



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Motor
Carrier Safety
Administration

GRANT PROGRAM

HIGH PRIORITY COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE



BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Preparing a HP-CMV Grant Application



FMCSA BEST PRACTICES: PREPARING AN HP-CMV GRANT APPLICATION



KEEP IN MIND

FMCSA recommends that grant applicants take several steps before preparing their application. Read the FMCSA Discretionary Grants Toolkit, available at ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants, for information.



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This guide is meant as a helpful summary of the content and format requirements. For complete information on content and formatting requirements, see section 2 (Content and Form of Application Submission) of the HP-CMV Grant NOFO.

Thank you for considering applying for FMCSA’s High Priority Commercial Motor Vehicle (HP-CMV) Grant Program!

We are eager to hear about your proposal for a project, or projects, to improve roadway safety and reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles (CMVs).

The HP Grant Program is a discretionary grant program—meaning, this is a competitive application. No applicant is guaranteed HP grant funding, and each application is evaluated on its merit. This document is meant to help you prepare a competitive, high-quality HP grant application that showcases the potential of your project.

HP-CMV Grant Application Structure

To be considered by FMCSA, all HP-CMV grant applications must include the following:

- Project Plan Narrative
- Supplemental attachments, if any.
- Required forms, as specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Forms may be filled out electronically in Grants.gov.

Project Plan Narrative

The main part of your HP-CMV grant application, the Project Plan Narrative is where you will tell FMCSA what challenge your project will address, what activities you will take to address it, how much it will cost, and how you will track your success.

The Project Plan Narrative must include the following sections:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| A. Introduction | D. Performance Activity Plan | F. Monitoring and Timeline/Milestone Plan |
| B. Problem Statement | E. Performance Measurement Plan | G. Budget Narrative |
| C. Performance Objective | | |

Project Plan Narrative By The Numbers:

No more than 35 pages total	Up to 4 projects per application	No more than 5 pages per Narrative section	ALL Narrative sections, in order, for each project, including separate budgets	1 comprehensive/summary budget, if proposing multiple projects
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Give yourself plenty of time to write your application—FMCSA’s deadline is firm. Don’t wait until the last minute to click “submit”—give yourself some time to handle any technical issues that may arise.

How to Write a Complete Narrative

Providing a complete narrative will help your proposal move through the merit review process. FMCSA considers an application incomplete when the Project Plan Narrative provides insufficient information and context.

What Makes a Complete Narrative?

Incomplete	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very general description • Lack of data cited • Does not prioritize FMCSA’s stated goals for this funding opportunity • Monitoring plan contains no substantive or realistic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cites three years of data and trend analysis to explain the problem • Cites U.S.DOT strategic priorities and specific goals from the NOFO that the project will seek to address • Names and quantifies the specific proposed activities • Identifies clear, measurable project goals • Provides context for whether this is a new project or an extension of an existing project • Demonstrates that a monitoring plan is ready to enact

Does Your Application Contain Multiple Projects?

If so, each project must be listed separately and include the all sections in consecutive order.

For example:

Project 1	Project 2
1.1. Introduction	2.1. Introduction
1.2. Problem Statement	2.2. Problem Statement
1.3. Performance Objective	2.3. Performance Objective
1.4. Performance Activity Plan	2.4. Performance Activity Plan
1.5. Performance Measurement Plan	2.5. Performance Measurement Plan
1.6. Monitoring and Timeline Milestone Plan	2.6. Monitoring and Timeline Milestone Plan
1.7. Budget Narrative	2.7. Budget Narrative

And so on, until all projects are accounted for. You will also need to include a comprehensive or summary budget that includes expenses per project/per line item. The comprehensive budget must match the application’s forms SF-424 and SF424A.



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Supplemental documents are not common for HP-CMV applications, but include them if they are relevant to your proposed project. Be sure to refer to them in your project narrative and include them as attachments. These attachments may not take the place of any narrative sections.

SECTION A: Introduction

Explain the project purpose. Be sure to specify which grant priorities the project will address.

This section must also include a Local Law Enforcement and Other Entities statement certifying that you meet the conditions listed in 49 CFR 350.405, or that your organization is exempt from them.

Incomplete	Complete
[The Applicant] will conduct an estimated 1,000 inspections and 2,000 traffic enforcement contacts by allocating 3,000 officer hours towards high visibility traffic enforcement activities.	[The Applicant]'s high visibility blitz project will be focused on HP-CMV NOFO priority 1 of Targeting unsafe driving of CMVs and non-CMVs in areas identified as high-risk crash corridors. As identified in the 2022 crash fatality report of State X, Highways 31 and 85 have shown a three year upward trend in crashes and fatalities, with X% of the 2,100 crashes identified in calendar year 2022 along these corridors. Through high visibility traffic enforcement blitzes the State can meet its goal to reduce CMV crashes by 10% (210) from the 2,100 crashes identified in CY 2022 along these corridors. High visibility blitz activity will include 4 sworn officers conducting an estimated 1,000 inspections and 2,000 traffic enforcement contacts by allocating 3,000 officer hours, with an average of two contacts per hour, towards high visibility traffic enforcement activities.
[no certification statement]	As a local law enforcement agency, [The Applicant] certifies that it meets the eight conditions of 49 CFR § 350.405(a)(2).
[no certification statement]	As an education institution, [The Applicant] certifies that it meets the conditions of 49 CFR § 350.405(a)(2) except for subsections (ii) and (vii), as this project is not directly related to law enforcement activity, and subsection (viii) as there are no national databases relevant to this specific project.



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Include statistics to show how your proposal is data-driven. FMCSA provides data on crashes involving large trucks and buses, roadside inspection activity, and motor carrier registration information on FMCSA's Analysis & Information Online (A&I) website: ai.fmcsa.dot.gov.

SECTION B: Problem Statement

Describe the problem(s) the project will address, using qualitative and quantitative measures. Be specific, citing data sources, explaining your rationale, and showing at least three years of trend analysis for the specific problem(s), driver behaviors, and/or location(s).

✘ Incomplete	✔ Complete
<p>[The Applicant] has identified 5 highway corridors that alone account for 38.4% of all CMV related fatalities in its State. State traffic records indicate that speeding, following too closely, and improper lane change account for 84% of the crash causation factors along these corridors.</p>	<p>[The Applicant] has newly identified in the 2023 crash fatality report of State X that 5 highway corridors account for 38.4% of all CMV related fatalities in its State. State traffic records indicate an upward trend from FY16 to FY23 resulting, in FY23, in speeding, following too closely, and improper lane change accounting for 84% of the crash causation factors along these corridors. This would be a new project in efforts to combat the upward trend of driver-related crashes within the identified crash corridors. Through high visibility traffic enforcement blitzes State X can meet its goal of crash reduction by 210 (10%).</p> <p>Addressing these issues aligns with the FMCSA priorities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing speeding • Preventing unsafe driving





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Performance objects should be SMART-- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

SECTION C: Performance Objective(s)

Describe the anticipated quantifiable goal(s) related to the problem statement. They can be measured in numbers, percentages, or other forms that accurately measure the outputs and outcomes. Objectives should reference at least three years of data and trend analysis.

	✘ Incomplete	✔ Complete
EXAMPLE 1:	[The Applicant] will reduce the number of hours of service violations found in roadside inspections and during carrier investigations by 10% during the activity period.	[The Applicant] will reduce the number of hours of service (HOS) violations found in roadside inspections and carrier investigations by 310 (10%) during the grant's period of performance. 2023 Commercial Motor Vehicle citation report of State X identified 3,100 HOS violations in calendar year 2023 which will be utilized as the baseline in determining effectiveness of program's traffic enforcement activity.
EXAMPLE 2:	[The Applicant] will reduce the percentage of speeding, following too closely, and improper lane change violations along Highways 10 and 20 during the grant's Period of Performance (POP). [The Applicant] will also reduce the total number of CMV crashes as well as reduce the number of CMV crashes in which HOS violations were identified in a post crash inspection in the two identified high crash corridors.	In this project, [the Applicant] identifies three objectives : Reduce the percentage of speeding, following too closely, and improper lane change violations by 20% (1,344) of crash causation factors along Highways 10 and 20 during the grant's Period of Performance (POP). This reduction uses CY2023 as the baseline, when speeding, following too closely, and improper lane change violations were cited in 84% of CMV crashes on these highways. Reduce by 10% the number of CMV crashes where HOS violations were identified in a post crash inspection in the two identified high crash corridors, from 1,500 (CY2023 baseline) to 1,350 (CY2025). Reduce by 10% the total CMV crashes in the two identified high crash corridors from 2,100 (CY2023 baseline) to 1,890 (CY2025).



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Include specific benchmarks that you can track—if awarded grant funding, you will report on these in your quarterly progress reports.

SECTION D: Performance Activity Plan

Provide a description of the project activities your team believes will help mitigate the identified problem(s). Include details such as the number and frequency of activities.

✘ Incomplete

[The Applicant] will conduct high visibility traffic enforcement and inspection campaigns around the designated corridors during the activity period. [The Applicant] will conduct the campaigns based on identified needs and will ensure that it triples the number of officers assigned to each area during each of the periods.

✔ Complete

[The Applicant] will conduct **8 quarterly high visibility traffic enforcement and inspection campaigns** during third shift (2300-0700) around the 2 high crash corridors on Highways 31 and 85 identified in the **2023 crash fatality report of State X**. Each campaign will consist of at least **9 officers per crash corridor** focusing on **speeding and following too closely**. All traffic enforcement stops will be conducted in conjunction with a **level 3 inspection** with an average of **2 stops per hour per officer** during the 8-hour shift. Proposed activities include **144 traffic enforcement contacts and inspections** per location per campaign **totaling 2,304 traffic enforcement contacts and 1,152 level 3 inspections during the Period of Performance (POP)**, as shown in data table:.

Highway	# of officers	# of quarters	# of hours per shift	Average traffic enforcement contacts per campaign	Total expected traffic enforcement contacts during Grant POP	Average Level 3 inspections per campaign	Total expected Level 3 inspections
10	9	8	8	144	1,152	72	576
20	9	8	8	144	1,152	72	576
Total					2,304		1,152



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Keep your performance goals as measurable as possible. For example, if you are raising awareness about preventing human trafficking, a measurable goal may be the number of visits to a specific website.

SECTION E: Performance Measurement Plan

Provide a description of how the applicant will measure progress towards the performance objective goal(s), such as quantifiable and measurable outputs (hours, carrier contacts, inspections, etc.) and in terms of performance outcomes.

✘ Incomplete	✔ Complete
<p>[The Applicant] will evaluate the various levels of inspections each quarter to ensure that officers focus on Level III to meet the program wide goal of at least 33% of all inspections.</p> <p>Further, the Applicant will evaluate the violation types cited on inspections and carrier investigations for domiciled carriers to monitor the percentage of hours of service violations.</p>	<p>[The Applicant] will monitor and evaluate the various levels of inspections each quarter within the State traffic management system to ensure that officers focus on Level III to meet the program wide goal of at least 33% of all inspections. Further, the Applicant will evaluate effectiveness of the program towards its goal of reducing Hours of Service (HOS) violations by 298 (10%) of the baseline 2,983 HOS violations cited in 2022. Evaluation will include the violation types cited on inspections and carrier investigations for domiciled carriers to monitor the percentage of hours of service violations.</p>





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Remember, the goal of monitoring is to quickly identify when a project is falling short of its performance goals, giving the project team the opportunity to make the adjustments needed to make the project as successful as possible.

SECTION F: Monitoring Plan

Provide a description of how you will monitor the progress of the project on an ongoing basis. This should include who will conduct the monitoring, the frequency with which it will be carried out, and how and to whom reports will be made to FMCSA.

✘ Incomplete	✔ Complete
<p>The (identify position performing this function [e.g., State Police Lieutenant]) will schedule locations for the details as well as all paperwork involved. Clerical administration staff will assist with all reports to State X and FMCSA and day-to-day operations as needed.</p> <p>The (identify position performing this function [e.g., State Police Lieutenant and administrative personnel]) will also be setting up and maintaining the data, ensuring goals are met. These reports will be filed and available upon request at State X Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Building (Location X).</p>	<p>The (identify position performing this function [e.g., State Police Lieutenant]) will monitor weekly traffic enforcement activity reports for the prospective corridors and schedule the enforcement details. Clerical administration personnel will assist with all reports to State X and FMCSA and any other day to day operations as needed. All reporting to</p> <p>FMCSA will be completed on a quarterly basis. The (identify position performing this function [e.g., State Police Lieutenant and administrative personnel]) will also maintain the data by completing reports at the end of each traffic enforcement campaign to ensure accurate capture of data on tasks performed. The coordinators will file quarterly reports with FMCSA.</p>





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FMCSA strongly recommends that applicants use or refer to the Budget Narrative Template included in the current NOFO application package on Grants.gov. Use the 2023 Budget Template as an example; check the NOFO Appendix for the current year's preferred content and format.

SECTION G: Budget Narrative

Provide a description of the expenses by budget category which match the application's SF-424a Budget Category columns for each project. The narrative explains the "what," "how," and "why" of costs proposed to carry out grant project goals and objectives. You must provide clear detail to demonstrate that all proposed costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary.

Your budget narrative must also meet the following requirements:

- Expenses must be itemized to demonstrate how the total cost was determined. For example, travel cost must not be bundled, but must show how the total was determined by itemizing cost for airline, lodging, taxi, etc.
- All line items must be rounded to the nearest whole dollar amount.
- Salaried and/or supervisory staff must be budgeted only for their time actively spent on project tasks.

✘ Incomplete

The annual cost of this project will be \$63,616 for all related personnel, covering additional work hours per officer and the preparation of quarterly performance reports.

✔ Complete

PERSONNEL BUDGET NARRATIVE SECTION

Position(s)	# of Staff	% of Salaried Time	This Project's Annual Hours Per Person	Hourly Rate	Total Cost	Federal Share (85%)
Troopers Overtime	18	0%	64	\$55	\$63,360	\$53,856
Clerical Administrative Specialist	1	0.4% x 2000 hrs	8	\$32	\$256	\$218
Subtotal Salary					\$63,616	\$54,074

The State will conduct one high visibility traffic enforcement and inspection campaign each quarter in the 2 high crash corridors on Highways 10 and 20 (for a total of 8 campaigns). Per campaign, there will be 9 officers staffing each location during an 8 hour shift, for a total of 64 additional work hours per officer, or 1,152 total hours. The State budgeted an average rate of \$55 per hour, as mandated by the State's Collective Bargaining Agreement for the State Troopers' Association. This totals \$63,360.

The part time hours are for the Clerical Administrative Specialist who prepares the quarterly performance reports. Applicable program hours are tracked through the State's electronic timecard system. We have projected eight hours during the performance period for these tasks at an hourly rate of \$32. This totals \$256.



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It can be hard to proofread your own work! Ask a colleague who has not worked on the narrative to read it through and provide feedback before you submit. Ask them to read the NOFO for reference.

Before You Submit

Use the checklists below to make sure your application meets all FMCSA criteria. Don't let your application be declined due to missing one of these important points!

REQUIRED for a COMPLETE Application:

- Have you checked the NOFO to confirm you are an eligible applicant?**
 - **Are you applying for the correct HP grant?**
If the proposed project involves the development and deployment of new and innovative technology solutions to support commercial motor vehicle information systems and networks, make sure the application is submitted under the HP-ITD NOFO, rather than the HP-CMV NOFO.
- Are you submitting the application by the deadline (date and time)?**
- Has the applicant submitted a well thought out application that does not duplicate language from other grant applications?**
- For your Title VI Non-Discrimination Program Compliance Plan:**
 - New applicants: Have you contacted the FMCSA Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at FMCSATitleVI@dot.gov prior to applying to discuss requirements?
 - Have you created or updated your existing Title VI Plan? (Must be done annually.)
 - Have you requested approval of your Title VI Plan from the FMCSA Office of Civil Rights (OCR)?
 - Have you submitted your approved or draft Title VI Plan with this application?
 - Have you prepared and submitted your Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurance form (in the NOFO)?

*** NOTE: While this is not required as part of your application, it is required to be completed before grant agreement execution, if selected for an award. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to include their Title VI Plan in their applications.*
- Does the application include, for each proposed project, a complete Project Narrative including Budget Narrative?**
- Does each Project Narrative Introduction include a statement certifying that you meet (as a law enforcement agency) or are exempt from (as another entity) the eight conditions of 49 CFR § 350.405(a)(2)?**
- Have you prepared and submitted with this application all required forms in your [Grants.gov Workspace](https://www.grants.gov), including:**
 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)?
 - Budget information for Non-Construction form (SF-424A)?
 - Assurances for Non-Construction form (SF-424B)?
 - Certification Regarding Lobbying form, if applicable?
 - Disclosure of Lobbying activities form (SF-LLL), if applicable?
 - Key Contacts, with your Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) and Administrative Official (ADO) contact information?
 - Current Indirect Cost (IDC) agreement, if applicable?
- If submitting multiple projects in this application, have you included a comprehensive or summary budget that includes expenses per project/per line item and which matches the application's SF-424 and SF424A above?**



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While the steps on this page are not required, they will help make sure you anticipate the questions FMCSA will have when reviewing your application, which may get your application through the merit review more smoothly.

RECOMMENDED for a HIGH-QUALITY Application (more likely to receive funding):

- Have you explained how your project(s) directly supports the [purpose of the HP-CMV Grant program](#) and statutes?
- Have you explained how each project directly addresses specific priorities named in:
 - U.S. DOT's strategic goals?
 - FMCSA Priorities?
 - This HP-CMV Grant's current-year Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
- Does the application propose SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals, or a similar proposed deliverable?
- If you have applied for an HP Grant before, does this application directly address the feedback provided by FMCSA on previous submissions?
- Is the proposed project budget reasonable, appropriate, and proportionate to the services provided and the applicant's staff time required to execute?
- Is your office/organization well-positioned to accept and manage Federal funding and its reimbursement model?





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Need More Information?

GRANT PROGRAM

For questions about the HP Grant Program, please contact FMCSA.

Email: FMCSAHPGrants@dot.gov

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

For questions about grant application submission, please contact FMCSA's Grants Management Office.

Email: FMCSA_GrantMgmtHelpdesk@dot.gov

<https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Grants/HighPriority.aspx>