



# Annual Report Guidance

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With the assistance of the GHSA Federal Relations Committee

Language **highlighted in yellow** was added with the May 8 update.

# Annual Report “Quick Review” Checklist



**NOTE:** The Checklist below is not a substitute for fully utilizing the AR Guidance. The relevant Federal regulations and other resources should also be consulted to ensure full compliance.

## REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- ✓ Assessment of the State's progress in achieving performance targets in the prior year, and a description of how the SHSO will adjust its upcoming HSP to better meet performance targets if a performance target has not been met
- ✓ Description of the projects and activities funded and implemented and the amount of Federal funds obligated and expended
- ✓ Description of the State's evidence-based enforcement program activities
- ✓ Provision of the required Information regarding mobilizations
- ✓ Explanation of reasons for planned activities not implemented, and,
- ✓ Description of how the projects funded contributed to meeting the performance targets
- ✓ If applicable, report on the purchase of paid media within programs or as a summary
- ✓ If applicable, report on any Section 2011. Child Restraint Grants funds expended
- ✓ Inclusion of the results of the annual State Attitudes Survey if conducted

## RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS – OPTIONAL

- ✓ Cover Page
- ✓ Table of Contents
- ✓ Message from the Governor's Representative/Coordinator
- ✓ Executive Summary
- ✓ Mission and Vision Statements
- ✓ Statewide SHSO Program Overview
- ✓ Fiscal Overview of Obligations and Expenditures
- ✓ Legislative Update
- ✓ Traffic Safety Partners and Other Safety Plans
- ✓ Future Plans and Targets
- ✓ Report Design

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## History and purpose of the Annual Report Guidance

In 2003 the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) produced an Annual Report Template and Instruction Manual for use by its members. The purpose at that time was to provide the national office with consistent data for aggregation and reporting purposes and to simplify the reporting requirements.

Since that time, the majority of States have used the Template as a guide for assembling the general contents of their Annual Report and ensuring compliance with the applicable federal regulations. Beginning in FY2010, the States began including the results of the core Traffic Safety Performance Measures developed jointly by GHSA and NHTSA. Using the Template, the States have designed a graphic format which best fits their needs and capabilities for presentation of the required information. States have also been encouraged to model their report format after typical corporate annual reports in order to not only report results but also present them in a professional and easy-to-read format. This approach assists States with marketing their programs to various audiences including the general public, related organizations and legislators.

On July 6, 2012, a transportation reauthorization bill was signed into law P.L. 112-141, called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The reauthorization was effective until October 1, 2014. MAP-21 restructured and made various substantive changes to the highway safety grant programs conducted by the States and administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). To implement the requirements of MAP-21, the NHTSA issued Interim Final Regulations (IFR) on January 23, 2013, entitled "Uniform Procedures for Highway Safety Grant Programs".

On May 23, 2016, NHTSA published the interim Federal rules (IFR), 23 CFR Part 1300, to implement the new reauthorization act effective in late 2015, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The interim rules took immediate effect. Changes were made to the Annual Report requirements which were effective for the FY16 Annual Report. This Guidance was revised in December 2016 to include the new FAST Act and IFR changes.

On January 25, 2018, NHTSA issued the Final Rule to implement the FAST Act. As a result, two previous requirements for the Highway Safety Plan (HSP) were moved to the Annual Report: inclusion of a description of upcoming adjustments if a performance target was missed and of the specific metrics from high-visibility enforcement campaigns. The Guidance was revised in September 2018 to reflect those changes.

In response to recommendations made to NHTSA in an October 22, 2019, Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, in November 2019 the NHTSA Regions clarified the requirement for States to assess and report progress made in achieving fatality targets. The Guidance has been revised in May 2020 to add these clarifications.

It is helpful to examine best practices from the available State Annual Reports. A complete set of the FY19 State Annual Reports are available on line at: [NHTSA Link to State Annual Reports](#).

### 1. Annual Report Guidance - Target Audience

This Guidance is designed for use by the person or persons in the State Highway Safety Office (SHSO) responsible for developing the State's Annual Report (AR). The Guidance can be used by both experienced and newer employees but does assume a basic level of knowledge regarding the HSP and the function of the AR.

### 2. Ground Rules

The GHSA AR Guidance is organized into two major sections: Required Elements and Recommended Elements-Optional. It is important that the full document be read to have a complete understanding of the AR development process. The **Required** Elements are based solely upon the applicable Federal regulations and other guidance provided by NHTSA. The **Recommended** Elements are suggestions to enhance the completeness and readability of the AR. The Recommended Elements are drawn from common practices of SHSOs as well as typical corporate annual reports.

The SHSO is mandated by Federal regulation to include all of the Required Elements in the AR. However the SHSO may choose which of the Recommended Elements to include in their State's AR as well as other information not identified in this Guidance.

### 3. Overall Purpose

The overall purpose of the AR is to report on the accomplishments and challenges experienced by the SHSO in the prior fiscal year with direct reference to the performance measures, targets, strategies and funding identified in the prior year's HSP. The AR completes the HSP cycle by providing the results and outcomes achieved through implementation of the initial HSP and any revisions which may have been made to the HSP during the fiscal year.

In addition to documenting the prior year's results, the AR provides an opportunity to the SHSO to evaluate the effectiveness of the prior year's HSP. The "lessons learned" should then be considered by the SHSO as a starting point for the development of the HSP for the new fiscal year.

The release of the completed AR is also an opportunity to showcase the State's highway safety achievements. Some States prepare a news release with highlights of the year's results to announce the AR's availability to the public. Many States post the AR to their web site and distribute an electronic link to their statewide highway safety partners, State Legislature and Congressional members.

### 4. SHSO Preparation

The process of developing the annual AR typically begins at the close of the fiscal year on September 30. The SHSO must compile information contained in the subrecipient Final Reports, examine and analyze the applicable data from the most recent year available and review other relevant information sources.

### 5. AR Development Process Calendar

The Federal deadline for submission of the annual AR is December 31. This is a firm deadline. To ensure completion of the AR by the deadline, it is recommended that the SHSO establish and follow an AR Development Process Calendar. A deadline for submission of Final Reports from subrecipients must be set and tracked which allows adequate time for the SHSO to receive, analyze and compile the required information for the Annual Report. Following is an example of an AR Development Process Calendar. The Calendar can be modified to add staff assignments and track completion of the AR.

**Figure 1:** AR Development Calendar

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
<i>Beginning of fiscal year:</i> <b>October-September</b>	Review subrecipient and SHSO progress and monitoring reports during the year to identify significant highlights or accomplishments for inclusion in the AR
<i>End of fiscal year:</i> <b>October 1</b>	Track receipt of subrecipient Final Reports and send reminders where needed ensuring that all projects in the initial HSP and any amended or new projects during the year are included  Analyze and assemble data for each HSP minimum, other and activity performance measure to determine the State's progress in achieving performance targets for the year  Update State crash data and trends with the most recent available data
<b>November 15</b>	Deadline for submission of subrecipient Final Reports
<b>October-November 30</b>	Review subrecipient Final Reports and develop a general description of each project and activity funded and implemented including the total Federal fund expenditures and obligations (like projects and activities may be aggregated)  For each Program Area develop a general summary of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● problem statement</li> <li>● objectives</li> <li>● performance measures</li> <li>● performance targets</li> <li>● description of each project and activity funded and implemented along with the amount of Federal funding amount obligated and expended</li> </ul> Provide a description of the State's evidence-based enforcement program activities  Compile a summary of information regarding mobilization participation (e.g. participating and reporting agencies, enforcement activity, citation information, paid and earned media information)  Identify the reasons for planned activities that were not partially or fully implemented  Describe how the projects funded under the prior year contributed to meeting the performance targets  Paid Media projects may be reported within the applicable individual program area or may be grouped
	If section 2011 funds were expended, compile the required Child Restraint Grant Program report
	Compile the annual State Attitudes Survey results
<b>December 15</b>	Develop any optional sections to be included  Assemble the AR components into a first draft for review
	Produce final Financial Obligation Closeout (voucher) and obtain HSO Administrator approval
<b>December 23</b>	Submit draft AR for final review and approval by HSO Administrator
<b>December 31</b>	Submit final AR to NHTSA Regional Office
<b>January 1</b>	Distribute copies of AR to the HSO email list including State and Congressional legislators and post on the HSO web site (optional)

## C. Required Elements



### 1. Federal Regulations

The interim Federal regulations regarding the AR requirements are provided at [23 CFR Part 1300.35](#). Due to the brevity of the language, it is presented here in full.

Within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year, each State is required to submit **electronically** an AR describing:

- A.** An assessment of the State's progress in achieving performance targets identified in the prior year HSP, and a description of how the State will adjust its upcoming HSP to better meet performance targets if a State has not met its performance targets;
- B.** A description of the projects and activities funded and implemented along with the amount of Federal funds obligated and expended under the prior year HSP;
- C.** A description of the State's evidence-based enforcement program activities;
- D.** Submission of information regarding mobilization participation (e.g., participating and reporting agencies, enforcement activity, citation information, paid and earned media information);
- E.** An explanation of reasons for planned activities that were not implemented.
- F.** A description of how the projects funded under the prior year HSP contributed to meeting the State's highway safety targets.

The regulatory requirement was changed in the Final Rule to move two items previously required to be provided in the HSP to the Annual Report (see Items A and D above).

#### a. Assessment of State Progress and Adjustments to Performance Targets

In this section of the AR, the SHSO is required to identify the highway safety performance targets established in the HSP and provide a general assessment of the State's progress in the fiscal year in working toward achievement of those targets. The performance measures and targets established in the State's HSP are the basis for this section of the AR. The results for the year are then reported. If the State has not met its performance targets, a description of how the State will adjust its upcoming HSP to better meet performance targets is required.

- i. MINIMUM PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** The SHSO should first list the minimum 12 outcome and behavior performance measures required to be used by all States, the State's performance targets for the year and the actual results achieved for the year. See [Traffic Safety Performance Measures for States and Federal Agencies](#), (DOT HS 811 025).
- ii. OTHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** Making a direct reference back to the State's HSP, the same information (measure, target and results) should be reported for any additional performance measures which had been included in the HSP by the State.
- iii. ACTIVITY PERFORMANCE MEASURES:** The results achieved during the year for the three required activity performance measures (number of seat belt citations, impaired-driving citations and arrests and speeding citations and arrests made during grant-funded enforcement activities) must be reported. The activity results are often displayed for multiple years including the current year for comparison purposes.

The required information can be presented in a simple table or in a variety of graphic formats to visually illustrate progress.



In November 2019 NHTSA provided the following clarification of this requirement:

- The current practice of using the latest available Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data to report progress remains unchanged. However, given the value of using more recent data and to provide States with maximum flexibility, NHTSA clarifies that within the Annual Report, States have the option to use more current State-level data (instead of FARS data if such data are available). For example, with the 2019 Annual Report submissions, States are to report progress towards achieving 2019 fatality and serious injury targets (as submitted in State's FY 2019 HSPs) using the 2018 FARS data and/or a State may use its more recent State fatality data. States should identify which datasets are used to assess progress.
- Based on known information, the State must assess if it will likely achieve or miss its 2019 performance targets. If data indicates the State will likely miss a performance target, the State must describe how its upcoming FY21 HSP will be adjusted accordingly, as warranted by the data.
- NHTSA will continue to evaluate ways to improve the State's ability to assess progress more accurately and provide additional guidance to States. Before States submit their FY21 Highway Safety Plans (HSPs), due August 1, 2020 (due date changed for FY 21 only), NHTSA will further clarify HSP performance reporting requirements.

### b. Projects and Activities Funded

Previously the list of projects and the funds expended were two separate items. For FY 16 and beyond, this information is required to be reported together. And, both the amount of funds obligated and expended must be identified.

The SHSO is required to include in the AR a description of each of the projects and activities funded and implemented under the prior year HSP along with the amount of Federal funds obligated and expended. NOTE: Prior to FY16 like projects and activities could be aggregated for this description.

- PROJECT LIST:** This section should correspond directly to the list of projects provided in the State's HSP. Each project had been assigned a project identifier (number) which should be used for the AR project description. If like projects are grouped as mentioned above, the SHSO should be certain to include a list of all of the applicable project identifiers.
- ACTIVITIES:** The SHSO is required to include a general description of each activity funded and implemented under the HSP. The term "activity" is similar to "projects" and provides for grouping report information within a program area based on either a similar type of projects or similar activities that cross-cut projects, such as, media efforts.
- HSP CHANGES:** If there had been any reallocation of funds between program areas or changes were made to the HSP during the fiscal year, the SHSO must ensure that those changes, including any additional projects, are reported accurately in the AR project description section. (Following submission of the initial HSP to NHTSA and receipt of NHTSA approval, the SHSO is required to submit an amendment for approval by the NHTSA Regional Office, see 23 CFR Part 1300.32.) States should refer to NHTSA for the requirements of the HSP amendment procedure.

The required information can be presented in a narrative format organized by program area.

If the SHSO enters data at the project level in the Federal Grant Tracking System (GTS), the final voucher will meet the requirement to report funds obligated and expended (the project description must also be included in the Annual Report). If the SHSO enters data into GTS only at the program level, the amount of Federal funds obligated and expended on each project in the HSP must be reported.

This information is obtained from the SHSO's financial system following the submission and payment of subrecipient final claims for the fiscal year. This reporting must include the SHSO's final claims for its own grants to fund the SHSO's program management and planning and administration costs. The process of obtaining this information is closely related to the required closeout of the fiscal year which is also due on December 31 by submitting to NHTSA the final voucher.

## C. Required Elements



### c. State's Evidence-Based Enforcement Program

For FY16 and beyond, the SHSO is required to describe the State's evidence-based traffic safety enforcement program activities. A complete and concise narrative description of the enforcement activities that were completed by program area should be provided. The SHSO should review the prior year HSP's evidence-based enforcement program to ensure that all aspects of the plan are included. This information may have already been included within the AR Report in the applicable program area(s). If so, a cross reference to the applicable page(s) within the AR Report must be provided in this section.

### d. Mobilization Participation Information

For FY18 and beyond, the metric information on the State's mobilization participation which was previously required to be submitted in the HSP is now required to be provided in the Annual Report. The required information must include: participating and reporting agencies, enforcement activity, citation information, and, paid and earned media information. This information will be used to evaluate the State's participation in the national campaigns. NHTSA clarified in November 2018 that it is acceptable to provide high-level metrics in the Annual Report as long as the information provides sufficient detail to describe the State's efforts in this area and the supporting documentation is available for review by the Region.

### e. Planned Activities Not Implemented

For FY18, if an individual project in the prior year's HSP was not fully or partially implemented, or did not achieve the expected results, a short description must be provided of the likely cause(s). This description should include: (1) whether there was an impact on the project or the ability to implement the related countermeasure, and, (2) how this information will be used to achieve a more positive impact in the future. Some projects may take more than one year to produce results. In those cases, a description of the future expectations for results should be provided. For example, the annual results may show that a project designed to increase safety belt use within a high-risk population did not achieve the performance target. The SHSO may identify the cause was that the project started too late in the year for the target audience to be reached. The SHSO should state the cause and their plan to ensure that time-sensitive projects begin earlier in the upcoming year. Or, the SHSO may state that the project was designed for multiple years and that more significant results are expected to occur in the following year. For FY2019, this requirement changed from a "project" to a "planned activity" level description. Use of the term planned activity instead of project was a change made to the HSP development requirements in the January 2018 Final Rule.

### f. Projects' Contribution to Meeting the Highway Safety Targets

The SHSO is required to describe in the AR how the projects funded during the past fiscal year contributed to meeting the State's highway safety targets.

In addition, data may have become recently available on a project from a prior year which indicates that the project contributed to meeting the current State highway safety targets. In that case, the project's contribution should also be reported in the AR. For example, the SHSO may have funded the training of Drug Recognition Experts in the prior year. If data from the current year indicates that the number of drugged driving arrests increased significantly and drugged-driving related crash deaths have decreased, reference should be made to the prior year project in the current AR.

A specific format for presenting the information required in this section is not prescribed by NHTSA. Many States approach this requirement by reporting the information together with the required description of projects and activities funded. The required project information is first organized by

## C. Required Elements



program area. For each program area, the performance target(s) for that program may first be restated as a point of reference. This is followed by a general description of the overall objectives of that program area. Then the SHSO describes how they believe the results of the projects funded in that program area contributed to the achievement of the performance targets.

States may also group like projects within a program area to discuss their contribution to the program area's performance targets rather than by the individual project. Some potential project groupings are: local law enforcement projects, child passenger safety seat projects or all community outreach projects.

This section of the AR provides the SHSO with an opportunity to frankly examine the project results, provide the required report, learn from the experience and then use the information to guide decision making in the next HSP development cycle.

### 2. Paid Media – NHTSA Guidance

If Federal funds were expended on Paid Media during the fiscal year, the SHSO is required to report in the AR on the purchase similar to other projects. The SHSO is not required to include a gross rating point (GRP) analysis. Paid Media projects may be reported within the applicable individual program area or grouped in a separate summary report. If a separate summary report for Paid Media is provided, a reference should also be included in the respective program area to identify the contribution to the program area performance measure target. See [NHTSA Highway Safety Grant Management Resources Guide Advertising Space Guidance](#).

### 3. Section 2011 – Child Restraint Grants – 23 USC 405 Section 2011

If under the SAFETEA-LU Section 2011 Child Restraint program funds were received by the State which have been expended in the fiscal year, a report must be included within the AR until all Child Restraint grant funds are expended. See [23 USC 405 Section 2011](#) for the specific information required to be included in the AR. For the NHTSA Guidance, go to [NHTSA Highway Safety Grant Management Resources Guide](#). In the right column click on "SAFETEA-LU Incentive Grants", then click on "Legislation, Regulations, Guidance", then scroll down that page to the bottom, "Section 2011 Child Safety and Booster Seat Incentive Grant" and click on "Guidance" for the NHTSA Implementing Guidance for Child Restraint Grant Program.

### 4. State Attitudes Survey Results

By mutual agreement between NHTSA and GHSA, States began conducting an annual Attitudes Survey in FY2010. The survey contains 9 recommended (or equivalent) questions on occupant protection, impaired driving and speeding. See the GHSA web site, Projects page: [Survey Recommendations for the NHTSA-GHSA Working Group](#). Reporting of the survey results by the States began with the FY 2010 AR, see [Performance Measures for States and Federal Agencies DOT HS 811 025](#). While conducting the surveys is not required in FAST Act, States are strongly urged to continue doing them and reporting the results. The data is important to help the States and also NHTSA. If an Attitudes Survey is conducted, the complete findings are required to be reported in the following year's AR.

## D. Recommended Elements – Optional



Following is a list of the Recommended Elements which may be included in the SHSO's AR. Each item is optional and not required by Federal regulation or policy. These items are recommended for consideration because they enhance the appearance of the report and the reader's understanding of the full program and activities conducted by the SHSO. Several of the suggestions also provide important information regarding factors outside of the grant administration which influence the SHSO's ability to achieve its performance targets.

### 1. Cover Page

The AR cover page contains the State and SHSO name, Governor's name, Governor's Highway Safety Representative's name, and location of the Highway Safety Program Coordinator including contact information (name, address, phone, email, web site).

### 2. Table of Contents - self explanatory

### 3. Message from the Governor's Representative/Coordinator

The Governor's Representative or SHSO Coordinator may open the report with a brief message or statement to set the stage for the report that follows. These messages typically identify key elements of the year's success, thank the many partners who contributed to the positive results and make a renewed commitment to additional improvements in the future. A photo may also be included.

### 4. Executive Summary

The executive summary is a brief synopsis of the highlights of the past year's activity results. The summary should include a discussion of any particular difficulties which may have affected the full attainment of the targets which had been stated in the HSP. The summary may also make a statement regarding how the knowledge obtained from the report will be applied in the coming year. Often referred to as a management summary, an additional purpose is to provide a quick snapshot of the year especially for those who may not have the time to read the full report or to provide an overview for sharing with the public or media.

### 5. Mission and Vision Statements

The mission and/or vision statements for the SHSO are often included in the AR to remind the reader of the focus and purpose of the highway safety program.

### 6. Statewide SHSO Program Overview

An overview of the organization and structure of the SHSO can be provided to describe the staffing and administrative functions of the program. A summary of the program's administrative accomplishments can describe actions taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations. Some examples are the acquisition of an electronic grants management system, a reorganization, a staffing increase/decrease or the revision of the SHSO Policy Manual.

### 7. Fiscal Overview of Obligations and Expenditures

Additional information regarding the fiscal aspects of the highway safety program may be provided. This can be done through tables, graphs and pie charts to visually display how that year's funding was obligated and expended during the year. The charts may display the budgetary information by funding sources, by program area or other categories of interest. Comparative charts may also be provided to illustrate the planned vs. expended budget for the year, multiple budget years or other items.

### 8. Legislative Update

To recognize the key role that strong public policy plays in achieving highway safety performance targets, any significant State legislative or public policy accomplishments during the year may be summarized, such as, passage, amendment or repeal of a key traffic safety law.

### 9. Traffic Safety Partners and Other Safety Plans

Recognition can be given to key partnerships and traffic safety groups which have made a major contribution to the highway safety program. This section can take a variety of approaches from providing a full list of partners to identifying programs which received awards or special recognition from the SHSO during the year.

### 10. Future Plans and Targets

This is a brief listing of the more significant challenges that must be addressed by the SHSO in the coming year and to identify resources which may be needed to be more successful in the future. A reference can also be made to coordination with the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and any major traffic safety initiatives which may be planned for the upcoming year, for example, an update to the SHSP or a statewide SHSP Summit.

### 11. Report Design

The design and layout of the report is another element which is completely within the SHSO's control and budget constraints. There is a wide range of choices from a straightforward PDF document to a fully graphically-designed report with pictures, art, electronic links and beyond. Keep in mind that meeting the regulatory requirement is the first consideration. However if the SHSO also wants to use the AR as a marketing or informational tool, graphic enhancements may make the report more appealing to a reader. There are a wide range of resources that can be accessed through research for assistance in developing a professional annual report.

## E. NHTSA Deadline and Review



The SHSO is required to submit the AR to NHTSA no later than December 31 following the fiscal year to which the AR is applicable. This is a firm deadline. This deadline may be extended by NHTSA for the FY20 Annual Report. The SHSO should consult with the Regional Office for report submission instructions.

The NHTSA Regional office uses a checklist to review the SHSO Annual Reports. The SHSO should request a copy of this checklist from their NHTSA Regional Office each fall in order to ensure that they are aware of any changes to the checklist. Upon completion of their review, the NHTSA Regional Office will send a letter to the SHSO to indicate whether there are any questions or comments. The SHSO should respond promptly in writing to address each question or comment. The results of the NHTSA review of the SHSO's Annual Report are also helpful to the SHSO in preparing for questions which may be posed during the triennial NHTSA Management Review.

## F. Resources



One of the best resources for the SHSO is the ARs developed and submitted by other States and territories. Annually these documents are posted on the NHTSA web site under [State Annual Reports](#). Many examples can be reviewed for the presentation and display of both the required and recommended elements.

In seeking to improve the visual appearance and usefulness as a marketing tool, the SHSO can also review the annual reports produced by private corporations and non-profit organizations for additional ideas.

## G. Acknowledgments



As with other guidance, updates will be made to this document as new information or requirement changes are brought to the attention of GHSA.

A special thank you is given to the States who participated in the initial development of this Guidance by sharing examples from their ARs and the GHSA Federal Relations Committee.



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