E. National Evaluations

1. Initial Procedures for Operational Tests of Intelligent Infrastructure

Upon selection of the organization to conduct a national evaluation of a designated ITS operational test of intelligent infrastructure, the ITS JPO Program Assessment Coordinator will establish the initial communications between involved parties. The detailed procedures for the conduct of the evaluation and the scope of the evaluating organization's tasks will be defined in accordance with procedures established by the ITS JPO Program Assessment Coordinator.

2. Requirements for ITS Integration Program Projects

During the annual project definition and proposal process, participants in the ITS Integration Program will be offered the opportunity to commit to cooperate with evaluators in the event of selection for a national evaluation. This commitment includes participation in evaluation planning and in-progress reviews to ensure a consensus-based, successfully implemented national evaluation as described in sections V.B. and V.C. of these guidelines.

3. Requirements for CVISN Deployment Projects

During the annual project definition and proposal process, participants in the Commercial Vehicle Intelligent Transportation System Infrastructure Program will be offered the opportunity to commit to cooperate with evaluators in the event of selection for a national evaluation. This commitment includes participation in evaluation planning and in-progress reviews to ensure consensus-based, successfully implemented national evaluations.

4. Timing Considerations for ITS Deployment Program Projects Selected for National Evaluations

Participants in ITS Deployment Program projects selected for national evaluations may experience a time delay between receipt of notification for project funding and, in the event of selection for national evaluation, notification of such selection. Upon notification of project funding approval, the project participants should proceed with the preparatory steps required for evaluation. The preparatory measures will lay the foundation for an effective self-evaluation. In the event of selection for a national evaluation, that process will build on this foundation. An evaluation team should be formed and an evaluation strategy, based upon the example in the *ITS Evaluation Resource Guide,* should be developed.

It is anticipated that U.S. DOT notification of selection for national evaluation will be accomplished prior to a project's development of an evaluation plan. This will facilitate coordination between the independent evaluating organization and the project partners in proceeding with the development of a consensus-based evaluation plan.

F. Reporting Requirements

This section prescribes reporting procedures for the categories of evaluations.

1. Projects conducting self-evaluations in the ITS Integration Program are expected to produce: (1) an annual cost report based upon guidelines in the *ITS Evaluation Resource Guide;* and, (2) a final evaluation report. Projects conducting self-evaluations of the CVISN are expected to produce a final report. All project partnerships conducting self-evaluations are expected to submit two camera-ready reproducible copies and one electronic file to the ITS JPO Program Assessment Coordinator at: Intelligent Transportation Systems, Joint Program Office (HOIT–1), Attn: JPO Program Assessment Coordinator, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Copies which may be required for other addressees will be defined in annual guidance documents transmitting instructions.

2. Reporting procedures in national evaluations will be defined in the appropriate documentation governing the contract entered into by the evaluating organization.

G. References

In lieu of incorporating detailed procedural guidance for the conduct of evaluations in this document, an *ITS Evaluation Resource Guide* has been developed. This comprehensive resource for supporting evaluation planning is accessible at the ITS JPO web site (*http://www.its.dot.gov*) through the Program Assessment/Evaluation Link.

[FR Doc. 99–24363 Filed 9–17–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Child Passenger Protection Education Grants

AGENCY: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT

ACTION: Announcement of grants for child passenger protection education.

SUMMARY: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announces a grant program under Section 2003(b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) to implement child passenger protection programs that are designed to prevent deaths and injuries to children, educate the public concerning the proper installation of child restraints, and train child passenger safety personnel concerning child restraint use. This notice solicits applications from the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories and the Indian Tribes through the Secretary of the Interior.

DATES: Applications must be received by the office designated below on or before December 15, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted to the appropriate National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Regional Administrator.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For program issues contact Ms. Joan Tetrault, State and Community Services, NSC–01, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590; telephone (202) 366–2121. For legal issues contact Mr. John Donaldson, Office of the Chief Counsel, NCC–30, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590, telephone (202) 366–1834.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children under the age of 15 years, despite a seven percent decline in the motor vehicle occupant death rate from 1987 to 1996. During the same time period, the motor vehicle occupant nonfatal injury rate among children has increased by four percent. Motor vehicle injuries and fatalities occur when children ride unrestrained or are improperly restrained. This grant program is intended to help reduce injuries and deaths by educating the public about the importance of correctly installing and using child safety seats, booster seats and seat belts.

1. Children Riding Unrestrained

Approximately 40 percent of children ages 1 through 15 years ride unrestrained, placing them at more than twice the risk of death and injury as those riding restrained. Child safety seats reduce the risk of fatal injury in a crash by 69 percent for infants (less than 1 year old) and by 47 percent for toddlers (1–4 years old). In 1997, there were 594 occupant fatalities in passenger motor vehicles among children under 5 years of age. Of those 594 fatalities, an estimated 298 (54 percent) were totally unrestrained. The problem of riding unrestrained is not limited to infants and young children. From 1975 through 1997, the lives of an estimated 3,894 children were saved by the use of child restraints (child safety seats or adult safety belts). Among children under age 15 who were killed as occupants in motor vehicle crashes in 1997, 63 percent were not using safety restraints at the time of the collision.

Examination of the demographics of children killed in motor vehicle crashes (for which the most recent available year is 1995) shows that safety restraint use differs markedly by race. For example, while somewhat less than half (43.3%) of white children up to age 9 riding in passenger motor vehicles were using safety restraints at the time of their deaths, that was true of only about one-quarter (28.2%) of black children. Native American children under age 15 have a motor vehicle occupant death rate twice that of white children. (Injury and fatality data for other minority groups is currently being collected.) Restraint use is also lower in rural areas and low-income communities. Lack of access to affordable child safety seats and booster seats contributes to a lower usage rate among low-income families. However, research shows that 95 percent of low-income families who own a child safety seat use it. Improving access to affordable child restraint systems and educating parents and care givers about proper installation and use are key components to improving use rates in these communities.

2. Misuse of Child Safety Seats and Improper Seating Positions

In 1997, 85 percent of infants (children under age 1) were restrained while riding in motor vehicles, as were 60 percent of children ages 1 to 5. However, it is estimated that approximately 80 percent of children who are placed in child safety seats are improperly restrained. Furthermore, adult safety belts do not adequately protect children ages 4 to 8 (about 40 to 80 pounds) from injury in a crash. Although car booster seats are the best way to protect them, only six percent of booster-age children are properly restrained in car booster seats.

In addition, there is a high risk of severe injury or fatality to children riding in the front seat of vehicles equipped with a passenger side air bag, due to the deployment force of the air bag. However, even if the air bag is shut off or there is no air bag, the back seat is the safest place for children to ride. Under no circumstances should a parent place a rear-facing infant seat in front of an air bag. It is estimated that children ages 12 and under are 36 percent less likely to die in a crash if seated in the rear seat of a passenger vehicle.

Child passenger safety professionals, educators, emergency personnel and others need to be adequately trained on all aspects of child restraint use in order to help reduce the problems of misuse and encourage the safest seating positions for children riding in motor vehicles. With these concerns in mind, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21), which the President signed into law on June 9, 1998, established a new grant program under Section 2003(b) of Title 23, United States Code, to promote child passenger protection education and training.

New Grants for Child Passenger Protection

Section 2003 (b) provides Federal funds to States for activities that are designed to prevent deaths and injuries to children; educate the public concerning the design, selection, placement, and installation of child restraints; and train and retrain child passenger safety professionals, police officers, fire and emergency medical personnel, and other educators concerning all aspects of child restraint use. A State may expend the funds itself or elect to distribute some or all of the funds to carry out the public education and training activities as grants to political subdivisions of the State or appropriate private entities. States are encouraged to direct funds obtained through this grant program to organizations that can deliver training and education to ensure positive impact in minority and low income communities where lack of child passenger protection is especially severe. Section 2003(b) provides that the Federal share of the cost of a program carried out with the grant funds is not to exceed 80 percent. A State that receives a grant must submit a report describing the program activities carried out with the funds.

Application Procedures

A. Use of Funds

To be eligible for funding under Section 2003(b), a State must submit an application that addresses how the State will implement child passenger protection programs that meet each of the three requirements listed below. For the education and training components, the grant application must identify expected program accomplishments, such as the estimated number of public education messages to be distributed (e.g. public service announcements or printed materials) and the type of audience to be targeted by these messages (e.g. minority or low-income communities); the estimated number of and type of training classes conducted; the number of child safety seat clinics or check-ups performed; and the number of fitting stations established.

Specifically, the State must implement a child passenger protection program that:

1. Is designed to prevent deaths and injuries to children. The State should provide a statement describing how their program supports efforts to prevent deaths and injuries to children.

2. Educates the public on all aspects of child passenger safety. The public education program may include strategies to increase child restraint use for children up to age 16, increase use among targeted populations (e.g., minority, rural, low-income, or special needs populations), or develop and implement child safety seat clinics and/or permanent locations where consumer's can have child safety seats and booster seats inspected. Additional information under public education may be included relevant to proper use of child restraint systems, booster seats and FMVSS 225, the Universal Child Safety Seat System (UCSSS).

At a minimum, the public education program must:

(a) Provide a summary of the information that the State intends to include or develop in the public education program. The information must address at least the following topics:

- All aspects of proper installation of child restraints using standard seat belt hardware, supplemental hardware, and modification devices (if needed), including special installation techniques;
- Appropriate child restraint design, selection, and placement [NHTSA interprets this to include instruction about proper seating positions for children in air bag equipped vehicles]; and

• Harness threading and harness adjustment on child restraints.

(b) Include a description of the public education information methods that the State intends to employ, how these messages will be delivered to the target population, and expected accomplishments. The methods could include billboards, public service announcements, and published materials. It is also important to deliver this information in the language of the targeted group.

3. Trains and retrains child passenger safety professionals, police officers, fire and emergency medical personnel, and other educators concerning all aspects of child restraint use. At a minimum, States should include in the application a description of or reference to the curricula that the State will use to train and retrain child passenger safety experts to reach the targeted population and expected accomplishments.

All persons selected for training and retraining as child passenger safety professionals should achieve and maintain at least some minimum standards of expertise. In collaboration with several partners, NHTSA has developed several model curricula including: ''Mobilizing America to Buckle Up Children'' and ''Operation Kids'' for law enforcement officers; and the ''Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program'' for child passenger safety professional candidates. States are not restricted to using only these curricula, but States are encouraged to incorporate the learning objectives of these courses into the training and retraining provided to child passenger safety experts. Funding for this grant program is intended to help States develop and sustain adequate cadres of persons with technical expertise in child passenger protection who will directly serve the public through child safety seat clinics, checkpoints, workshops, fitting stations and other training and educational opportunities.

B. Certification

The State must submit certifications that: (i) It will use the funds awarded under this grant program exclusively to implement a child passenger protection program in accordance with the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 2003(b); (ii) It will administer the funds in accordance with 49 CFR Part 18 and OMB Circular A–87; and (iii) It will provide to the NHTSA Regional Administrator no later than 15 months after the grant award a report of activities carried out with grant funds and accomplishments to date.

C. Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility is limited to the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories (which include the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) through their Governor's Office of Highway Safety, and Indian Tribes through the Secretary of the Interior.

Award Procedures

The authorization for this program is $7,500,000 for each fiscal year of 2000 and 2001, and is subject to appropriations. (Separate applications must be submitted for each fiscal year.) Awards to applicants meeting the requirements of this notice will be made based upon the formula used for Section 402 apportionment, subject to the availability of funds. The amount awarded to each State qualifying under this program shall be determined by multiplying the amount appropriated for this grant program for the fiscal year by the ratio that the amount of funds apportioned to each such State under 23 U.S.C. 402 for the fiscal year bears to the total amount of funds apportioned to all such States under Section 402 for such fiscal year. Applicants will be required to submit to NHTSA within 30 days of notification that an award is made, a program cost summary (HS Form 217) obligating the Section 2003(b) funds to child passenger protection education programs. The Federal funding share may not exceed 80% of the program cost, and States should clearly identify their share in the program cost summary (HS Form 217).

Each State must submit one original and two copies of the application package to the appropriate NHTSA Regional Administrator. Only complete application packages submitted by a Governor's Highway Safety Representative and received on or before December 15, 1999 will be considered for funding in fiscal year 2000. The agency will publish a future notice covering grant funds for fiscal year 2001.

NHTSA Publications Available To Support Public Education

A number of NHTSA publications are available through the *Traffic Safety Materials Catalog* that address child passenger safety program topics. The *Are You Using It Right?* brochure illustrates a number of errors and the correct method of installing and using child passenger safety seats. *Parents' Guide to Booster Seats* illustrates the proper way to use different types of booster seats and includes information about purchasing and installing booster seats. Nine of fourteen ''tips'' in *Child Transportation Safety Tips* address child passenger safety issues including proper installation, appropriate child restraint design, selection, and placement, harness threading and harness adjustment, and proper seating positions for children in air bag equipped vehicles. *Child Transportation Safety Tips* is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Russian, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Vietnamese. These materials may be ordered from the NHTSA web site at >HTTP://WWW.NHTSA.DOT.GOV< or contacting the Media and Marketing Division, NTS–21 by fax at (202) 493–2062.

Issued on: September 15, 1999.

Ricardo Martinez,

Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

[FR Doc. 99–24375 Filed 9–17–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB–33 (Sub–No. 140)]

Union Pacific Railroad Company—Abandonment—in Lancaster and Gage Counties, NE, and Marshall County, KS

On August 31, 1999, Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for permission to abandon a 57.72-mile line known as the Beatrice Branch extending from milepost 66 near Jamaica, NE, to milepost 125 near Marietta, KS, in Lancaster and Gage Counties, NE, and Marshall County, KS.[1] The information contained in the application is bifurcated into two segments—the 29-mile northern segment between milepost 66 and milepost 95 north of Beatrice, and the 28.72-mile southern segment between mileposts 95 and 125.[2] The line includes the following stations in Nebraska: Aldo Jct., milepost 69.8; Princeton, milepost 74.7; Cortland, milepost 79.5; Pickrell, milepost 88.9; Beatrice, milepost 96.8; Holmesville, milepost 105.7; Blue Springs, milepost 110.3; and Barneston, milepost 118; and

[1] The track mileage is 1.28 miles less than the milepost differential because a track relocation on the line between Beatrice and Holmesville, NE, created a milepost discontinuity. (Milepost 101.72 now coincides with milepost 103.)

[2] UP states that the bifurcated information is based on the different origins for the service and the absence of any traffic projected for the northern segment. It did not provide bifurcated cost data for the base year.