

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Office of Grants and Research**



**Notice of Availability of Grant Funds (AGF)
for
FFY 2021 State Traffic Safety Information System
Improvements Grant, Section 405(c) Funding**

December 29, 2020

**Charles D. Baker
Governor**

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Lieutenant Governor**

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Secretary**

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Executive Director**

**Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Office of Grants and Research
Availability of Grant Funds (AGF)**

FFY 21 State Traffic Safety Information System Improvements Grant, Section 405(c) funding

I. AGF Overview

The **Office of Grants and Research (OGR)** is the State Administering Agency for the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** Section 405(c) grant funding received annually by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This grant opportunity's primary intent is to help states improve the performance attributes of core traffic safety information systems.

OGR is issuing this competitive AGF with an anticipated total award amount of \$800,000.

OGR seeks to provide Section 405(c) funding available in FFY 2021 from NHTSA for projects to improve the accessibility, accuracy, completeness, integration, timeliness, and/or uniformity (performance attributes) of one or more of the following six core traffic records systems of the Commonwealth: citation/adjudication, crash, driver, injury surveillance/EMS, roadway, vehicle.

Improving these systems will enhance traffic records stakeholders' ability to conduct problem identification, develop and implement projects, and evaluate project impact of local, state, and federal traffic safety programs.

Permissible projects could also:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to improve these six systems;
- Link with other appropriate state or federal data systems;
- Improve compatibility and interoperability of state data systems with national systems and those in other states; and
- Enhance an agency's ability to observe and analyze national trends in crash occurrences, rates, outcomes, and circumstances.

Only units of state and local government, state higher educational institutions, or not-for-profit organizations in Massachusetts with a public purpose are eligible to apply for this funding. Private sector organizations are not eligible to receive this funding.

OGR reserves the right to adjust or cancel the amount of funding being made available through this AGF, as any awards made will be contingent upon receipt and availability of NHTSA grant funds.

The funding to support awards for projects resulting from this AGF process is further contingent upon NHTSA's acceptance of these projects into OGR's FFY 2021 or subsequent Highway Safety Plans (HSP).

Funding made available in this AGF comes from a federal grant program, established in Title 23, Chapter 4, and 23 CFR Part 1300 section, known as the **405(c) - State Traffic Safety Information System Improvements Grant**. This section establishes criteria, in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 405(c), for grants to States to develop and implement effective programs that improve the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility of State safety data needed to identify priorities for Federal, State, and local highway and traffic safety programs; evaluate the effectiveness of such efforts; link State data systems, including traffic records and systems that contain medical, roadway, and economic data; improve the compatibility and interoperability of State data systems with national data systems and the data systems of other States; and enhance the agency's ability to observe and analyze national trends in crash occurrences, rates, outcomes, and circumstances.

All funding awarded through this AGF could be available to subrecipients on or about May 17, 2021 through September 30, 2021 (the end of FFY 21). Any projects starting in FFY 21 needing to continue past September 30, 2021 into FFY 22 will do so through contract amendments.

However if OGR determines an entity awarded funds cannot start work sufficiently prior to September 30, 2021, a start date of October 1, 2021 or later in FFY 22 will be necessary.

The expected end date for all awarded funds will be September 30, 2022 (the end of FFY 22).

Pending OGR and NHTSA approval, grant funding for projects could be extended up to June 30, 2023. Any FFY 22 projects needing to continue past September 30, 2022 into FFY 2023 will require new contracts specific to this new FFY.

Notice of any changes to the AGF will be posted at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants.

Key Dates

- AGF Posted: December 29, 2020
- Letters of Intent Due: by 11:59 pm, February 10, 2021
- Questions regarding AGF: by 11:59 pm, February 19, 2021
- **E-Applications Due: by 11:59 pm, February 24, 2021.**
- Virtual Project Presentations: on or about March 10, 2021
- ETRCC Review of Projects: anticipated April 6, 2021
- Award Announcements: on or about April 22, 2021
- Project Start Dates: on or about May 17, 2021 or October 1, 2021 onward.
- Project End Dates: expected by September 30, 2022

II. Program Background

Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC)

This committee, known in Massachusetts as the TRCC, is a NHTSA requirement attached to the Section 405(c) grant program. The TRCC mission is as follows:

"Through the coordinated efforts of its member organizations, provide a forum for the creation, implementation, management, and dissemination of accessible, accurate, complete, integrated, timely, and uniform traffic records data to aid decision-makers working to reduce transportation-related fatalities, injuries, and economic losses in Massachusetts."

The TRCC assists OGR with awarding projects to receive Section 405(c) funding, monitoring project progress, maintaining strategic direction for our traffic records information systems by annually updating and approving a Strategic Plan for Traffic Records Improvement, and supporting OGR's efforts to submit annual applications for Section 405(c) funding to NHTSA. The TRCC membership consists of representatives of the six core data systems as well as key data collectors and consumers. More TRCC information is available within the FFY 2021 Strategic Plan at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-records.

Traffic Records Assessment

In early 2019, OGR and its TRCC partners finalized a NHTSA-required traffic records assessment. This assessment and its recommendations are a critical source of project ideas for TRCC members and other traffic records stakeholders as well as a resource during the TRCC review and selection of projects. Below are the currently unmet recommendations. The full assessment is available at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-records. More on the current status of these recommendations and related assessment questions can be found in the FFY 2021 Strategic Plan at the above referenced web address.

Crash Recommendations: improve the ...

- applicable guidelines for
- interfaces with
- data quality control program for

... the system that reflects best practices in NHTSA's 2018 Traffic Records Program Assessment Advisory (Advisory).

Driver Recommendations: improve the ...

- data dictionary for
- data quality control program for

... the system that reflects best practices in the Advisory.

Vehicle Recommendations: improve the ...

- interfaces with
- data quality control program for

... the system that reflects best practices in the Advisory.

Roadway Recommendations: improve the ...

- data dictionary for
- data quality control program for

... the system that reflects best practices in the Advisory.

Citation and Adjudication Recommendations: improve the ...

- description and contents of
- data dictionary for
- data quality control program for

... the system that reflects best practices in the Advisory.

Injury Surveillance/EMS Recommendations: improve the ...

- interfaces with
- data quality control program for

... the systems that reflect best practices in the Advisory.

Data Use & Integration Recommendation: improve the traffic records systems capacity to integrate data that reflects best practices identified in the Advisory.

Other Resources

More information on the Massachusetts traffic records systems are in the 2014 Crash Data Audit and the 2019 Utilization of Crash and Medical Data to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crash Severity Findings Report at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-records. Another useful information source is the 2021 Massachusetts Strategic Highway Safety Plan at www.mass.gov/service-details/strategic-highway-safety-plan.

III. Application Information and Requirements

- All applicants must submit a non-binding letter of intent by **11:59 pm, February 10, 2021**. A letter of intent must be on an organization's letterhead, hand-signed by the organization's chief executive officer, and include the following information: project title, description of the proposed project and key partners (suggest no more than four sentences), confirmation that the organization's senior IT official supports the project, expected start and end dates, and the amount of funding sought. Send letters in PDF format to brook.chipman@mass.gov. OGR reserves the right to request a proposed project described in a letter of intent that involves multiple systems be submitted via separate applications.
- **Responses to this AGF must be submitted on the provided documents, Attachment A – Application and Attachment B - Budget Summary and Detail (Excel document) by the due date highlighted in the Key Dates section above.** See these attachments and below for additional response requirements. A response must also include a completed and hand-signed OGR Subrecipient Risk Assessment form (sections B, C, and E). All these documents and other required documents necessary for an award to be finalized are available at

www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants.

- If an organization is requesting funding for more than one project, use separate application documents.
- Projects related to the Massachusetts citation and/or crash systems must align with the Motor Vehicle Automated Citation and Crash System (MACCS) overseen by the Department of Criminal Justice Information System.
- Applications for projects dependent upon public sector partner(s) must be supported with a hand-signed letter(s) of support on partner letterhead. Partner CEOs or CIOs must sign such letters.
- Projects must work to meet **at least one** unmet recommendation from the Commonwealth's *2019 Traffic Records Assessment* at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-records.
- Projects must have **a minimum of one** measurable benchmark and performance measure related to a performance attribute of one of the six core traffic records systems.
- Projects determined to have **at least one** benchmark and performance measure meeting the "quantitative improvement" standard detailed below may receive from a reviewer up to five (5) additional points during a Four-Box Analysis and Scoring Tool process.

This benchmark and performance measure must be likely to assist Massachusetts to demonstrate a quantitative improvement of at least one performance attribute of at least one of the core traffic records system. Must use the methodology set forth in the *Model Performance Measures for State Traffic Records Systems* (DOT HS 811 441), as updated, at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/811441>. Must provide detail in Attachment A of the application how supporting documentation could be generated from the system for a performance period covering 12 months, starting anytime between April 1 and July 1, 2021, and a prior, contiguous benchmark period of one year. If awarded grant funding, the subrecipient must agree to work with OGR to provide the benchmark documentation in spring 2021, and to document the performance against the benchmark in the early spring of 2022. Must continue to provide such information in future years as long as receiving grant funds.

- As applicable, proposed projects must comply with the latest version of the *Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, at <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-ict-refresh>, and other related federal requirements as well as (2) the *Web Accessibility Standards*, issued by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Technology Services and Security at

www.mass.gov/eotss, and other related state requirements.

- Supplanting of state or local funds with federal grant funds from this program is prohibited. Supplanting includes: (a.) replacing routine and/or existing state or local allocations with federal grant funds and/or (b.) using federal grant funds for costs of activities that constitute general expenses required to carry out the overall responsibilities of the state, local, or federally recognized Indian tribal government. Funds provided through this grant must supplement, not supplant, state or local funding sources.
- No costs incurred before a grant contract is finalized or after its period of performance will be reimbursed.
- There is no match requirement.
- Applicants who are non-profit, local or regional government, or non-Executive Branch state-level entity must have a seat belt use policy in place to be awarded funds from this program.

Except for Executive Branch state agencies (OGR has this seat belt policy on file), **ALL** other applicants must provide a copy of such a policy at the time of application or before contract execution. **Failure to do so will result in your application not being eligible for funding.** A sample safety belt use policy is available on request at brook.chipman@mass.gov.

Executive Branch agencies are covered by the policy on safety belt use in the Commonwealth's New Employee Orientation Guide (4.14) and any related agency-specific policy.

IV. Allowable Costs and Budget Related Requirements

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefit
- Indirect
- Consultant / Contractor services
- Equipment/software and related installation and delivery costs
- Travel
- Supplies
- Others costs may be allowable with prior OGR approval

Equipment/Software Costs

If a proposed project requires an equipment purchase (includes a software-related expense), carefully review the equipment related requirements in OGR's General Subrecipient Grant Conditions, specifically Addendums 4 and 5. In addition to the federal requirements described in the conditions document that pertains to the procurement, management, and disposition of equipment, state agencies and communities must follow state/local laws and regulations if these are more restrictive.

A key NHTSA requirement for equipment purchases (includes software-related expenses) is prior written NHTSA approval for purchases of \$5,000 or over. This will be secured after an award is made through an equipment/software request letter developed by OGR with subrecipient assistance. This NHTSA approval must also be renewed for each federal fiscal year a project operates. Such purchases must also align with the Buy America Act (49 U.S.C. 5323(j)). More information on this act is in Addendum 5 of OGR's General Subrecipient Grant Conditions.

Definitions of each budget cost category are provided below.

Allowable Budget Cost Categories	Definitions and Documentation Requirements
Personnel Costs	Full or part-time regular salaried employees working on the grant. At a minimum reporting will need to detail employee name, hours worked per pay period, and hourly rate.
Fringe Benefit Costs	<p>Eligible costs include the <u>employer share</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life insurance • Health insurance • Social security costs • Pension costs • Unemployment insurance costs • Workers compensation insurance • Payroll taxes <p>Cost amounts for direct fringe benefits can be either actual costs or rates per employee calculated by the fiscal or human resource unit in your organization (rate computations must be included).</p> <p>Include copy of federally approved rate agreement in the application response.</p>
Indirect Cost	<p>Costs can only be shown here if the applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate. If the applicant's accounting system permits, costs may be allocated to the applicable direct cost category in the budget including the category "other" if the costs being identified do not fit into one of the specific direct cost categories.</p> <p>Include copy of federally approved rate agreement in the application response.</p>
Consultants/ Contract Costs	<p>Consultant or contractor fees.</p> <p>The maximum rate for consultants is \$650 for an eight-hour day or \$81.25 per hour (excluding travel and subsistence costs). Any request for compensation over \$650 per day hour day or \$81.25 per hour requires prior written approval by OGR. This rate is the exception not the rule.</p>

Equipment Costs	Tangible non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year; cost based on classification of equipment. Must be directly related to the program implementation.
Travel Costs	Travel directly related to the purpose of the grant. In-state travel costs associated with the grant shall include mileage rates not in excess of \$0.45 per mile, as well as the actual costs of tolls and parking. No grant funds may be spent for out of state conference fees, out of state travel or out of state lodging without prior written approval from OGR.
Supplies Costs	Supplies required for program (pens, pencils, postage, training materials, copying paper, and other expendable items such as books, ink, etc.).
Other Costs	Items (e.g., telephone costs, training material costs)

Unallowable Costs

In addition to the supplanting prohibition noted above, there are unallowable costs and other restrictions noted in Title 2 CFR Chapter II Part 200 - UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS (in particular Subpart E – Cost Principles) at

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ed90f54836feb6a994f657188eb05e33&node=2:1.1.2.2.1&rgn=div5>. Also within NHTSA guidance that applies to Section 405(c) funds and other federal grant funding at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/highway-safety-grants-program/resources-guide>.

OGR does not allow overtime or separately purchased warranty/service plan expenses under this grant program.

V. Application Review Process

At the start of the process, an OGR-selected AGF review committee with OGR staff and one or more outside reviewers will ensure AGF responses adhere to the AGF requirements. OGR anticipates recruiting one or more outside reviewers from the TRCC (an external reviewer can't be from an entity that has submitted an AGF response).

As part of the committee's process, applicants will be able to make virtual presentations on their projects to the committee that will be open to all TRCC members in early March 2021. The committee will then review proposed projects using a Four-Box Analysis and Scoring Tool similar to those used in the past by the TRCC.

Projects will first be prioritized by the committee using the following Four Box Analysis, with 'A' the highest priority, then B, C, and finally D.

<p>A - LOW COST – HIGH PAYOFF</p> <p>(good opportunity/high priority)</p>	<p>B - HIGH COST – HIGH PAYOFF</p> <p>(moderate opportunity/higher to middle priority)</p>
<p>C - LOW COSTS – LOW PAYOFF</p> <p>(moderate opportunity/lower to middle priority)</p>	<p>D - HIGH COST – LOW PAYOFF</p> <p>(poor opportunity/low priority)</p>

Then the projects will be further prioritized within each of the boxes using the following scoring tool.

- Project Overview/Description/Needs Assessment/Timeline (50 Points)
- Project Virtual Presentation (10 points)
- Project Benchmark and Performance Measure (20 Points – plus up to five (5) additional points for meeting the "quantitative improvement" standard detailed in Section III of AGF.)
- Budget (20 Points)

Scores from reviewers will be added together and averaged, and any differing award recommendations reconciled through committee deliberation.

The committee will then produce a report on its deliberations, with a rank ordering/scores of the proposed projects and suggested award amounts. The report will also have information on any Section 405(c) funded grant work since FFY 2020 done by an applicant being considered for new funding. This information will include performance against the benchmark(s) in the original application or any accepted update, project reporting issues, and level of unspent funding. This report, applicant presentation materials, and the AGF responses will be shared with the TRCC.

An Executive-level TRCC (ETRCC) meeting is anticipated for April 6, 2021. The ETRCC can do one of the following:

1. Accept 'as is' the project recommendations including award amounts in the AGF review committee's report;
2. Make minor adjustments to the AGF review committee project recommendations and award amounts, then approve the updated report; or
3. Use a Four-Box Analysis and Scoring Tool process similar to that used by the AGF review committee to develop and approve its own project recommendations and award amounts.

ETRCC members from entities with applications under consideration in the AGF process cannot participate in any vote to select projects.

The resulting project recommendations and award amounts from the ETRCC will then advance to the Executive Director of OGR, Secretary of Public Safety and Security, and Governor's Office for review and final approval. OGR will then forward these decisions to NHTSA for consideration and anticipated acceptance in the OGR FFY 2021 Highway Safety Plan or subsequent plan.

OGR and its AGF review committee reserve the right to discuss and modify minor program or budget elements with applicants at any time prior to final award selection and to correct minor submission issues (i.e., missing signature).

VI. Post-Award Requirements and Information

- If an award occurs based on a response to this AGF, the applicant will then be required to complete one or more of following documents to finalize a grant contract based on the Commonwealth's Standard Contract or the Interdepartmental Service Agreement: OGR General Subrecipient Grant Conditions, Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing (unless a current, acceptable version of this form is on file at OGR), the OGR A-133 Form, and the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). Other state forms may be required. These forms are at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants. If applicable, a copy of a seat belt use policy must also be provided. Depending on the start and end dates of a project, OGR may request an entity awarded funds to provide a breakdown by federal fiscal years of its project budget and related programmatic/deliverables details.
- For non-state agencies, this is a cost-reimbursement style grant that requires the submission of regular reports detailed below. State agencies will receive grant funding through the state accounting system (MMARS) and must also submit regular reports. No costs incurred before or after the contract period will be reimbursable.
- Monthly expenditure and activity reports in a format approved by OGR will be required on or about the thirtieth (30) day following the close of a month. Activity reports must be hand-signed by the project manager, the expenditure reports by an authorized signatory or appropriate representative. Electronic submission of these reports is preferred, in PDF format. OGR reserves the right to require hard-copy, original hand-signed submission of these reports. During any FFY the project operates, the last activity report must summarize (between 175 to 200 words) all significant project accomplishments, in particular progress made from benchmark(s) towards performance measure(s). Expenditure reports must be supported with required back-up (i.e., MMARS reports, paid vendor bills, etc.).
- Based on our efforts to utilize federal funds in the most efficient and effective manner, to increase program participation, and to administer with fairness to all participating subrecipients, OGR shares with the TRCCs during the AGF process information on recent 405-c grant-funded

work of applicants being considered for new funding. The following subjects will be addressed: performance against the benchmark(s) in the original application or any accepted update, project reporting issues, and unspent funding level.

- Be advised an OGR grant award to a subrecipient does not guarantee reimbursement. Funding is subject to appropriation and is contingent upon compliance with all grant conditions and eligibility requirements. If the federal government determines that a subrecipient does not comply with federal eligibility requirements, OGR cannot guarantee alternative sources of funding. It is the obligation of the subrecipient to ensure compliance with all eligibility requirements and grant conditions.
- All subrecipients who are law enforcement agencies receiving any state or federal grant award from OGR will be required to gather and submit case-specific information on officer-administration of Narcan/Naloxone using a reporting tool as determined by EOPSS.
- **OGR reserves the right to decline requests for project extensions past September 30, 2022.**

VII. Submission Process and Deadline

Completed and hand-signed AGF response documents (Attachment A - Application & Attachment B – Budget Summary and Detail) and required supporting documentation (i.e., risk assessment form, partner support letter, federally approved rate agreement, safety belt policy, etc.) must be e-mailed in PDF format to Mr. Brook Chipman, Program Manager, OGR, at brook.chipman@mass.gov, **by 11:59 pm, February 24, 2021.**

If you have any questions regarding this AGF process, in particular allowable costs, contact Mr. Chipman at brook.chipman@mass.gov **by February 19, 2021.** Given the competitive nature of this grant, no questions on the merits of a proposed project can be answered. All questions received and all answers provided will be posted in a non-attributable manner at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants **on or about February 22, 2021.**

VIII. Application Checklist

- Letter of intent in PDF format submitted by e-mail by **11:59 pm, February 10, 2021**
- E-mail submission of complete and hand-signed AGF response documents and required supporting documentation (i.e., risk assessment form, partner support letter, federally approved rate agreement, safety belt policy, etc.) in PDF format **by 11:59 pm, February 24, 2021.**