

Traffic Safety Program Request for Proposals

FY 2026 STEP Grants

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(TRF-BTS)

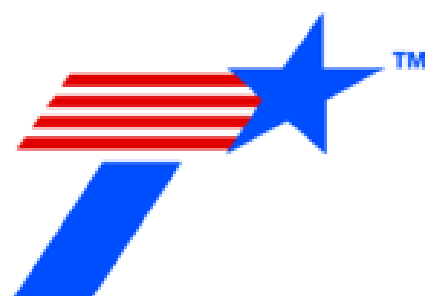
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Summary

Texas' Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) is a federally funded law enforcement grant program run by the Traffic Safety Division at the Texas Department of Transportation. The goal of the STEP program is for TxDOT to develop strategic partnerships with law enforcement to reduce crashes by creating safer driving environments on Texas roadways through high-visibility engagement (HVE). Any accredited law enforcement agency in Texas is eligible for funding through STEP, though priority to receive the funds and the maximum funding amount an agency may receive is based on the number and type of crashes occurring in the applicant jurisdictions.

Agencies participating in STEP must develop a limited number of specific Enforcement Zones in which all grant-funded enforcement will be conducted. These zones are based on data provided by the Texas Crash Reporting Information System (CRIS), and analyzed and plotted by the Texas Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Operations Center (HSOC). The Enforcement Zones are limited in number and size to help magnify the impact of the enforcement efforts on troublesome crash areas.

Agency performance will be measured by the number of STEP-funded vehicle stops made within the established Enforcement Zones, and by the impact the enforcement has on the jurisdiction's crash totals. To maximize the value of the vehicle stops conducted during STEP enforcement, agencies are strongly encouraged to focus their Enforcement Zones and community engagement efforts in and around intersections, which are planned points of conflict on the transportation system.

TCOLE-accredited training supporting all aspects of STEP enforcement, including grant proposal and Enforcement Zone development, grant administration, data quality and analysis, operational philosophy and strategies, and child-passenger and officer safety courses are available free-of-charge through the [Texas Law Enforcement Liaison program](#). The training courses are designed to help agencies stay current on the latest information and enforcement concepts, and to realize the maximum value STEP enforcement can provide to the agency and the community.

While a vehicle stop on STEP can be made for any probable cause, officers conducting STEP enforcement should focus on the following violations,

- DWI/DUI - Driving While Intoxicated/Driving Under the Influence
- OP - Failure to Use Occupant Restraint, including child-passenger safety seats
- ITC - Intersection Traffic Control
- SP - Speed Enforcement /Control
- CMV - Commercial Motor Vehicles (for CMV grants only)

Proposing agencies may ask TxDOT personnel for assistance in developing their STEP proposal(s).

Agencies may request a funding amount based on the number of enforcement hours the agency reasonably expect to work over the course of a full year. TxDOT reserves the right to negotiate or amend a proposal's budget prior to execution and to request funds projected to remain unspent be returned prior to the end of the project period.

All proposers are required to contribute at least 20% of the total budget in approved match, but agencies are discouraged from budgeting to contribute more than 25% match.

Note: Click-It-Or-Ticket, Operation: Slowdown and Impaired Driving Mobilization Proposals will not be accepted through this Request for Proposal; however, they will be accepted through a separate process. Recruiting for Click-It-Or-Ticket and Operation: Slowdown begins in late January and continues through early March, and recruiting for Impaired Driving Mobilization begins in June and ends in August. For more information regarding mobilizations, please contact [Larry Krantz, TxDOT Police Traffic Services Program Manager](#).

Eligibility for Funding

STEP grants provide federal funding for overtime enforcement activities conducted by Texas law enforcement agencies. Organizations eligible for STEP funds include the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS), sheriff's offices, constable's offices, and local police departments.

Grant Types and Definitions

STEP-Comprehensive (COMP) Grants

Officers conducting enforcement on a STEP-COMP grant should focus their efforts on reducing incidences of intersection-related violations, driving while intoxicated, failure to use occupant restraint systems, enforcement of state and local ordinances on cellular and texting devices and unsafe speed within the high-crash areas they identify, although any traffic-related probable cause may be used to initiate a vehicle stop. A vehicle stop may be counted toward the agency's grant performance only when initiated for infractions witnessed inside of, or in route to or from an established Enforcement Zone by the initiating officer. For purposes of documentation, each officer's Daily Activity Report should reflect the Enforcement Zone in which the stop was made, the time and specific location of the stop (i.e. 4800 block of South Broadway). The officer should run the offender's driver license for warrants, run the vehicle registration for its history, and must document taking one of the following three actions:

- Issuing a written warning
- Issuing a citation
- Making an arrest

Agencies will document and report the numbers of warnings, citations and arrests made on STEP time to TxDOT at the end of each month, but there will be no target numbers established for each individual element. STEP-COMP agencies will be considered to be in compliance with TxDOT performance expectations as long as they document making a minimum average of 2.5 vehicle stops per hour for each enforcement hour and show that minimum activity in each STEP enforcement hour. STEP-COMP subgrantee agencies should make it a priority to conduct enforcement activities during state and federally determined holiday periods, which occur during the months listed in parenthesis:

- Christmas-New Year's (Dec-Jan 1)
- Spring Break (March)
- Memorial Day (May-June)
- Independence Day (June-July)

- Operation: Slowdown (July)
- Labor Day (August)

STEP-Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Grants

Law enforcement agencies may also request a STEP-CMV grant. Officers need not be specially certified to participate in STEP-CMV enforcement, and TxDOT does offer TCOLE-accredited training that supports officer safety while working with CMVs. This 2-hour course is NOT a CVE certification course, and federal inspections are not allowable on STEP projects.

Crashes involving commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) are often serious-injury or fatal crashes, even though CMVs are found to be at fault approximately 20% of the time. Therefore, officers conducting enforcement on a STEP-CMV grant must focus on state-level traffic violations and/or violations of local ordinances committed by CMVs, and on passenger vehicles whose unlawful actions such as improper lane changes manifestly cause a CMV to take evasive action or undertake hard-braking events.

Officers working STEP-CMV must document making 1.5 qualifying vehicle stops for every enforcement hour worked, and must specify the probable cause for each stop.

Additionally, linear enforcement zones developed on STEP-CMV projects will be a maximum of six (6) linear miles instead of 4 as in the past. Area zones will remain the same four (4) square miles.

Finally, STEP-CMV projects are exempt from standard PI&E requirements and do not require any PI&E.

STEP Project Operational Requirements

The following items are requirements for both STEP-COMP and STEP-CMV grants:

- All enforcement activities must be initiated within, or in route to or from, an established Enforcement Zone as outlined in the grant's Operational Plan.
- A minimum number of documented vehicle stops must be made during each hour of enforcement so that enforcement efforts are consistent throughout the assigned shift. The minimum number of stops required depends on the grant type. A minimum average of 2.5 vehicle stops per hour is required for STEP-COMP, and a minimum average of 1.5 stops per hour is required on STEP-CMV projects.
- Officers working STEP must witness the violation for which they stop a vehicle. Officers may not be dispatched or otherwise directed to violators, including through the use of spotters.
- All Daily Activity Reports must be legible, contain appropriate additional documentation to describe long periods of inactivity, time-related details for activities that extend the vehicle stop beyond the typical contact with the operator such as roadside investigations, administration of SFST, arrests or waiting for towing services, and signed by a supervising officer.
- STEP officers may not claim arrests and arrest time for stops not made by officers working STEP enforcement, or from officers outside their department regardless of their STEP status. However, officers not working STEP may transport offenders arrested by officers working STEP.
- TxDOT will not allow multiple officers on grant time to work together in a single vehicle.
- Only one officer may claim STEP time for any stop made on STEP time. Officers working STEP who briefly assist another officer working STEP must document taking that action on the DAR. Reimbursement for that time will be evaluated for reimbursement on a case-by-case basis.

Developing a STEP Proposal

The following relates to information subgrantees will need to develop their STEP proposal.

Administrative Requirements

Prior to executing a STEP-COMP or STEP-CMV grant, the agency must have:

- An approved and current overtime policy that allows for STEP enforcement to occur (See Policies and Procedures)
- Approved and current STEP Policies and Procedures that outline the agency's administrative controls and operational concepts signed by a department official with a cover letter indicating the documents are valid for enforcement in the intended grant year (See Policies and Procedures)
- Approved Internal Compliance verification (See Internal Ethics and Compliance Program)
- A Universal Entity Identification (UEI) number (formerly a DUNS number)

Salary and Fringe Benefits Information

Proposing agencies will be required to build a budget based on estimated officer salaries and fringe benefits. Enforcement can only be conducted when in overtime status, so agencies need to have access to average overtime salaries for the various ranks of officer expected to work STEP enforcement as well as the components that make up their agency's fringe benefits.

The number of enforcement hours on the project will ultimately determine the total number of enforcement zones the project can have. See more information in Enforcement Zones (Operational Plan) below.

Baseline Enforcement Information

Baseline enforcement information serves as a foundation for proposers to measure non-grant traffic enforcement activity against that provided through STEP grants. This information must be provided by the proposers and includes the total number of arrests, citations and warnings made during non-STEP vehicle stops the proposing agency made in the past 12 months. The information must exclude any activity generated with STEP grant dollars. Once the enforcement baseline is established, these figures will be used to compare subsequent years' local- and grant-funded traffic enforcement activity against crash data the agency provides to TxDOT.

Baseline KA Crash Data

Proposers must enter the three-year-average KA crash data for their jurisdiction as provided by TxDOT. The baseline numbers are critical in establishing the number and key contributing factors for fatal and serious-injury crashes in a community and are used to measure the effectiveness of grant-related enforcement efforts in reducing crashes. This information is found on the [Texas Law Enforcement Liaison website](#).

County Sheriff's Departments and Constable's Offices should use the KA crash data for the county, found under "Outside City Limits (county name)" unless otherwise approved by TxDOT.

Enforcement Zones (Operational Plan)

Agencies will use geolocated KA (Fatal and Serious Injury) crash data from the CRIS database to establish the foundation for at least two STEP Enforcement Zones within their jurisdiction. Crash heat maps for your jurisdiction developed by the Texas Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Operations Center (DPS-HSOC) are available by visiting the [Texas Law Enforcement Liaison website](#). Proposers must use the [FY 2026 STEP-COMP or FY 2026 STEP-CMV](#) mapping portal provided by the DPS-HSOC to identify and measure the locations of their enforcement zones. A comprehensive map of all the agency's requested zones and detailed maps of each zone will be uploaded to the grant proposal in the Operational Plan Enforcement Zones portion of the document. Assistance with identifying and building zones using this portal is available through the LEL program.

Every STEP-COMP and STEP-CMV agency may develop up to two Enforcement Zones per grant, however most grants will have no more than two zones. In order to qualify for additional zones, the agency must have enough enforcement hours on their grant to support the addition so a continuous presence, defined as at least 40 hours per month per zone, can be maintained in each zone throughout the life of the grant. The formula for determining the maximum number of enforcement zones is 40 enforcement hours per zone per month, or 480 enforcement hours per year per zone. Agencies need to have at least 1,200 enforcement hours on a grant to qualify for a third zone.

The purpose of the creation of STEP Enforcement Zones is to focus consistent high-visibility enforcement on areas with a history of high KA crashes, and zones should be developed and patrolled accordingly. Enforcement Zones should be anchored by the locations of one or more KA crashes and expanded to include areas of approach in any direction and for a reasonable distance from the crash site or sites in

evidence. Agencies may supplement CRIS KA data with additional data to support zone development. There are two types of enforcement zones:

- Linear – Measured end-to-end on a stretch of roadway. Usually more appropriate to higher-speed facilities. Maximum 4 linear miles for STEP-COMP and 6 linear miles for STEP-CMV.
- Area – Measured as the area inside a shape bounded on all sides by roadways. Usually more appropriate for use inside city limits and on lower-speed facilities. Maximum size 4 square miles as measured by a tool such as Google Maps.

All STEP Enforcement Zones must be approved by TxDOT prior to enforcement beginning in that zone. Identifying new Enforcement Zones after the grant begins is discouraged, and agencies may be asked to delete zones if new zones are added to maintain the maximum allowed number of zones. STEP enforcement should be used to patrol areas identified through historical crash data, not to react to short-term trends. Zones built to satisfy a short-term or temporary need will not be allowed.

Public Information & Education (PI&E)

Law enforcement agencies are required to conduct PI&E activities throughout the grant period. Salaries being claimed for PI&E activities must be included in the budget, but when combined with administrative costs may not exceed 10% of the total TxDOT award.

Law enforcement agencies are required to provide a minimum number of documented PI&E activities throughout the grant period as outlined in the grant proposal (STEP-CMV grants do not require PI&E). These should coincide with identified holiday mobilization periods and include appropriate motorist education efforts. For example, during the Memorial Day Mobilization period, otherwise known as Click-It-Or-Ticket, agencies should develop media opportunities focused on the importance of buckling up and properly securing children, or a similarly themed community event.

Agencies are encouraged to coordinate their PI&E efforts with their local TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialist, and when possible, agencies are encouraged to hold PI&E events inside their active Enforcement Zones to help draw media and public attention to the crash-related issues in those areas. More details on specific PI&E requirements can be found in the proposal.

Policies and Procedures

All STEP agencies must either have established written STEP operating policies and procedures, or develop policies and procedures prior to a STEP grant being executed. The applicant will certify via signed cover letter appended to the STEP Policy and Procedures document uploaded into eGrants that the applying agency has such procedures contained in the uploaded document, or will develop, certify and upload STEP Policies and Procedures prior to grant execution. At a minimum, STEP Policies and Procedures must include:

- Roles and Responsibilities – a description of which position serves as STEP project director and a list of their main responsibilities, including detailed information for supervisory review (i.e. timesheets, activity reports, citations, etc. and how often the reviews should occur) prior to reimbursement request.
- STEP Shifts – a description of how the agency selects individuals to work a STEP shift.
- Authorization to Work – a description of how prior approval is obtained for an individual authorized to work a STEP shift.
- Work Restrictions – a list of any restrictions imposed on working STEP, such as limitations on the number of hours an officer can work per shift, etc.
- Supervision – a description of how the agency supervises officers working STEP shifts.
- Overtime Status – a description on how the agency determines an individual's overtime status before working STEP.
- Documentation – a description of how an individual's time worked on a STEP shift is documented, including circumstances for arrest time and for clocking in and out of STEP.
- Required STEP Documentation – a description of the paperwork that is required after the STEP shift ends (i.e., time sheets, overtime cards, STEP daily activity reports, citations).
- Approval Process – a description of the process the supervisor uses to approve and document the hours worked.
- Performance Targets – a description of the process used to oversee the agency's performance toward meeting the grant's performance measures.

Internal Ethics and Compliance Program

Each agency will be required to undergo a review by TxDOT's Internal Compliance Program prior to grant execution. Agencies must demonstrate compliance with Title 43 Texas Administrative Code §25.906(b) by certifying adoption of an internal ethics and compliance program that satisfies the requirements of Title 43 Texas Administrative Code §10.51 (relating to Internal Ethics and Compliance Program) prior to any grant execution.

Pre-Award Audit

Agencies may be required to undergo a Pre-Award Audit prior to grant execution.

Proposal Submission and Project Execution

The proposal process schedule includes major milestones and target due dates culminating in an executed grant agreement. The deadline for this Request for Proposal process ends Friday, April 18 at 5 p.m. Central Standard Time.

TxDOT will review all proposals submitted through this process and may request specific modifications to budgets, operational plans or other elements related to the grant's operation that must be made prior to the project's execution. Proposers can reduce their chances of having extensive modifications by asking for assistance from [Texas Law Enforcement Liaisons](#) or their local TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialist.

Please refer any questions or comments about this process to [Larry Krantz, TxDOT Police Traffic Services Program Manager](#).