

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Office of the Secretary****Proposed Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request**

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and its implementing regulations, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) hereby announces that it is seeking renewal of the following currently approved information collection activity. Before submitting these information collection requirements for clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), FRA is soliciting public comment on specific aspects of the activities identified below.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than June 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on any or all of the following proposed activities by mail to either: Mr. Robert Brogan, Office of Safety, Planning and Evaluation Division, RRS-21, Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Ave., NW, Mail Stop 17, Washington, DC 20590, or Ms. Dian Deal, Office of Information Technology and Productivity Improvement, RAD-20, Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Ave., NW, Mail Stop 35, Washington, DC 20590. Commenters requesting FRA to acknowledge receipt of their respective comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard stating, "Comments on OMB control number 2130-0517." Alternatively, comments may be transmitted via facsimile to (202) 493-6265 or (202) 493-6170, or E-mail to Mr. Brogan at robert.brogan@fra.dot.gov, or to Ms. Deal at dian.deal@fra.dot.gov. Please refer to the assigned OMB control number in any correspondence submitted. FRA will summarize comments received in response to this notice in a subsequent notice and include them in its information collection submission to OMB for approval.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Robert Brogan, Office of Planning and Evaluation Division, RRS-21, Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Ave., NW, Mail Stop 17, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone: (202) 493-6292) or Dian Deal, Office of Information Technology and Productivity Improvement, RAD-20, Federal Railroad Administration, 1120 Vermont Ave., NW, Mail Stop 35,

Washington, DC 20590 (telephone: (202) 493-6133). (These telephone numbers are not toll-free.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), Pub. L. 104-13, § 2, 109 Stat. 163 (1995) (codified as revised at 44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), and its implementing regulations, 5 CFR Part 1320, require Federal agencies to provide 60-days notice to the public for comment on information collection activities before seeking approval for reinstatement or renewal by OMB. 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A); 5 CFR 1320.8(d)(1), 1320.10(e)(1), 1320.12(a). Specifically, FRA invites interested respondents to comment on the following summary of proposed information collection activities regarding (i) whether the information collection activities are necessary for FRA to properly execute its functions, including whether the activities will have practical utility; (ii) the accuracy of FRA's estimates of the burden of the information collection activities, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used to determine the estimates; (iii) ways for FRA to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information being collected; and (iv) ways for FRA to minimize the burden of information collection activities on the public by automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology (e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses). See 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)(i)-(iv); 5 CFR 1320.8(d)(1)(i)-(iv). FRA believes that soliciting public comment will promote its efforts to reduce the administrative and paperwork burdens associated with the collection of information mandated by Federal regulations. In summary, FRA reasons that comments received will advance three objectives: (i) reduce reporting burdens; (ii) ensure that it organizes information collection requirements in a "user friendly" format to improve the use of such information; and (iii) accurately assess the resources expended to retrieve and produce information requested. See 44 U.S.C. 3501.

Below are brief summaries of the currently approved information collection activity that FRA will submit for clearance by OMB as required under the PRA:

Title and Form Number: Supplemental Qualifications Statement for Railroad Safety Inspector Applicants, FRA-F-120.

OMB Control Number: 2130-0517.

Abstract: The Supplemental Qualifications Statement for Railroad

Safety Inspector Applicants is an information collection instrument used by FRA to gather additional background data so that FRA can evaluate the qualifications of applicants for the position of Railroad Safety Inspector. The questions cover a wide range of general and specialized skills, abilities, and knowledge of the five types of railroad safety inspector positions.

Affected Public: Individuals or Households.

Frequency of Submission: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2,000 Applicants.

Estimated Average Burden per Respondent: 3 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 6,000 hours.

Status: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 3507(a) and 5 CFR 1320.5(b), 1320.8(b)(3)(vi), FRA informs all interested parties that it may not conduct or sponsor, and a respondent is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 3501-3520.

Issued in Washington, DC on April 27, 1999.

Marie S. Savoy,

Director, Office of Information Technology and Support Systems, Federal Railroad Administration.

[FR Doc. 99-10893 Filed 4-29-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-62-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****Discretionary Cooperative Agreements To Assist in the Development of Crash Outcome Data Evaluation Systems**

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of availability—Discretionary cooperative agreements to assist in the development and use of Crash Outcome Data Evaluation Systems.

SUMMARY: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announces a discretionary cooperative agreement program to assist states in the development and use of Crash Outcome Data Evaluation Systems (CODES) and solicits applications for projects under this program from states that have not previously been funded to develop CODES. Under this program states will link their existing statewide traffic

records with medical outcome and charge data. The linked data will be used to support highway safety decision-making at the local, regional, and state levels to reduce deaths, non-fatal injuries, and health care costs resulting from motor vehicle crashes.

DATES: Applications must be received at the office designated below on or before July 2, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted to DOT/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Contracts and Procurement (NAD-30), ATTN: Debra J. Crites, 400 7th Street, SW, Room 5301, Washington, DC 20590. All applications submitted must include a reference to NHTSA Cooperative Agreement Program No. DTNH 22-99-H-07159. Interested applicants should contact Ms. Crites to obtain the application packet. Included in the application packet are reports about data linkage and applications for linked data developed by the CODES project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

General administrative questions may be directed to Debra J. Crites, Office of Contracts and Procurement. All questions and requests for copies may be directed by e-mail at dcrites@nhtsa.dot.gov or, if necessary, at (202) 366-9547. Programmatic questions relating to this cooperative agreement program should be directed to Dennis Utter, CODES Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), NHTSA, Room 6125, (NRD-31) 400 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20590 or by e-mail at dutter@nhtsa.dot.gov or, if necessary, at (202) 366-5351.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Statement of Work

Background

Crash data alone are unable to convey the magnitude of the medical and financial consequences of the injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes or the success of highway safety decision-making to prevent them. Outcome information describing what happens to all persons involved in motor vehicle crashes, regardless of injury, is needed.

Person-specific outcome information is collected at the crash scene and en route by EMS personnel, at the emergency department, in the hospital, and after discharge. When these data are computerized and merged statewide, they generate a source of population-based data that is available for use by state and local traffic safety and public health professionals. Linking these records to statewide crash data collected by police at the scene is the key to developing relationships among specific

vehicles, crash, and occupant behavior characteristics and their medical and financial outcomes.

The feasibility of linking crash and medical outcome (EMS, emergency department, hospital discharge, death certificate, claims, etc.) data was demonstrated by the CODES project. This project evolved from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, which mandated that NHTSA prepare a Report to Congress about the benefits of safety belt and motorcycle helmet use. NHTSA provided funding to the States of Hawaii, Maine, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin to link their state data and use the linked data to analyze the effectiveness of safety belts and motorcycle helmets. The Report was delivered to Congress in February 1996. In 1996, three CODES states (New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin) and three states which linked crash and medical data without CODES funding (Alaska, Connecticut, New Mexico) were awarded NHTSA research funds to develop state-specific applications for linked data. In 1997, NHTSA awarded CODES grants for linkage to Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maryland, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Nevada. Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and South Carolina which were funded to implement the CODES linkage in 1998.

The CODES project also demonstrated that linked data have many uses for decision-making related to highway safety and injury control. In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of safety belts and motorcycle helmets in preventing death, injury, and costs, the linked data were used to identify populations at risk for increased severity or high health care costs, the impact of different occupant behaviors on outcome, the safety needs at the community level, the allocation of resources for emergency medical services, the injury patterns by type of roadway and geographic location, and the benefits of collaboration on data quality. When crash, vehicle, and behavior characteristics were linked to outcome information, decision-makers could identify those prevention programs that had the most impact on preventing or reducing the medical and financial costs associated with motor vehicle crashes.

Data linkage fulfills expanded data needs without the additional expense and delay of new data collection. The linkage process itself provides feedback about data quality and content problems which leads to improvement in the state data. Thus, it is in NHTSA's interest to encourage states to qualify for CODES

funding. NHTSA benefits from the improved quality of the state data while the states benefit from state-specific medical and financial outcome information about motor vehicle crashes.

Objective

The objective of this Cooperative Agreement is to provide resources to the applicant to:

1. Coordinate the development and institutionalization of the capability to link state crash and medical outcome data to identify the medical and financial consequences of motor vehicle crashes.

2. Utilize this information in crash analysis, problem identification, and program evaluation to improve decision-making at the local, state, and national levels related to preventing or reducing deaths, injuries, and direct medical costs associated with motor vehicle crashes.

3. Provide NHTSA with population-based linked crash and injury data to analyze specific highway safety issues of interest to NHTSA in collaboration with the CODES states.

4. Develop data linkage capabilities as a means of improving the quality of state data which support NHTSA's national data.

This cooperative agreement is not intended to fund basic development of data systems. However, it is hoped that this project will inspire States to develop and improve their state data and to expedite these activities in order to become eligible for CODES funding.

General Project Requirements

1. Link statewide population-based crash to injury data for any two calendar years available since 1995, to produce a linked data file that, if not statewide, reflects a contiguous geographical area that contains at least three (3) million residents in which the residents obtain all levels of emergency medical care without the need to be transferred elsewhere, except in rare occurrences, when involved in motor vehicle crashes. The linked data must be representative and generalizable for highway traffic safety purposes in the state/area. All applicants must be able to clearly document what data are available and what data are missing and the significance of the missing data for highway traffic safety planning efforts.

- a. Develop a state/area-wide CODES that includes outcome information for all persons, injured and uninjured, involved in police reported motor vehicle crashes.

- (1) The CODES should consist of crash data linked to hospital, and either

EMS or emergency department data, preferably both. States without EMS or emergency department data are eligible if this type of outpatient information can be obtained from insurance claims data for everyone involved in a crash who is treated at an outpatient center.

(2) Additional state/area-wide data (driver licensing, vehicle registration, citation/conviction records, insurance claims, HMO/managed care/etc. outpatient records, etc.) should be linked as necessary to meet state/area wide objectives.

b. Set up processes for collaboration among the technical experts who manage the data files being linked.

c. Assign an agency to be responsible for:

(1) Obtaining a computer and AutoMatch software to be dedicated to CODES activities (the computer and software resources may not be permanently tied to existing computer network in such a way as to preclude their movement in the future, as directed by the CODES Board of Directors, to another organization more interested in continuing the linkage and application for the linked data);

(2) Implementing probabilistic linkage methodology to facilitate tracking the crash victim from the scene to final disposition/recovery using existing computerized state/area-wide, population-based databases;

(3) Validating the linkage results by evaluating the rate of false positives and false negatives among the linked and unlinked records;

(4) Analyzing the linked data; and

(5) Cross-training sufficient staff to ensure continuation of the linkage capability in spite of changes in organizational priorities or personnel during or after the project period.

d. Document the file preparation, linkage and validation processes so that the linkage can be repeated efficiently during subsequent years after Federal funding ends and provide evidence of this documentation.

e. Provide NHTSA a version of the linked data file with supporting documentation that conforms to State laws and regulations governing patient/provider confidentiality, yet satisfies minimum NHTSA data needs.

2. Use the linked data to influence highway traffic safety and injury control decision-making by implementing at least one application of linked data that is expected to have a positive impact on reducing death, injury, and direct medical costs.

3. Develop the computer programs needed to translate the linked data into information useful for highway traffic

safety and injury control at the local, regional, or state/area-wide level.

a. Develop for access within the State a public-use version of the linked data, copies of which will be distributed upon request.

b. Develop the resources necessary to produce and distribute routine reports, respond to data requests, and provide access to the linked data for analytical, management, planning, and other purposes after Federal funding ends.

c. Use the Internet and other electronic mechanisms to efficiently distribute and share information generated from the linked data.

4. Promote collaboration between the owners and users of the state/area-wide data to facilitate data linkage and applications for linked data.

a. Establish a state/area-wide CODES collaborative network.

(1) Convene a Board of Directors consisting of the data owners and major users of the state/area-wide data. The CODES Board of Directors will be responsible for managing and institutionalizing the linked data, establishing the data release policies for the linked data, supporting the activities of the grantee, ensuring that data linkage and application activities are appropriately coordinated within the state/area, and resolving common issues related to data accessibility, availability, completeness, quality, confidentiality, transfer, ownership, fee for service, management etc. The CODES Board of Directors will meet monthly.

(2) Convene a CODES Advisory Group consisting of the CODES Board of Directors and other stakeholders interested in the use of linked data to support highway safety, injury control, EMS, etc. The CODES Advisory Group will be informed of the results of the data linkage, application of the data for decision-making, the quality of the state/area-wide data for linkage and the quality of the linked data for analysis. The CODES Advisory Group will meet twice a year.

b. Promote coordination of the various stakeholders through use of the Internet, teleconferencing, joint meetings, and other mechanisms to ensure frequent communication among all parties to minimize the expense of travel.

5. Work collaboratively with NHTSA to implement the Cooperative Agreement.

a. Attend Initial Briefing Meeting: Each grantee shall attend a briefing meeting (date and time to be scheduled within 30 days after the award) in Washington, D.C. with NHTSA staff. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the goals and objectives of the project, discuss implementation of the

linkage software, review the tasks to be specified in the action plan for the data linkage and applications of the linked data for highway safety or injury control decision-making and discuss the agendas for the Board of Directors and Advisory Group.

b. Submit Detailed Action Plan and Schedule. Within 30 days after the briefing meeting, the grantee shall deliver a detailed action plan and schedule, covering the remaining funding period, for accomplishing the data linkage and incorporating information generated from linked data into the processes for highway safety or injury control decision-making. The action plan shall be subject to the technical direction and approval of NHTSA.

c. Attend Technical Workshops. All grantees together shall attend two technology transfer workshops during project performance at locations convenient to the majority of CODES grantees. The first meeting, to be scheduled during the ninth month of funding, will be organized to share data linkage experiences, review the proposed state-specific highway safety applications of linked data, and resolve common problems. The second meeting will be scheduled at the end of the funding period for the purpose of sharing results and making recommendations for future CODES projects.

d. Attend National Meeting. At the direction of the COTR, Grantee shall attend one national Meeting to report on progress or results from their CODES project.

e. Progress Report. Grantee shall submit quarterly progress reports. During the period of performance, the grantee will provide letter-type written reports to the COTR. These reports will compare what was proposed in the Action Plan with actual accomplishments during the past quarter; what commitments have been generated; what follow up and state-level support is expected; what problems have been experienced and what may be needed to overcome the problems; and what is specifically planned to be accomplished during the next quarter. These reports will be submitted seven days after the end of each quarter.

f. Develop a plan to institutionalize the data linkage and applications for linked data after Federal funding ends. By the end of the 15th month of funding, each grantee shall submit a long-range plan and schedule to institutionalize data linkage and the use of linked data for highway safety and

injury control decision-making within the state.

g. Final Report. The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA, at the end of the project, a final report describing the results of the data linkage process, and the applications of the linked data generated during the project.

NHTSA Involvement

NHTSA will be involved in all activities undertaken as part of the Cooperative Agreement program and will:

1. Provide a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) to participate in the planning and management of the Cooperative Agreement and coordinate activities between the grantee and NHTSA.
2. Provide, at no cost to the grantee, training and technical assistance by a CODES expert for up to two weeks on-site and off-site during the project to assist the grantee in preparing the files for linkage, implementing probabilistic linkage techniques, validating the linkage results, developing applications for the linked data, and organizing the CODES Board of Directors and Advisory Group.
3. Develop a format in which the linked data and supporting documentation will be delivered to NHTSA.
4. Conduct Initial Briefing at NHTSA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. (Date and time to be scheduled within 30 days after the award.) The purpose of the meeting will be to review the goals and objectives of the project, discuss implementation of the linkage software, identify the tasks to be specified in the action plan for the data linkage and applications of the linked data for highway safety or injury control decision-making, and discuss agendas for the Board of Directors and Advisory Group.
5. Conduct two Technical Assistance meetings for the purpose of technology transfer. The first meeting to be scheduled during the ninth month of funding, will be organized to share data linkage experiences, review the proposed state-specific highway traffic safety applications of linked data, and resolve common problems. The second meeting will be scheduled at the end of the funding period for the purpose of sharing results and making recommendations for future CODES projects. Locations for the Workshops will be determined based on the location of the Grantees. However, for the purpose of cost estimation, assume the workshops will be held in Washington, D.C.

6. Collaboratively work with the state when using the state's linked data to analyze and report on specific highway safety issues and report on them.

Period of Support

The project study effort described in this announcement will be supported through the award of up to four (4) Cooperative Agreements, depending upon the merit of the applications received and the availability of funding. It is anticipated that individual award amounts will range from \$250,000—\$300,000. Project efforts involving linkage of the state/area-wide data and applications for the linked data must be completed within twenty-one months after funding.

Eligibility Requirements

The grantee must be a State Highway Safety Office, Department of Transportation or other State agency involved with highway traffic safety to ensure active involvement by highway traffic safety stakeholders. States which have previously been funded to develop CODES are not eligible. Only one application should be submitted for a state/area. Because this Cooperative Agreement program requires extensive collaboration among the data owners in order to achieve the program objectives, it is envisioned that the State Highway Traffic Safety Office will need to actively involve the data owners in the development of the formal application and may need to sub-contract activities with at least one of them to implement a successful CODES.

While the general eligibility requirements are broad, applicants are advised that this Cooperative Agreement program is not designed to support basic developmental efforts. Although no single organization within any state/area has all of the required data capabilities, the application should demonstrate strong collaborative agreements with the data owners and access to at least the state/area-wide crash, hospital, and either EMS or emergency department data, or both, by the time of the award. States/areas that collect at least the date of birth and zip code of residence on their crash data and have state/area-wide health and/or vehicle insurance claims information may be eligible, in spite of the lack of EMS or emergency department information, if the claims data include everyone involved in motor vehicle crashes. In addition, it is important that the applicant indicate the level of commitment, with state/area funding and/or shared resources, by the data owners to meet program objectives, particularly institutionalization of the

data linkage and applications for linked data.

Application Procedure

Each applicant must submit one original and two (2) copies of the application package to: DOT/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Contracts and Procurement (NAD-30), ATTN: Debra J. Crites, 400 7th Street, S.W., Room 5301, Washington, D.C. 20590. Applications must be typed on one side of the page only. An additional three (3) copies will facilitate the review process, but are not required. Applications must include a reference to NHTSA Cooperative Agreement Program No. DTNH22-99-H-07159. Only complete application packages received on or before 2 p.m., July 2, 1999 will be considered.

Application Contents

1. The application package must be submitted with OMB Standard Form 424 (REV. 4-88, including 424A and 424B), Application for Federal Assistance, with the required information filled in and assurances signed (SF 424B). While the Form 424A deals with budget information and Section B identifies Budget Categories, the available space does not permit a level of detail which is sufficient to provide for a meaningful evaluation of the proposed total costs. A supplemental sheet shall be provided which presents a detailed breakdown of the proposed costs (direct labor, including labor category, level of effort, and rate; direct materials including itemized equipment; travel and transportation, including projected trips and number of people traveling; subcontractors/subgrants, with similar detail, if known; and overhead), as well as any costs the applicant proposes to contribute or obtain from other sources in support of the project. Applicants shall assume that awards will be made during September 1999 and should prepare their applications accordingly.

2. The application shall include a program narrative statement of not more than 20 pages which addresses the following as a minimum:

a. A brief description of the state/area in terms of its highway safety and injury control decision-making processes for planning, performance monitoring and other functions aimed at reducing death, injury, and costs of injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes. This description should indicate how linked data will make a difference to the decision-making processes.

b. A brief description of the existing crash and medical outcome data files. Applicants will link state/area-wide

population-based crash data to EMS (and/or emergency department or insurance claims) and hospital discharge data to obtain medical and financial outcomes for persons injured in motor vehicle crashes for any two calendar years of data available since 1995. Linkages to census, other traffic records (vehicle registration, driver

licensing, roadway, conviction/citation, etc.), insurance claims, etc., are encouraged to meet priorities for highway safety and injury control decision-making. The following information should be included describing the state/area-wide data:

(1) The total crashes, total persons involved in crashes, total victims with

injuries caused by a motor vehicle crash as identified or estimated and a descriptive profile of the total injuries by severity level, if available, state/area-wide.

(2) Information about the current status of the data files to be linked, recorded using the format below:

Data files	Reporting threshold (A)	Rate of compliance with (A)	Data year(s) for computerized data available	Month and year when computerized data available for linkage	Percent of records state/area wide which need to be computerized for linkage
Crash					
EMS					
ED					
Hosp					
Other:					

(3) The data elements chosen to identify persons and crashes and, for each, the missing data rate.

(4) The data elements indicating type of injury, severity of injury, total charges, a payer source and, for each, the missing data rate.

c. A brief description of the proposed sequence for linking the data files.

d. A brief description of how staff from the various data owners will be cross-trained in the CODES linkage to compensate for potential future changes in organizational priorities and personnel.

e. A brief description of the process to be used to ensure adequate documentation of the data files and linkage process.

f. A brief description of how the linked data will be converted into information useful for the highway safety and injury control decision-making processes for the purpose of reducing death, injury, and costs resulting from motor vehicle crashes.

Describe:

(1) The different types of decision-making processes, currently being utilized in the state/area, that identify highway traffic safety and injury control objectives and prioritize prevention programs that have the most impact on reducing death, injury and direct medical costs associated with motor vehicle crashes; and

(2) Why linked data are needed to make these decision-making processes more effective and how the data will be incorporated.

g. A brief description of each member of the CODES Board of Directors and the proposed arrangements describing the management and use of the linked data.

3. The application shall include an appendix. A large appendix is strongly discouraged. Additional material should be included only if it is necessary to support information about data linkage, applications for linked data or institutionalization discussed in the application. Do not send copies of brochures, documents, etc., developed as the result of a collaborative effort in the state/area. The appendix should include the following:

a. Letters of support from each proposed member of the CODES Board of Directors. A letter of support should reflect the signer's level of commitment to the CODES project and thus should not be a form letter. The letter of support should document:

(1) Why linked data are important to the agency.

(2) The priority assigned by the agency to obtain linked data compared to other responsibilities.

(3) The agency's level of commitment in terms of the number of staff and the dollars or shared resources which will be available to support and institutionalize CODES.

(4) The agency's willingness to collaborate with other data owners to support shared ownership of the linked data.

(5) The agency's permission to release the linked data (or description of policies which would restrict transfer) to NHTSA at the end of the project.

b. A brief description or letters of support should be included for the other stakeholders to be represented on the CODES Advisory Group. The letters of support should indicate the stakeholder's need for the linked data, and willingness to facilitate the linkage of state/area-wide data or use of linked data for decision-making.

c. A list of activities in chronological order and a time line to show the expected schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

d. Descriptions of the proposed project personnel as follows:

(1) Project Director: Include a resume along with a description of the director's leadership capabilities to make the various stakeholders work together.

(2) Key personnel proposed for the data linkage and applications of linked data, and other personnel considered critical to the successful accomplishment of this project: include a brief description of qualifications, employment status (permanent, temporary) in the organization, and respective organizational responsibilities. The proposed level of effort in performing the various activities should also be identified.

e. A brief description of the applicant's organizational experience in performing similar or related efforts, and the priority that will be assigned to this project compared to the organization's other responsibilities.

f. Data Use Agreement. A description of the existing State laws and regulations governing patient/provider confidentiality in the data files being linked that would restrict use of the data for linkage and/or for transfer of the CODES linked data to NHTSA and conditions under which the linked data file may be used by NHTSA.

Application Review Process and Evaluation Factors

Initially, all application packages will be reviewed to confirm that the applicant is an eligible recipient and to ensure that the application contains all of the items specified in the Application Content section of this announcement.

Each complete application from an eligible recipient will then be evaluated by an Evaluation committee. The applications will be evaluated using the following criteria which are listed in descending order of importance:

1. *Understanding the intent of the program* (30%). The applicant's recognition of the importance of CODES to obtain medical and financial outcome data which are necessary for a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of highway safety and injury control countermeasures. The applicant's understanding of the importance of developing CODES as a meaningful and appropriate strategy for improving traffic records capabilities and ensuring the continuation of CODES after completion of this project.

2. *Technical approach for project completion* (30%). The reasonableness and feasibility of the applicant's approach for successfully achieving the objectives of the project within the required time frame. The appropriateness and feasibility of the applicant's proposed plans for data linkage and applications for the linked data. Evidence that the applicant has the necessary authorization and support from data owners to access medical and non-medical state/area-wide data, particularly total charges and information about type and severity of injury which are not routinely available for highway safety analyses and release data.

3. *Project personnel* (20%). The adequacy of the proposed personnel to successfully perform the project study, including qualifications and experience (both general and project related), the various disciplines represented, and the relative level of effort proposed for the professional, technical and support staff.

4. *Organizational capabilities* (20%). The adequacy of organizational resources and experience to successfully manage and perform the project, particularly to support the collaborative network and respond to the increasing demand for access to the linked data. The proposed coordination with and use of other organizational support and resources, including other sources of financial support.

Depending upon the results of the evaluation process, NHTSA may choose to alter the number of awards. In addition, NHTSA may suggest revisions to applications as a condition of further consideration to ensure the most efficient and effective performance consistent with the objectives of the project. An organizational representative of the National Association of Governors' Highway

Safety Representatives will be assisting in NHTSA's technical evaluation process.

Special Award Selection Factors

After evaluating all applications received, in the event that insufficient funds are available to award to all meritorious applicants, NHTSA may consider the following special award factors in the award decision:

1. Priority may be given to those applicants that have statewide data available for linkage.

2. Priority may be given to applicants who have the highest probability of maintaining the collaborative network of data owners and users, of institutionalizing the linkage of the crash and medical outcome data on a routine basis, and of continuing to respond to data requests after the project is completed.

3. Priority may be given to an applicant on the basis that the application fits a profile of providing NHTSA with a broad range of population densities (rural through metropolitan) with different highway safety needs.

Terms and Conditions of the Award

1. Prior to award, each grantee must comply with the certification requirements of 49 CFR part 20, Department of Transportation New Restrictions on Lobbying, and 49 CFR part 29, Department of Transportation Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants). In addition, grantees must certify that data release agreements have been signed by the owners of the data files being linked to transfer the CODES linked database according to NHTSA specifications to NHTSA.

2. Reporting requirements and Deliverables:

a. Detailed Action Plan and Schedule. Within 30 days after the briefing meeting, the grantee shall deliver a detailed action plan and schedule for accomplishing the data linkage and applications of linked data for decision-making, showing any revisions to the approach proposed in the grantee's application. This detailed action plan will be subject to the technical direction and approval of NHTSA and will describe the following:

(1) The personnel and hardware resources required to perform the data linkage.

(2) The process for obtaining the different files required for linkage.

(3) The process for accelerating the data processing schedule, if necessary,

so that the state/area-wide data are available in a timely manner for the linkage.

(4) The process for verifying the data and performing additional edits on the linkage variables.

(5) The process for resolving problems expected during linkage and their proposed solutions.

(6) The process for documenting the content of the various linked data files, programs used for editing, and the linkage process itself.

(7) The milestones for completing the various phases of the probabilistic linkage and validation processes.

(8) The milestones for proposed meeting schedules and actions by the Board of Directors and Advisory Group.

(9) Date(s) for providing the linked data to NHTSA.

(10) The process for identifying the limitations of the final linked database or applications of the linked data, if any.

(11) The process for ensuring access to the linked data as demand for information increases.

(12) The process for choosing those applications of linked data that will have the most impact on reducing death, injury, and costs of injuries related to motor vehicle crashes.

(13) The milestones for implementing the applications.

(14) The benefits expected from the applications of the linked data.

b. Quarterly Progress Report. During the performance, the grantee will provide letter-type written reports to the NHTSA COTR. These reports will compare what was proposed in the Plan of Action with actual accomplishments during the past quarter; what commitments have been generated; what follow-up and state-level support is expected; what problems have been experienced and what may be needed to overcome the problems; and what is specifically planned to be accomplished during the next quarter. These reports will be submitted seven days after the end of each quarter.

c. Board of Directors and Advisory Group Meetings. Copies of the agenda and minutes for each Board of Directors and Advisory Group Meeting will be attached to the Progress Report submitted to NHTSA immediately following the meeting.

d. Institutionalization Plan. The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA by the end of the 15th month of funding, a long-range plan and schedule to institutionalize data linkage and the use of linked data for highway safety and injury control decision-making within the state.

e. Final Report. The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA, at the end of the

project, a final report describing the results of the data linkage process, and the applications of the linked data. The report shall include the following:

- (1) A description of the state/area wide linked crash and injury data,
- (2) A description of the file preparation,
- (3) A description of the linkage, validation processes and results,
- (4) A description of the extent of the documentation and how the documentation will facilitate linkage in subsequent years,
- (5) A discussion of the limitations of the linked data and subsequent applications of these data,
- (6) A description of the applications of linked data implemented for decision-making and results of the decision-making,
- (7) A description of how the data linkage and use of linked data for decision making has been institutionalized for decision-making,
- (8) A description of the documentation created to facilitate repeating of the linkage process and an estimate of how much time is needed to repeat the linkage in subsequent years, and
- (9) A copy of the public-use formats that were successful for incorporating linked data into the decision-making processes for highway safety and injury control.

e. **CODES Linked Database.** The grantee shall deliver to NHTSA after linkage, at the date specified in the Action Plan, the CODES linked databases. NHTSA will use the data to help facilitate the development of data linkage capabilities at the state/area-wide level and to encourage use of the linked data for decision making.

The deliverables will include:

- (1) The database in an electronic media and format acceptable to NHTSA, including all persons, regardless of injury severity (none, fatal, non-fatal), involved in a reported motor vehicle crash for any two calendar years of available data since 1995 and including medical and financial outcome information for those who are linked.
- (2) A copy of the file structure for the linked data file.
- (3) Documentation of the definitions and file structure for each of the data elements contained in the linked data files.
- (4) An analysis of the quality of the linked data and a description of any data bias which may exist based on an analysis of the false positive and false negative linked records.

3. During the effective performance period of Cooperative Agreements awarded as a result of this

announcement, the agreement as applicable to the grantee shall be subject to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's General Provisions for Assistance Agreements, dated July 1995.

Issued: April 26, 1999.

Patricia Breslin,

Director, National Center for Statistics and Analysis, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[FR Doc. 99-10851 Filed 4-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33735]

Great Western Railway of Colorado, L.L.C.—Acquisition Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

Great Western Railway of Colorado, L.L.C. (GWR), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire approximately 6.12 miles of rail lines owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) located: (1) between milepost 76.5 and milepost 75.48, near Riverside Avenue in Fort Collins, CO; (2) between milepost 74.57, near Linden Street, and milepost 74.3, at Willow Street, in Fort Collins; (3) all of the tracks, except Track No. 398, in BNSF's North Yard, in Fort Collins; (4) BNSF's Black Hollow Line located between BNSF's main line at milepost 77.36 and the end of the Black Hollow Line at milepost 79.53 near Fort Collins; and (5) BNSF's Busch Spur located between milepost 78.8 and milepost 79.9 in Busch, CO.¹ GWR will operate the property.

In conjunction with the acquisition of these rail lines, GWR will acquire approximately 7.1 miles of incidental overhead trackage rights over BNSF's rail line between milepost 74.5, in Fort Collins, and milepost 80.2, near Busch, and over Track No. 398, in BNSF's North Yard, in Fort Collins. GWR will also acquire by assignment from BNSF approximately .91 miles of overhead trackage rights over the Union Pacific Railroad Company's rail line located between Mullberry Street and Linden Street, in Fort Collins.

The earliest the transaction could be consummated was April 16, 1999, the effective date of the exemption (7 days after the exemption was filed).

¹ GWR certifies that its annual revenue will not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier and that its annual revenues are not projected to exceed \$5 million.

If this notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33735 must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, BALL JANIK LLP, Suite 225, 1455 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: April 20, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-10775 Filed 4-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33738]

Rock & Rail, Inc.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

Rock & Rail, Inc. (R&R), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company's (BNSF) ownership interest in, and to acquire from BNSF a permanent and exclusive rail freight easement to operate over, and thus to operate, approximately 41.31 miles of rail line in Pueblo and Canon City, CO. The lines or rights intended to be acquired by R&R are as follows: (1) From milepost 160.30 in Canon City extending westerly for a distance of approximately 252 feet in Fremont County, CO; (2) from milepost 160.80 in Canon City extending easterly approximately 256 feet to serve the power plant at or near Canon City, in Fremont County, CO; (3) BNSF's trackage rights over Union Pacific Railroad Company's (UP) rail line between milepost 160.30 in Canon City and milepost 120.73 in Pueblo, a distance of 39.57 miles in Fremont and Pueblo Counties, CO; and (4) all of BNSF's connecting sidings, spurs, sidetracks and yard, industrial, team and switching tracks that are owned or