

United States Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Fiscal Year 2014 – Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability

The United States Department of Transportation's (US DOT) Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announces the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) Grant Program funding opportunity. This document will assist you by providing important information about the PRISM program, including the FY 2014 program priorities and critical information related to preparing and submitting a grant application.

All applications **must be submitted** to Grants.gov and **accepted** by FMCSA on or before **February 21, 2014** by 11:59 P.M. (Eastern Time). Submitting an application into Grants.gov by the deadline does not constitute meeting the final submission requirements.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for PRISM is 20.231.

Important Reminders for FY 2014:

- Please review this **entire** Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) before submitting an application. The NOFA explains application requirements; some of which have changed from previous years.
- All FY 2014 PRISM applications must be submitted in response to this NOFA; FMCSA does not anticipate a second NOFA for FY 2014 PRISM.
- The FMCSA **will not** evaluate applications received without the complete set of required forms and attachments (see Section IV for additional information). A "Required Document Checklist" is located in Appendix A. Use of the checklist is strongly encouraged to ensure your application proceeds for further review.
- All Applicants must submit a current FMCSA Administrative Capabilities Questionnaire if one has not already been submitted for FY 2014.
- By submitting an application, the Applicant is agreeing to comply with the FMCSA Financial Assistance Agreement General Provisions and Assurances throughout the grant period of performance. This agreement by the Applicant is required to execute the grant agreement and before grant funds are awarded (see Section VI).

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- The FMCSA will make award decisions based on the priorities and evaluation criteria listed in this document (See Section V).

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

The FMCSA announces the availability of PRISM funding as authorized based on authorities provided for in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users (SAFETEA-LU), Pub. L. No.109-59, §§ 4101(c)(3), 4109, 119 Stat. 1144, 1715, 1720-21 (2005), *as amended by* Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), Pub. L. No. 112-141, §§ 32602 and 32603(c) (2012). PRISM grants are governed by 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) §§ 49 31106(b) and 31109 (2006), *as amended*.

The PRISM grant program provides financial assistance to State commercial motor vehicle (CMV) registration and enforcement agencies that conduct two interrelated tasks to promote CMV safety. The first is determining the operating status of a motor carrier when licensing or registering the carrier or by monitoring the operating status while the license or registration is in effect. The second activity is denying, suspending, or revoking CMV registrations of a motor carrier that has been issued an operations out-of-service order by FMCSA.

The FMCSA provides PRISM funds to link State commercial motor vehicle registration and licensing systems with Federal motor carrier safety information systems. This connection enables a State to determine if a motor carrier or registrant has been ordered to cease interstate operations by FMCSA when that carrier or registrant applies for or renews vehicle registration, or while the registration is in effect and enables the State to take action on that information. Law enforcement activities are funded by PRISM grants as an enhancement to track and improve safety performance of carriers with demonstrated poor safety performance.

Other Agency PRISM priorities described below include vehicle registration programs and law enforcement programs. State registration agencies and/or State law enforcement agencies may apply separately or together. The following is a list of specific requirements for State registration agencies to implement PRISM. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that represent strategies to initiate or support and enrich their existing PRISM program based on these criteria:

Registration Program Requirements:

1. Seek authority to suspend (or revoke) and deny registration if the motor carrier responsible for safety of the vehicle is under a Federal out of service (OOS) order, including authority to deny registration to motor carriers attempting to avoid FMCSA enforcement sanctions by obtaining a new USDOT number under a different name and motor carriers under Federal operating authority sanctions.
2. Seek authority to retrieve license plates from carriers whose registration has been suspended based on FMCSA sanctions.

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Registration Processes:

3. Check carrier safety status before issuing credentials and deny the registration if the motor carrier is prohibited from interstate operations.
4. Check carrier safety status during the registration period on a daily basis, and suspend the registrations of any vehicles assigned to motor carriers under a Federal OOS order or under Federal operating authority sanctions.
5. Check every VIN entered into the IRP system against the PRISM Target File to see if the vehicle is associated with a motor carrier that is under a Federal OOS order or under Federal operating authority sanctions.
6. Update the PRISM-SAFER database daily with vehicle registration information by uploading either a PRISM Vehicle File or CVIEW T0022 transactions.
7. Maintain/update the IRP Status Code within the vehicle registration records, and apply the 950 status code to vehicles that are suspended due to a Federal OOS order.

Data Collection and Forms:

8. Identify, collect and maintain the USDOT Number and TIN for the motor carrier responsible for the safe operation of each vehicle being registered. States that issue USDOT numbers must use standardized procedures to access the MCMIS database.
9. Validate the USDOT Number and TIN before adding any USDOT Number and TIN combination to the IRP registration files at the vehicle level (VIN).
10. Print and barcode the motor carrier information on the cab card if the motor carrier responsible for the safety of the vehicle is not expected to change during the registration year.
11. Incorporate PRISM requirements in temporary authority processes.

Communications and Training:

12. Collect the number of registration denials and suspensions/revocations due to a motor carrier being identified as under a Federal OOS order, and report to the Division Office on a quarterly basis.
13. Provide assistance to FMCSA Division Office for carrier-related registration information requested.
14. Provide assistance to State motor carrier law enforcement for carrier-related registration information requested.

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15. Ensure PRISM training is provided to all appropriate IRP staff, motor carriers, and other interested parties, including training of IRP staff on key FMCSA applications such as MCMIS and Query Central, where applicable.

Law Enforcement:

1. Identify vehicles assigned to carriers under a Federal OOS order or operating without operating authority when operating authority is required and take the appropriate enforcement action by placing the vehicle OOS.
2. Identify vehicles assigned to carriers on the PRISM target file and prioritize those carriers for inspection.
3. In probable cause states, obtain authority to consider as a probable cause the FMCSA OOS condition and/or OOS order against the USDOT number of the motor carrier responsible for safety.
4. Seek and implement authority to remove the license plates from vehicles associated with motor carriers that have been suspended for operating under a Federal OOS order.
5. Implement procedures to determine how to correct the unassigned or incorrectly assigned safety events.
6. Ensure PRISM training is provided to all enforcement officers.

Program Goals – FY 2014 National Priorities:

Priority funding consideration in FY2014 will be given to remaining jurisdictions that have yet to address vehicle registration systems changes to implement PRISM registration program requirements 1 – 15 and implementation changes to address law enforcement requirements 1 – 6.

Priority funding consideration will be given to applications that address vehicle registration systems changes to implement registration processes to maintain/update the IRP Status Code within the vehicle registration records (requirement 7) and apply the 950 status code to vehicles that are suspended due to a Federal OOS order.

In addition, to be given equal consideration as the priority above due to a PRISM program procedural change, priority funding consideration in FY2014 will be given to applications addressing systems and process modifications needed for initial registration and registration renewal packages to accommodate the PRISM procedural change eliminating the program requirement for vehicle registration agencies to complete MCS-150 on behalf of motor carriers and verify the MCS-150 update date.

Finally, priority funding consideration in FY2014 will be given to remaining jurisdictions that may still need to implement changes to accommodate FMCSA's elimination of the "vehicle

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registrant-only” USDOT number.

Applications related to commercial motor vehicle law enforcement strategies, such as using mobile enforcement technologies such as mobile license plate readers will be prioritized over applications for fixed site technologies.

Section II: Award Information

Available Funding:

- The FMCSA expects to award as many as 15 PRISM grants in FY 2014. The amount of available funding is anticipated to be up to \$5,000,000 total, with award amounts ranging from \$7,000 to \$1,000,000.
- The Federal share of all funds awarded under this grant program is 100 percent. There are no matching or cost-sharing requirements.
- Applicants may not receive the full amount requested. The FMCSA may contact the Applicant directly if the award amount is expected to be less than the amount requested to ensure that the project will remain sustainable with less than the amount requested.
- If an Applicant accepts a grant awarded under this program, it is responsible for all project expenses that exceed the awarded amount.
- The FMCSA expects to announce awards as soon as administratively practicable subject to availability of funds. The grant periods of performance will begin no earlier than the award date of the funds and will be determined by the project plan submitted with the application.

Cost Requirements:

- Costs charged to FMCSA grants must be in accordance with the applicable cost principles for the Grantee type. All reimbursable items *must* be necessary, reasonable, allocable, and allowable to accomplish the goals of the program. These standards are described in the applicable cost principles and administrative requirements:
 - 49 CFR Part 18 and/or 49 CFR Part 19 (depending on the type of Grantee);
 - 2 CFR Part 220 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21);
 - 2 CFR Part 225 (Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments, OMB Circular A-87); and/or
 - 2 CFR Part 230 (Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations, OMB Circular A-122).
- The eligibility of specific items is subject to review by FMCSA. For assistance during the pre-application contact the FMCSA Grants Management Office for guidance on

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the cost eligibility of activities or items (see Section VII for contact information).

- Allowable costs under the PRISM grant include, but are not limited to, expenses for contractual services, equipment (purchased or leased) for information technology hardware and software, contractor support, data acquisition, storage, and analysis that are specifically identifiable as PRISM program-related to develop/coordinate resources and improve efficiency. Grants made under this program may not be used to rent, lease, or buy land or buildings.

Section III: Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants for PRISM funds include States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Individuals and businesses are not eligible for PRISM funding.

Section IV: Submission Information and Application Requirements

Submission Information:

- The FMCSA utilizes Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) for accepting program applications. All FY 2014 applications must be submitted electronically through this site. Applications not submitted electronically are not eligible to be considered and will not be reviewed.

To apply, the Applicant first must complete the Grants.gov registration process. To register, go to http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp and follow the instructions found on the Grants.gov website by selecting “Get Registered.”

The registration process can take as long as four weeks. Applicants are encouraged to register as soon as possible. The Grants.gov website provides customer support through its toll-free number, (800) 518-GRANT, or through e-mail at support@grants.gov. The customer support center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, to address Grants.gov technical issues. The FMCSA does not own or maintain Grants.gov and is therefore unable to provide technical assistance; all technical assistance issues should be directed to Grants.gov.

All applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time on February 21, 2014. Applications received after this time will not be considered. Due to unforeseen connectivity or technical issues associated with online submission, FMCSA strongly encourages all Applicants to submit their applications well in advance to allow for additional time if needed.

- If the designated grant official from an Applicant requires special assistance or accommodation associated with submitting this grant application, methods other than

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Grants.gov are available. Please contact the FMCSA Grants Management Office if assistance is required (see Section VII for contact information).

- **IMPORTANT:** If the Applicant does not have an active account in the System for Award Management (SAM), possess a valid DUNS number, and is fully registered, the Applicant will be unable to process their application through Grants.gov. There are instances where for the aforementioned reasons or other errors made by an Applicant, Grants.gov will not accept the application. Merely entering an application into Grants.gov does not constitute a successful submission of an application. It must be entered and accepted before the deadline as stated within this NOFA. Extensions to the aforementioned deadline will not be granted; therefore, ensure all Applicant submissions are completed well before that deadline.

Application Changes, Additions or Corrections:

- Modifications to the application will not be accepted after the closing date of this program solicitation. Under some circumstances, changes, additions, or corrections may be necessary to an application submitted to FMCSA via Grants.gov before the specified program solicitation closing date.

Modifications to applications will require a resubmission of the entire application package and the Applicant must first notify the FMCSA Grants Management Office (see Section VII for contact information). Submitting changes to Grants.gov without contacting the help desk could significantly delay your application submission and may result in the application not being reviewed.

Application Package Requirements:

1. SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance

This is a standard application form for all requests for Federal assistance. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit.

2. SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Program

This is a standard budget form for requests for Federal assistance. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit.

On page 1, the Applicant may indicate up to four (4) projects requested. The Applicant should clearly indicate the title of each project in the boxes provided in Column A. Please indicate \$0.00 in Columns C, D, and F as there are no Applicant-matching requirements for PRISM funds.

If there are more than four (4) projects proposed, please submit only the total for all projects on the SF-424A on Grants.gov and then provide the detailed breakdown of each

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project using the Excel version of the SF-424A form as a supplemental form. Applicants may use as many supplemental forms as needed to provide a breakdown of each project.

The Excel version of the SF-424A is located on the Grantee resources page at:
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/GRANTS/grantee-resources.aspx>

On page 1A, please clearly indicate up to four (4) projects listed on page 1 in Rows 1-4 (if applicable) and then fill in the appropriate object class categories in Rows A-K. Complete the remaining pages as appropriate.

If the Applicant feels that an additional budget worksheet is necessary to further explain estimated costs, attach a budget document to the Attachments Form (explained in #6 below). Attached budgets should be pre-formatted to print on standard, letter-sized paper. If the Applicant attaches budget worksheets for multiple projects under the same grant application, each project should be clearly distinguished in the document.

3. SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs

This is a standard assurances form associated with accepting Federal assistance funds. This document indicates that the Applicant organization is in substantial compliance with various programs, regulations, and Federal laws. This document should not be completed without confirmation from the appropriate agency or State official that the Applicant organization is indeed compliant. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit.

The FMCSA and other applicable Federal agencies reserve the right to request further information and/or conduct an audit to confirm compliance as indicated on this form, as provided for in the United States Code or the Code of Federal Regulations.

4. Grants.Gov Lobbying Form

This form allows applicants to indicate that they do not engage in lobbying activity. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit.

5. SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

This form requests information related to the lobbying activities of the Applicant. If an applicant conducts lobbying activities, the activities must be indicated on the SF-LLL. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit.

IMPORTANT: If an applicant completes the Grants.Gov Lobbying Form, the SF-LLL is not required.

6. Key Contacts Form

This form requests contact information for the: 1) designated Administrative Official, 2) Principal Investigator or Program Director; and 3) Financial Official. This form is

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available in the Grants.gov application kit. Annotate on the form if the same individual is responsible for multiple roles.

- **Administrative Official** (Authorized Signer): This individual is authorized to sign a grant award on behalf of the organization. This individual is typically the head of the organization or a designee (e.g., Colonel, Director, Commissioner, etc.).
- **Principal Investigator or Program Director** (Program/Project Manager): This individual has daily program implementation oversight. This role is typically performed by a project/program manager (e.g., Unit Commander, Project Coordinator, etc.)
- **Financial Officer** (Grants Manager): This individual is responsible for monitoring grant program finances and providing clarification on financial information such as budget details, Single Audits, invoice support documentation, etc. This role is typically performed by a grant, finance, or administrative/program specialist.

7. **Attachment Form**

This form is used to submit supplemental attachments to support the grant application. This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit. Applications received without the complete set of required forms will not be evaluated until all forms are received.

IMPORTANT: Attachment file names must be limited to the following characters: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, and period. **Using any other characters for attachment file names will cause the application to be rejected.**

8. **Project Narrative**

The project narrative must include the required proposal elements: problem statement, project goal(s) and objective(s), work plan, evaluation or monitoring plan, and organizational capacity. See Section V for additional project narrative guidance. The Applicant must generate and attach the project narrative to the Grants.gov application package.

9. **Budget Narrative**

The budget narrative must thoroughly and clearly justify and explain each budget category on the SF-424A. See Section V and Appendix B for additional budget narrative guidance. The Applicant must generate and attach the budget narrative to the Grants.gov application package.

10. **Indirect Cost Rate Information**

If the Applicant is claiming indirect costs, a copy of the Applicant's signed current approved indirect cost rate from the cognizant Federal agency must be included in the

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application. The Applicant must attach the indirect cost rate to the Grants.gov application package.

11. FMCSA Administrative Capability Questionnaire

This questionnaire allows the State to self-certify its administrative infrastructure, policies, and resources for FMCSA to assess the adequacy of administrative management systems. The Applicant must complete the questionnaire and attach it to the Grants.gov application package. The questionnaire is located within the Grants.gov “Full Announcement” tab. All Applicants must submit a current FMCSA Administrative Capabilities Questionnaire if one has not already been submitted for FY 2014.

12. PRISM-Specific Attachment

Each Applicant must complete the PRISM-Specific Attachment along with the application. This attachment (See Attachment C) requires the Applicant to certify that the Applicant applying for FY 2014 PRISM funding meets the conditions for participation under SAFETEA-LU §4109(a)(3). This section requires PRISM program States to use grant funds to:

1. Comply with PRISM uniform policies, procedures, and technical and operational standards;
2. Possess (or seek the authority to possess) sanctions relating to commercial motor vehicle registration on the basis of a Federal safety fitness determination; and
3. Establish and implement a process to cancel the motor vehicle registration and seize the registration plates of a vehicle of a carrier with an out-of-service order.

Additional Information on the Indirect Cost Rate (IDCR):

- **When FMCSA is not the cognizant Federal agency:** The Applicant must have a basis for requesting indirect costs in the application budget. The Applicant must use the current indirect cost rate approved by its cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most direct funds). If the Applicant wishes to budget an indirect cost rate but does not have a current approved rate agreement, the Applicant must contact their cognizant federal agency to obtain an approved indirect cost rate. The Applicant must either submit documentation with their application from the cognizant agency with an approved rate or a letter from their cognizant agency that the approval request is under review by that agency.

If awarded, the Applicant will be required to produce an approved indirect cost rate agreement or a confirming letter stating from the cognizant agency in order to recover indirect costs. If the Applicant is unable to obtain an approved rate from its cognizant agency, the Applicant is not permitted indirect cost reimbursement.

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Rather, the Applicant shall only be reimbursed for allowable direct costs. Violation of Cost Accounting Standards is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards.

- **When FMCSA is the cognizant Federal agency:** If the Applicant does not have a current negotiated rate from FMCSA, and FMCSA is the cognizant agency, the Applicant must have an approved indirect cost rate calculation in order to request indirect costs in the budget.

Sample indirect cost rate calculations are available at:
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/GRANTS/grantee-resources.aspx>

During the application process, the Applicant is not required to complete the entire indirect cost package proposal identified on FMCSA's website. Rather, the Applicant shall state in their budget narrative that FMCSA is the cognizant agency and then shall only need to calculate an indirect cost rate to serve as a basis for requesting indirect costs. If awarded, the Applicant must submit a complete Indirect Cost Proposal (ICP) package to FMCSA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer in within 90 days of the start date of the award. If the ICP is not received within 90 days of the start date, the grantee will not be reimbursed at any time for any indirect cost expenses incurred under the award.

- **Retroactive Requests:** FMCSA will not approve requests for either indirect cost rate proposals or indirect cost reimbursements after the period of performance has expired under an award agreement. Before FMCSA will pay any reimbursements for indirect costs, a current and approved indirect cost rate agreement must be in force. FMCSA will not approve reimbursement requests for indirect costs if an approved indirect cost rate agreement is not in force for the period of time that the indirect cost expenses are incurred.
- **Budget Placeholder:** During such time that an Applicant or grantee is negotiating an indirect cost rate agreement with their cognizant agency, an estimated indirect costs rate may be included in the application as a budget placeholder. Reimbursement **will only be approved** if the current approved indirect cost rate agreement is received within the current period of performance or the following ninety (90) days of liquidation, unless FMCSA provides the grantee an extension to the liquidation period, which ever applies.

The FMCSA advises that:

- The Applicant should attach any supplemental information that it believes will support the proposal. However, the Applicant should limit the information provided to FMCSA to what is needed to evaluate the proposed projects. Descriptions of problems and proposed solutions should not exceed 3 – 4 pages in length unless they involve the most complicated of issues.

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- Budgets and other information in charts or spreadsheets should be pre-formatted for printing on standard size copy paper.
- This program solicitation is intended for informational purposes and reflects current planning. If there is any inconsistency between the information contained herein and the terms of any resulting funding agreement, the terms of the funding agreement are controlling.
- FMCSA is not responsible for any monies expended by the Applicant prior to the award of any funding agreement.
- This program solicitation is not an offer by FMCSA and does not obligate FMCSA to make any specific number of awards. Also, awards under this program are contingent upon the availability of funds.
- Unsolicited applications will not be accepted.
- If an Applicant proposes to place equipment or temporary facilities, modify structures, or to alter existing infrastructure, the Applicant is required to assess the ability for the equipment, modifications, or alterations to withstand current and future climatic conditions, including potential changes in climatic conditions. The Applicant shall use the best-available peer-reviewed studies and science to determine the potential climatic conditions the equipment, modifications or alterations may experience over the life-cycle of the equipment, modification or alteration funded by the grant. The Applicant can rely on existing Federal Highway Administration suggestions or guidelines for placing infrastructure, or on other Federally-issued guidance on assessing potential impacts of climate change.

Section V: Application Review Information

The FMCSA will review all application packages for timeliness, completeness, eligibility, allocability, reasonableness, and necessity. The FMCSA will evaluate each of the required proposal elements: Problem Statement, Project Goal(s) and Objective(s), Work Plan, Evaluation or Monitoring Plan, Organizational Capacity, and the Budget Narrative. Reviewers will consider the below criteria and questions when reviewing each application.

Project Narrative Guidance:

The Project Narrative explains the need for the project(s) (Problem Statement), Project Goal(s) and Objective(s), Work Plan (proposed tasks), an Evaluation or Monitoring Plan, and an how the Applicant has the expertise to implement the project(s) (Organizational Capacity). A well-developed Project Narrative clearly shows how the project(s) meets or exceeds objectives in this announcement.

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PRISM-Specific Project Narrative Guidance

In order to be considered for funding, the application **must** address the following four areas to comply with the PRISM Program uniform policies, procedures, and technical and operational standards. These areas include:

1. Explain how the Applicant ensures that State motor carrier and vehicle data is collected and reported to FMCSA in a uniform, timely, and accurate manner;
2. Explain how the Applicant ensures that the appropriate, necessary measures and procedures are in place to operate a reliable, information system available to FMCSA and other States;
3. Explain how the Applicant has established and implemented a process to cancel the motor vehicle registration and seize the registration plates of a vehicle when an employer is found liable under 49 U.S.C. § 31310(i)(2)(C) for knowingly allowing or requiring an employee to operate such a commercial motor vehicle in violation of an out-of-service order; and
4. Explain how the Applicant already has or is seeking the authority to impose sanctions relating to commercial motor vehicle registration on the basis of a Federal safety fitness determination.

The FMCSA strongly encourages Applicants to submit their Project Narrative in this format. Components of a Project Narrative include:

1. **Problem Statement:** This section describes the unmet needs the Applicant intends to address. Applicants should describe the problem and provide supporting data whenever possible. Applicants should compare data to a baseline whenever possible. All data must be properly cited and clearly presented to minimize the need for additional validation.

In reviewing the Problem Statement, FMCSA will consider the extent to which the Applicant has demonstrated knowledge of the problems associated with the program and clearly identified the barriers to successfully meeting the national NOFA priorities.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following criteria in its evaluation:

- How well does the application support applicable statutory and program requirements?
- Does the application provide data to support the need or problem it proposes to mitigate?
- How well does the data support the activities?
- How well is the data quantified?
- Are the data sources identified and appropriate for the purposes used? To what extent?
- Does the application establish baseline measures or benchmarks to describe the problem statement? To what extent?

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2. **Project Goal(s) and Objective(s):** This section establishes the outcome-based project goals and objectives and directly addresses the problem statement. The Applicant should establish goals and objectives that are performance-based in nature and linked to increased highway safety, rather than simply identifying counts of specific activities. Objectives must be specific, measurable results expected within a particular performance period. This section may explain broad themes for proposed actions and should reflect reasonable choices among alternative paths, but not identify or explain specific activities.

In reviewing the Project Goals and Objectives, FMCSA will consider the extent to which the Applicant describes sound program goals and objectives that are specific, measurable, and can likely be achieved during the grant period of performance. The FMCSA will also consider the extent to which the Applicant thoroughly explains why it selected the project goals and objectives to address the need(s) established in the Problem Statement.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following questions in its evaluation:

- How well does the project goal address the FY 2014 national priorities?
- How well does the project goal address the Applicant's problem statement?
- How well does the application establish project objectives that are measureable using the data sources identified?
- How well does the application establish project objectives that are reasonable and feasible in their scope?

3. **Work Plan (Proposed Tasks):** This section describes the various tasks and program activities the Applicant proposes to carry out using grant funds to accomplish the objectives and mitigate issues identified in the problem statement. The Work Plan must include a description of the site(s) where the work will be performed, the duration of each proposed task or activity, a list of required goods or services, the number of personnel necessary to conduct the activities, and the entire time schedule for the effort. The level of detail will vary according to the project, but should be concise and sufficient to support the project goal and justify the funding requested in the budget.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following questions in its evaluation:

- How well does the application describe tasks and activities that will help achieve the project objectives and mitigate the problem identified?
- How well does the application describe specific goods, services, and individuals or organizations necessary for the completion of tasks to support the project goal?
- How well does the application establish detailed and feasible timelines for each proposed task or activity?
- How well does the application identify implementation challenges and describe how the Applicant may overcome them?
- How well does the application describe innovative or creative approaches to implementing the program (if applicable)?

4. **Evaluation or Monitoring Plan:** This section explains how the Applicant will monitor program strategies to ensure they are being implemented as designed and achieve desired results. Applicants should use the same program performance goals established earlier in the application and how they plan to measure the effectiveness of each activity and strategy, such as using incremental benchmarks for a multi-phased strategy to determine whether targets/milestones were met. Applicants should also identify process evaluation measures that describe how their organization will remain focused on implementing a quality program on time and within budget. Finally, Applicants should provide additional information regarding the types of measures that will be used to document the success of the proposed project.

The following factors may be used by the Applicant to evaluate performance:

- Baseline data compared to new results;
- Effectiveness of strategies and activities;
- Monitoring plan and adjustments, as appropriate; and
- Data for quarterly reports or annual update.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following questions in its evaluation:

- How well does the application describe an Evaluation/Monitoring Plan that assesses the overall performance of the proposed project?
- How well does the application utilize iterative performance measures that are quantifiable, time-specific, and realistic?
- How well does the application describe the performance measures that support the project outcome goals?
- Does the application include data sources that are relevant to completing the evaluation? To what extent?

5. **Organizational Capacity:** This section demonstrates that the Applicant has the expertise to successfully implement the stated strategies and attain stated goal(s). This section includes information related to the Applicant's organizational goals, mission statement, structure, and other information relevant to the proposed project. The Applicant should also include a description of the scope of current activities as well as key elements of previous and/or other motor carrier or highway safety programs. It is also appropriate to reference any past performance descriptions and/or operating certifications/accreditations.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following questions in its evaluation:

- How well does the Applicant describe its organization, mission, and infrastructure?
- How well does the Applicant describe its work on current or past activities for similar projects?
- How well does the Applicant demonstrate its capability to successfully implement the proposed project?

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The FMCSA may also consider the following questions:

- How well has the Applicant performed in achieving its goals in prior FMCSA awards?
- How effectively has the Applicant utilized proposed funds in previous grants (based on remaining, unexpended balances at the end of similar efforts in previous grants)?
- What is the actual or estimated amount of funds available for expenditure from previously issued grants for projects similar to those in the application?

Budget Narrative Guidance:

This section describes the costs necessary to complete the proposed tasks and achieve the project goal. The Budget Narrative should thoroughly and clearly explain and justify each budget category (Object Class) from the SF-424A and follow all guidelines and limitations as provided in the application package. See Appendix B for budget narrative guidance.

The budget narrative should be clear, specific, detailed, and mathematically correct; it should correspond to the SF-424A. A well-written Budget Narrative allows the Applicant and FMCSA to understand all costs included in the budget and determine whether items are allowable for reimbursement. Where appropriate, costs per unit will be calculated and compared with national averages to determine cost-effectiveness. As appropriate, proposed costs will be compared with historical information to confirm reasonableness.

The FMCSA may consider any or all of the following questions in its evaluation:

- How well does the application provide clear explanations of the costs associated with each Budget Category (Object Class)?
- How well does the Budget Narrative support the funds requested on the SF-424A?
- How accurate are the mathematical computations in the Narrative and the SF-424A?
- How well does the application demonstrate a cost-effective approach that will provide a demonstrable impact on safety as the result of grant funds?
- Are the costs allowable under the cost principles established in this NOFA and all FMCSA cost eligibility policies?
- Are the costs allocable specifically to the activities proposed by the application?
- Are the costs reasonable in amount and quantity for the activities proposed;
- Are the costs necessary to conduct the activities proposed?
- If applicable, how accurately is an Indirect Cost Rate (IDCR) applied to the Budget?
- If applicable, how accurately are fringe benefits applied to the Budget?

Section VI: Award Administration Information

This is a discretionary grant program. Funding decisions shall depend on the quality and completeness of the information provided. The FMCSA does not have an appeals process for unsuccessful applications for discretionary grant funds.

Upon receipt and approval of the complete application package, FMCSA will award funding as

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soon as administratively practicable. An award recipient may be required to submit a supplemental budget or project narrative based on a partial or modified grant award.

Funding amounts made available for reimbursement may be impacted by limitations placed on the spending authority and appropriations enacted for FMCSA.

Reporting responsibilities include quarterly program performance status using the Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR). Additional quarterly report information and other required forms and templates is available at: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/GRANTS/grantee-resources.aspx>

Grantees must agree to the FMCSA Financial Assistance Agreement General Provisions and Assurances before grant funds will be awarded. The agreement general provisions and assurances are available at:
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/chief-counsel/2012/2012-FMCSA-Grant-Provisions.pdf>

Section VII: Agency Contact

Contact your FMCSA Division Office to obtain further information concerning program requirements, as well as the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. For general information about funding and requirements, please contact the FMCSA Grants Management Office:

By E-mail:

FMCSA_GrantMgmtHelpdesk@dot.gov, or

By Telephone:

(202) 366-0621

Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

By Mail:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Grants Management Office
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, West Building
Washington, DC 20590

Section VIII: Other Information

The FMCSA Grant Programs Website (for Applicant and Grantee Resources): <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/GRANTS/grantee-resources.aspx>

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Appendix A— Required Documents Checklist

Each document and/or certification is REQUIRED to be considered as being responsive to this announcement. Use of the required documents checklist is strongly encouraged as it ensures your application will proceed forward for further review. The table below lists the documents, location, and a description.

Document Name		Document Description & Location	Document Included	
1	SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance	Standard application form for all requests for Federal assistance. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐
2	SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs	Standard budget form for requests for Federal assistance. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐
3	SF-424B Assurances for Non-Construction Programs	Standard assurances form associated with accepting Federal assistance funds. This document indicates that the Applicant organization is in substantial compliance with various programs, regulations, and Federal laws. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐
4	Grants.Gov Lobbying Form	Form that allows Applicants to indicate that they do not engage in lobbying activity. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐
5	SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)	Form that requests information related to the lobbying activities of the Applicant. Available in the Grants.gov application kit. If an Applicant completes the Grants.Gov Lobbying Form, the SF-LLL is not required.	YES ☐	NO ☐
6	Key Contacts Form	Form requests contact information for the: 1) designated Administrative Official (authorized signer), 2) Principal Investigator or Program Director (program/project manager); and 3) Financial Official (Grants Manager). This form is available in the Grants.gov application kit. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐

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Appendix A— Required Documents Checklist				
Document Name		Document Description & Location	Document Included	
7	Attachment Form	Form used to submit supplemental attachments to support the grant application. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.	YES ☐	NO ☐
8	Project Narrative	Project Narrative includes: Problem Statement, Project Goal(s) and Objective(s), Work Plan, Evaluation or Monitoring Plan, and Organizational Capacity. Applicant generated and attached to the Grants.gov application package.	YES ☐	NO ☐
9	Budget Narrative	Budget Narrative thoroughly and clearly justify and explain each Budget Category on the SF-424A. Applicant generated and attached to the Grants.gov application package.	YES ☐	NO ☐
10	Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)	Applicant's signed current approved indirect cost rate from the cognizant Federal agency. Attached by the Applicant to the Grants.gov application package.	YES ☐	NO ☐
11	FMCSA Administrative Capability Questionnaire	Applicant self-certification for FMCSA to assess the adequacy of the Applicant's administrative management systems. Completed by the Applicant and attached to the Grants.gov application package. The questionnaire is located within the Grants.gov "Full Announcement" tab. All Applicants must submit a current FMCSA Administrative Capabilities Questionnaire if one has not already been submitted for FY 2014.	YES ☐	NO ☐
12	PRISM-Specific Attachment	Applicant self-certification to certify that the Applicant applying for FY 2014 PRISM funding meets the conditions for participation under SAFETEA-LU §4109(a)(3). Applicant generated and attached to the Grants.gov application package.	YES ☐	NO ☐

Appendix B— Budget Narrative Guidance

What is a Budget Narrative?

The budget narrative explains the “what, “how” and “why” of a line item cost in carrying out grant project goals and objectives. Use these instructions to develop your application budget narrative.

What does a Budget Narrative do?

A budget narrative is a narrative explanation of each budget component which supports the costs of the proposed work. The budget narrative should focus on how each budget item is required to achieve the proposed project goals and objectives. It should also justify how budget costs were calculated. The budget narrative should be clear, specific, detailed, and mathematically correct; it should correspond to the SF-424A line items.

The budget narrative is one of the first places FMCSA reviews to confirm the allowability, allocability, necessity, reasonableness and consistent treatment of an item. A well-developed budget narrative is an effective management tool; a budget that doesn’t represent a project’s needs makes it difficult to recommend for funding and assess financial performance over the life of the project.

The budget narrative serves a number of critical functions:

- Describes your need for or necessity of an expense;
- Documents how reasonable the request is, conveys your judgment as well as the feasibility of the project in context of available and proposed resources.
- Helps FMCSA review high-risk cost items to decide funding.

What different types of costs do I need to put in my budget narrative?

1. **Personnel:** Personnel costs are your employee salaries working directly on a project. Include the number and type of personnel, the percentage of time dedicated to the project, hourly wage, and total cost.
2. **Fringe Benefits:** Fringe costs are benefits paid to your employees, including the cost of employer’s share of FICA, health insurance, workers’ compensation, and vacation. Include how the fringe benefit amount is calculated (i.e., actual fringe benefits, rate approved by HHS State Wide Cost Allocation Plan or cognizant agency). Include a description of specific benefits are charged to a project and the benefit percentage.

Appendix B— Budget Narrative Guidance

3. **Travel:** Travel costs are funds for field work or for travel to professional meetings. Provide the purpose, method of travel, number of persons traveling, number of days, and estimated cost for each trip. If details of each trip are not known at the time of application submission, provide the basis for determining the amount requested.
4. **Equipment:** Equipment costs only includes those items which are tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Include a description, quantity and unit price for all equipment. If the expense is under the usual threshold of \$5,000 per item, it belongs under “Supplies”. However, if your equipment threshold is below \$5,000, provide an explanation why so FMCSA understands why lower costs items are included in this line.
5. **Supplies:** Supplies are tangible personal property other than equipment. Include the types of property in general terms. It is not necessary to document office supplies in great detail (reams of paper, boxes of paperclips, etc.). A good way to document office supplies is to indicate the approximate expenditure of the unit as a whole. Do include a quantity and unit cost for larger cost supply items such as computers and printers.
6. **Contractual:** Contracts include sub-contractual and consulting costs. Include the rationale for the amount of the costs. You do not need to identify the organization in which you will be subcontracting. You DO need to include the specific contract goods and/or services provided, the related expenses for those goods and services, and how the contract represents a fair market value. Entering the statement “contractual services” shall not be considered as meeting the requirement for completing this section.
7. **Other:** Other direct costs do not fit any of the aforementioned categories, such as rent for buildings used to conduct project activities, utilities and/or leased equipment, employee training tuition, etc. You must itemize **ALL** “Other” direct costs.
8. **Indirect Costs (if applicable):** Indirect costs are incurred for common or joint objectives that benefit more than one project. Indirect costs may be both administrative and programmatic. Include a current and fully executed agreement in your application if you are claiming indirect costs. Make sure the rate is applied to the appropriate base in the approved agreement. Please refer to Section IV (Indirect Cost Rate section) for more detailed information on this area.

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Appendix B— Budget Narrative Guidance

Complete the tables below to complete your budget narrative. Add additional lines to the table, as necessary. Remember to include clear, concise explanations on how you came up with the costs and how the costs are necessary for project success. If you fail to provide a complete budget narrative, your application may not be considered for funding.

Personnel Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6a)				
Position(s)	# of Staff	% of Time	Hourly Salary/Wage	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary, especially if you are budgeting personnel overtime costs]</i>				
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>				

Fringe Benefits Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6b)				
Position(s)	Benefit(s)	Rate	Base Amount	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>				
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>				

Travel Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6c)				
Purpose	# of Staff	Method of Travel	Days	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>				
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>				

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Equipment Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6d)			
Item Name	# of Items	Cost per Item	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>			
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>			

Supplies Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6e)			
Item Name	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>			
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>			

Contractual Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6f)	
Description of Services	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>	
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>	

Other Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6h)			
Item Name	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
<i>[Add additional lines, as necessary]</i>			
<i>[Enter explanation of how you came up with the costs and how they are necessary for project success]</i>			

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Appendix B— Budget Narrative Guidance

Indirect Costs Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6j)— [Choose one of the following options]	
OPTION A: If you have an approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement	
Name of the Federal agency that issued the agreement:	
What is the approved rate (%)?	
What is the period of time covered by the rate?	
What is the base against which rate is applied? <i>[As specified in the agreement]</i>	
What is the base amount (\$)?	
Enter the rate (%) that will be used:	
Enter the amount (\$) that will be used:	
TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES	
OPTION B: If you DO NOT have an approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement	
Enter fixed amount (\$) that will be used:	
TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES	
OPTION C: No Indirect Cost charges will be used	

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Appendix C— PRISM-Specific Attachment

The [State Organization Name] (hereby known as State) certifies that the State applying for Federal Fiscal Year 2014 Performance and Registration Information Systems Management (PRISM) funding meets the conditions for participation under Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Pub. L. No.109-59,§4109(a)(3) as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), Pub. L. No. 112-141, §§ 32602 and 32603(c) (2012). PRISM grants are governed by 49 United States Code (U.S.C.) §§ 49 31106(b) and 31109 (2006), as amended. This section requires PRISM program States to use grant funds to:

1. Comply with PRISM uniform policies, procedures, and technical and operational standards;
2. Possess (or seek the authority to possess) sanctions relating to commercial motor vehicle registration on the basis of a Federal safety fitness determination; and
3. Establish and implement a process to cancel the motor vehicle registration and seize the registration plates of a vehicle of a carrier with an out-of-service order.

Signature of State Authorizing Official: _____

Date: _____