22) GRANTS User Accounts/Password Security

For security purposes, each person using the GRANTS Plus system must have a separate user name and password. Each account must have its own email account. **Sub-recipient agency personnel must not share passwords with agency staff or ODPS staff.**

Terms and Conditions

- 23) Labor Costs

All work (personnel labor costs) reimbursed under this grant must be for actual paid hours worked. Labor costs based on a percentage of hours worked or hours accrued as comp time will not be accepted for reimbursement. Leave hours (e.g., sick, vacation, personal, holiday, etc.) are not reimbursable as direct labor. The employer's share of fringe benefits (e.g., retirement, Medicare, etc.) are eligible for reimbursement. Worker's Compensation is not eligible for reimbursement. Documentation verifying fringe percentages must be available to OTSO upon request.

- 24) Personnel Activity Reports

Personnel Activity Reports may be required for any individual working on this federal grant program. These reports, at a minimum, must document date worked, detailed explanation of activity performed and the number of hours per date to be charged to this agreement. This document must be signed and dated by the individual and their immediate supervisor, maintained by the administering agency and submitted as a part of the reimbursement documentation required.

Terms and Conditions

- 25) Sub-Contracts

All sub-contracts must be submitted to OTSO for review prior to their execution and are subject to the same laws, regulations, and policies that govern this agreement. **Contracts and procurements must include a copy of these Terms and Conditions.** Do not include a specific contractor's name/vendor's name in the proposal/grant.

Any public information/educational materials purchased under a sub-contract, must be submitted to OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to incurring the cost.

Any training courses must be submitted to and approved by OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to scheduling.

Terms and Conditions

- 28) Supplies / Materials / Other Direct Costs

All supplies, materials, and other direct costs must be used for approved traffic safety activities throughout its useful life. All purchases must be submitted to and approved by OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to incurring the cost. Outreach efforts should be made and materials should be provided to reach the county's ethnic and/or limited English speaking populations.

Alcohol is not allowed to be purchased with funds from this grant.

The sub-recipient must submit a final draft copy of all materials to OTSO for approval prior to production. In addition:

A.) All materials shall include federal sponsorship credit and/or disclaimer clauses as directed by OTSO. The credit line shall state: Funded by U.S. DOT/NHTSA and ODPS.

B.) All public service announcements funded with federal funds, in whole or in part, must be closed captioned for the hearing impaired.

C.) All data results, reports, equipment, supplies and other materials (including but not limited to electronic versions) developed by the sub-recipient must be available to ODPS/OTSO upon request.

Terms and Conditions

- 30) Travel

Any request for travel and associated costs must be submitted to and approved by OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to incurring any travel related costs.

Attendance at any conference/seminar/workshop that charges a registration fee must be submitted to and approved by OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to registration. All conferences/seminars/workshops must be traffic safety related; an agenda must be provided to OTSO.

All out of state travel conducted under this grant agreement will be reimbursed using U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates based on travel location or your agency's travel policy whichever is less. A current travel policy must be submitted with the grant proposal. OTSO will not reimburse for meals provided by the conference. Dietary restrictions need to be worked out with the conference organizer. Alcohol is not allowed to be purchased with funds from this grant.

Terms and Conditions

- 31) Training

The cost of training personnel for traffic safety purposes may be funded when the training supports both the goals and scope of work of the approved grant program and the goals of OTSO. All training requests and purchases must be submitted to and approved by OTSO on a Request to Purchase form prior to incurring the cost.

- 32) Request to Purchase (RTP)

All RTPs must be submitted to OTSO by August 1, 2026.

Terms and Conditions

- 33) Expenditure Reports

This agreement will operate on a reimbursement basis only. The administering agency must first incur the costs for approved expenditures and then apply for the reimbursement. Appropriate and accurate documentation will be required for each expense.

Expenditure Reports with accurate documentation and corresponding report information must be submitted monthly. If there wasn't any activity, a zero expenditure report must be submitted. The expenditure report must be submitted online to the OTSO by the 15th calendar day of the following month. Failure to submit these reports in a timely manner will cause a delay in payment of claims, may jeopardize funding for present and future projects and may result in being placed in "Sub-Recipient on Notice" status.

Terms and Conditions

- 37) Final Report and Final Expenditure Report

A final comprehensive annual report **and** a properly documented final claim for reimbursement are due to the OTSO November 1st.

The final expenditure report will not be reviewed until the annual report has been submitted.

- a) If either the final expenditure report or the annual report are not submitted by November 1st, a 10 percent penalty may be deducted from the final expenditure report.
- b) If either the final expenditure report or the annual report are not submitted by November 15th, the final expenditure report will not be reimbursed.

The previous year's final expense report and/or annual report will be completed during the current federal fiscal year with a reasonable amount of hours.

Terms and Conditions

- 38) Records Retention

All records relating to project activity and/or expenditures must be maintained for review by representatives of the federal or state government for at least three years following the final reimbursement payment.

- 40) Termination of Agreement

Either OTSO or the sub-recipient may terminate this Agreement for any reason by giving the other party 30 days written notice. If the Agreement is cancelled under this provision, OTSO shall reimburse the sub-recipient for approved work completed and documented to that date. Upon termination all data results, reports and other materials developed by the sub-recipient will become the property of OTSO. All of the equipment, materials and/or supplies provided to the sub-recipient for use under this agreement must be returned to OTSO upon request within 30 days of said written notice. Should any change in federal funding adversely affect OTSO's ability to complete the fiscal year's activities, OTSO has the right to revise or terminate the agreement in writing.

Terms and Conditions

- 72) Personnel Activity Reports

Personnel Activity Reports are required for all individuals working on this federal grant program. These reports, at a minimum, must document date worked, detailed explanation of activity performed and the number of hours per day to be charged to this agreement. This document is to be signed and dated by the individual and their immediate supervisor. It must be included as a part of the reimbursement documentation.

GENERAL GRANT

Proposal Guidelines

FFY 2026 General Grant Changes

Grant Program Changes

- Out of state travel changed to \$2,000 for an OTSO approved conference.

General Grant Proposals

- General traffic safety grant proposals must demonstrate cost effectiveness, measurable results, and the potential to positively impact the traffic-related goals both at the state and local levels. If it is appropriate for the grant activity, outreach efforts should be made and materials should be provided to reach the jurisdiction's ethnic/non-English-speaking populations (materials can be requested from OTSO).
- Criteria used in selecting general projects:
 - Who is being served?
 - What is the purpose and what is the intended outcome?
 - Where will the project be undertaken?
 - Why is the project needed?
 - When will the project take place and when will the results be accomplished?
 - How does the project relate to identified high risk areas? How will the results be measured? How will the project reduce the overall number of traffic related fatalities in Ohio?

General Grant Proposals

- Examples of why proposals get turned down:
 - Proposals that:
 - Are not performance-based and data-driven or will have little impact on reducing traffic related fatalities (“feel-good” projects).
 - Do not relate to the traffic safety problems identified by OTSO problem identification process.
 - Are of poor quality.
 - Are submitted by organizations or agencies that have had a poor performance record in managing projects.
 - Use federal funding to replace existing state or local funding instead of funding a new or expanded effort (“supplanting” is prohibited by federal regulation).
 - Fund staff positions that do not relate to the proposed project.

General Grant Proposals

Allowable Costs

- Personnel/Coordination Expenses (Salaries and Wages)
- Contractual Services
- Meetings and Conferences
- Equipment
- Supplies and Materials
- Travel
- Training
- Public Information and Education (PI & E)
- Petty Cash
- Vehicle Mileage

Refer to pages 60 – 62 of the FFY2026 Grant Solicitation Package for details on each cost category.

General Grant Proposals

Unallowable Costs

- Phone
- Rate/Cost Allocation Charges
- Paid Advertising/Public Communications
- Equipment
- Certain Labor Costs
- Worker's Compensation
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Food
- Vehicle Fuel
- Entertainment
- Facilities and Construction
- Office Furnishings and Fixtures
- Lobbying

General Grant Proposals

Unallowable Costs (cont.)

- Central Service Charges

Refer to pages 62 – 64 of the FFY2026 Grant Solicitation Package for details on each cost category.

Next Steps

- OTSO will begin proposal reviews in June.
- If corrections are needed in the proposal, it will be opened up for corrections. You will receive an email stating that modifications are required. Return to the GRANTS Plus System. The proposal will be on your Task List. Click on the proposal link to open the proposal.
- After all corrections have been made, return to the proposal menu and click “Submit Modified Application”.

Next Steps

- OTSO strives to have all approved grants executed by mid-September. In order to achieve this, proposals that have been sent back for corrections need to be returned to the OTSO promptly for re-review.

Questions?

- If you have any questions, please email your questions to otso@dps.ohio.gov

Reminder

- All FFY2026 Traffic Safety Grant Proposals must be submitted via the website no later than 11:59 p.m. on **Thursday, May 25, 2025.**
- The due date is subject to change based on the current environment.