

INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION PROGRAM

TRANSIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM (TSGP)

The Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) provides funds for security enhancements to rail and bus networks. Funds can be used for planning, equipment acquisitions, training, exercises, and Management and Administrative (M&A) costs. There are seven specific priorities for TSGP rail and bus grants. They are (1) protection of underground and underwater rails assets, (2) protection of high-risk/high-consequence assets, (3) visible and unpredictable deterrence, (4) targeted counterterrorism training for key staff, (5) emergency preparedness drills and exercises, (6) public awareness campaigns, and (7) support of the National Preparedness architecture.

Summary of Findings

The Analysis of Federal Requirements Team conducted cooperative discussions with 13 States regarding their perceptions of the TSGP. All (100%) of the States said the TSGP grant provides critical funds that directly support their Strategies to enhance transportation security and preparedness. Each of the jurisdictions were asked to reply to a series of questions pertaining to reporting requirements, timeline requirements, grant guidance, grant approval process, resource requirements, and program summary issues.

Reporting Requirements

Most States had no concerns about the frequency of the reporting. Virtually all States believed the Categorical Assistance Progress Report (CAPR) should be eliminated, and that there were too many redundant reports, such as the Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR), Initial Strategy Implementation Plan (ISIP), Preparedness Reports, and the Governor's Report. They should be consolidated into one report. Many felt the electronic reporting system was outdated and needed upgrading to prevent system time outs and lost data and to increase availability.

Timeline Requirements

The majority of the States reported the timelines were not acceptable for submitting the application. The application requires coordination with other agencies and jurisdictions, and there was insufficient time built into the system to allow for this. One State reported that last-minute guidance changes resulted in wasted time and created more stress on the State to meet the deadline. The majority of the States responding also believed there was not sufficient time allocated for the development of the Investment Justification (IJ), as it required significant levels of coordination with stakeholders. Recommendations for improving the timeline requirements included providing an annual timeline/calendar that is coordinated with the States and Federal agencies, coordinating release of the TSGP grant application with the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSPG) grants so that timeframes do not overlap, and all States would like to see the grant guidance out sooner, even if in draft form. Draft guidance could be sent out and then adjusted if necessary after congressional appropriations.

Grant Guidance

The States overwhelmingly agreed the grant guidance is not overly lengthy. States on both sides of this issue strongly agree the guidance has recently improved. Most States found the grant guidance to be understandable, while some are still having difficulty with ambiguous or vague terminology. All States would like to see the grant guidance sent out to States no later than mid-October so that the 60-day deadline would come before the holiday season. Recommendations for improving grant guidance included providing a matrix that lists changes and additions in program guidance and authorized equipment, training, and M&A costs as well as establishing checklists covering timelines.

Grant Approval Process

A majority (77%) of the States involved in the TSGP did not have any significant issues regarding the length of the grant approval process. A few States raised concerns over the role of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) with the TSGP. Some believe the TSA should not be setting policy, which they have been perceived as doing. Others raised concerns over the length of time it takes to get a project approved and funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Additionally, comments were offered by the States to improve the TSGP, including the following: States would like to receive periodic updates on the status of their application; the State Administrative Agency (SAA) should be expected and required to review all grant submissions coming from the State, including those involving the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and TSA; and timelines for the approval process need to be established.

Resource Requirements

The range of personnel required by and assigned to manage the TSGP grant was from 0.2 to 5 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Most of the States believed the staffing levels were sufficient to administer the program. Funding of personnel in States is hampered by the 5% maximum for M&A of the total grant funding. States have a need for computer software and hardware to administer the grant funds. They would like outreach materials to provide to local transit authorities. Lastly, States have identified travel as a non-personnel requirement. To administer the program properly, additional travel funds to various local jurisdictions and to Federal conferences are needed.

Program Summary Issues

The majority of the States said the TSGP increased their preparedness, supported their State Strategy, and assisted them in supporting the National Preparedness Goal. All States believed this program is making a positive contribution to preparedness in their State, especially in the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) areas. Six States added comments including the program is being well received by local governments, supports training and increases security of stakeholders, and has assisted with evacuation planning. Many of the States offered several overall comments for the TSGP, including the following:

- Provide written, clear, and direct guidance, especially given the change in management to TSA.
- Create a schedule of grant applications—a calendar that can spread the workload over time for applicants.
- The SAA should be the applicant and should have some level of authority to approve project modifications, possibly up to 20% similar to 2005 guidance.
- Operate the port and transit grants in parallel and role the ferry grant into the ports grant rather than the transit grant, as there is more interface between ferry and port operations.

Program Requirements Impacting State Emergency Management/Homeland Security Agencies

1. Reporting Requirements

a. Is the frequency of the reporting requirements a concern of the State?

Yes 2 No 10 Unanswered 1

Most States had no concerns about the frequency of the reporting requirements, and there were no specific negative comments offered by the two States that had concerns.

b. Are there any unnecessary reporting requirements?

Yes 6 No 6 Unanswered 1

Six States reported there were unnecessary reporting requirements and felt the CAPR should be eliminated and that there were too many redundant reports, such as the BSIR, ISIP, Preparedness Reports, the Governor's Report, etc. One State felt the BSIR is unnecessary and of virtually no help to the States.

c. Are any of these reporting requirements covered in other Federal program requirements?

Yes 3 No 9 Unanswered 1

The only example offered in this section was that the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program covered some of these reporting requirements.

d. Is the electronic reporting submittal process for this program a concern?

Yes 5 **No** 7 **Unanswered** 1

The assessment tool collected data in four categories:

- 31% of the respondents said it takes too long to input data.
- 38% indicated they had system availability issues.
- 23% indicated they have lost data previously entered.
- 38% have experienced the system timing out during use.

Additionally, a couple of States pointed out that large documents are difficult to upload and that updates, in general, are difficult to accomplish. Overall, it was felt the system is not user-friendly, especially to the local authorities.

e. Suggested improvements.

A number of States felt the CAPR should be eliminated and the BSIR be made more user-friendly. In that regard, these States felt there should be added upload capability, and there should be a single portal with one password. Lastly, they felt the system should better capture progress and accomplishments to be more helpful to the States.

2. Timeline Requirements

a. Are timeline requirements acceptable for submitting the program application?

Yes 5 **No** 8

The majority of the States reported the timelines were not acceptable for submitting the application. The application requires coordination with other agencies and jurisdictions. One State reported that last minute guidance changes resulted in wasted time and created more stress on the State to meet the deadline.

b. Are timeline requirements acceptable for Investment Justification plans?

Yes 6 **No** 5 **Unanswered** **N/A** 2

The IJ plan is the largest component of the application. Of the States reporting the timelines are not acceptable, their main concern was there is not enough time to engage stakeholders in the process and fully develop the projects.

c. Are timeline requirements acceptable for financial reporting?

Yes 12 No Unanswered 1

Almost all States felt the timeline requirements were acceptable for financial reporting. No other specific comments were received.

d. Are timeline requirements acceptable for program reporting?

Yes 11 No 1 Unanswered 1

The vast majority of States felt the timeline requirements were acceptable for program reporting. Some States said their concerns were also identified in this section of the HSGP. Recommendations for improvement included increasing the time the BSIR is open to report for at least 60 days, if not left open all year. States felt this would result in higher quality reports, particularly those that use local data.

e. Are there other timeline issues?

Other timeline issues included the following:

- Changing guidance during the application period resulted in more time being needed.
- Timelines too short and overlapping with other grant programs.
- One State reported National Environmental Policy Act requirements for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 were unclear and slowed the process.

f. What recommended improvements do you have regarding the timeline requirements?

Recommended improvements included the following:

- Provide an annual timeline/calendar that is coordinated with the States and that Federal agencies be required to follow it. The calendar should be consistent from year to year.
- Coordinate release of the grant application with the HSPG grants so that timeframes do not overlap. Stagger grant application periods.
- The vast majority of States would like to see the grant guidance out sooner, even if in draft form, and Federal timeline commitments met. Draft guidance could be sent out and then adjusted if necessary after congressional appropriations.

3. Grant Guidance

a. Is the grant guidance too lengthy?

Yes 1 No 12

The States overwhelmingly found the grant guidance is not too lengthy. States on both sides of this issue strongly agree the guidance has recently improved. Some of the States suggested that as the guidance becomes more complex, they rely more and more on their Preparedness Officers for assistance.

b. Is the grant guidance understandable?

Yes 8 No 5

Most States found the grant guidance to be understandable; however, some are still having difficulty with ambiguous or vague terminology. First-time users especially have difficulty in understanding this process.

c. Is the grant guidance consistent?

Yes 6 No 7

The States are almost evenly split on consistency of the grant guidance. While six States found the guidance consistent, others voiced concerns such as the following:

- The guidance is incoherent and conflicts internally with itself—it seems that two versions were merged at the last moment—and TSA’s guidance made little sense.
- The budget sheets on Grants.gov do not match the Office of Grants and Training (G&T) budget requirements found in the guidance and IJs.

d. Is the grant guidance timely?

Yes 5 No 7 Unanswered 1

Of the four questions posed to the States regarding grant guidance, the issue of timeliness was described as the most troublesome. Common responses from States suggested the grant guidance is received too late in the process and frequently over the holidays. This delay in publication makes it very difficult to schedule workshops with State agencies to develop IJs. The States would like to receive the guidance no later than mid-October so that the 60-day deadline would come before the holiday season. The DHS Interim Review was received favorably; however, it caused States using it to have even less time to prepare. Two States recommended that publishing early draft guidance would be of great value in preparation to meet timelines. Another State commented the application period is too short given the number of questions asked and the information needed.

e. Are there other grant guidance issues?

Other grant guidance issues included the following:

- TSA should be subject matter experts, not the grant managers.
- There is a need for more timeline checklists.
- Grant guidance should drive reporting toward capability needs.

f. Any recommended changes for grant guidance improvement?

Recommended changes to grant guidance included the following:

- Provide a matrix that lists changes and additions in program guidance and authorized equipment, training, and M&A costs.
- Establish checklists covering timelines.
- Demand detailed assessments of risk as the basis for requests.
- Extensive last-minute changes should be implemented the following year.
- Guidance should reflect the consensus of the working groups.
- Be consistent and provide the guidance early.

4. Grant Approval Process

a. Do you have any concerns regarding the length of the grant approval process?

Yes 3 No 10

More than three quarters (77%) of the States involved in the TSGP answered “No” or did not answer when asked if they had concerns regarding the length of the grant approval process. Only a couple of comments were provided by those who responded “Yes.”

One State indicated the TSGP 2006 approval was not provided until 2007, and then it was only a partial approval. Another State had the following to say: “The process is totally convoluted and TSA is unilaterally setting priorities. Requirements they are implementing are not part of the guidelines or process. Regional partnerships are being adversely affected by TSA, undermining the authority of the Regional Working Groups. The State is sitting with money in the bank and the working groups have projects ready to go, yet DHS will not give the go ahead to proceed.”

b. If used, is the Peer Review an acceptable process?

Yes 5 **No** 3 **Unanswered** 5

Five (38%) of the 13 States involved in the TSGP did not answer this question. All but one indicated the Peer Review process was not applicable to TSGP. Comments from the three States answering “No” included that the Federal review process needs a Peer Review component and it should have local input, the State Regional Working Groups are a more viable Peer Review than the Federal review, and Peer Reviews must include subject matter experts from State and local organizations familiar with field operations.

c. Are there other grant approval process issues?

Five of the 13 States involved in TSGP responded to the question asking if there are other grant approval process issues. Responses provided included the following:

- Stakeholders would like to receive periodic updates on the status of their application.
- The State has received the guidance, but is unsure what action is required next.
- The Federal Government allowed applications to be resubmitted, and the State still does not know all of the projects that were approved for 2006.
- Bids have expired before approvals have been received.
- If the Federal Government (i.e., DHS) is going to unilaterally allocate funds, they should do so at the beginning of the process.

d. Do you have any recommended improvements to the grant approval process for the program?

Three States provided recommended improvements to the grant approval process for TSGP. They are as follows:

- The Federal review should be tied to work group consensus.
- Write guidance and adhere to it. Current requirements being implemented are not in the guidance.
- The SAA should be expected and required to review all grant submissions from within the State, including those involving the USCG and TSA.
- Timelines for the approval process need to be established.

5. Resource Requirements

a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs) are required to administer this program?

Table 3 represents a composite summary of data collected from 11 States (six small, three medium, and two large) for the six Infrastructure Protection Program (IPP) grant programs.

Table 3. Average FTE IPP Staff for 11 States for Program/Operations and M&A

Each State was asked the following three questions:

1. How many State staff are believed to be required to fully accomplish the objectives of the program?
2. How many State staff are currently assigned to program and operational duties?
3. How many State staff are currently assigned to accomplish M&A?

	Small Population States (<3 million)				Medium Population States (3 to 10 million)				Large Population States (>10 million)			
	Total Staff Required	Current Program Staff	Current M&A Staff	Shortage or Need	Total Staff Required	Current Program Staff	Current M&A Staff	Shortage or Need	Total Staff Required	Current Program Staff	Current M&A Staff	Shortage or Need
Average FTE	3.4	1.6	0.8	1	3.2	0.5	1.2	1.5	5.5	3.7	1.8	0

The FTE numbers illustrate that the State role in the IPP grants is minimal and requires few additional resources. The FTE numbers, by population grouping, do not differ significantly. However, a minimum number of FTE personnel are still required to manage and administer the IPP grants regardless of State population size.

b. Number of FTEs currently assigned to this program.

Table 4 represents a composite summary of data collected from nine States (two small, four medium, and three large) for the six IPP grant programs.

Table 4. Average FTE IPP Staff for 9 States for M&A Staff Only

Each State was asked the following three questions:

1. How many State staff are believed to be required to solely manage and administer (M&A) the program?
2. How many State staff currently assigned to M&A are paid by State funds?
3. How many State staff currently assigned to M&A are federally funded by the grant M&A allocations?

	Small Population States (<3 million)				Medium Population States (3 to 10 million)				Large Population States (>10 million)			
	Total M&A Required	Current State M&A	Current Federal M&A	Shortage or Need	Total M&A Required	Current State M&A	Current Federal M&A	Shortage or Need	Total M&A Required	Current State M&A	Current Federal M&A	Shortage or Need
Average FTE	1.3	0.2	0.9	0.2	2	0.6	0.7	0.7	12.5	4.8	5.3	2.4

Table 4 shows the States are contributing State funding toward M&A of the IPP grants. This data supports the need to increase Federal M&A allowances to meet the requirements of IPP. State funding recommendations included raising the current 3% or 5% M&A ceiling and establishing minimum baseline funding to fully offset the need for State supplements.

c. If the FTEs required to administer this program are less than the FTEs currently assigned, why is there a difference?

Several variables affect the difference between the number of FTEs assigned to the program and the number required. In those States that had a requirement for additional personnel, the primary reasons are noted below.

Funding of personnel in States is hampered by the 5% maximum for M&A of the total grant funding.

One State is using existing State staff to manage the program and providing all funding to local jurisdictions.

d. Are additional non-personnel resources needed to accomplish this program?

Yes 4 No 9

Additional non-personnel resources are required for the successful accomplishment of the TSGP program. These resources include the following:

- States have a need for computer software and hardware to administer the grant funds.
- States would like outreach materials to provide to local transit authorities.
- States have identified travel as a non-personnel requirement. To administer the program properly, additional travel funds to various local jurisdictions and to Federal conferences are needed.

e. Other issues related to the personnel/resources for this program.

For a minimal amount of funding available in the TSGP grant, the States are expending a high percentage of staff time managing the program.

f. Recommended improvements for the personnel/resources for this program.

The States recommended important considerations for the TSGP program that could improve personnel and other resourcing:

- An increase of the limit on M&A from 5% to a higher amount would help to alleviate the manpower shortage that exists in administering the grant.

- Provide the States with grants management tools, such as an electronic management system to lessen the workload on State staff.

6. Program Summary Issues

a. Does this program improve preparedness in your State?

Yes 13 No

All States believe this program is making a positive contribution to preparedness in their State, especially in UASI areas. Six States added comments, including that the program is being well received by local governments, supports training and increases security of stakeholders, and has assisted with evacuation planning. One other State expressed concern for the State versus Federal priorities and the time to gain project approval. At the time of the interview in June (2007), FY05 projects were being completed and 2006/2007 projects had been submitted and were awaiting approval.

b. Does this program support your State's Homeland Security Strategy?

Yes 13 No

All States responded that this grant provides critical funds that directly support their objectives to enhance transportation security and preparedness. Quicker approval for projects will expedite progress.

c. Does the program support the National Preparedness Goal?

Yes 13 No

There was total agreement that TSGP supports the National Preparedness Goal. Comments were added that it helps achieve this by educating the public, developing partnerships, improving information sharing, supporting interoperability, and, in general, supporting the missions of Prevent and Deter.

d. Are there any program requirements or items related to this program not previously discussed?

Yes 7 No 6

Communications of and rationale for changes to guidance, meetings with cities without including State representation, and the high level to which any change must go for approval were all subjects mentioned by States as needing attention since program management was transferred to TSA.

e. What recommendations for improvement does the State have for this program?

The following recommendations were made:

- Provide written, clear, and direct guidance, especially given the change in management structure to TSA. Criteria for scoring and clarification of eligible expenses are needed.
- The SAA should be the applicant and should have some level of authority to approve project modifications, possibly up to 20%, similar to 2005 guidance.
- Develop tools to analyze risk for transit facilities.
- Given demonstrated risk worldwide, it would appear that funding should be more equitably split among air, rail, subway, and bus systems.
- Publish clearer, more substantive guidance on “supplanting.” One sub-grantee wanted to “augment” their ongoing efforts, but it was called “supplanting” by DHS staff. We should support, even reward, any “additional” effort by sub-grantees toward established goals and objectives.
- A recommendation was made to operate the port and transit grants in parallel and roll the ferry grant into the ports grant rather than the transit grant as there is more interface between ferry and port operations.
- Manage the grants through G&T, which has more experience and expertise with grants management than TSA.
- The project review process should include the expertise of local operators as well as security professionals at both the State and Federal levels and be consistent with State Strategies.

f. Has the State identified any other requirements from Federal agencies other than DHS and FEMA that can be associated with or related to this program?

There are obvious roles and interface with TSA, USCG, the Federal Transit Administration, and Amtrak.

TSGP PROGRAM Y/N COUNT SUMMARY WORKSHEET

#	AFR Impact/Response (Template 3) Y/N Criteria	Summary				Small States (8 Sites Surveyed)				Medium States (7 Sites Surveyed)				Large States (5 Sites Surveyed)			
		Yes	No	N/A	U	Yes	No	N/A	U	Yes	No	N/A	U	Yes	No	N/A	U
10.	Reporting Requirements																
A.	Is the frequency of the reporting requirements a concern of the State?	2	10		1	0	2		0	2	3		1	0	5		0
C.	Are there any unnecessary reporting requirements?	6	6		1	0	2		0	4	1		1	2	3		0
E.	Are any of these reporting requirements covered in other Federal Program requirements?	3	9		1	0	2		0	3	2		1	0	5		0
G.	Is the electronic reporting submittal process for this program a concern?	5	7		1	0	2		0	3	2		1	2	3		0
11.	Are Timeline Requirements acceptable for submitting:																
A.	The application for this program?	5	8		0	1	1		0	1	5		0	3	2		0
C.	Investment Justification plan?	6	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	2	2	1	0
E.	Financial reporting?	12	0		1	2	0		0	5	0		1	5	0		0
G.	Program reporting?	11	1		1	2	0		0	5	0		1	4	1		0
12.	Is the Grant Guidance:																
A.	Too lengthy?	1	12		0	0	2		0	0	6		0	1	4		0
C.	Understandable?	8	5		0	2	0		0	3	3		0	3	2		0
E.	Consistent?	6	7		0	1	1		0	3	3		0	2	3		0
G.	Timely?	5	7		1	1	0		1	3	3		0	1	4		0
13.	Grant Approval Process:																
A.	Do you have any concerns regarding the length of the Grant approval process?	3	10		0	1	1		0	0	6		0	2	3		0
C.	Is used, is the Peer Review an acceptable process?	5	3		5	1	1		0	3	0		3	1	2		2
14.	Resource Requirements:																
E.	Are additional non-personnel resources needed to accomplish this program?	4	9		0	1	1		0	2	4		0	1	4		0
15.	Program Summary Issues:																
A.	Does this program improve preparedness in your State?	13	0		0	2	0		0	6	0		0	5	0		0
C.	Does this program support your State's Homeland Security Strategy?	13	0		0	2	0		0	6	0		0	5	0		0
E.	Does this program support the National Preparedness Goal?	13	0		0	2	0		0	6	0		0	5	0		0
G.	Are there any program requirements or items related to this program not previously discussed?	7	6		0	1	1		0	2	4		0	4	1		0
	TOTALS	128	105	2	12	21	16	0	1	59	45	1	9	48	44	1	2

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