

- utilization of technology, community resources, media, and other delivery channels to gather and provide information;
- ability to establish an infrastructure and acquire resources for sustaining the program beyond the initial project funding period;
- ability to evaluate activities and outcomes; and
- potential for replication in other rural community settings.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this cooperative agreement program is to identify/test "best practice" approaches for delivering/administering traffic safety programs in rural communities. Best practices are those that successfully increase safety belt use and can be replicated in other rural communities. The program is designed to generate the interest and commitment of rural area service providers to become traffic safety focal points in their rural community/service area. NHTSA will provide funding between approximately \$150,000 and \$200,000 total over a 3-year period for program startup, implementation, and evaluation for each community level project, as well as support for State or national organization administrative costs. Annual funding will be allocated in depreciating increments based on 100 percent funding the first year, 50 percent funding the second year, and 25 percent funding the third year. Thus, the successful applicant(s) will be responsible for providing 50 percent funding for the second year and seventy-five percent funding for the third year, while maintaining a level of program activity and delivery equivalent to or in excess of that provided in the first year of the program.

The objectives of this initiative are to have the successful applicants, whether national, State or local, work together to establish an infrastructure for program delivery, to conduct program delivery activities and to spearhead coordination at the community level of highway safety activities, all designed to increase safety belt use. In order to achieve these objectives, the successful applicant(s) will:

- Work with NHTSA to identify one to four geographically dispersed "rural" community sites based on criteria and objectives identified in this Notice;
- Perform an assessment of the identified community site(s) for their safety belt use rates, knowledge and attitudes about safety belt use, enforcement of occupant protection laws, motor vehicle injuries and

fatalities, and recent past/current program activity;

- Develop a program structure within the community organization(s) (and national or State organization, if applicable) or enhance an existing structure to serve as a central point(s) of contact for program coordination and community outreach;
- Design and implement program delivery services and information to/within the community(ies) with regard to safety belts, occupant protection, and traffic safety in coordination with law enforcement, other service providers, and community leaders;
- Evaluate the process and impact of this effort in terms of the benefits to the community and the service provider (applicant organization), increases in safety belt use rates and enforcement of occupant protection laws, changes in knowledge and attitudes, and community awareness of and impressions about the program, working under the oversight of a NHTSA evaluator.

Eligibility Requirements

Applications may be submitted by public and private, non-profit and for-profit organizations or agencies that represent and provide direct services to rural communities or within rural areas. An eligible organization may be national, state, regional or local in scope. Tribal organizations and agencies are also eligible to apply. Eligible applicants must have an established network at the community level, including affiliates well integrated into the infrastructure of each community where a demonstration project will be conducted.

- National organizations must have the capacity to administer the entire demonstration program, consisting of at least three to four geographically dispersed community projects each servicing at least a countywide area, through their State/local affiliates. National organizations must demonstrate how they will institutionalize the program within their organization, nationally, in addition to institutionalizing the program in the demonstration communities.

- State level organizations and agencies must have the capacity to administer/oversee at least one to possibly two community-level projects each servicing at least a countywide area, and also demonstrate how they will institutionalize the program at the state level in addition to institutionalizing the program in the demonstration community(ies).

- Local level applicants proposing to serve as the project focal point for the

community must be able to provide program coordination/services on at least a countywide-basis. Tribal Nation applicants must have the capacity to provide program coordination/services on a basis comparable to countywide.

- All project applications must be coordinated with the State Governor's Highway Safety Office and a letter of support from that office must accompany applications. Tribal organization and agency applications must be coordinated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Indian Highway Safety Program Office, which serves as the Governor's Representative for Highway Safety for Indian Nations, and a letter of support from that office must accompany their application. National/state organizations may not be able to identify specific state/local site locations for proposed projects at the time of this application; however, upon award, successful applicants must submit support letters from the appropriate State Governor's Highway Safety Office or the Indian Highway Safety Program Office for all sites being considered for project funding under this agreement. These contacts and letters serve the purposes of notification and coordination with state and BIA highway safety programs. Contact information for Governor's Highway Safety Offices and the Indian Highway Safety Program Office can be found on the NHTSA Web site at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatis/regions/>

- Applicants must describe their strategies for increasing teen/adult safety belt use, including the role of law enforcement. Although programs may include activities that encompass younger children and the use of child restraint systems, the major focus should be on teen/adult belt use.

- All applicants must include an evaluation plan in their proposal and be willing to work in conjunction with a NHTSA evaluator (discussed below) to insure that consistent data is collected for overall evaluation across all projects awarded as part of the demonstration program.

Project Evaluation

- The grantee shall evaluate the process, outcome, and impact results of the demonstration project at the community level, and, if applicable, process and outcome of the effort at the State and/or national level to administer and institutionalize the program. As discussed in the "Goals" section of this announcement, at a minimum, applications should include a detailed Evaluation Plan. Please note that successful applicants will work closely