

The Right Road to Grants Management

*How to Navigate the Peaks and Pitfalls
of the Grant Lifecycle*



Something to think about ...

- How do I manage my grant?
- What do I need to know to be a better grant manager?
- Where can I find assistance, guidance and training?
- How does the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) impact how I apply and manage my grants?



All Grants Follow a Lifecycle



- 1 – How grant programs are designed
- 2 – How applications are received and evaluated
- 3 – How grant projects are recommended and awarded
- 4 – How the grant is operated and managed
- 5 – How the grant is evaluated and ended



Program Development and Eligibility

Purpose: Based on legislation, organizational policies and priorities are developed that drive the functions for the whole lifecycle

It's always about the mission:

Reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks and buses

How we do it programmatically:

Develop and enforce regulations, target educational messages, harness safety information systems, and partner with stakeholders



Program Development and Eligibility

How we do it financially:

Transfer a thing of value to the State or local government or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support

When we say “Grants Management”, we mean:

All of the programmatic and financial tasks required to handle the money, reporting, and program implementation that meets generally accepted standards and funding source requirements



Program Development and Eligibility

How the FAST Act changed our grant programs:

- Ensured allocations are consistent with government priorities
- Established clear programs with non-conflicting objectives based on evidence of need
- Reduced the potential for duplication of programs
- Enhanced the capacity for input into determining how needs can be addressed to improve service delivery



Resources

- Find all Federal grant programs online at the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance at www.cfda.gov
- Sign up and set your search criteria so you can be notified when a grant opportunity opens at www.grants.gov
- Learn more about FAST by searching Public Law 114-94 online at the Library of Congress at www.thomas.loc.gov
- Find us in Title V – Motor Carrier Safety



Application Submission and Review

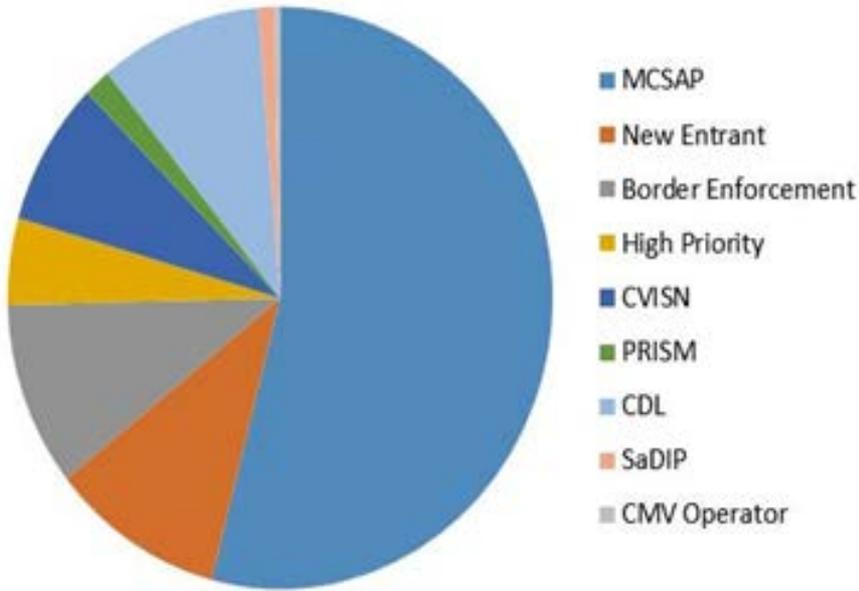
Purpose: Applicants apply under grant announcements and the applications are reviewed using the announcement criteria

The good news:

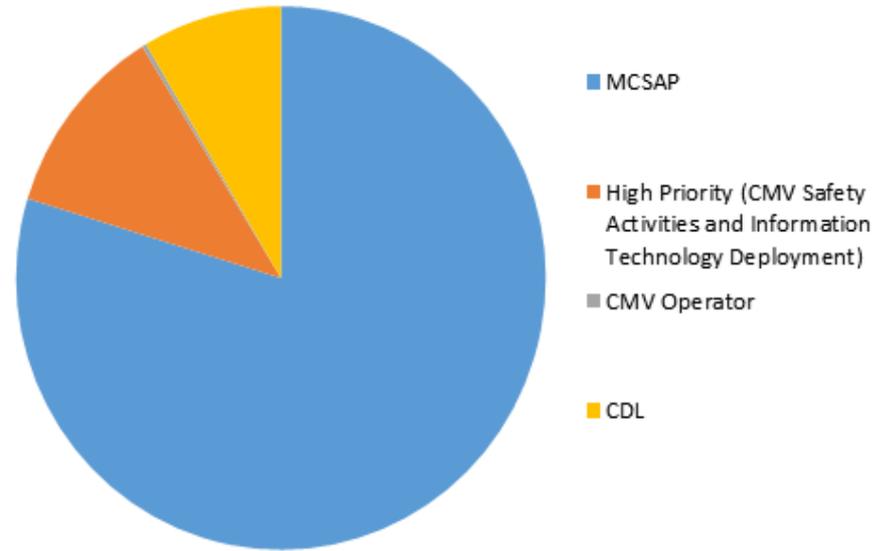
- Administrative application submission process unchanged (same basic standard required forms)
- Programs consolidated; however, general budget and project planning concepts remain the same (although formats may differ)
- FAST's 5-year authorization brings predictability to the schedule



Application Submission and Review



*Our Grants
Pre-FAST Act*



*Our Grants
Post-FAST Act*



Application Submission and Review

Our next steps and opportunities:

- Bring informed decisions, collaboration, and diversity of thought to the decision-making process
- Ensure accountability and compliance in decision and action
- Seek the highest level of customer service and support through timely, transparent communication



Get a Head Start on the Application ...

Gather and analyze prior year grant activity data and costs to find your baseline. Ask:

- Do your financial records identify the source and use of grant funds for each award?
- Can you account for equipment purchased with grant funds?
- Do you have a list of activities most important to the mission and management?
- Do you know how much time your organization spends on each activity (both programmatic and financial)?



Get a Head Start on the Application ...

Gather and analyze prior year grant activity data and costs to find your baseline. Ask:

- Do you know how much these activities cost (budget vs. actual)?
- Are your financial and programmatic internal control policies and procedures up to date?
- Have you identified any FMCSA requirements that you cannot fulfill within your own organization?
- Do you have the resources (e.g., match, data collection mechanisms) identified/in place to report outcomes?



Get a Head Start on the Application ...

People

Build your team (leader, statistical analysis, financial)

Systems

Decide who is responsible for which activities and provide support for them to succeed

Activities

Create and prioritize your projects and costs

Results

Develop measureable, sustainable results



Award Determination and Obligation

Purpose: Operational process of executing the notice of grant award that creates the obligation and project begins

What is a notice of grant award (NGA)?

- Formal, legal binding agreement that sets out the arrangements under which a grant is provided, received, managed and conducted
- Contains appropriate controls and accountability mechanisms to ensure funds are spent appropriately and the project or the service is going to plan



Award Determination and Obligation

- Review the NGA standard assurances and conditions to ensure you agree to the terms of the agreement
- Reimbursement (vouchering) quarterly is required in FAST § 31104 authorization of appropriations (b)(3)
- Performance and proceedings recorded in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System at www.fapiis.gov



Program Implementation and Management

Purpose: Recipients implement grant activities and Federal staff provide oversight and technical assistance to ensure compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations (program and financial)

Set yourself up for success:

- Create your grant file
 - Grant agreement, application, terms and conditions
 - Start files for Program Progress Reports (PPR), Federal Financial Reports (FFR), Reimbursement Requests (SF-270)
 - Track pertinent correspondence related to implementation



Program Implementation and Management

- Create a checklist of grant requirements and actions
 - What do you need to do to ensure and demonstrate program and financial grant compliance?
 - Use grant agreement as the guide (project plan, budget and grant terms and conditions)
 - Meet with the FMCSA Division Office to review checklist



Program Implementation and Management

- Hold project initiation briefing with your team
 - Programmatic, financial, logistical, line personnel
 - Explain grant requirements, roles and responsibilities
 - Convey your expectations (e.g., what data is needed for PPR, invoice information needed for reimbursement)
 - Set a schedule when data/documentation/information is due to you in order to meet grant project timelines



Program Implementation and Management

- Verify your statistical collection and reporting systems
 - How do you plan to obtain information (financial and programmatic) to meet requirements?
 - What are the challenges to obtaining information?
 - How can the data be obtained and reported if changes won't be implemented in time for project start?
 - Alert Division Office if there are significant challenges preventing movement forward



Program Implementation and Management

- Verify that your financial and program policies/procedures are in alignment with requirements
 - It's a double-check now that the award is in place
 - Develop an interim plan if an update cannot be made prior to start of activities
 - Include results within your first PPR
 - Also alert Division Office if there are significant challenges preventing movement forward



Evaluation and Closeout

Purpose: Final reconciliation of all program and financial grant activities and outcomes of the award to end the grant.

Components of the Closeout:

- Complete activities within the period of performance
- Pay final purchase orders and seek final reimbursement
- Develop final FFR to certify bills paid/costs are accounted for and documented
- Develop final PPR to explain project results and challenges



Evaluation and Closeout

Importance of the final PPR

- Honest evaluation of how what worked, what didn't and why
- Benefit to you (future grants and better run programs)
- Benefit to FMCSA (better technical assistance, national performance measures, program design)
- Benefit to Congress (more funds towards CMV safety, changes in law to ensure success)
- Benefit to the American public (tax dollars saving lives)



Evaluation and Closeout

Single Audit requirements and use:

- Review to look at financial statements, test internal controls, verify compliance, follow-up on previous findings
- FMCSA reviews every applicant's single audits during the application review process
- Available online to the public
- Review your organization's findings and ask: Do we have the people, systems, activities in place to prevent a finding?



Resources

- Visit our website to access grantee resource guides, forms, and our grantee manual and training at:
www.fmcsa.dot.gov/mission/grants/grantee-resources
- Learn more about how to use our grants management system, GrantSolutions at home.grantsolutions.gov/home/grantee-training-videos/
- Find free grant regulation webinars created by the U.S. Chief Financial Officers Council at www.cfo.gov/cofar/training



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