

BEST PRACTICES FOR PREPARING A CMVOST Grant Application



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

CMVOST

About the Grant Process

This document provides “best practices” for writing a Commercial Motor Vehicle Operator Safety Training (CMVOST) grant, covering structure details and budget narratives.

CMVOST grants provide funding to entities to train current or former members of the U.S. Armed Force (including National Guard, Reservists and their spouses/children), to obtain a CDL. The latest CMVOST Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) announcement on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) details additional priorities for the funding cycle.

Application Overview

What Is a Project and What Must They Include?

A project may consist of one or more priorities achieving a defined goal. If an applicant chooses to propose multiple projects within a single application, each project must contain:

- A distinct title.
- Separate and distinct project narratives.
- Separate and distinct budget narratives and line-item budgets.
- Applications with multiple budgets must include a comprehensive budget.

To learn more about the project narrative and budget narrative for a CMVOST Grant application, see the section below on the Application Structure.



How Should I Structure My Application?

Follow the NOFO for detailed structural requirements, such as font, type size, and page limitations. Direct any questions to the point of contact in the NOFO. See below for a high-level summary of the application structure.

A Project Narrative Includes:

- **Introduction:** Explain the project purpose and specific NOFO priorities the project addresses and organizational capacity.
- **Problem Statement:** Provide a quantitative description of the issue the project will address, including baseline data and targeted outcome.
- **Performance Objective:** Describe the anticipated project outcome using quantitative data.
- **Program Activity Plan:** Outline activities required to achieve the performance objective, including performance benchmarks.
- **Performance Measurement Plan:** Explain how performance objective progress will be measured (hours, carrier contacts, number of drivers tested, etc.). Include milestones and timelines.
- **Program Evaluation and Monitoring Plan:** Explain the methods to assess the project's progress and success.

A Budget Narrative Includes:

A description by budget category (refer to [Standard Form 424A](#) object class categories) clearly supporting the project plan that justifies the expense is allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary. This section demonstrates that the applicant has the expertise to successfully implement the stated strategies and achieve its stated goal(s).



What You Need for Each Goal

Problem Statement



Performance Objective



Performance Activity Plan



Performance Measurement Plan

Describe how your organization has the expertise to implement the strategies and achieve its goal(s) and the NOFO priorities, including:

- Information related to the applicant's training program.
- Ability to conduct recruitment and career placement.
- Ability to successfully manage a Federal financial assistance award.
- Proximity to military bases and the business relationships that your entity leveraged in recruiting qualified and/or underserved students and/or refugee's.

The following sections will cover required components of the CMVOST grant application in more detail.



Project/Budget Narrative Development

Brief Introduction

Example: Introduction

The applicant has been providing CDL training since 1986 and is the preferred training provider for several large government and for-profit organizations. The training and recruitment are within 60 miles of a major military base and a VA hospital. The applicant maintains an on-campus Office of Veterans Affairs and is recognized by GI Jobs Magazine as a military-friendly program. Its experience includes training drivers in the safe operation of all commercial vehicles, including passenger vehicles and tankers. The applicant is currently registered on the FMCSA ELDT Training Registry for in-person training and has three locations registered to provide training.

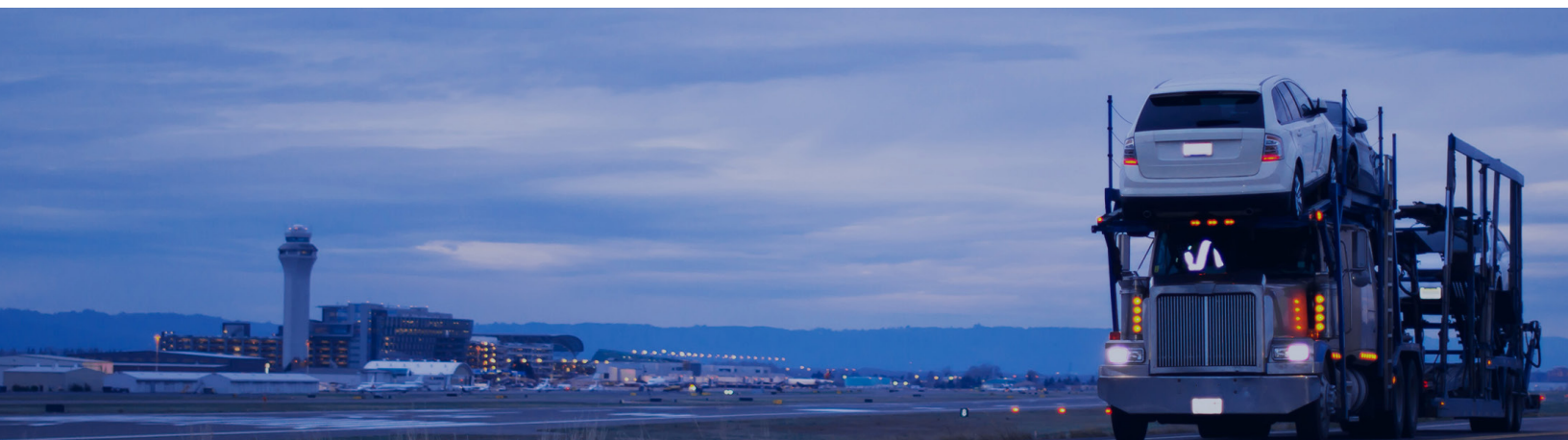
Applicants that received previous CMVOST grant funding should provide a brief narrative about operational obstacles they encountered that may have prevented them from meeting approved performance metrics and how these same obstacles will be overcome.

Problem Statement

Describe the application goal(s) and the applicable program priority(s) met by the application's projects. Include specific information about outcomes resulting from requested funding.

Example: Problem Statement

The demand for financial assistance to provide CDL training continues to grow. This application will fund at least 20 individuals by providing commercial motor vehicle operator safety training. The Training will assist in reducing the severity and number of crashes on U.S. roads involving commercial motor vehicles. Specifically, to recruit current and former members of the United States Armed Forces (including National Guard members and Reservists) and their spouses or children (Qualified Students), provide them with superior safety-focused training, and offer placement services to assist them in becoming employed in the transportation industry. In support of Federal Executive Order 13985, the applicant will recruit people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.





Performance Objective



Goals should be S.M.A.R.T.

S

Specific

M

Measurable

A

Achievable

R

Relevant

T

Time Bound

Include a description of the applicant's quantifiable goal related to the problem statement.

This can be measured in:

- Numbers
- Percentages
- Other forms that accurately measure the outputs and outcomes that the applicant anticipates will result from implementing the strategies and activities proposed.

Program Activity Plan

Provide a description of the quantifiable goal related to the above problem statement. Three areas must be covered in the Program Activity Plan: Current Student Recruitment Practices, Established CMV Training Program, and Projected CDL Positions Offered to Students. See below for examples of each:



Example: Current Student Recruitment Practices

Describe the entity's current recruitment practices focusing on "qualified students" and eligible students.

Example: Applicant has a wide recruitment network that concentrates on outreach to veteran and military applicants, and/or those that are in underserved communities. Applicant's recruiting staff uses existing veteran organizations, visits to military bases, public advertising and promotion, and job fairs in coordination with local workforce training agencies to achieve focused recruiting of current and/or former members of the military.



Example: Established CMV Training Program

Describe the entity's established CMV training program; Project the number of students who will graduate/successfully complete the course curriculum; and Project the number of students who will be issued/obtain a CDL.

Example: The CDL training program takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete and includes 105 hours of classroom instruction, 25 hours of off-road training and 44 hours of behind-the-wheel training; the curriculum is as follows (insert course listing here -). Based upon historical graduation rates, we project that 95% of all enrolled students will complete all required hours of training in order to pass/graduate, and of those students who graduated, we project that 98% of those students will obtain their CDL.



Example: Projected CDL Positions Offered to Students

Include the projected number of students who will be offered a CDL position.

Example: Concurrent with training, students are given numerous opportunities to speak with on-site recruiters; students are given guidance in interviewing strategies for achieving employment; students are provided with assistance and counseling in evaluating pay, benefits, lifestyle, and location pros and cons.

Performance Measurement & Monitoring Plan

- Write how performance goals and objectives will be measured using quantifiable methods to capture outcomes. Measurement must include specific benchmarks that can be reported on in the quarterly progress report, as appropriate. These should include all the activities listed in the project plan.
- Describe how the plan will determine if a driver was retained in the industry at the end of the period of performance.

Example: Measurement & Monitoring

All academic and skills training for each student will be documented weekly and compared to current baseline training data to determine the effectiveness of training activities and program administration; data will be maintained for each course on the number of students recruited, qualified, enrolled, and graduated, the number of students who passed the CDL test, and the number placed in the trucking industry.

Budget Narrative

Include a description, by budget category (object class), detailing costs necessary to achieve the proposed project goals and objectives. The level of detail should be sufficient to support the funding requested. The budget narrative should:

- Be clear, specific, detailed, and mathematically correct.
- Explain the “what,” “how,” and “why” of a line-item cost to carry out grant project goals and objectives.
- Show how costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary.
- Show how costs are calculated.

Refer to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) for specific cost guidance, such as what constitutes allocable, allowable, necessary, and reasonable costs.

Example Cost Element

Example: Other Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6h)

	4 Refugees to be Trained	12 Qualified Students to be Trained	4 Underserved Students to be Trained	Total of 20 Trainees
Tuition (\$5,000 per Trainee)	\$20,000	\$60,000	\$20,000	\$100,000

The cost of tuition is inclusive of required SDLA testing fees, drug screen, physical fees and published tuition of course (inserted tuition link to webpage).



Grant Application Tips

- The [Grants Resource Center](#) has training and tools to help in applying for and maintaining CMVOST grants.
- Carefully read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Previous year's NOFOs are posted on [Grants.gov](#) for your reference. The Assistance Reference Number is 20.235.
- Attend the funding conference and/or review the recording of the funding conference and associated FAQ's. If you still have unaddressed questions, refer to the NOFO point of contact
- Must contact the FMCSA Office of Civil Rights to obtain approval of the current year's Title VI Compliance Plan and Assurances is required.
- Project goals should support the National Priorities in the annually updated NOFO.
- Use the checklist in the NOFO to prepare all required materials prior to submission.
- It is recommended that you utilize the budget template that is provided in the NOFO. The budget template can be found under the "related documents" tab on [Grants.gov](#). If it isn't used, it can still help account for the requirements conveniently captured in the template.
- All forms required by the NOFO must be completed and uploaded in [Grants.gov](#) by due date. See Appendix A and C of the NOFO.
- It is recommended that after completing the draft, someone not involved in developing the draft review the application. Provide this editor/reviewer with a copy of the NOFO.
- Upload your application to [Grants.gov](#) well in ADVANCE of the due date to account for any technical challenges that may arise. After uploading your application package, you will receive two emails within two business days.
 - ▶ A confirmation application receipt from the [Grants.gov](#) system.
 - ▶ An email indicating that the application was successfully validated by [Grants.gov](#) prior to transmission to FMCSA or if it was rejected due to errors.
- Be careful when copying from a previous application as requirements might have changed from the previous NOFO.
- Provide a description of the expenses by budget category which match the application's SF-424a Budget Category columns for each project. Narrative must include a detailed justification for the costs necessary to complete the proposed project.
- Submit all supporting documentation with your grant application package (Ex. Certifications and Accreditations and TPR confirmation).



Help

Questions?

Should you have any questions, please email your questions to Grants@dot.gov or your Field Office Point of Contact.

Additional Resources

Visit FMCSA's [Grants Management Training page](#) for additional resources and links to the Grants Management eLearning Series or the [CMVOST grant page](#) for information on CMVOST.