



Illinois Department  
of Transportation



## Utilizing IDOT/BSPE Highway Safety Grants to Improve Your Traffic Safety Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation's Bureau of Safety Programs and Engineering (BSPE) is actively working to meet the goal of zero fatalities on Illinois roadways. In order to make this goal a reality, BSPE offers grant opportunities providing funding to state and local agencies and qualified organizations.

### What is the Sustained Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Grant Program?

- The Sustained Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant focuses on well publicized High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) at specific times and on specific dates during the year.
- The enforcement efforts are designed to reduce fatalities and serious injuries during some of the deadliest times of the year for vehicle travel.
- The program reimburses agencies for the overtime or comptime earned by officers/deputies working grant enforcement details.
- The Grant year runs from October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027 (Federal Fiscal Year)
- For FFY26 STEP,
  - 230 grant agencies participating
  - 34 of which are Sheriff's Departments

### STEP Program Requirements

- STEP Program targets specific crash causing traffic violations
  - Fatal 4 violations – Impaired Driving, Occupant Protection, Speeding and Electronic Device use
  - Contributory Cause Crash Violations
    - Disobeying traffic control device/signal, failure to yield, Scott's Law, etc.
- Conduct enforcement efforts during the 6 mandatory campaigns,
  - Thanksgiving (November)
  - Christmas/New Year's (December/January)
  - St. Patrick's Day (March)
  - Memorial Day (May)
  - Independence Day (June/July)
  - Labor Day (August/September)
- Conduct pre and post enforcement media notifications
- Conduct traffic enforcement
- Obtain, collect, and report to IDOT/BSPE grant activity for the campaigns

### Optional STEP Campaigns

- Agencies can participate in up to 5 optional campaigns to supplement a sustained enforcement effort,
  - Halloween (October)
  - Super Bowl (February)
  - Distracted Driving (April)
  - Speed Enforcement (July)
  - Occupant Protection (September)

### **Additional Enforcement Options**

- Additional efforts can be scheduled throughout the grant year, as needed outside of campaigns, to address specific traffic issues and problems.
- There are no time of day/day of week requirements
- These enforcement efforts are intended to address jurisdiction-specific issues

### **Indirect Costs**

- The grant allows for indirect costs to be requested. These funds are used to cover costs that are not directly associated with the grant personnel costs

### **Equipment**

- For full year programs (STEP), the grant allows for specific equipment to be requested. These funds are used to purchase a RADAR, LIDAR or Portable Breath Tester (PBT) to be used by grant-funded personnel.

### **FFY26 Mini Grant**

- IDOT/BSPE also offers a mini grant for agencies who are not currently funded for a full-year STEP grant. This scaled-down offering is designed to help agencies determine if the grant program will work to complement their traffic safety efforts. This grant runs from May 15<sup>th</sup> to September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- There are three mandatory campaigns; Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day; one of which you must participate in to be eligible for the optional Speed campaign in July

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### **Grant Application Process**

- The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for each of these grants is currently being finalized. Once the NOFOs are posted and the programs are announced—anticipated in January 2026—the application portal will open for a 60-day period.
- Once posted, agencies will have 60 days to complete an application.
- Easy, on-line application. You can request LEL assistance.

### **Support**

- Law Enforcement Liaison Workgroup. Retired LE senior command officers with more than 150 years of experience, as a resource for agencies seeking or managing a grant.
  - Develop enforcement strategies for grant campaigns.
  - Completion and submission of grant application.
  - Resource once an agency is approved for a grant.
  - Assist with required reporting.
  - Provide strategic, tactical, and operational recommendations to be successful.

### **Obligation**

- There is no minimum or maximum number of hours your agency has to commit to for the grant.
- We recommend being conservative. The LELs can assist with drafting an enforcement strategy.
- Another point to know; if you apply, you are under no obligation to accept the grant if a state award is issued to your agency and circumstances have changed since your application. There would be NO penalty or negative consideration with respect to future partnerships and opportunities with IDOT/BSPE should you decline the award.

### **Additional Information**

- Illinois Traffic Safety Grants website
- <https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/transportation-safety/safety-grants.html>
- Questions: Scott Kristiansen, 847-456-2293, email: scottkilacp@gmail.com