

Colorado Department of Transportation
Office of Transportation Safety
Highway Safety Office (HSO)

Request for Application (RFA) and RFA
Guide and Instructions

FY27 Grant Applications will be solicited February 20, 2026 - March 20, 2026

Applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm on March 20, 2026

OVERVIEW

The Highway Safety Office (HSO) is soliciting applications for Federal FY27 funding. Please note: this solicitation is for a one-year grant cycle, beginning on or after October 1, 2026, and ending September 30, 2027.

All applications must be submitted electronically through the E-Grants System, which is used for application submission, grant reporting, and claims reimbursement.

- E-Grants System:
<https://www.codot.gov/business/grants/safetygrants/funding>
- Need help logging in?
<https://www.codot.gov/business/grants/safetygrants/access>

OVERVIEW OF IIJA

Funding for this grant is made available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). **Projects must address a traffic safety challenge supported by data and align with one or more Core Performance Measures.**

PURPOSE

Grants support agencies, organizations, and tribal governments that implement behavioral-based strategies to reduce traffic crash fatalities and serious injuries on Colorado roadways.

Projects must impact at least one of the following core performance measures:

- C-1: Reduce the number of traffic fatalities
- C-2: Reduce the number of serious injuries
- C-3: Reduce fatalities per Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- C-4: Reduce the number of unrestrained passenger vehicle occupant fatalities, all seat positions
- C-5: Reduce the number of fatalities in crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 and above

- C-6: Reduce the number of speeding-related fatalities
- C-7: Reduce the number of motorcyclist fatalities
- C-8: Reduce the number of unhelmeted motorcyclist fatalities
- C-9: Reduce the number of drivers age 20 or younger involved in fatal crashes
- C-10: Reduce the number of pedestrian fatalities
- C-11: Reduce the number of bicyclist fatalities
- C-12: Reduce the number fatalities involving a distracted driver
- C-13: Reduce the number of drivers 65 and older involved in fatal crashes (At Fault)
- C-14: Reduce the number of fatalities in crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator testing positive for => 5ng of Delta 9 THC
- C-15: Reduce the number of roadside fatalities
- R-1: Improve the accuracy of data in one or more core traffic record systems (crash, driver, vehicle, roadway, citation/adjudication, EMS/injury surveillance)
- TR-2: Improve data integration between multiple traffic records data systems or support the modernization of a traffic records data system.

AWARD DETAILS

- Estimated Grant Amount: \$50,000-\$200,000
- Total Funding Available: \$10 million
- Estimated Grants Awarded: 75
- Grant Period: October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027 (one-year cycle)
- Funding Type: Eligible Cost Reimbursement Only
 - No pre-payment or expenses before execution
 - Funds must enhance, not replace, existing funds

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Colorado state agencies
- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Cities, counties, and their sub-agencies
- Non-profits with 501(c)(3) IRS status
- For-profit entities

TIMELINE

- February 12, 2026 Funding Webinar
- February 20, 2026 Release date for RFA
- March 20, 2026 by 5:00 PM Applications Due
- By April 20, 2026 Notification of Funding Decisions Sent
- April 27, 2026 Reconsideration Requests Due
- May 1, 2026 Notification of Final Reconsideration Decisions
- Project Start Date On or after October 1, 2026

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Application Submittal

The HSO must receive applications by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 20, 2026. Applications must be submitted electronically through the E-Grants System.

RFA Application Guide

All applicants must use the RFA guide below to create applications as there have been changes since the last funding cycle. The guide mirrors the application form in the E-Grants system.

APPLICATION SELECTION AND SCORING PROCESS

STEP ONE: All applications will undergo a technical review by HSO Program staff. This screening assesses timeliness, completeness, eligibility, and verification that applications meet the requirements for funding.

STEP TWO: Applications that pass the technical review will be reviewed and scored by subject matter experts (SMEs) from CDOT, the HSO, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Applications will be reviewed against identified statewide problems supported by local, relevant data. The application must clearly define how the proposed project or activities will have an impact on at least one of the Performance Measures. Applications that do not demonstrate a clear need for the proposed project based on reputable data sources will not be scored. Eligible applications will be scored to assess how well the proposed project aligns with known best practices, or emerging practices with demonstrated success, for motor vehicle safety programming; the ability to impact the identified performance measure and targeted population; and the ability to measure performance and impact.

STEP THREE: The HSO Management staff will make final funding decisions. The HSO reserves the right to award funds based on funding availability and other variables at its discretion.

RECONSIDERATION PROCESS: Many applications are anticipated and scoring criteria will be strictly adhered to, therefore all requests may not be funded. If you wish to submit a request for reconsideration of a funding denial, you must do so through email to Darrell Lingk at Darrell.lingk@state.co.us.

Reconsideration requests must be received by April 27, 2026. Requests must include the application number and a statement of the reasons for the reconsideration request. Reconsideration decisions of the Director of the Office of Transportation Safety will be final. Applicants requesting reconsideration will be notified by May 1, 2026.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Proprietary information: All applications and accompanying documentation become the property of CDOT and will not be returned.

Nondiscrimination: All federal and state nondiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies must be followed during the performance of the project agreement.

Notice of debarment: Applicant shall promptly notify CDOT of any debarment. Those submitting grant applications must notify CDOT if they are presently or have ever been debarred, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in transactions by any federal or state department or agency. Failure to notify CDOT of debarment, ineligibility or exclusion will result in immediate cancellation of the project agreement and any grant monies received must be returned to CDOT.

Right of inspection: Grantees shall provide right of access to its facilities to CDOT or to any other authorized agent or official of the state of Colorado or the federal government at all reasonable times in order to monitor and evaluate performance.

Responsiveness: All applications will be reviewed by CDOT to determine compliance with administrative requirements. Failure to comply with the instructions in the E-Grant application may result in rejection of the application. CDOT reserves the right, however, to waive minor administrative irregularities.

Application costs: CDOT is not liable for any costs incurred in preparing or submitting an application in response to this grant notice.

Insurance coverage: The State of Colorado requires specific insurance coverage(s) for organizations contracting with the State.

Request for Application (RFA) Guide and Instructions

Below are instructions for completing each section of the application. Applicants may complete an application using the template below and then copy/paste to the E-Grants System or insert responses directly into the E-Grants System.

Each application will select a maximum of two Performance Measures (see page 1 and 2 above) and a specific emphasis area(s) in the E-Grants System. Refer to the Emphasis Area Guide [here](#) for further information. Applications must follow the core criteria listed below.

Law Enforcement applications typically focus on enforcement and media education of traffic safety laws. These applications are also encouraged to include community engagement and other educational efforts.

Non-Law Enforcement applications typically focus on a local area such as a city, county, or region and may address a combination of traffic safety challenges. They concentrate on increasing public awareness of behavioral based traffic safety challenges, implementing best practice solutions, addressing systems and policies that need improvement, and educating about issues related to safe driving.

Core Criteria

- **Data Informed:** Strategies must be consistent with crash, injury & fatality, and population survey data. Applicants must use relevant and recent data (within three years) and may also include strategies such as conducting needs assessments to better understand community needs, strengths, challenges, that may impact the success of the project.
- **Evidence Based:** Strategies must be backed by evidence and data, demonstrating their effectiveness in addressing the performance measures selected.

This [document](#) provides a list of resources for application development.

Examples of strategies applicable across non-law enforcement emphasis areas:

- Implement traffic safety coalitions that use a multidisciplinary approach to address traffic safety as a comprehensive and collaborative system. Coalitions should include varied membership including but not limited to: community members and leaders, city planners, policymakers, local public health agencies, law enforcement, schools, parks and recreation, and bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. Coalitions should be prepared to collect and analyze data to understand and address primary causes of traffic injuries and fatalities, and the most dangerous intersections and geographic areas, particularly for vulnerable road users. Coalitions should develop and implement comprehensive and inclusive action plans and evaluate those activities to reduce injuries and fatalities. NHTSA funding cannot be used for engineering or technology activities. It can be used for activities such as needs assessments,

community engagement, coalition facilitation, education and awareness, and behavior change.

- Develop and implement strengths-based outreach, education, programming, and systems change recommendations that promote safe driving and occupant behavior, particularly in communities who are disproportionately impacted by traffic safety fatalities. Work should be led by agencies representative of the communities they serve and have support from local community leaders.
- Implement community-wide strategies focused on reducing [excessive alcohol use](#), such as binge drinking and underage drinking, and cannabis consumption that are correlated with reductions in impaired driving. Education of community members, stakeholders, and decision makers on policies that improve physical environments and community norms that impact individual behaviors.
- Youth-led traffic safety promotion strategies. With support from trained adult mentors, youth coalitions identify local traffic concerns and implement targeted strategies to resolve them. Examples of these types of implementation activities may include but are not limited to youth-led safe driving campaigns, peer-to-peer education, participation in vision zero initiatives, and educating stakeholders about recommended policy changes.
- Collaborate with multiple sectors to build protective factors and increase awareness, understanding, and support of safe driving practices among youth and young adults.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Below are instructions for what each section of the application should include. Applicants may complete the application using the template below and then transfer to the E-Grants System or insert responses directly into the E-Grants System.

Emphasis Area

In the E-Grants System, you will select:

- Type of application (General Traffic Safety or Law Enforcement)
- Emphasis area that best fits the project's focus

Project Abstract (5 points)

Briefly describe the traffic safety problem(s) the project will address. Include the population(s) affected and strategies to be implemented. This is limited to 2-3 sentences.

Problem Identification and Population (20 points)

Select a maximum of two Performance Measures (see pages 1-2 above) that this project will address.

Using a minimum of the past three years of safety/crash data, clearly state the specific problem this project will address within the chosen emphasis area. This problem must be supported by crash/safety data and directly linked to the selected performance measures.

Law enforcement agencies: crash data must apply to the cities and counties directly served.

Describe the specific traffic safety challenge(s)/problems(s), the population(s) and behavior the project will serve, including information such as age groups, geographic areas, socioeconomic factors, and other relevant community demographics.

Agency Qualifications/Past Performance (5 points)

Describe agency resources and skills to adequately manage the project. Briefly describe qualifications of staff or plans to train the staff who will work on the proposed project, including fiscal staff. If the project involves direct contact with youth, provide information on how criminal background checks are conducted for paid and volunteer staff.

Has this project previously been funded by CDOT? If yes, provide details on past performance and how this project met goals and objectives in previous years.

You will also be prompted to complete the risk assessment. This risk assessment is a guide for HSO staff on the level of support that may be required if a grant is awarded.

Partnership and Community Engagement (5 points)

Identify key community partners (organizations, groups, or leaders) who will be engaged to address the problem. Outline the general collaboration and engagement plan for working with these organizations.

Traffic Records projects only: how does this align with the strategic plan and advance crash data in Colorado? If a data linkage or sharing project is being proposed, has work been done with those agencies and has a plan of agreement been developed?

Project Description (10 points)

Using [NHTSA's Countermeasures that Work](#), or other evidence-based strategies, as the foundation for your intervention, describe each strategy or approach you will use to address the traffic safety challenge. The proposed strategies can be adapted from other

fields but must be data informed, evidence-based or emerging practices with demonstrated success.

There are two supplemental questions specific for Seat Belt Survey Applications:

1. Please outline your plan for how you will complete the site selection process for survey locations.
2. Please describe how you will conduct the seat belt survey.

Traffic Safety Action Plan (20 points)

The following steps must be followed in building a traffic safety action plan:

1. Select Performance Measure(s) (maximum of two)
2. Create Goals (maximum of two goals **per** performance measure)
3. Create Activities related to each traffic safety goal (maximum of three activities **per** goal)

Note: To comply with federal funding guidelines, every goal and activity **MUST BE** directly related to traffic safety.

Action Plan Criteria

- Goals and activities need to have the following SMART elements:
 - **Must be specific:**
 - What specifically is to be achieved with the identified goal(s)? Avoid using vague language or generalizations here. Be clear and concise about what is to be achieved, improved, increased or decreased, etc.
 - **Must be measurable:**
 - How will progress towards meeting the goal(s) be tracked? Think about how success will be defined and how to gauge if the project is on track to meet the desired outcomes.
 - **Must be achievable and realistic:**
 - Think about available resources, abilities, and capacities. Avoid creating goals that aren't realistically achievable for the agency or team given available resources, capacity-levels and time allowances of partners involved in the work.
 - **Must be relevant:**
 - Think about why the goal(s) are important to the agency, partners and community members being served through this work. The goal(s) need to align with long-term visions, additional goals the agency and its stakeholders have, and be relevant to the populations and communities being served.
 - **Must be time-bound:**
 - Assign a due date for the goal(s) as well as any actionable steps needed to achieve success. It's okay if timelines and due dates need to be adjusted in the future - for now, establish deadlines to achieve the goal(s) so that progress can be tracked and how adjustments or pivots can be made if the goal(s) are not on track.

Example action plans below illustrate the required criteria:

Law enforcement action plan example:

- *Performance Measure: C-6:* Reduce the number of speeding-related fatalities
 - *Goal 1:* Between October 1, 2026 and September 30, 2027, [Law Enforcement agency] will reduce the number of traffic fatalities in town/city/county by 3%.
 - *Activity 1:* Provide outreach and education regarding risky driving behaviors at least once every quarter.
 - *Activity 2:* Provide X number of hours of overtime speed enforcement per quarter.

Non-law enforcement action plan example:

- *Performance Measure: C-9:* Reduce the number of drivers age 20 or younger involved in fatal crashes.
 - *Goal 1:* Between October 1, 2026 and September 30, 2027, [Agency Name] will reduce the number of traffic fatalities in town/city/county drivers between ages 14-24.
 - *Activity 1:* Provide Graduated Driver Licensing education to at least 7 schools every quarter.
 - *Activity 2:* Provide traffic safety related outreach at a minimum of 3 community events every quarter.
 - *Goal 2:* Between October 1st, 2026 and September 30th, 2027, [Agency Name] will host X traffic safety youth coalition events.
 - *Activity 1:* Recruit at least 2 new youth safety champions for the year.
 - *Activity 2:* Youth Safety Champions facilitate at least 2 coalition meetings a year.
 - *Activity 3:* Youth Safety Champions will submit a proposal for the annual Safety Summit.

For assistance with any or all of the action plan steps, reach out to your CDOT Grant Manager and cc Ashley Nicks (ashley.nicks@state.co.us)

Evaluation (15 points)

Using the dropdown menu in the E-Grants System, you will be required to select or write up to three evaluation measures for each goal. Please note: you may write your own evaluation measure(s) but you must select at least one pre-written measure.

Longterm Sustainability (5 points)

Outline plans for securing diverse financial support and reducing reliance on this grant funding. List any additional funds supporting or supplementing this program or project.

Budget (15 points)

Complete a budget in the E-Grants System. The HSO is moving toward a summary approach for each budget section. Please include a narrative that justifies and explains each budget item and figure. You may include a detailed budget description in an upload to supplement the narrative.

Example of the summary approach: for each personnel position, include a brief summary of their role and responsibilities. Provide total costs for Operating and Travel and a short narrative, each expense does not need to be itemized line by line.

Grant funds can only be used for eligible costs identified in the Budget. Budget amounts must be reasonable, necessary and support the project activities. Each grant should include travel costs for a maximum of two individuals to attend the 2026 [Highway Safety Summit](#).

Unallowable Project Costs: All projects must follow appropriate state and federal funding regulations. Examples of unallowable project costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Office furniture and fixtures
- Swag and give-away items
- Routine roadway construction or maintenance; and
- Funds that supplant existing budgets

Required Application Elements: These documents must be uploaded at the time of the application (if available).

Proof of Good Standing _____
(Upload in E-Grants System) [Colorado Secretary of State](#)

Certificate of Insurance _____
(Upload in E-Grants System)

Proof of Active Status in SAM.gov _____
(Upload in E-Grants System)
Obtain from www.sam.gov

Cognizant Agency Indirect Cost _____ **Rate Agreement, if Applicable**
(Upload in E-Grants System, if applicable)

Additional documents that must be uploaded if application to your specific grant
Indirect Rate _____

(Upload in E-Grants System)

Travel Policy _____
(Upload in E-Grants System)

Detailed Budget _____
(Upload in E-Grants System)

Reporting Frequency: The Highway Safety Office requires three types of reports in conjunction with highway safety projects:

1. Quarterly reports during the life of a project;
2. A final report at the conclusion of a project; include training and consultant reports, if applicable; and
3. Annual Report (Template to be provided by CDOT)

These reports keep the office informed of a project's progress, explain any difficulties encountered, provide a background of information that can be passed on to others, suggest ways in which CDOT can assist with the project and aid in distribution of funds.

Quarterly Reports: These are submitted quarterly and are due within twenty (20) calendar days after the end of the reporting calendar quarter as follows:

First Quarter: 1 October - 31 December - Report due January 20

Second Quarter: 1 January - 31 March - Report due April 20

Third Quarter: 1 April - 30 June - Report due July 20

If there is no activity during the reporting period, submit a report indicating so. Any original or innovative ideas or methods employed in your project should be incorporated into your reports.

Fourth and Final Report: These reports must be submitted within 45 days of Grant Agreement completion, due no later than November 15. Final reports are to be detailed and must describe whether the project objectives were accomplished, if technical and fiscal problems were encountered, and what improvements in traffic safety have resulted or probably will result. Copies of publications, training reports and any statistical data generated in project execution should be included. These final reports should discuss the following:

1. Accomplishments compared to the original project objectives;
2. Were all activities of the project completed as scheduled? Include dates and milestones when studies were completed; equipment acquired, installed and operated;
3. Any unanticipated proceedings that affected the project;
4. Funding and costs for completion of the project in relationship to original estimates; and
5. Third party performance if applicable. A copy of any consultant reports should be included with the final report.

Reimbursement Requirements

- CDOT HSO federal grants are paid on a “cost reimbursement” basis only. CDOT will not make payments in advance or in anticipation of goods or services.
- Claims for reimbursement are required to be submitted on a monthly basis, even if there are no costs incurred (note zero expenditure). Claims are due no later than 45 days after the end of each month.
- Final claims for reimbursement must be received by OTS no later than November 15 (for costs incurred through the final Grant Agreement month of September).

Claims for reimbursement received after the above cutoff dates will not be reimbursed.