U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Fiscal Year 2015 Commercial Motor Vehicle Operator Safety Training Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability

Announcement Type:	Grant
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:	20.235
Program Purpose:	The Commercial Motor Vehicle Operator Safety Training (CMVOST) grant is a nationwide Federal financial assistance program intended to reduce the severity and number of crashes on U.S. roads involving commercial motor vehicles (CMV) by training operators and future operators in the safe use of such vehicles.
Eligibility Information:	Eligibility for CMVOST funding is limited to organizations which provide CMV operator training, including accredited public or private colleges, universities, vocational-technical schools, post-secondary educational institutions, truck driver training schools, associations, and State and local governments, including Federally-recognized Native American Tribal governments. This NOFA is not being released to solicit proposals for the development of new CMV operator training programs. Applications received from educational institutions not accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and applications not addressing the national priority will not be considered. Individuals are not eligible to receive CMVOST funding.
Application Due Date:	February 26, 2015 (11:59 P.M. Eastern Standard Time)

A. CMVOST Grant Program Description

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announces the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 CMVOST grant program Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to solicit applications from organizations which provide CMV operator training, including accredited public or private colleges, universities, vocational-technical schools, post-secondary educational institutions, truck driver training schools, associations, and State and local governments, including Federally-recognized Native American Tribal governments that support CMVOST activities. The CMVOST grant is a nationwide Federal financial assistance program intended to reduce the severity and number of crashes on U.S. roads involving commercial motor vehicles (CMV) by training operators and future operators in the safe use of such vehicles.

The FMCSA announces the availability of CMVOST funding as authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Pub. L. No. 109-59, § 4134, 119 Stat. 1144, 1744-45 (2005), as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Pub. L. No.112–141, § 32603(g) (2012), as extended by The Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014, Pub. L. 113-159, § 1102 (August 8, 2014) and appropriated by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235 (December 16, 2014)). The FMCSA Grants Management Office (GMO) will make changes to the announcement via Grants.gov if there are statutory changes to the CMVOST program for FY 2015.

FY 2015 CMVOST Grant Program National Priority—

The CMVOST national priority is to train current and former members of the United States Armed Forces, including National Guard and Reservists, to obtain their CDL. The spouses and children of service members are also eligible for such training, with or without the service member. These individuals are referred to as "Qualified Students" for the remainder of this document.

B. Award Information

Use the information below to help you make an informed decision about whether to submit an application.

Total Amount of Funding FMCSA Expects to Award:	Up to but not to exceed $2,300,000
Anticipated Number of Awards:	10

Expected Amounts of Individual Awards (Estimates based off of previous year award amounts):	Award Ceiling: $200,000 Award Floor: $50,000
Anticipated Start Date/Period of Performance:	Upon execution of a Notice of Grant Award through the awarded end date. Funding amounts made available for reimbursement may be impacted by limitations placed on the spending authority and appropriations enacted for FMCSA.
Application Type:	Applications are for new FMCSA awards only. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible. The FMCSA will reimburse 80 percent (80%) of eligible costs. Recipients are required to provide a 20 percent match or cost share of the total, eligible program cost of the grant. Applications that fail to fully document their intent and ability to provide the matching funds will not be considered.

C. CMVOST Grant Program Eligibility Information

Eligibility for CMVOST funding is limited to organizations which provide CMV operator training, including accredited public or private colleges, universities, vocational-technical schools, post-secondary educational institutions, truck driver training schools, associations, and State and local governments, including Federally-recognized Native American Tribal governments. This NOFA is not being released to solicit proposals for the development of new CMV operator training programs.

Applications received from educational institutions not accredited by an accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and applications not addressing the national priority will be not be considered.

Individuals are not eligible to receive CMVOST funding.

The FMCSA cannot evaluate applications received without the complete set of required forms and attachments; all application section elements and all documents must be submitted (see next

section). A checklist specifically detailing each required document and its source is located in Appendix A.

D. Application and Submission Information

The FMCSA utilizes Grants.gov (*www.grants.gov*) for accepting program applications. All FY 2015 applications must be submitted electronically through this site; however, Applicants requiring additional accessibility or accommodation associated with submitting this grant application should contact the FMCSA Grants Management Office (GMO). Unsolicited applications will not be accepted.

STEP #1: To apply, the Applicant must complete the Grants.gov registration process. Note that the new registration process can take as long as four weeks.

STEP #2: Every Applicant must be:
1) registered in the System for Award Management (*www.SAM.gov*) before submitting the application; 2) provide a valid Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number in its application; and 3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by FMCSA.

The FMCSA will not issue a Federal award to an Applicant until the Applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an Applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FMCSA is ready to issue an award, FMCSA may determine that the Applicant is not qualified to receive the award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another Applicant.

How do I know that my application has been received by Grants.gov?

Once Grants.gov has received your submission, they will send email messages to advise you of the progress of your application through the system.
Over the next two business days, you should receive two emails: 1) confirms application receipt by the Grants.gov system; and 2) indicates that the application has either been successfully validated by Grants.gov prior to transmission to FMCSA or has been rejected due to errors. Click here for more information.

STEP #3: The Applicant must download the grant application package from Grants.gov, complete it, and submit the completed application package with required attachments through Grants.gov on or before the **deadline of 11:59 P.M. (EST) on Thursday, February 26, 2015**. 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.

For Grants.gov assistance, contact:	
Phone:	1-800-518-4726 (toll-free) or 606-545-5035
Business Hours:	24 hours a day, 7 days a week
	Closed on Federal holidays
Email:	support@grants.gov

Modifications to an application after it has been submitted will require a resubmission of the entire application package. The Applicant must notify the FMCSA Grants Management Office (GMO) prior to resubmitting the package. Submitting changes to Grants.gov without contacting the FMCSA GMO could significantly delay the application process and may result in the application not being reviewed.

The FMCSA will consider late applications on a case-by-case basis; late applications are not automatically accepted. A late application may be accepted if there is a large scale natural disaster or a Grants.gov system issue that threatens the timely submission of a grant application. Problems with computer systems at the Applicant organization, failure to follow the application instructions or failure to submit the program application or complete required registrations by the submission deadline are not considered system issues.

Content and Form of Application Submission—

Applicants are not required to use the project or budget narrative format below, but doing so helps ensure that the application meets the established minimum requirements. Application project and budget narrative guidance is in Appendix B and C (a Microsoft Word version of Appendix C is included separately in Grants.gov). Any applicant that does not use the provided guidance must still provide the information requested in it and will be evaluated based on the criteria established in this NOFA.

For all submissions, the application must be on 8.5" x 11" paper, using either the “Times New Roman” or “Arial” font in 12 point. Page margins must be at least 0.5” overall. There is no specific page limitation. The Applicant should attach any supplemental information that it believes will support the proposal.

Goal and Objective (Brief Introduction): Include a 1-2 sentence description of the goal(s) of the application and the applicable program priority(ies) met by the application’s projects. Include in this introduction specific information about the outputs the application proposes to achieve. Example: To expand the number of individuals receiving commercial motor vehicle operator safety training in order to reduce 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 Guard members and Reservists) and their spouses or

children (Qualified Students), provide them with superior safety-focused training, and provide placement services to assist them in becoming employed in the transportation industry.

1. **Activity Workplan:** A description of the Applicant's quantifiable goal related to the above problem statement. This should be measured in four activity areas:
   - Activity 1 – Recruiting Qualified Students: Example: Applicant has a wide recruitment network that concentrates on outreach to veteran and military applicants. 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.
   - Activity 2 – Training Qualified Students: Example: The program takes approximately 4 weeks to complete and includes 105 hours of classroom instruction and 44 hours of behind-the-wheel training; the curriculum is as follows (insert course listing here).
   - Activity 3 – Providing Graduated Students with Job Placement Assistance 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.
   - Activity 4 – Providing Qualified Students with Fees or Expenses Outside Tuition Costs Example: All fees and expenses, including books, materials, and permit and testing fees are included in each student's tuition. The Applicant routinely hosts job fairs and other work-related skills classes and seminars on campus at no charge to the student.

2. **Program Evaluation and Monitoring Plan:** A description of how the Applicant will measure progress towards the performance objective goal by using quantifiable and measurable outputs and in terms of performance outcomes. The measure must include specific benchmarks that can be reported on in the quarterly progress report, if practicable, or as annual outcomes. Example: 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 that passed the CDL test, and the number placed in the trucking industry.

3. **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 training program, its ability to conduct recruitment and career placement, and its ability to successfully manage a Federal financial assistance award. Example: Applicant has been providing CDL training since

1986 and is the preferred training provider for several large government and for-profit organizations. Its experience includes training drivers in the safe operation of all commercial vehicles, including passenger vehicles and tankers.

4. **Budget Narrative:** A budget narrative is a description by budget category (object class or type of expense) that details the costs necessary to complete the proposed projects. A well-written budget narrative ensures that the Applicant has properly documented proposed costs. The level of detail should be sufficient to justify the funding requested. Guidance on how to develop an application budget narrative is included in Appendix B.

Application Form Requirements—

1. **SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance:** Standard application form for all Federal assistance requests available in the Grants.gov application kit.

2. **SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs:** Standard budget form for requests for Federal assistance available in the Grants.gov application kit. **NOTE:** On page 1 of the SF-424A, the Applicant may list up to four (4) projects requested for funding. 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 or roll-over funds available for these grants.

   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 project using the Excel version of the SF-424A form as a supplemental form.

   The Excel version of the SF-424A is located on the Grantee resources page at:

   http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/mission/grants/sf-424a-budget-worksheet%C2%A0

3. **SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs:** Standard assurances form associated with accepting Federal assistance funds available in the Grants.gov application kit. This document indicates that the Applicant organization is in substantial compliance with various programs, regulations, and Federal laws.

4. **Grants.Gov Lobbying Form:** Standard lobbying form available in the Grants.gov application kit for Applicants to indicate that they do/do not engage in lobbying activity.

5. **SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:** Standard form for Applicants to report their lobbying activities available in the Grants.gov application kit. Only applies to Applicants that have lobbying activities to disclose.

6. **Key Contacts Form:** Form to include the individuals that will be responsible for a Federal award. It is available in the Grants.gov application kit. Contacts for three positions are required: 1) Authorized Designated Official (ADO), 2) Principal Investigator or Program Director (PI/PD); and 3) Financial Official (FO). If the same individual is responsible for multiple roles, this should be indicated on the form.

    - **Authorized Designated 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)

    - **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:** Supplemental form to submit attachments. Available in the Grants.gov application kit.

8. **Indirect Cost Rate Information:** If the budget includes indirect costs, attach a copy of the fully executed, negotiated agreement. If the rate will not be approved by the application due date, attach the letter of renewal or letter of request that you sent to your cognizant agency to your application. The FMCSA does not require indirect cost rate information if the Applicant does not include indirect costs anywhere in the application's budget.

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 will cause the application to be rejected by Grants.gov!

9. **FMCSA Administrative Capability Questionnaire (ACQ):**
This self-certification questionnaire is used by FMCSA to assess your organization's administrative management systems, infrastructure, policies, and resources. It is located within the Grants.gov "Full Announcement" tab.

Application Cost Guidance/Funding Restrictions—

Costs charged to FMCSA grants must be in accordance with the applicable cost principles. 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 per 2 CFR §§ 200.400 through 200.475, with the exception of §§ 200.416-200.417, which include Special Considerations (only) for States, Local Governments, and Indian Tribes, and §§ 200.418-200.419, which include Special Considerations (only) for Institutions of Higher Education. Contact the FMCSA Grants Management Office for additional information.

The FMCSA seeks to award grants that will cover two types of expenses: tuition costs for Qualified Students and costs associated with the recruitment and post-training job placement of Qualified Students unless recruitment and post-training job placement are already part of an institution's advertised tuition cost for all students.

Allowable Cost 1

The FMCSA will not award grant funds for instructor or administrative support salaries or other general recurring expenses associated with the Applicant's daily operations. It is FMCSA's expectation that the institution has an established CMV operator training program, that the cost of tuition charged for each student supports all administrative, personnel, and supplies/equipment related costs for the training, and that this grant will primarily support the tuition costs for Qualified Students based upon an established tuition cost. To properly document this, applications must:

- Present all proposed costs associated with training Qualified Students in the form of student tuition; specifically:
    - Applications must document the public, advertised tuition rate for the CMV training program that the institution offers;
    - Applications must identify the proposed tuition rate for the grant-funded Qualified Students. This tuition cost may not be higher than the advertised tuition rate for the institution's CMV training program; if lower than the advertised tuition rate, the application must demonstrate what costs or services have been removed or the reason for the reduction. Applications must also identify any non-tuition fees that are required of all students and include these in the cost of the program.
    - Applications must identify the amount of funding requested for the tuition for Qualified Students multiplied by the anticipated number of Qualified Students the

Applicant proposes to train. If the Applicant requests only a percentage of tuition, the application must indicate whether the school will consider the remaining tuition part of its required match. CMVOST grants require a 20% match or cost-share by the Grantee. The required match can consist of the remaining portion of student tuition as described above or other costs that directly benefit the students enrolled in the program or the school's CMV training program.

Allowable Cost 2

Costs associated with the recruitment of Qualified Students and the post-training job placement of graduated Students may include:

- The proportional share of salaries for program recruitment and job placement coordinators who recruit Qualified Students and assist them with post-graduation employment; student recruitment by the institution or a contractor that is part of an institution's normal operations will not be reimbursed by this grant.

- Travel expenses related to attending student recruitment and job placement events that are directly related to identifying and recruiting Qualified Students or assisting them in finding employment for which a CDL is required.

- Costs for recruitment materials (such as handouts for a job fair, a poster in a military facility's announcement area, etc.). NOTE: promotional items such as key chains, coffee mugs, pens, tote bags, and the like are not allowable, even if intended solely to publicize or promote the program. This restriction applies to any subcontractor operating on behalf of a grantee to conduct recruitment and job placement services.

- Fringe benefits, indirect costs, contractual costs or other costs that directly benefit students by supporting recruiting and job-placement activities for Qualified Students in the program. **Instructor salaries, administrative staff or support salaries, associated fringe benefits for those salaries, and other general recurring expenses associated with the Applicant's daily operations are expected to be part of the cost of tuition and are not eligible as required cost-matching.**

- **Other Cost Eligibility Notes**
  - The 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. NOTE: indirect costs cannot be applied to tuition if prohibited by the approved indirect cost rate.

  - The FMCSA will not approve pre-award costs. Pre-award expenditures are made at the Applicant's risk. The incurrence of pre-award costs in anticipation of receiving a

competing award imposes no obligation on FMCSA either to make the award or to increase the amount of the approved budget if an award is made for less than the amount anticipated and is inadequate to cover the pre-award costs incurred.

E. Application Review Information

All applications received by the due date and time are subjected to an initial intake review. This intake review determines whether: (1) the Applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFA has been submitted; and (3) all program eligibility requirements described in the NOFA are satisfied. Applications that pass the intake review will be subjected to a comprehensive evaluation. Applications in response to this announcement are evaluated by a cross-discipline team: a technical review panel (TRP), grant specialists, program officers, and FMCSA staff responsible for day-to-day grant management oversight.

Each application is reviewed in the following areas:

1. **Technical Review Panel (TRP) Merit Review:** This review provides an independent assessment of the technical/programmatic merit of an application. At least three qualified individuals are selected to review each application to ensure diversity of perspective and knowledge. TRP individuals are selected based on their technical education and experience and the extent to which the individual has engaged in relevant work, the capacities in which the individual has done so, and the quality of such work.

   TRP reviewers will evaluate each eligible application to determine the extent to which the application describes a project that reflects the program's priority and that is likely to achieve successful completion within the award's period of performance.

   TRP reviewers will also evaluate each eligible application to determine the extent to which it describes specific activities that support the objective(s) of the program. In evaluating this, the reviewers will consider whether all budget components are reasonable and necessary to conduct the project's activities; proposed expenditures must be fully described and provide sufficient detail to verify that they were calculated accurately.

   Finally, TRP reviewers will evaluate each eligible application to determine the extent to which it describes a plan that: includes clearly-identified performance goals and measurements that are supported by data, if available, and that includes benchmarks and timelines to facilitate evaluating the Applicant's progress towards completion, Applications must include a monitoring plan that can be used by both the Applicant and FMCSA to evaluate performance, identify potential obstacles, and make adjustments as necessary.

TRP members will utilize the below adjectival ratings for each component above and as a final summary determination based on all components reviewed.

- **Highly Responsive:** Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criteria, convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the Government's performance requirements, and demonstrates minimal or no weaknesses.

- **Responsive:** Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criteria, demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the Government's requirements, but may include a few weaknesses.

- **Somewhat Responsive:** Applicant addresses most aspects of the criteria and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. However, the application contains significant weaknesses and/or a number of minor weaknesses. These weaknesses may be addressed by recommending the award and including a specific programmatic or administrative post-award term and condition.

- **Not Responsive:** Applicant does not sufficiently address the criteria and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the Government's requirements.

2. **Budget Review/Cost Analysis.** This review provides an assessment of allowable costs in accordance with Federal grant requirements, including the appropriateness and reasonableness of the budget estimate and the resources to be dedicated to the project, and of the feasibility of the schedule relative to the application timeline. The budget evaluation provides preliminary insight to project-related risk, other than risks arising from technical uncertainty, which must be considered prior to recommendation.

   Reviewers will evaluate applications to determine the extent to which:

   - Elements of work included in the application have associated budget costs and, conversely, all elements in the Applicant’s budget have corresponding work elements included in the application;

   - Budget costs are allowable, allocable, necessary and reasonable per Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; and

   - Costs in each cost category have been properly identified as allowable, necessary, and not duplicative of the other budget line items.

3. **Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.** This review provides a risk assessment of each Applicant's organization. The risk assessment is conducted in several parts: 1) a debarment and suspension review that includes a review of the Applicant's administrative capability self-certification form and a check against the records in SAM; 2) a review of the Applicant's history with other Federal agencies in the Single Audit Clearinghouse Database; and 3) an evaluation of the Applicant's Single Audit in accordance with the Single Audit Act. The FMCSA may, at its discretion, request further information and/or conduct an audit to confirm compliance as indicated on the SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form, as provided for in the United States Code or the Code of Federal Regulations.

   Depending on the level and severity of the Agency's risk assessment findings, FMCSA may determine that the Applicant is not qualified to receive the award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another Applicant. The FMCSA may also impose additional grant award terms and conditions above its customary general terms and conditions.

4. **Applicant Past Performance w/ FMCSA.** This review provides information that is considered as a possible indicator for predicting future performance. Many Applicants for FMCSA programs have received FMCSA funding in the past and will be evaluated against their ability to complete prior year awards on time, their compliance with grant terms and conditions, and their results from FMCSA grant monitoring activities. Applicants with no prior FMCSA grant awards will not be eliminated from funding consideration.

   Reviewers will evaluate applications to determine the extent to which:

   - The application is written in a manner that would allow FMCSA to monitor performance based on FMCSA reporting requirements;

   - The proposed project/program is reasonable in scope, adequate to address existing and emerging commercial driver's license safety issues, and likely to succeed in achieving its goals;

   - Based on prior personnel and budgetary practices, and past performance, the proposed expenditures are reasonable and necessary to conduct the proposed projects and whether or not costs are allowable under applicable Federal regulations; and

   - The Applicant successfully performs and manages current project tasks (e.g., within budget and on schedule).

Reviewers will also:

- Document any issues or findings from monitoring activities (e.g., audit, program, or process reviews) that demonstrate the Applicant's violation of the grant terms and conditions;

- Consider whether or not the Applicant's previous performance and financial reports were submitted late, were incomplete or incorrect, and/or if the Applicant has consistently requested additional time to complete the reports; and

- Provide feedback on the application's significance, approach, and feasibility.

5. **Consideration of Program-Specific Aspects:** The FMCSA will consider other aspects in the review of the application, in addition to the application's merit, budget, risk assessment, and past performance. These aspects relate to program-specific policy areas that may factor into an award recommendation. In considering final awards, the FMCSA may consider an institution's geographical location within a region and the United States as a whole to prevent the clustering of grantees in any one region of the country or area within a broader geographical region (ex: the Southeast, Pacific Northwest, etc.).

   Further, FMCSA may consider an applicant institution's proximity to nearby military installations that will provide the largest available candidate pool for Qualified Students. If FMCSA determines that consideration based on geographical region or proximity to a military installation is necessary, applications will be competed among similarly situated applications rather than the application pool as a whole.

Applicant Negotiation—

After the application review process, FMCSA may find it necessary to contact the Applicant with additional questions for clarification. The FMCSA also reserves the right to negotiate with the Applicant regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding. An Applicant may be required to submit a supplemental budget or project narrative based on a partial or modified grant recommendation. The FMCSA expects to contact Applicants and/or conduct negotiations (if necessary) on or about April 30, 2015. The FMCSA does not expect to make final awards prior to August 2015. Any contact made by FMCSA with an Applicant shall not be inferred as a precursor to a final award at any level after questions are responded to, or additional documents are provided by, the Applicant.

F. Award Administration Information

The FMCSA will consider the results of the reviews outlined in this NOFA, Applicant responses (if applicable) and recommend that the application: 1) be approved for award from currently available funds (in its entirety or in part); or 2) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review. Once the FMCSA Administrator approves the recommendations, they are presented to the United States Secretary of Transportation for final approval. The FMCSA may not award grants or release information concerning application recommendations until Secretarial approval is obtained.

In addition to Secretarial approval, FMCSA cannot award grants until the enactment of authorizing legislation, an appropriations act, budget authority, and apportionment from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The FMCSA may, at its discretion issue partial funding awards up to the level authorized and provided that the above conditions are met. Additional information on the budget process may be found in OMB A-11: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default/.

After approval, the GMO issues the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) to the recommended Applicant via GrantSolutions (www.grantsolutions.gov), the FMCSA grant management system. Attached to the NGA is the FMCSA Financial Assistance Agreement General Provisions and Assurances (grant terms and conditions). By accepting the award, Applicants are agreeing to the award's terms and conditions. A copy of the FY 2015 terms and conditions is located within the Grants.gov "Full Announcement" tab.

The grant terms and conditions outline the reporting requirements that the recipient must meet after award. Reporting responsibilities include quarterly program performance status using the Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR) and quarterly financial status using the Federal Financial Report (SF-FFR, also known as the SF-425). Grantees may elect to submit financial reports by email or electronically through GrantSolutions; contact the GMO for additional information. Grantees must submit quarterly performance reports via email until FMCSA has made the necessary GrantSolutions system modifications that will allow for electronic SF-PPR reporting. Roll-out is scheduled in FY 2016.

Additional quarterly report information and other required forms and templates are available at:

http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/mission/grants/grantee-resources

All FMCSA grant programs are cost reimbursable. Reimbursement means that grant funded entities must first expend their own money for activities identified in the grant application. Entities will then be reimbursed by FMCSA for actual costs incurred. All FMCSA recipients must request reimbursement on at least a quarterly basis. This request must include a signed

Request for Advance or Reimbursement (SF-270) and a detailed expenditures worksheet with a written explanation of how the funds were used. All costs must be in line with the approved budget, OMB cost principles, and related FMCSA and other policies. Recipients must submit requests for reimbursement electronically through the Delphi eInvoicing System (iSupplier). Additional information is available at: http://www.dot.gov/cfo/delphi-einvoicing-system.

If an Applicant is not selected for funding, it will not receive any communication until all funding recommendations have been approved by the United States Secretary of Transportation. At that time, FMCSA will send a letter to notify those Applicants who were not funded. The FMCSA does not have an appeals process for unsuccessful applications for discretionary grant funds.

G. Agency Contact—

FMCSA Grants Management Office (GMO):

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 Standard 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

H. Other Information—

The FMCSA may make changes or additions to this NOFA. All changes will be communicated on Grants.gov. We encourage you to sign up for Grants.gov emails so you may be notified of any changes.

Prior to the application due date, FMCSA plans to conduct a pre-funding conference(s) for all prospective Applicants. At this conference, FMCSA staff will review the NOFA requirements and answer questions from prospective Applicants. Information regarding a pre-funding conference will be posted on Grants.gov.

This NOFA 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.

The FMCSA is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Funding amounts made available for reimbursement may be impacted by limitations placed on the spending authority and appropriations enacted for FMCSA. The FMCSA is not responsible for any monies expended by the Applicant prior to the award of any funding agreement. Only FMCSA authorizing officials can obligate the Federal government.

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application; however, withdrawn applications normally will not be returned. One copy of each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by FMCSA for a period of three years.

The FMCSA Grant Programs Website (for Applicant and Grantee resources):

http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/mission/grants/grantee-resources

Appendix A— Required Documents Checklist

Each document and/or certification below is REQUIRED to be considered as being responsive to this announcement. Use of the required documents checklist is 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 ☐

Appendix A— Required Documents Checklist				
	Document Name	**Document Description & Location**	**Document Included**	
6	Key Contacts Form	Form that requests contact information for the: 1) Authorized Designated 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 ☐
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 and Budget Narrative	Project narrative includes: brief introduction, problem statement, performance objective(s), program activity plan(s), performance measurement plan(s), and a Program Overview. Applicant generated and attached to the Grants.gov application package. Budget narrative includes a thorough and clear justification of each budget category (object class or type of expense) on the SF-424A.	YES ☐	NO ☐
9	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 ☐
10	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 2015.	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 and 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 the necessity of an expense;
- Documents how reasonable the request is, conveys your judgment as well as the feasibility of the project in the 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 for staff 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. Please note:

   - This category is limited to persons employed by your organization ONLY.
   - Only include compensation paid for employees engaged in grant activities.
   - Costs should be consistent with payment for similar types of work within the organization.
   - Those not employed by your agency shall be classified as subgrantees **or** contractors. These individuals should be listed under the "Contractual" object class.

2. **Fringe Benefits:** Fringe costs are benefits paid to your employees, including the cost of the employer's share of FICA, health insurance, and workers' compensation. Include how the fringe benefit amount is calculated (i.e., actual fringe benefits, rate approved by the Health and Human Services State Wide Cost Allocation Plan or cognizant agency). Include a description of specific benefits that are charged to a project and the benefit percentage. Please note:

   - Always understand the difference between a fringe benefit and an employee benefit. A fringe benefit is applied as a percentage or dollar contribution toward the base wage (retirement, health insurance, FICA, etc.) and an employee benefit is what we colloquially call a "goodie" for working for the employer (holidays, vacation, other leave).
   - Note that the personnel salaries should have corresponding fringe...and vice versa. Therefore, FMCSA cannot pay a fringe for a position that is not listed, and vice versa. If a position will be charged to grant activities, the level of participation (Full Time or Part Time) must correspond to the fringe charged. This way, we ensure that the correct fringe is attributed to the correct grant.
   - You can document this fringe rate if it comes from state approved levels or other supportable sources.
   - It is important to explain what is included in the benefit package and at what percentage.

- Fringe benefits are for the Applicant's staff and only for the percentage of time devoted to the project.
- The Applicant should not combine the fringe benefit costs with direct salaries and wages in the personnel category.

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. Please note:
   - Explain the reason for travel expenses for project personnel (e.g., attending training, field interviews, advisory group meeting, etc.) and, if known, identify the location/destination of travel.
   - It is acceptable to enter unforeseen travel such as possible FMCSA required meetings, with estimated costs for attendance.
   - Provide information used in estimating the cost.
   - List travel and per diem separately in the budget narrative.
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. Please note:
   - Purchases of less than $5,000 may be listed under "Supplies" or "Other", unless the Applicant's threshold is lower than $5,000. However, common purchases like a computer system (for example, a keyboard, monitor and hard drive) is considered a unit, when purchased as a package and does not have to be listed separately but should be placed under equipment when such package exceeds the threshold; however, if these same items are purchased individually (and not as a package), and each unit is below the threshold, they will be listed under supplies.
   - Software, unless its unit price exceeds the equipment threshold, is not considered Equipment and should not be listed here. It is more appropriately listed under "Supplies".

- Each item of equipment must be identified with the corresponding cost. General-purpose equipment must be justified as to how it will be used on the project.

- Analyze the cost benefits of purchasing versus leasing equipment, particularly high-cost items and those subject to rapid technical advances. List rented or leased equipment costs in the "Contractual" or “Other” category, depending upon the procurement method.

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:** Contractual costs are those services carried out by an individual or organization, other than the Applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. There are two ways to capture costs in this category: subgrants and contracts.

   What is a subgrant?

   A subgrant is an award provided by a pass-through entity (Prime Grantee Recipient) to a subrecipient. That subrecipient carries out part of a program for which the Prime Grantee Recipient received Federal support. A subgrant may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the Recipient calls a contract.

   A subgrant/subgrantee has its performance measured in relation to whether objectives of a Federal program were met; has responsibility for programmatic decision making; is responsible for adherence to applicable Federal program requirements specified in the Federal award; and (in accordance with its agreement), uses the Federal funds to carry out a program for a public purpose specified in authorizing statute, as opposed to providing goods or services for the benefit of the pass-through entity.

   What is a contract?

   A contract is a legal instrument by which a Prime Grantee Recipient purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under an award.

A contract/contractor provides the goods and services within normal business operations; provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers; normally operates in a competitive environment; provides goods or services that are ancillary (necessary support to the primary activities) to the operation of the Federal program; and is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program as a result of the agreement, though similar requirements may apply for other reasons.

For all contractual costs, include the rationale for the amount of the costs and include the specific contract goods and/or services provided and the related expenses for those goods and services. Entering the statement "contractual services" shall not be considered as meeting the requirement for completing this section.

6. **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. The use of the terminology "miscellaneous expenses" or any similar term is unacceptable. You must itemize all "Other" direct costs. Please note:

   - A cost, like a lease, is considered a "Contractual" cost when you directly engage, and form a contract with, a vendor.

   - A lease would be considered an "Other" cost when you are using a Statewide contract. If you are not the prime on the contract and are partnering with a different agency in your state or using a shared utility, facility or other services purchased through the state for one or more agencies, those costs should be shown as "Other" and itemized as described above.

7. **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. If the rate will not be approved by the application due date, attach the letter of renewal or letter of request that you sent to your cognizant agency to your application.

Appendix C— Sample Project and Budget Narrative Guidance

How to use this guidance:

1. Carefully read the instructions for each section. The FMCSA will only consider applications responsive if the information they provide is complete, clear, and accurate.
2. For each section, insert the requested information into the available fields (denoted by a bold, red outline).

Insert Institution Name Here

Section 1 – Project Narrative

Goal

To expand the number of individuals receiving commercial motor vehicle operator safety training in order to reduce 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 Guard members and Reservists) and their spouses (Qualified Students), provide them with superior safety-focused training, and provide placement services to assist them in becoming employed in the transportation industry.

Objective

Insert the requested information in the available column:

Description	Response
Your institution's publically advertised Tuition Cost **for the CMV operator training program you conduct.**	**$**
Your proposed tuition cost *for each student trained under this proposed program.*	**$**
Proposed number of New Students Recruited	
Anticipated number of Students Graduated **(based on the expected number of students recruited and the historical graduation rate for this program)**	
Anticipated number of students employed **in the transportation industry after graduation (based on the expected number of students graduated and the historical placement rate for this program)**	

Work Plan

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.

Activity 1 – Recruiting Qualified Students:

Describe your proposed activities for recruiting Qualified Students for enrollment into your training program and if your published tuition includes the recruitment efforts for students who are funded from other sources.

Insert Response Here

Activity 2 – Training Qualified Students:

Describe your proposed activities to provide superior, safety-focused CMV training for Qualified Students. Focus on the specific components of your training program. Include any details about the program that make it unique and a synopsis of the performance of the program in previous years. Include the number of classroom, driving range, and on-the-road training included in your curriculum. Please include any endorsements the Qualified Students will qualify for after completing their CDL training.

Insert Response Here

Activity 3 – Providing Graduated Students with Job Placement Assistance

Describe your proposed activities to provide assistance in placing the trained students into the transportation industry after graduation, and if your published tuition includes job placement efforts for students who are funded from other sources.

Insert Response Here

Activity 4 – Providing Qualified Students with Fees or Expenses Outside Tuition Costs

Describe your proposed activities to provide financial assistance regarding published fees or associated costs, and which is not included in your published tuition.

Insert Response Here

Program Evaluation and Monitoring Plan:

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 objectives established earlier in the application and describe 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.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

Project Quarter	Anticipated Number of Students Recruited and Enrolled	Anticipated Number of Students Graduated	Anticipated Number of Students Placed in the Transportation Industry
Q3 – FFY 2014			
Q4 – FFY 2014			
Q1 – FFY 2015			
Q2 – FFY 2015			
Q3 – FFY 2015			
Q4 – FFY 2015			

Provide additional information describing how you will monitor the success of this project each quarter.

Insert Response Here

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 training program, its

ability to conduct recruitment and career placement, and its ability to successfully manage a Federal financial assistance award.

Describe Your Organizational Capacity to Conduct the Proposed Program

Insert Response Here

Section 2 – Budget Narrative

How to use this guidance:

1. Carefully read the instructions for each section. The FMCSA will only consider applications responsive if the information they provide is complete, clear, and accurate.

2. Within each section there is a table. This table allows the applicant to itemize specific costs and provide explanation for those costs. Carefully review the instructions in *italics* in each table and provide the information that is indicated in *italics.*

3. 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.

4. Note: The costs associated with tuition should be entered into the "Other Cost Budget Narrative" as the cost of tuition for each student, times the number of students, for the total training tuition amount requested.

Personnel Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6a)				
Position(s)	**# of Staff**	**% of Time**	**Hourly Salary/Wage**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary, especially if you are budgeting personnel overtime costs]				
Provide a narrative justifying the proposed personnel cost provided in the budget for employee(s) salaries that are ***directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students.*** *Include the number and type of personnel, the percentage of time dedicated to the project, hourly wage, and total cost.*				

Fringe Benefits Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6b)				
Position(s)	**Benefit(s)**	**Rate**	**Base Amount**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]				
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed fringe benefits costs provided in the budget (including the cost of employer's share of FICA, health insurance, workers' compensation, and vacation) that are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students.** Include a description of specific benefits that are charged to a project and the benefit percentage.*				

Travel Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6c)				
Purpose	**# of Staff**	**Method of Travel**	**Days**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]				
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed travel costs provided in the budget guidance which are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students.** If a published tuition is being utilized within this application, the applicant must certify that any costs detailed within the budget are not already part of the published tuition cost. 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.*				

Equipment Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6d)			
Item Name	**# of Items**	**Cost per Item**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]			
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed equipment costs provided in the budget guidance that are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students and that are not included in student tuition.** **NOTE: The FMCSA will not approve the purchase of trucks and/or simulator training devises.** Include a description, quantity and unit price for all equipment.*			

Supplies Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6e)			
Item Name	**# of Units**	**Cost per Unit**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]			
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed supplies costs provided in the budget guidance which are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students and that are not included in student tuition.** Indicate the approximate expenditure of the unit as a whole. Include a quantity and unit cost for larger cost supply items such as computers and printers.*			

Contractual Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6f)	
Description of Services	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]	
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed contractual costs provided in the budget guidance which are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students.** If including consulting cost provide the rationale for all cost.*	

Other Cost Budget Narrative (SF-424A, Line 6h)			
Item Name	**# of Units**	**Cost per Unit**	**Total Cost**
[Add additional lines, as necessary]			
*Provide a narrative justifying the proposed "Other" costs provided in the budget guidance which are **directly associated with advertising, recruiting, and providing employment placement assistance for Qualified Students but are not already included in the** categories above. NOTE: **proposed tuition costs for training Qualified Students should be shown in this category.** You must itemize ALL "Other" direct costs.*			