Module 6: Project Development

Module Objectives

- Describe projects
- Outline project development and contract options
- Describe the State Highway Safety Office process for project development
- Identify the purpose and contents of a project agreement

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Introduction

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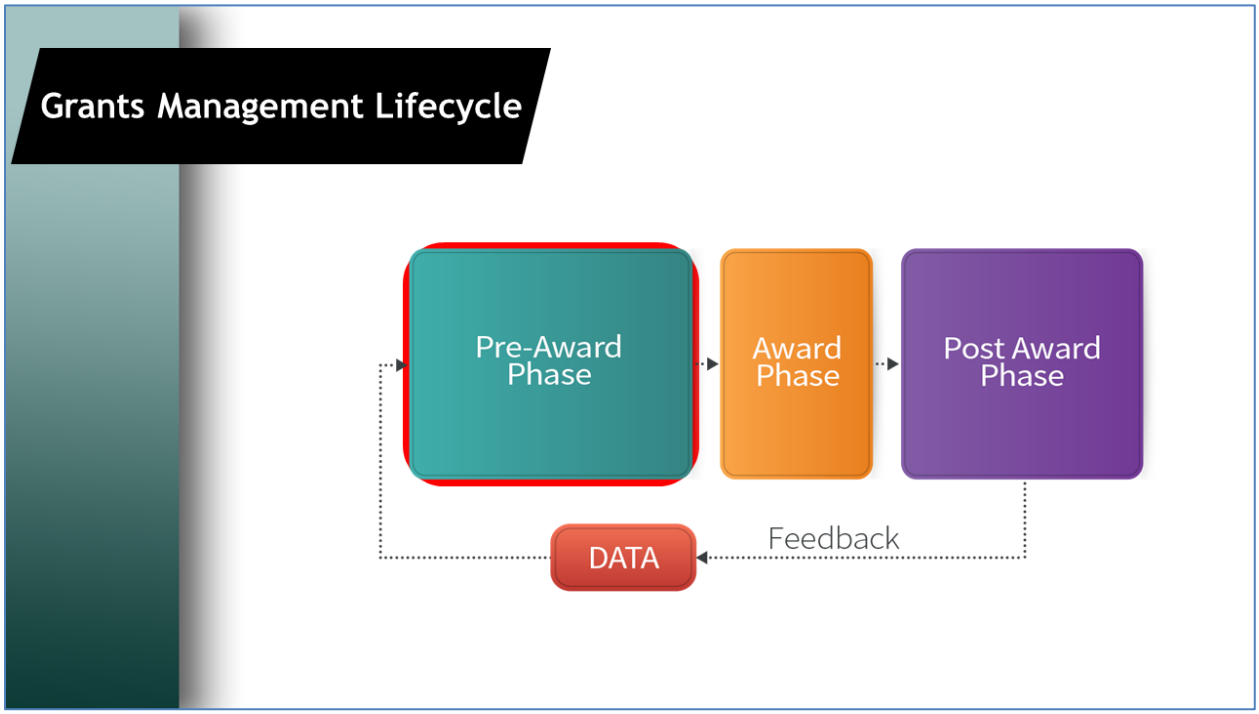
Module 6: Project Development

Module Objectives

Slide 2.

Grants Management Lifecycle



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Project Development is part of the pre-award process in the Grants Management Lifecycle.

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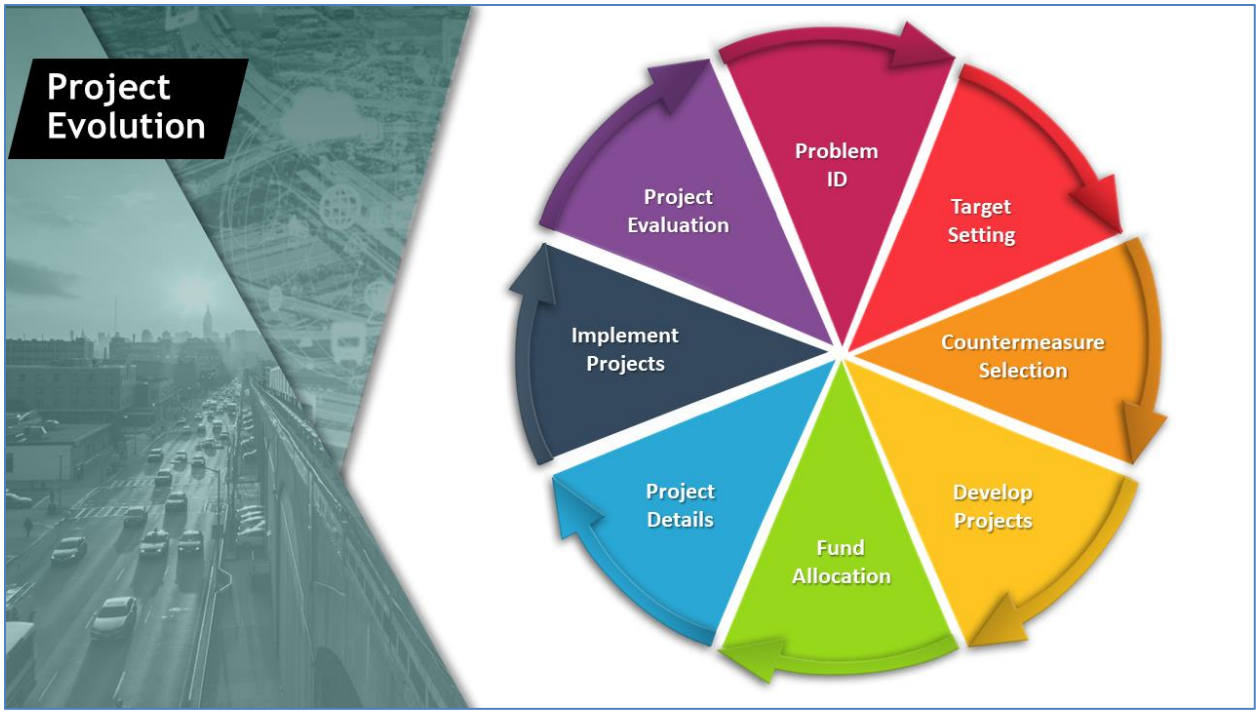
Let's begin with an overview of the project lifecycle or project evolution.

BIL continues the increased emphasis on the linkage between the Triennial Highway Safety Plan, the Annual Grant Application, the Annual Report and the project selection.



Slide 5.

Problem identification linked to data driven performance measures and targets, followed by countermeasure strategies and project planning, then initiate projects to achieve those targets.

Project evaluation is essential to understand their impact and identify areas to change and improve before starting the cycle over again.

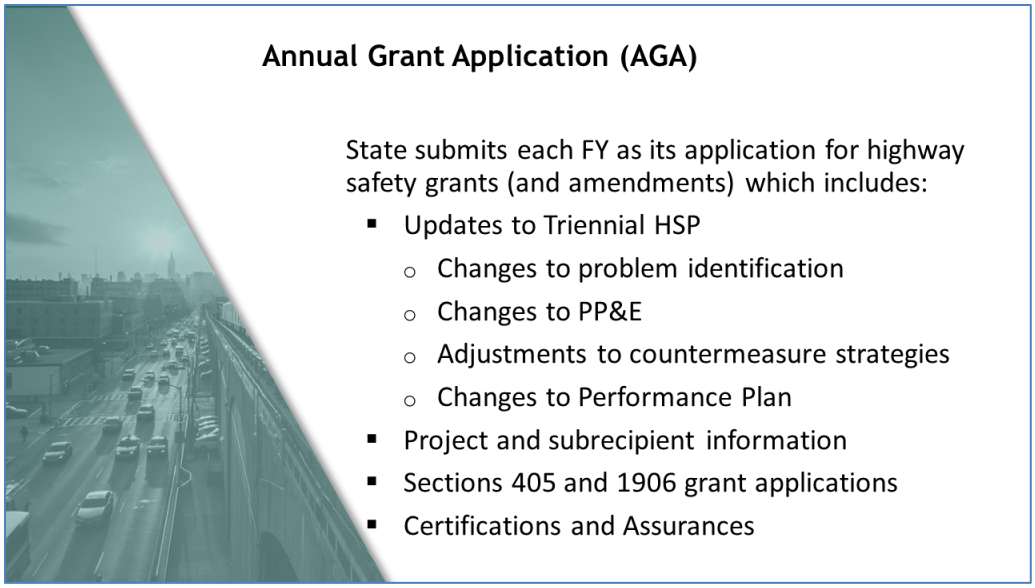
What is a Highway Safety "Project"

- Project (or funded project) means a discrete effort involving identified subrecipients or contractors to be funded, in whole or in part, with grant funds under 23 U.S.C. Chapter 4 or Section 1906 and that addresses countermeasure strategies identified in the triennial Highway Safety Plan. 23 CFR § 1300.3

Slide 6.

Project (or funded project) means a discrete effort involving identified subrecipients or contractors to be funded, in whole or in part, with grant funds under 23 U.S.C. Chapter 4 or Section 1906 and that addresses countermeasure strategies identified in the triennial Highway Safety Plan. 23 CFR § 1300.3

NOTE: Section 154 and 164 funds are also used to fund projects.



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NOTE: As referenced in the Foundations of Highway Safety, after the Triennial HSP has been approved, the State will submit to NHTSA the State's annual grant application which provides project level information on the State's highway safety program and demonstrates alignment with the State's most recent Triennial HSP.

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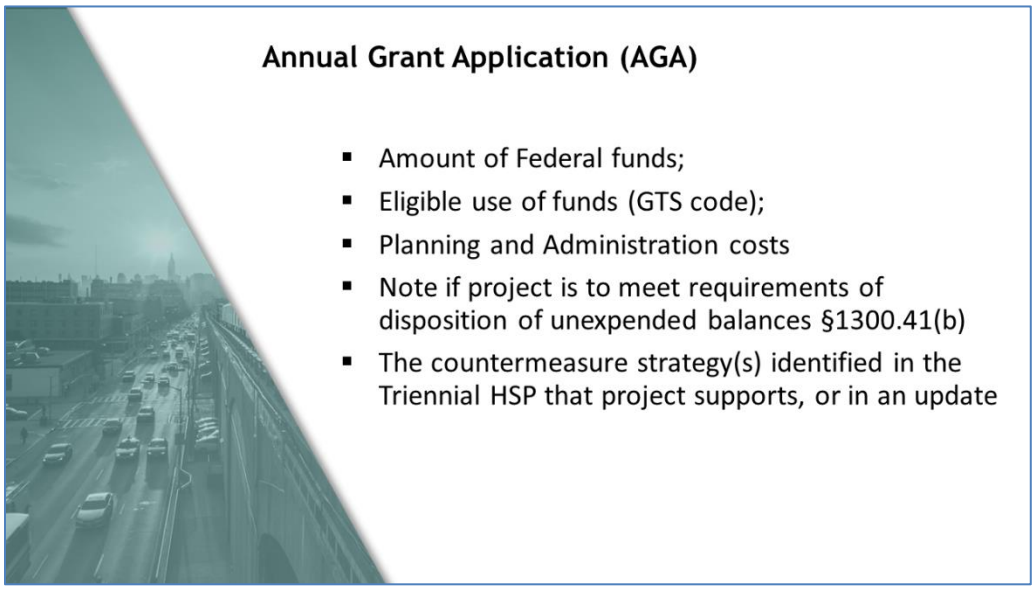

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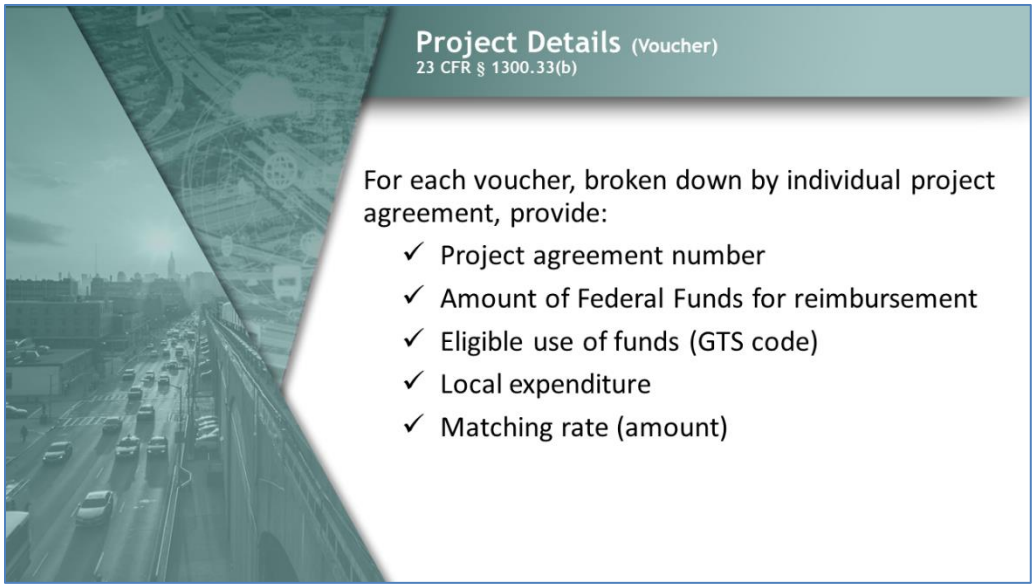
(2) Project and subrecipient information. For each project to be funded by the State using grant funds during the fiscal year covered by the application, the State must provide:

(i) Project name and description, including, at a minimum, a description of activities conducted, location where the project is performed, and affected communities, where applicable; (ii) Federal funding source(s) (i.e., Section 402, Section 405(b), etc.); (iii) Project agreement number (which, if necessary, may be provided in a later amendment to the annual grant application);

(iv) Subrecipient(s) (including name and type of organization; e.g., county or city DOT, state or local law enforcement, non-profit, EMS agency, etc.); (v) Amount of Federal funds; (vi) Eligible use of funds; (vii) Whether the costs are Planning and Administration costs pursuant to § 1300.13(a) and the amount; (viii) Whether the project will be used to meet the requirements of § (viii) Whether the project will be used to meet the requirements of § 1300.41(b); and (ix) The countermeasure strategy or strategies for programming funds identified in the most recently submitted triennial HSP under § 1300.11(b)(4) or in an update to the triennial HSP submitted under § 1300.12(b)(1) that the project supports. 23 CFR § 1300.12(b)(2)



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23 CFR § 1300.33(b)

This slide provides an overview of the information required for each project voucher the SHSO sends to NHTSA through the Grants Tracking System (GTS).

NOTE: Costs must be broken down by each eligible use if there is more than one eligible use for that project.

NOTE: The amount sought for reimbursement cannot exceed what was identified in the previously submitted project details and must line up with the project agreement e.g., project agreement number.

Types of Projects

Slide 11.

There are various types of projects from State to State.

Mini Grants - Short term grant, usually 30 days or less, and directed toward a special interest type project such as NHTSA national campaigns (belts and alcohol).

Enforcement – Such as overtime traffic or full-time traffic enforcement or development of a traffic safety enforcement team.

Training – For staff, enforcement (DRE).

Non-profit – Child safety seats, public information and education.

State Agency to State or Local Agency - Projects with other State Agencies or with local jurisdictions and agencies.

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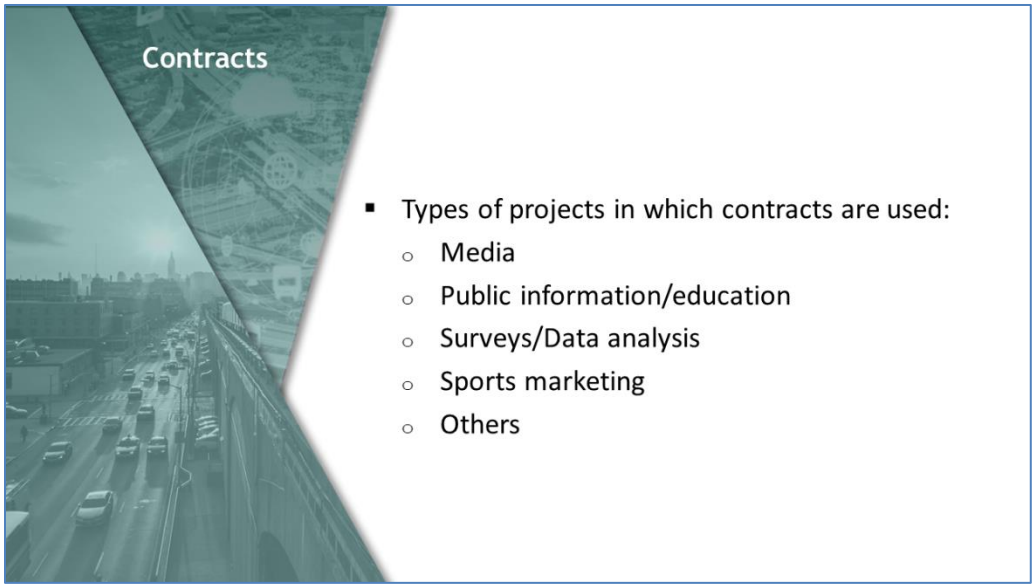


Slide 12.

Public Information/Education (PIE) - sports marketing, contracts, non-profit coalitions, media, speaker's bureau, outreach.

Each State has its own contracting and procurement processes. Contracts are different from subawards.

Slide 13.

There are several different mechanisms the SHSO can utilize to select projects to be funded based on problem identification in each program area that has been established in the 3HSP/AGA.

Public Participation and Engagement (PP&E) is a process that proactively seeks full representation from communities, considers public comments and feedback, and incorporates that feedback into a project, program, or plan when possible. PP&E is used to influence program activity development.

Be sure to engage local communities to find out the highway safety priorities, then work with these communities to develop countermeasure strategies, targets, and projects.

Benefits of Project Solicitation:

- Innovative ideas
- New partners may self-identify
- Increased positive community impact

23 CFR Part 1300 requires the State escribe the State's public PP&E planning efforts.

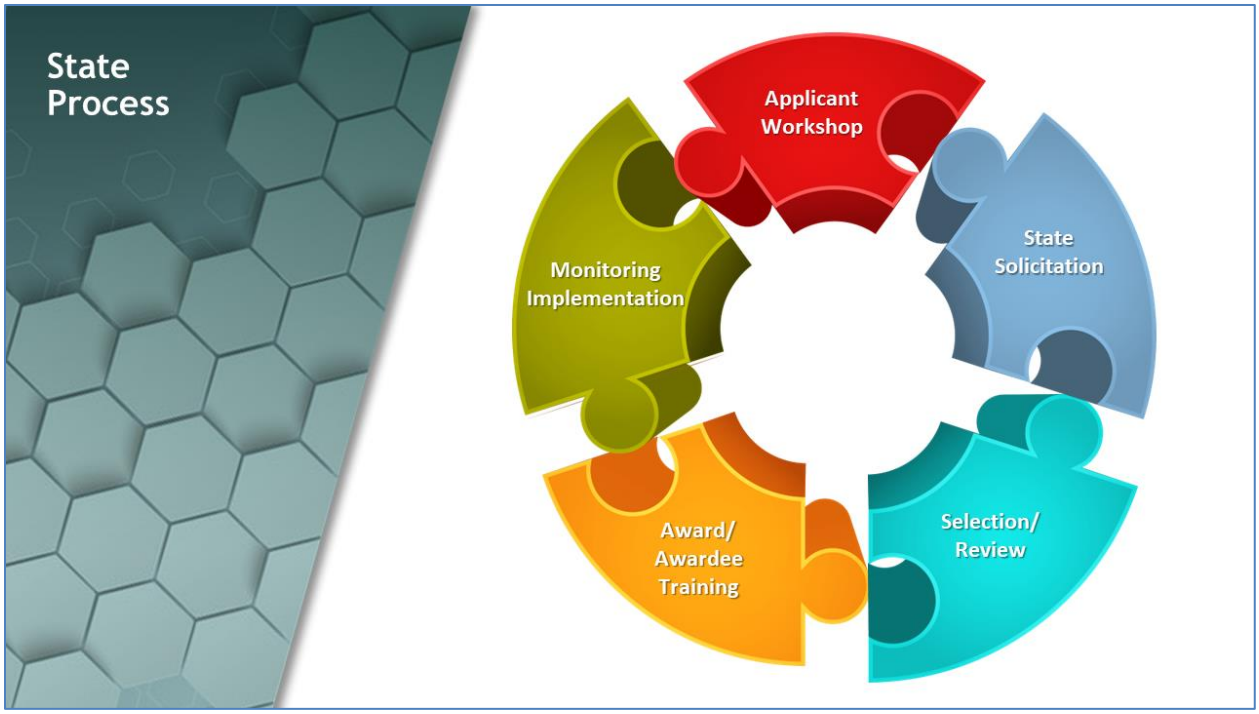
A description of considerations the State will use to determine what projects to fund to implement the countermeasure strategy, including, as applicable, public engagement, traffic safety data, affected communities, impacted locations, solicitation of proposals.

If the SHSO recruits subrecipients (including State agencies), remember to take into consideration the PP&E information as part of the proposed project.

Ideally, project agreements should be ready to be executed by October 1.

Projects should be ready when funding is available.

NOTE: Reminder - There is a 40% local expenditure requirement that must be met. Local community-based projects can help the State reach this requirement.

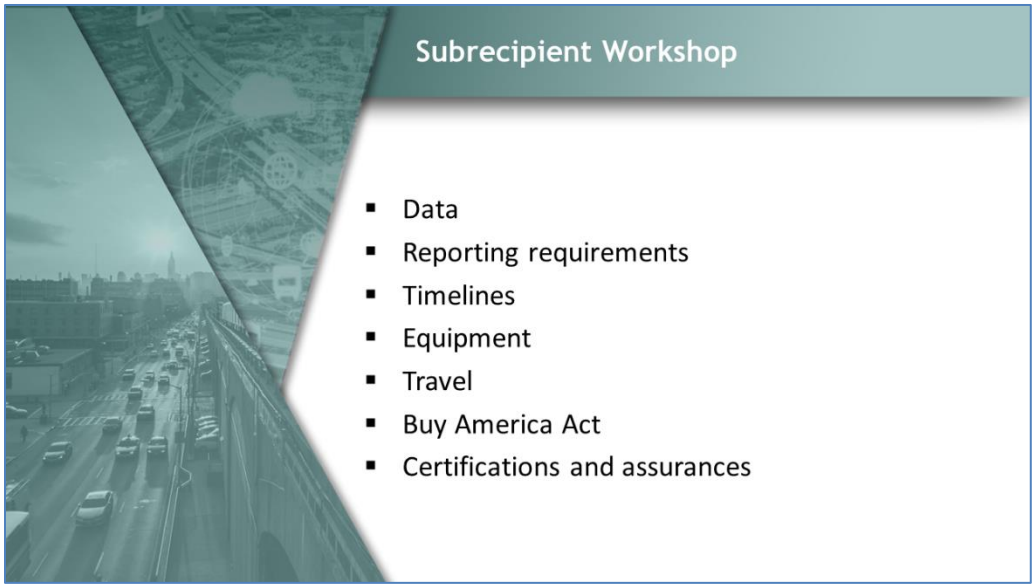


Slide 14.

NOTE: This process may be just one way of looking at the overall picture. Consider other approaches for example: town hall meetings/focus groups may lead you to the process of a project being submitted.

Slide 15.

This applicant workshop is not to be confused with subrecipient workshops that come later in the process, when applications have been selected, and subrecipients have been identified. The information provided to them is normally more detailed and specific on what is expected of/by the subrecipient.



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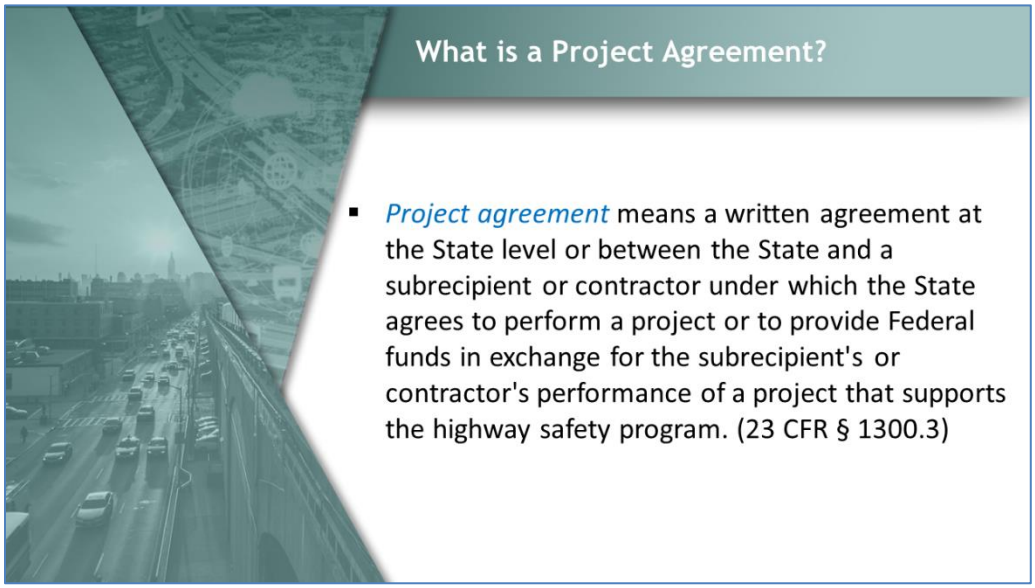
Items typically discussed during workshop can include:

- Data
- Reporting requirements
- Timelines
- Equipment
- Travel
- Buy America Act
- Certifications and assurances

Project Agreements



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Copies of each project agreement for which expenses are being claimed under the voucher (and supporting documentation for the vouchers) shall be made promptly available for review by the Regional Administrator upon request. Each project agreement shall bear the project agreement number to allow the Regional Administrator to match the voucher to the corresponding project. 23 CFR § 1300.33(c)

The project agreement number is a unique State-generated identifier assigned to each project agreement.

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Slide 18.

Four Purposes of a Project Agreement:

- To clearly define the problem

  The project should clearly define the identified highway safety problem, as well as the current status of resources and attitudes of the people within the community

- Identify specific solutions

  Suggest Solutions: The project suggests a proposed solution that clearly has the potential to make an impact within the community on the identified problem. One resource that can be used to select solutions is the NHTSA produced guide called "*Countermeasures that Work*". This guide is designed to assist SHSO's in selecting science-based traffic safety measures for highway safety problem areas

Website Resource

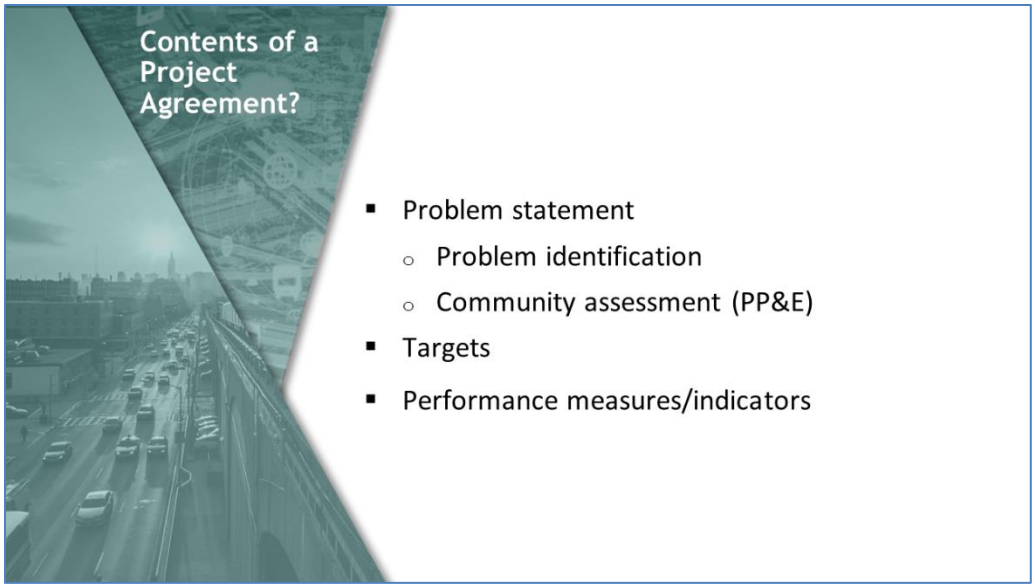
REFERENCE: Countermeasures That Work

- Present the commitments for all parties involved

  Commitments: An understanding and consensus between the people requesting the grant and the State Office overseeing the grant must be reached.

- Establish a mechanism for accountability

  Accountability: The project also establishes the mechanism for accountability to the State and the Federal government for the use of the grant money.


Contents of a Project Agreement?
Problem statement
Problem identification
Community assessment (PP&E)
Targets
Performance measures/indicators

Slide 19.

Contents of a Project Agreement?
Activities (tasks) and milestones
Evaluation plan
Budget
Plans for financial cost sharing (optional)
Certifications and assurances

Slide 20.

Slide 21.

Whether you are a program manager or a subrecipient, these are the steps involved. These best practices are valid whether you are reviewing/assessing an existing program, or are in process of developing a new project.

The problem statement provides a straightforward summary of the data collected and analyzed, as well as the existing and lacking community resources.

Once the problem has been identified and the community assessment has been conducted, the results are used to write the problem statement of the project proposal. The targets and objectives are then formulated to address the identified problem, and the entire project can be planned.

The target/objective should be in line with, and support the State target, and be specific for the jurisdiction that the project covers.

Example: In a project with a city police department for DWI enforcement, it would be appropriate to develop a target to reduce alcohol-impaired related crashes and injuries in that specific jurisdiction, not in the State as a whole. Similarly, an OP enforcement target for a city should address seat belt use in the city, not the entire State.

Some States require individual project match or cost sharing, and some require increased percentages of match each year of project.

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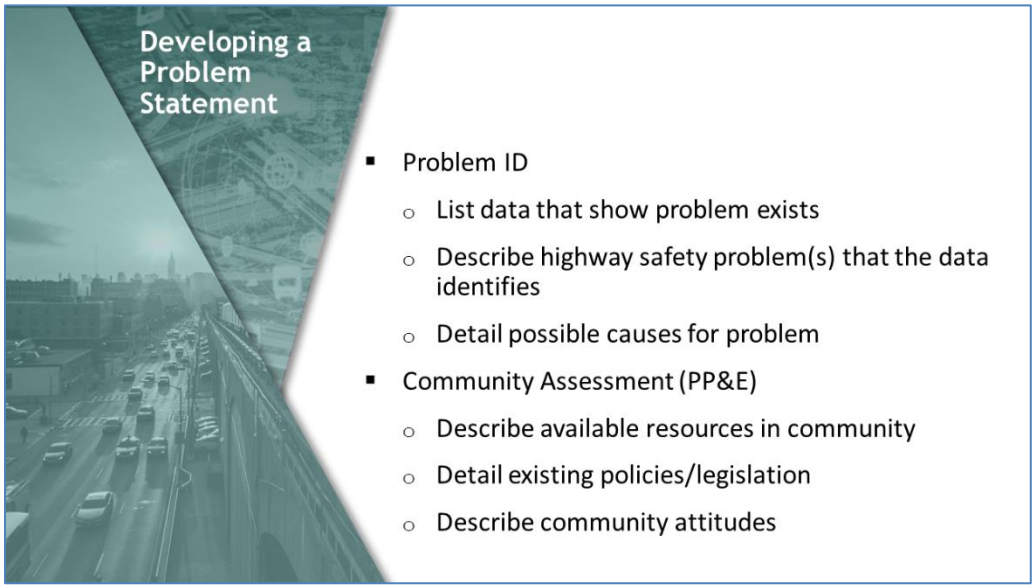
Problem Statement



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The problem statement of the project proposal is a straightforward summary of the identified problem and the community assessment.

The traffic safety problem of a community is identified by analyzing crash data. The elements involved in the crash – people, vehicles and roads – are divided into subgroups in order to determine which groups are more involved in crashes within a particular community.

The community assessment is the process of gathering information about the resources already available in the community for the highway safety project, as well as what resources may be missing.

It also examines the attitudes of the people of the community, as well as the current legislation and policy that would be relevant in the highway safety context.

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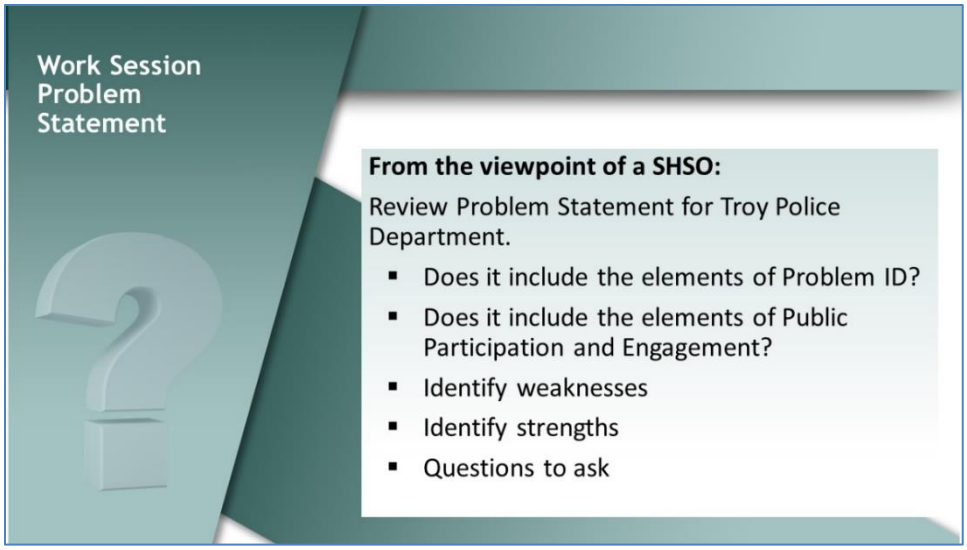

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Supplemental Materials

SUPPLEMENT: Troy Police Department - Participant

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Targets or Performance Targets
A quantifiable level of performance or a goal, expressed as a value, to be achieved through implementation of countermeasure strategies within a specified time period. 23 CFR § 1300.3

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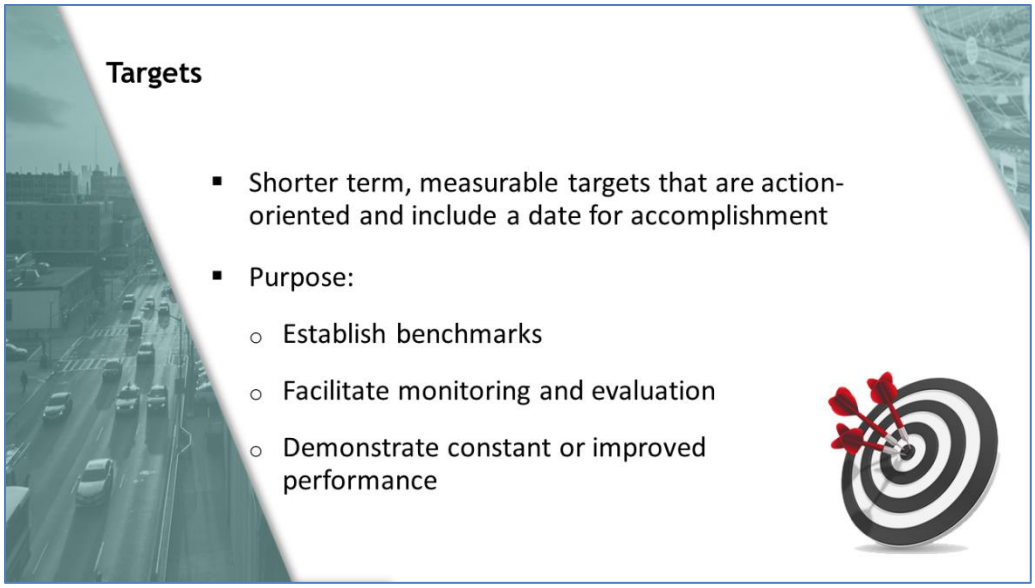
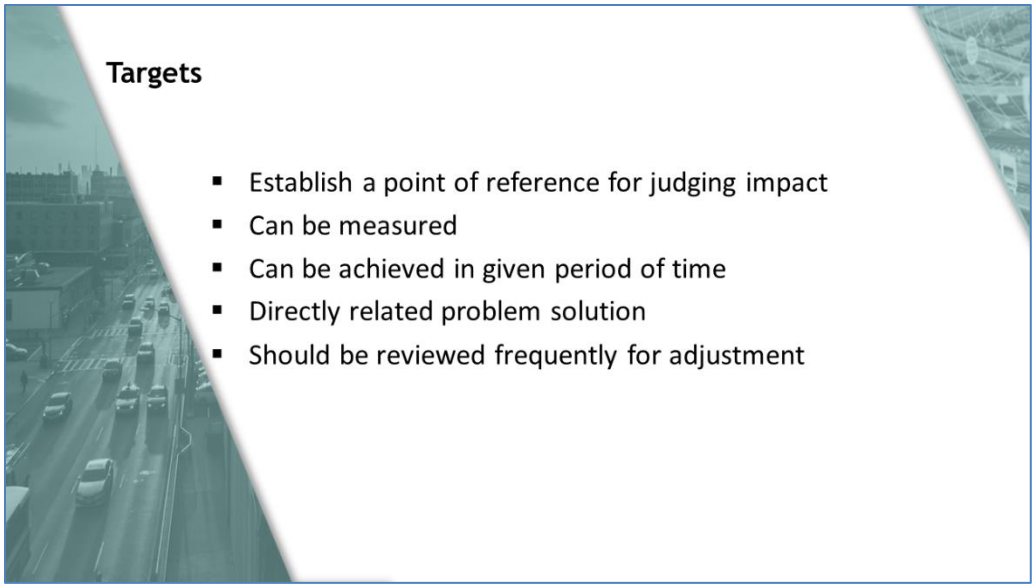


Slide 25.

The target is the end result to be achieved by the project.



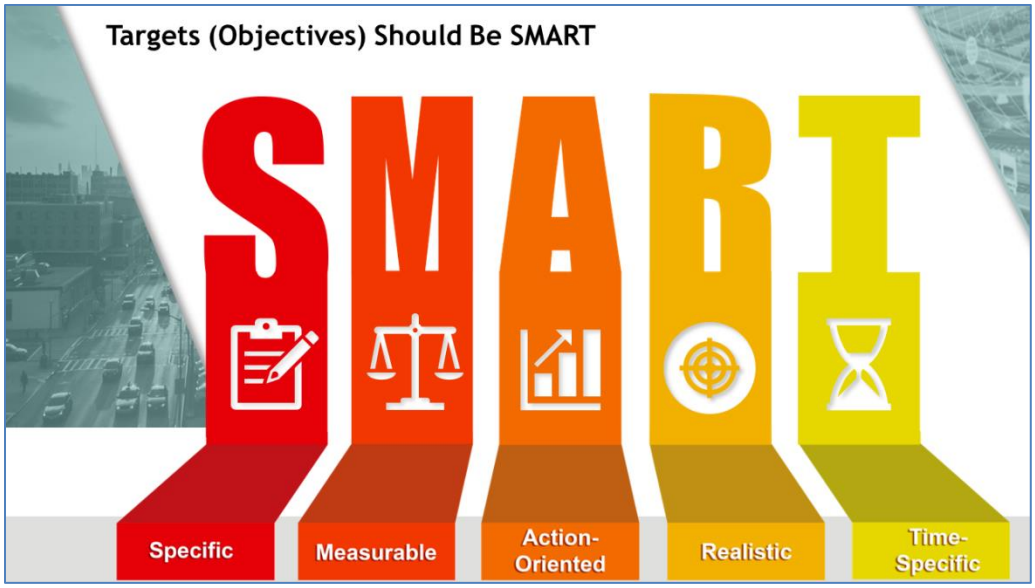
Slide 26.

Targets are used to establish a point of reference for judging the impact of the project.

Targets can be measured, can be achieved in a given period of time, and must be directly related to the problem solution in the project proposal. They must have a reasonable potential for making an impact.

In order to tell how far the project has come, it must first have a starting point.
To monitor the progress, to evaluate the impact, and to judge the cost effectiveness of the project, the targets create the basis for comparison.

A project director should review the targets frequently to ensure that the project stays on track.



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*Targets (Objectives) should be **S.M.A.R.T.** :*

Specific – Avoid using generalities like "improving traffic safety" or "increasing awareness." If you identify exactly what you want to happen, then you can document your success. Sometimes you can be specific about the amount of change you anticipate, expressed either in absolute (increase enforcement visibility by 75 percent) or relative (increase citations by 15 percent over baseline) terms. At other times, you can simply observe and record the change in behavior.

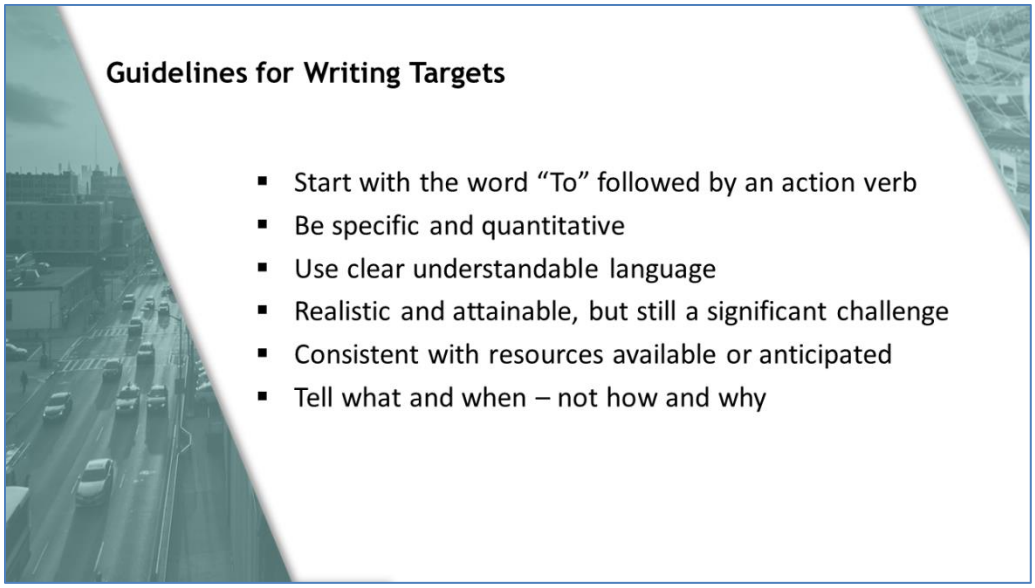
Measurable – For a target (objective) to be measurable there must be something you can quantify, like DWI citations, and you must be able to detect a change over time. When possible, isolate the targets of the countermeasure. For example, you want to increase by 10 percent the number of DWI citations issued to young drivers. Make sure to use data that you can obtain or that you can collect if it does not exist in another source.

Action-oriented – Action is good. You can usually see an action and count the number of times it happens. It is much easier to document that impaired driving laws were enforced by counting the number of traffic stops and citations/arrests, than it is to document if public support for DWI law enforcement increased. When resources allow for it, it is ideal to measure behavior(s) directly related to your targets (objectives).

Realistic – You must make sure that your overall target can actually happen as a result of your plan. For example, a public information campaign on the value of traffic safety enforcement cannot be expected to reduce traffic deaths community-wide.

It can change knowledge, attitudes and awareness, but public information and education programs generally have not been shown to change behavior in traffic safety, unless they are linked to something more powerful, such as highly visible enforcement. Take a hard look at the problem you are trying to solve and select a specific countermeasure that will address that problem, and then establish a reasonable target for success.

Time Specific – Projects don't last forever, and targets (objectives) should have deadlines. Deadlines make it clear to everyone when results can be expected. They also keep people focused on what needs to be accomplished by when, so it will be very obvious if you meet them or not. They challenge you to accomplish what you set out to do, and serve as a constant reminder of your criteria for success. This is all the more reason to be honest and practical when you write them.



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In writing targets, it is necessary to choose very precise words to describe the specific end to be achieved. Verbs like "to maintain" or "to decrease" can be used to give a clear idea of the measurable action to be taken.

Targets are specific and quantitative. They describe "from what, to what" and "when" - but do not attempt to tell "how" or "why" they will be accomplished.

Conversely, fuzzy "Weasel Words" such as "to become aware of," "to attempt to," and "to motivate" do not offer the necessary clear, measurable description.

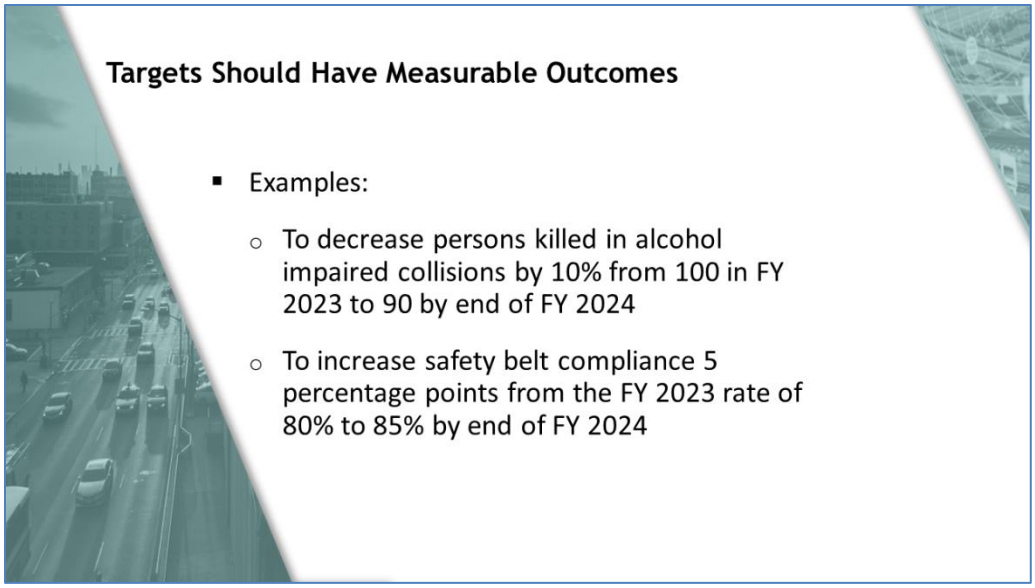
Poor example: To motivate parents to use restraints for their children.

This target is problematic because it is impossible to measure parent motivation.

Targets written in a project proposal must be clear and realistic, yet still represent a significant challenge. They must be consistent with available or anticipated resources, and they must represent a course of action that stands a very good chance of success.

"How" or "why" are questions that will be answered when the problem solution plan is developed. For solutions, activities or countermeasures, use action words such as: "to educate," "to acquire," "to survey," "to develop," and so forth.

Keep in mind, targets can be process related.


Targets Should Have Measurable Outcomes
Examples:
To decrease persons killed in alcohol impaired collisions by 10% from 100 in FY 2023 to 90 by end of FY 2024
To increase safety belt compliance 5 percentage points from the FY 2023 rate of 80% to 85% by end of FY 2024

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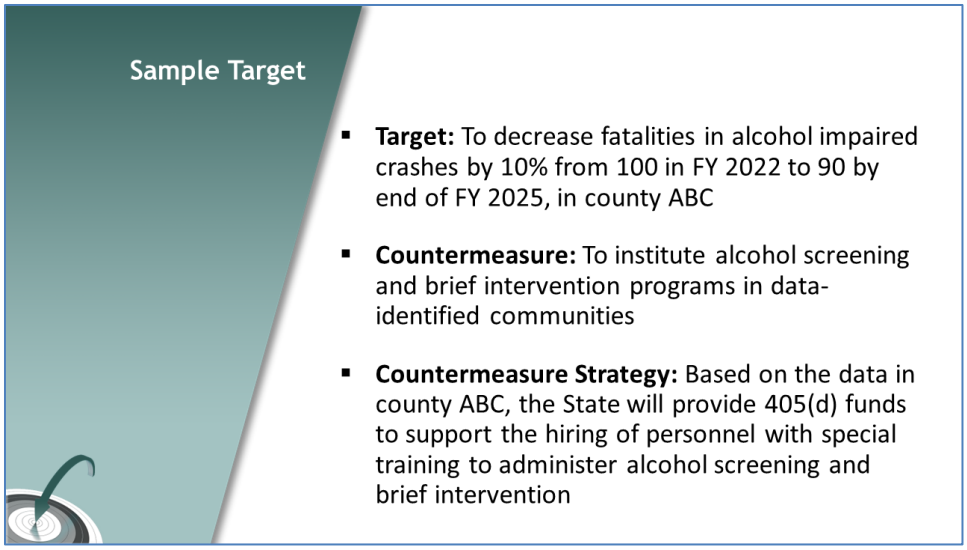

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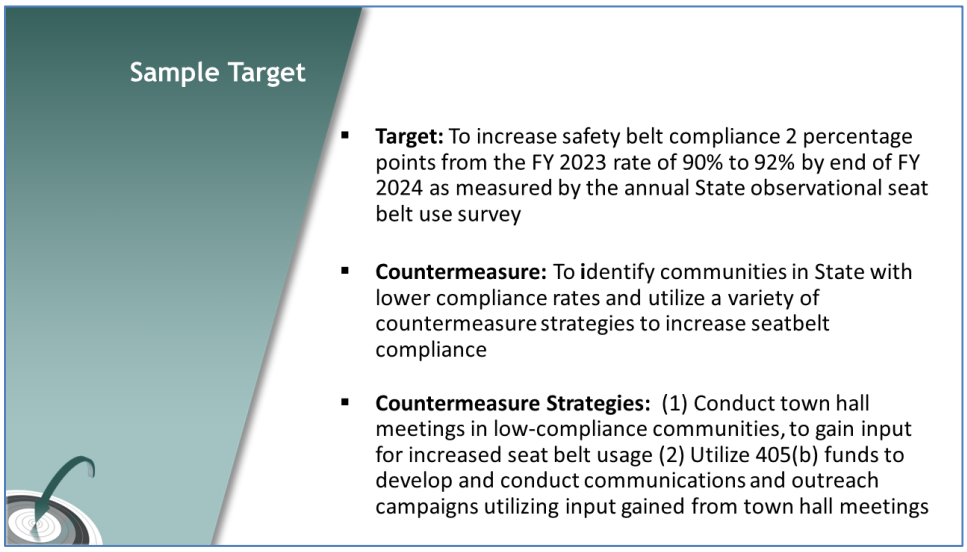

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Targets should be communicated to all the people who will contribute to a project either in writing or in face-to-face discussions.

This is another area where a subrecipient and SHSO should be cautious: Those creating targets and countermeasures must keep in mind the previous discussion about target(s) development.

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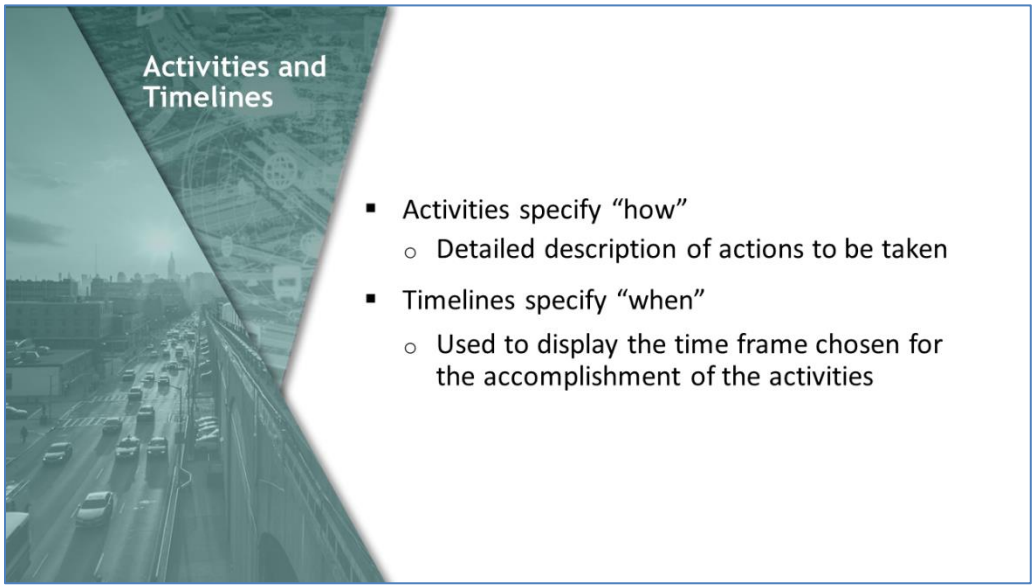
Activities and Timelines



Slide 32.

Activities are a more detailed description of the actions to be taken to achieve the targets outlined earlier in the project.

Activities answer the question "how?"

An activity is a specific action to be taken to help achieve a target. Each target should include a description of what will be done, who will do it, when it will start, and when it will be completed.

The project director must use judgment in choosing activities, so that they are realistic, and so that the desired results can be achieved within the given time frame and with the available resources.

Remember, you don't want to set people up for failure.

Maintain strong links from the activity to the target and follow through.
Be realistic.

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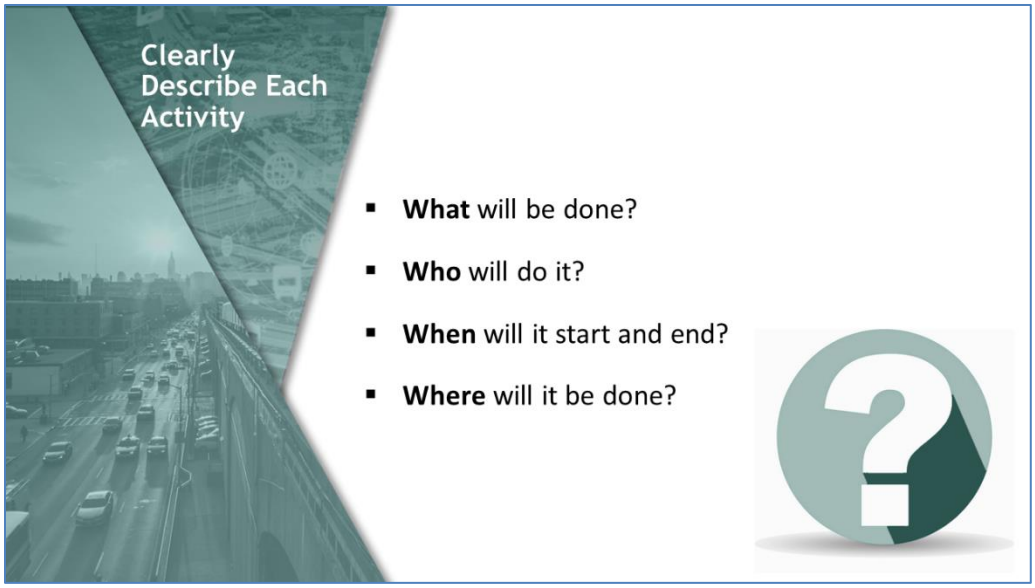

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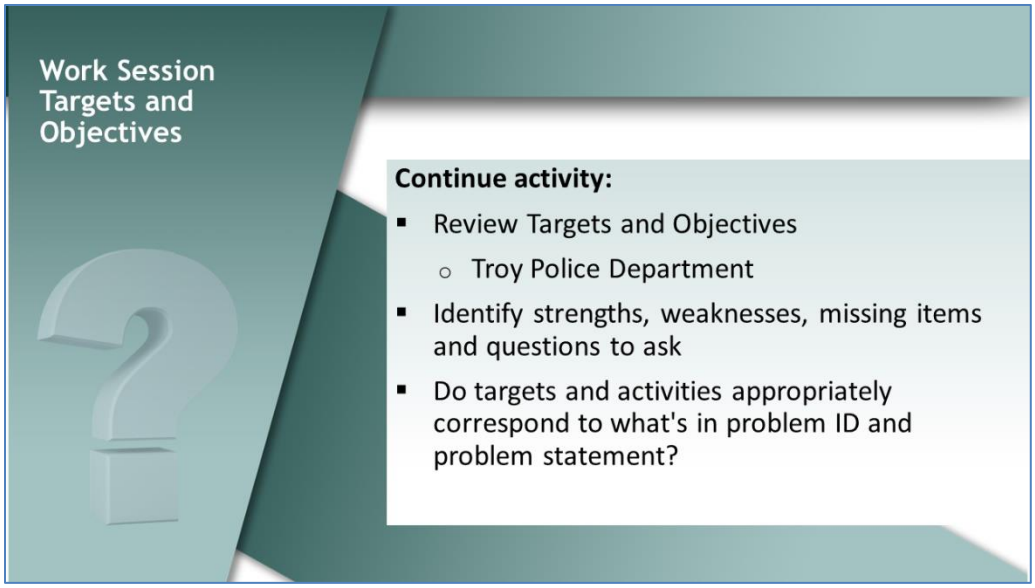
Work Session Targets and Objectives
Continue activity:
Review Targets and Objectives
Troy Police Department
Identify strengths, weaknesses, missing items and questions to ask
Do targets and activities appropriately correspond to what's in problem ID and problem statement?

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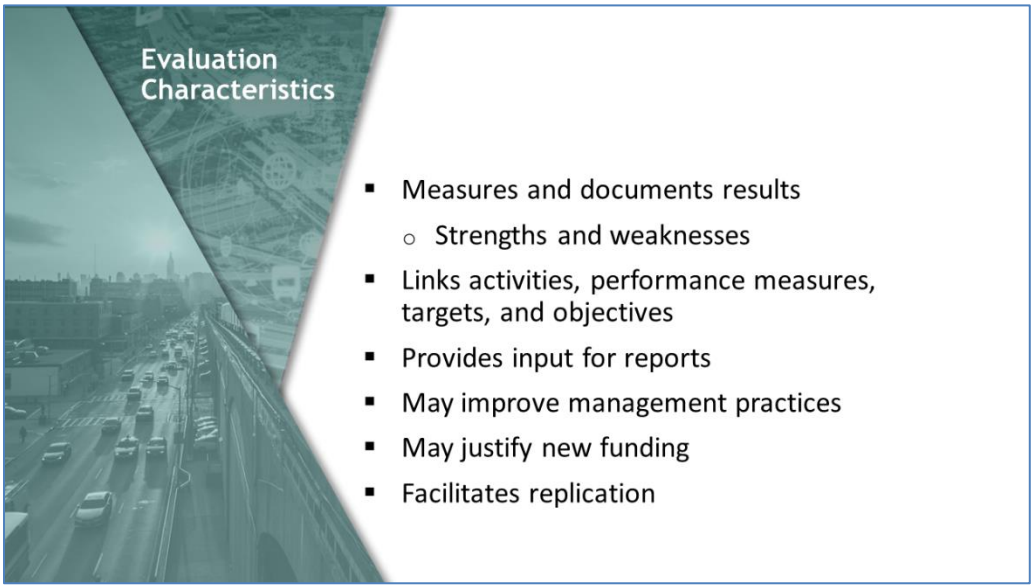
Evaluation



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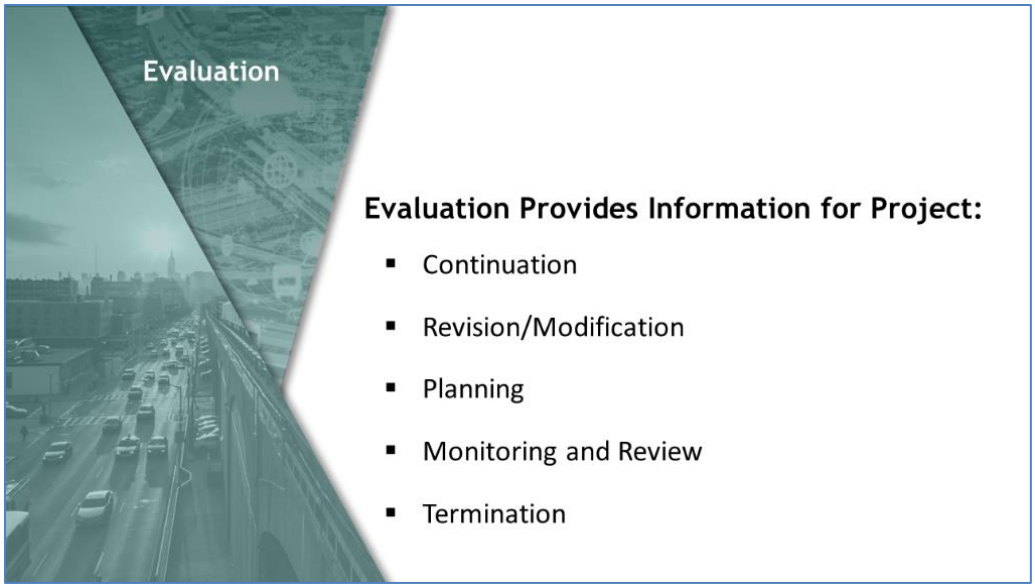
Website Resource

RESOURCE: [The Art of Appropriate Evaluation]



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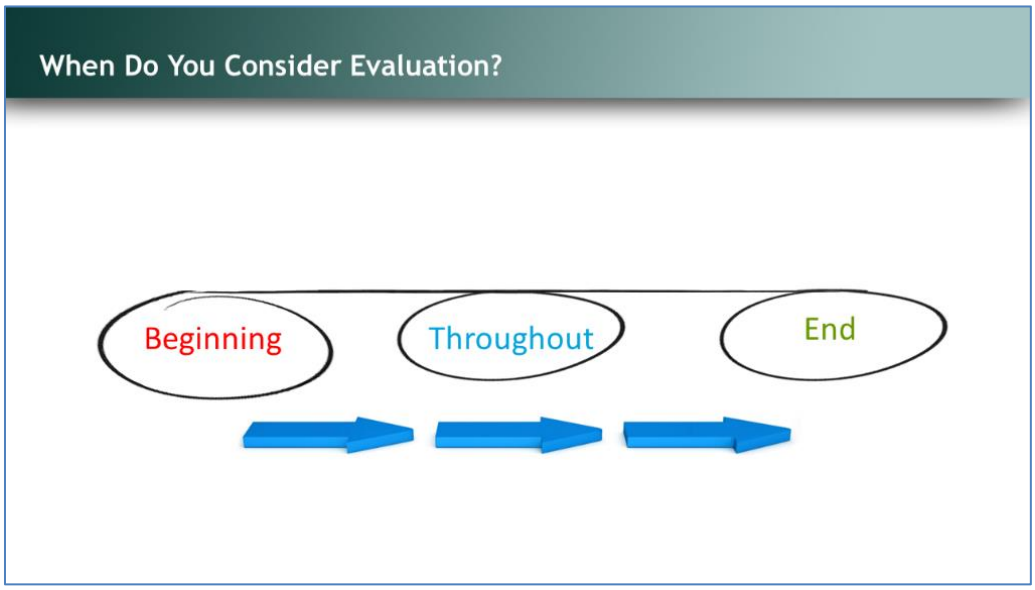

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Evaluation requirements should be considered throughout the project development process. Plan for it, check on status of it during, and fully evaluate at the end of the project.

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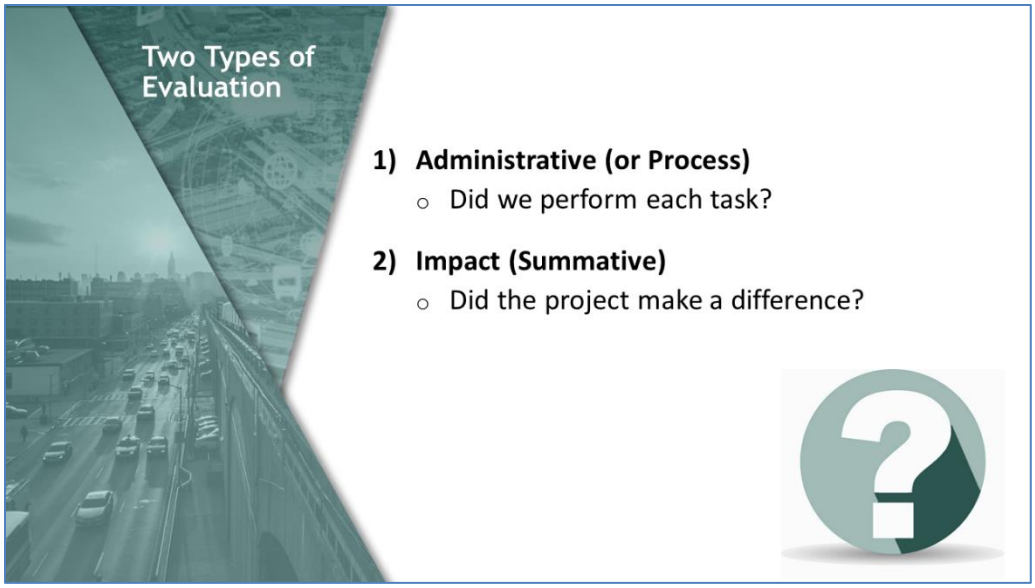

Slide 39.

Most highway safety project evaluations will be administrative.

Administrative: Administrative evaluation measures whether the activities planned for a project are actually accomplished. This type of evaluation and process is required on every project.

For example: Conduct one traffic safety education event each month; Make three traffic contacts each hour of overtime enforcement; etc.

Impact: This evaluation type is more scientific, with multiple data to back up the results and can be expensive. It is broader in spectrum, and shows behavioral outcomes.

For example: What was the percentage of safety restraint use increase in the project jurisdiction?

Summative Evaluation: Informs judgments about whether the program worked (i. e., whether the goals and objectives were met) and requires making explicit the criteria and evidence being used to make "summary" judgments.

Website Resource

RESOURCE: Evaluation Types: PennState College of Agricultural Sciences

Slide 40.

- Are we operating efficiently?
- Are we allocating resources appropriately?
- Are we scheduling staff correctly?
- Did we do what we planned?
- Did we involve the right stakeholders?

Supplemental Materials

SUPPLEMENT: Method of Evaluation Example

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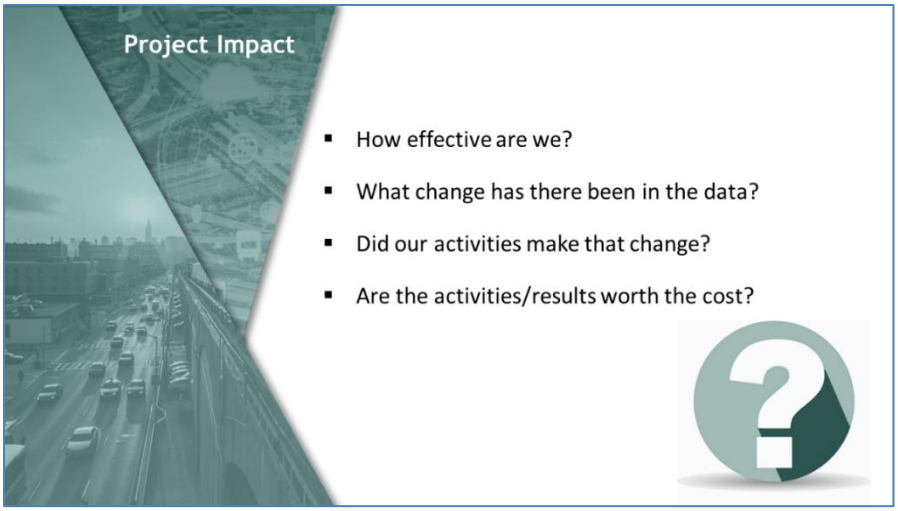


Slide 41.

The evaluation determines the change that can be attributed to the project, i.e., in crash reduction and/or injury severity or change in safety belt use rates. Conducted only on major projects that have large numbers in data collection and available funds and evaluation resources.

Evaluation plan must describe procedures the project will use to measure the accomplishment of activities.

Impact evaluation determines what effect the project has had on the problem.

This type of evaluation is feasible only on large projects that meet specified criteria.

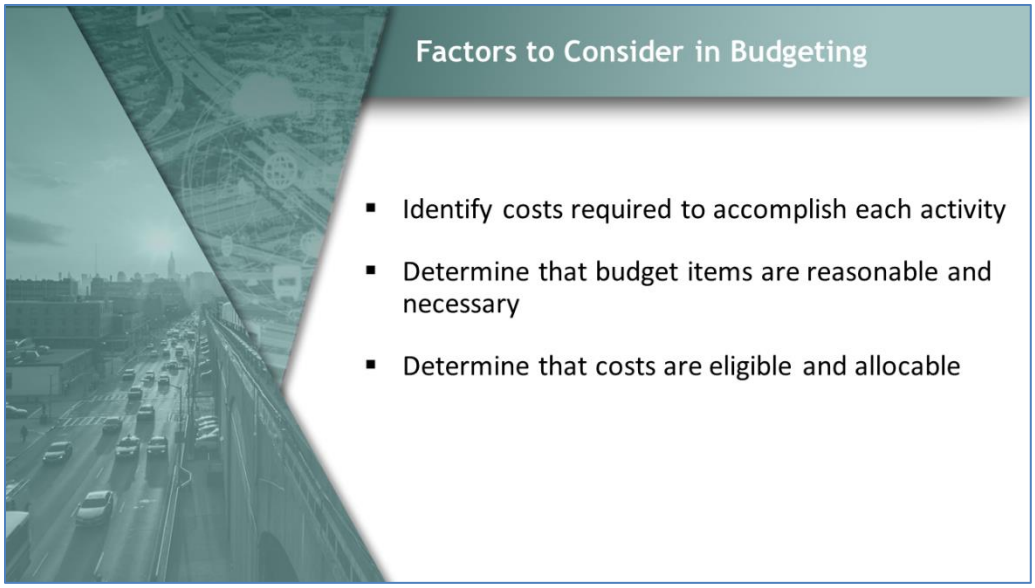
Otherwise, accurate judgments about the actual impact of a project are difficult because of the many factors that could be causing the perceived effects.

The evaluation plan must be written in sufficient detail, describing how and what will be used to measure the accomplishment of the activities of the project.

NOTE: This is also where a summative evaluation could be helpful. Impact evaluation examines the program's long-term goals. Summative, outcome, and impact evaluation are appropriate to conduct when the program either has been completed or has been ongoing for a substantial period of time (ATDSR, 2011) (Rossi et al, 2004)[1].

[1] Rossi, Peter Henry, Mark W. Lipsey, and Howard E. Freeman. "Evaluation: A systematic approach." Sage Publications, 2004.

"Principles of Community Engagement: Second Edition." Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), 2011.



Slide 42.

To determine if a budget total is reasonable, it is necessary to compare it to something. The project budget items should be compared to those of other projects approved by the SHSO, the Region, etc.

Some of the items that should be compared include: salaries, fringe benefits, equipment costs, overhead, travel, supplies and materials.

When considering budget – is it a mini grant or full-year project?

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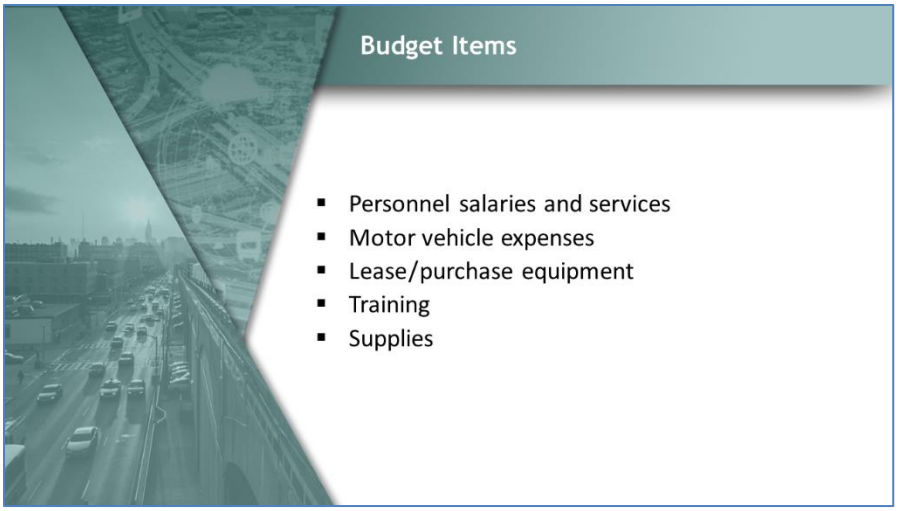
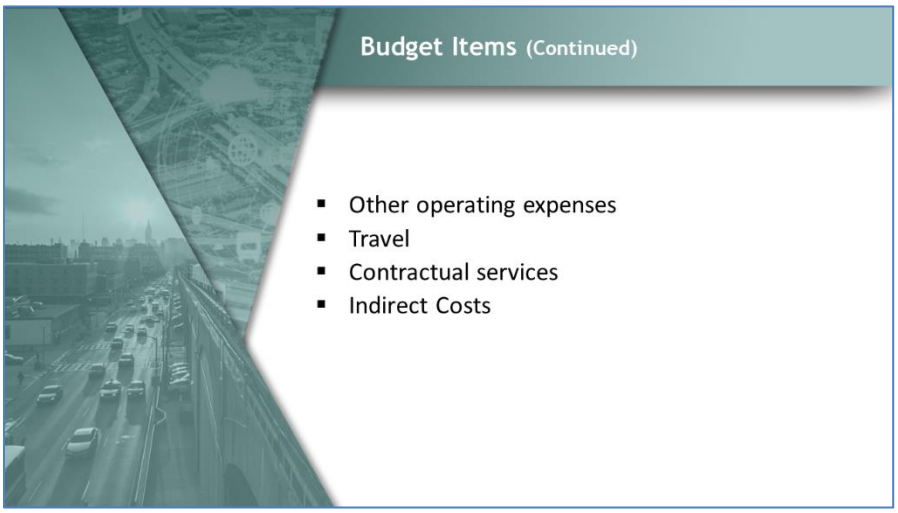
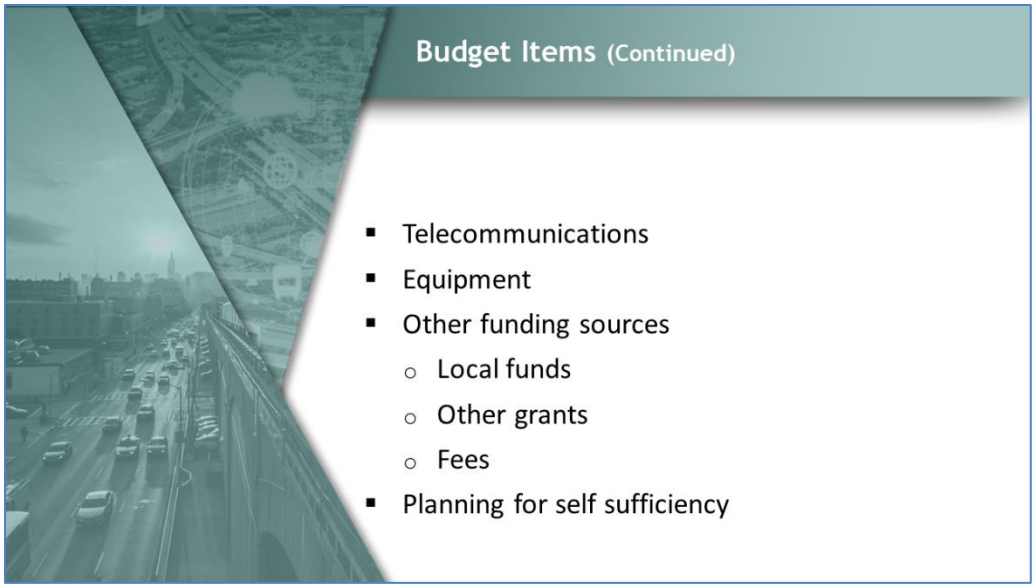


Slide 43.



Slide 44.

- Personnel salaries and services – salaries, and employer's share related benefits, social security, Medicare, health insurance
- Motor vehicle expenses
- Lease/purchase equipment – use applicable State or local approved rate
- Training - travel (per person), tuition, fees, per diem
- Supplies – actual costs
- Other operating expenses – office rent, utilities
- Travel – ensure you know the current applicable per diem rates
- Contractual services
- Indirect Costs



Slide 45.

- Telecommunications
- Equipment
- Other funding sources
  - Local funds
  - Other grants
  - Fees
- Planning for self sufficiency

NOTE: Equipment should be purchased at the beginning of the grant cycle, unless there is a specific situation where it would be appropriate during the year.

NOTE: All budgeted items must be part of an approved project.

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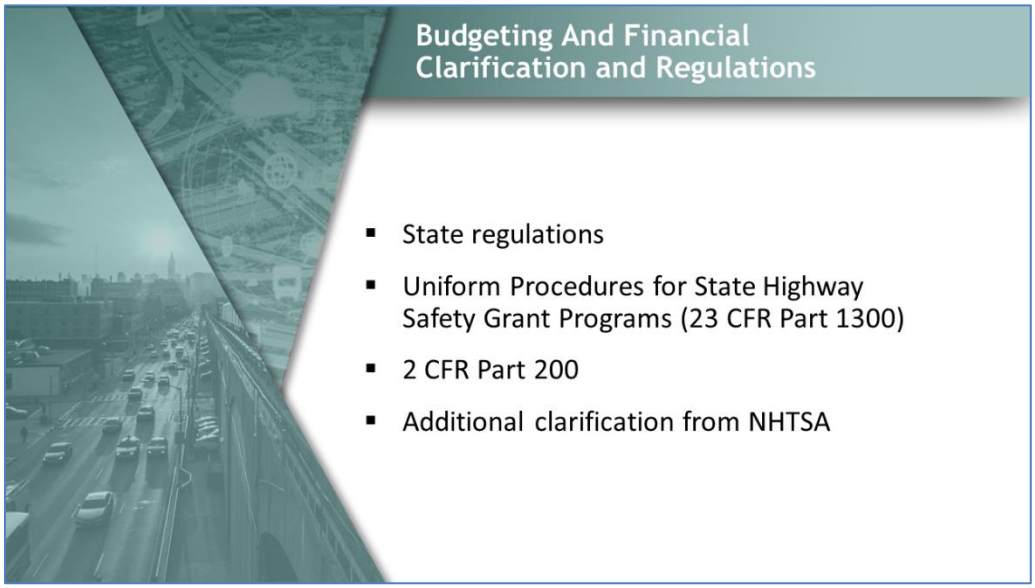
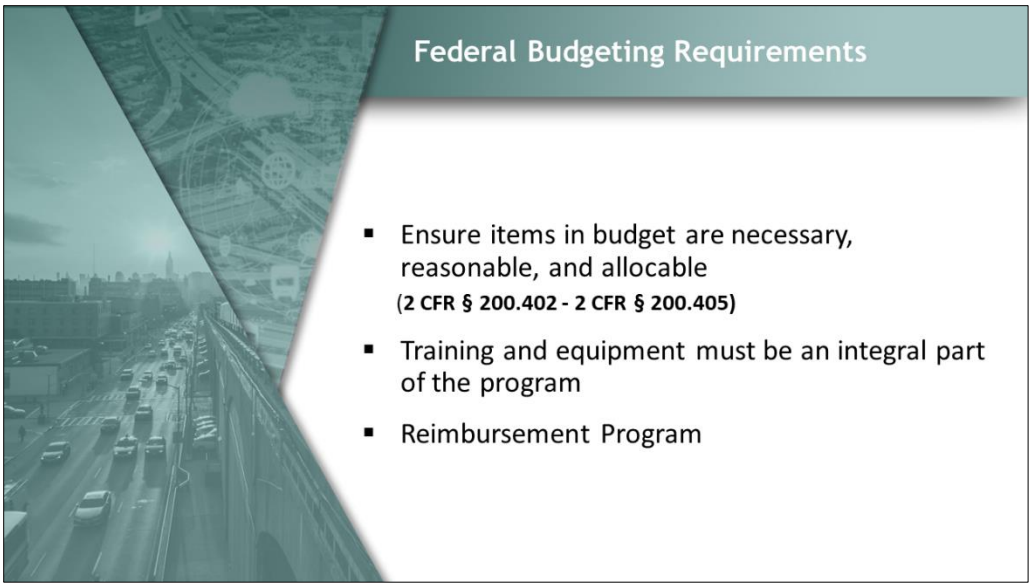
Budgeting and Financial Clarification



Slide 46.



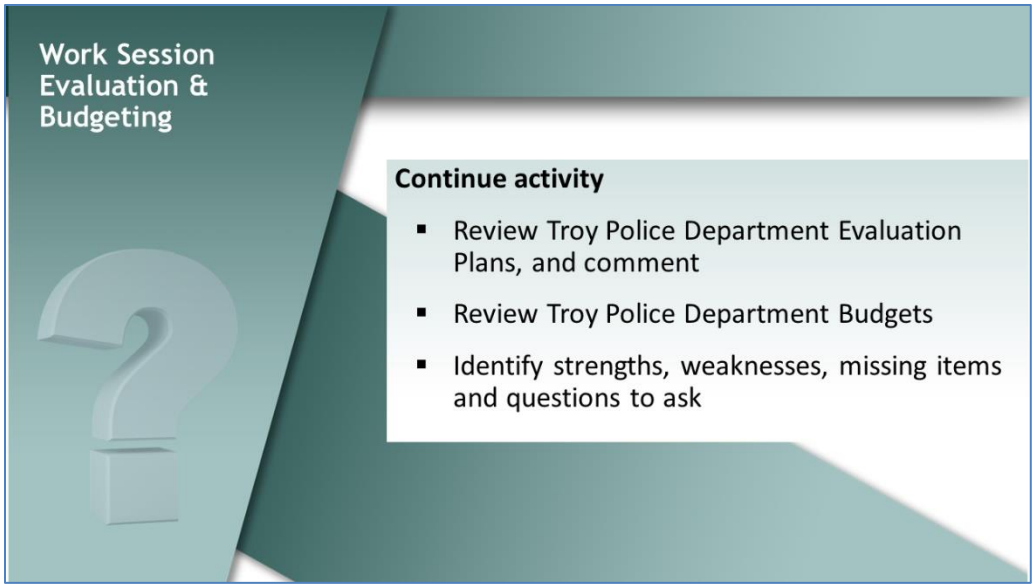
Slide 47.

It is important to justify why budget items are necessary (not nice)

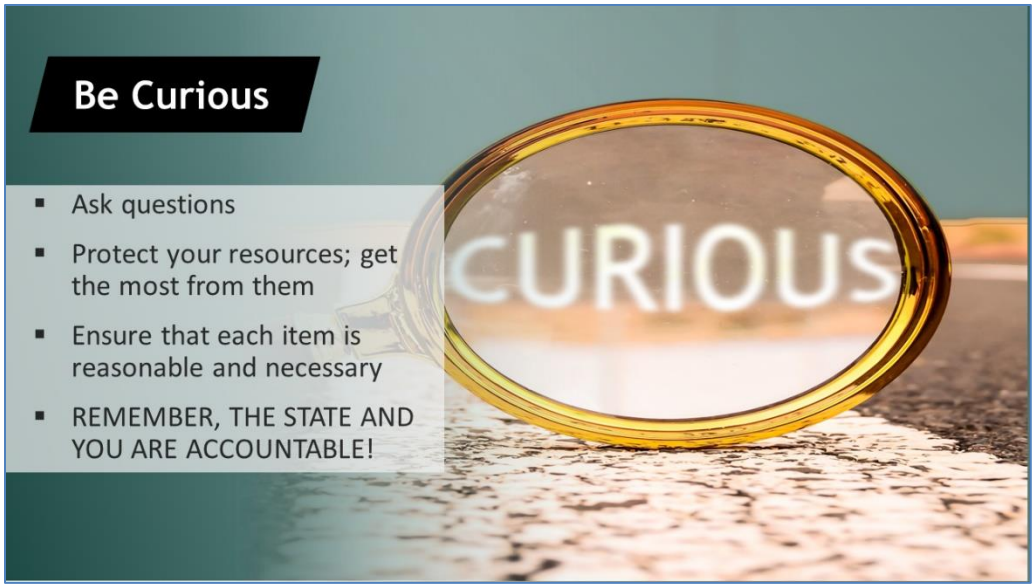
Cost sharing or matching.

Program income may be used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements only upon written approval of the Approving Official. Such use shall not increase the commitment of Federal funds.

NOTE: When funding equipment or training that will also be used for non-highway purposes, proportionate funding is required.


Work Session
Evaluation &
Budgeting
Continue activity
Review Troy Police Department Evaluation Plans, and comment
Review Troy Police Department Budgets
Identify strengths, weaknesses, missing items and questions to ask

Slide 48.

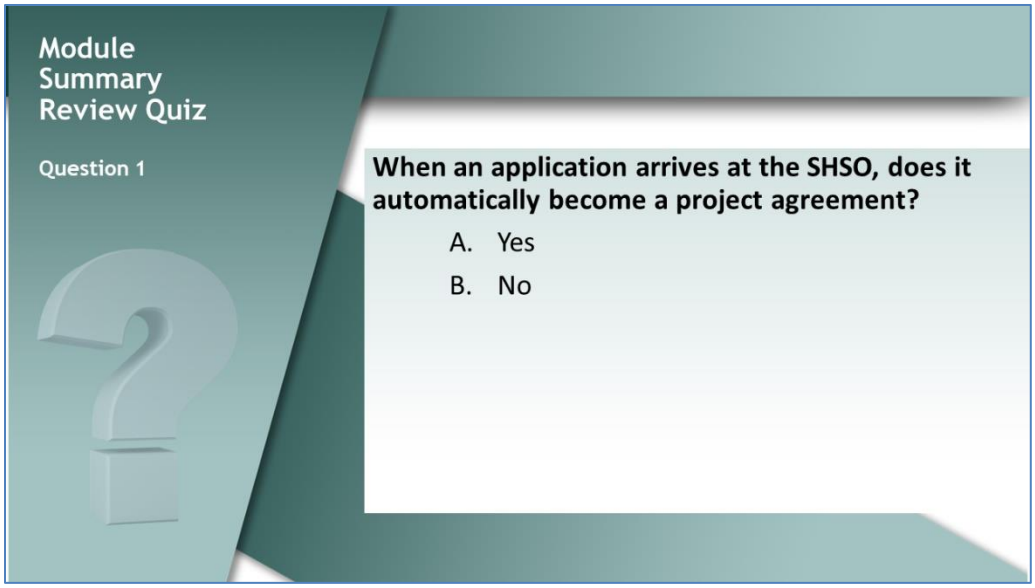


Slide 49.

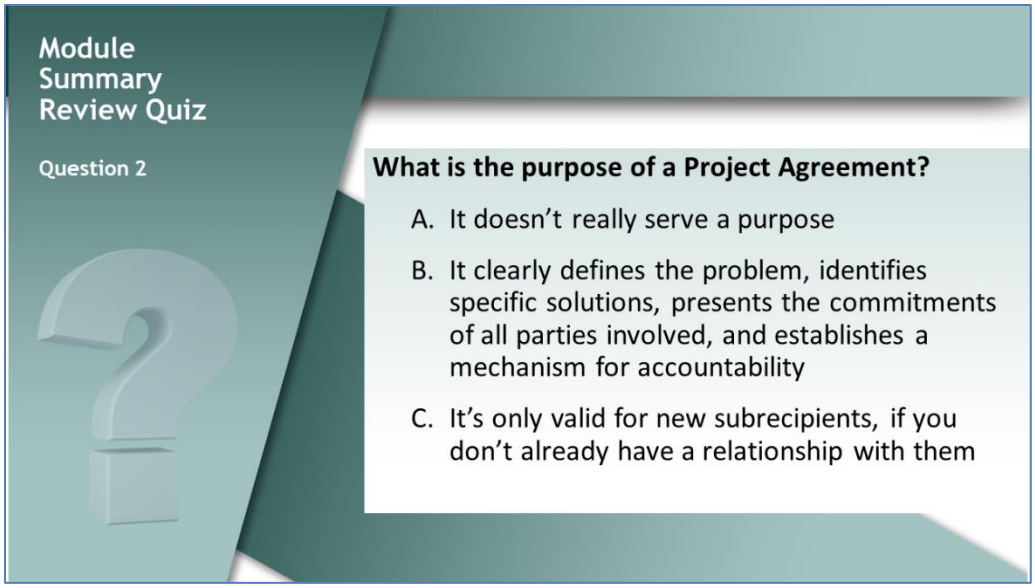
NOTE: Bottom line – We are overseeing taxpayer's resources, and we have to be accountable.

Module Summary Review

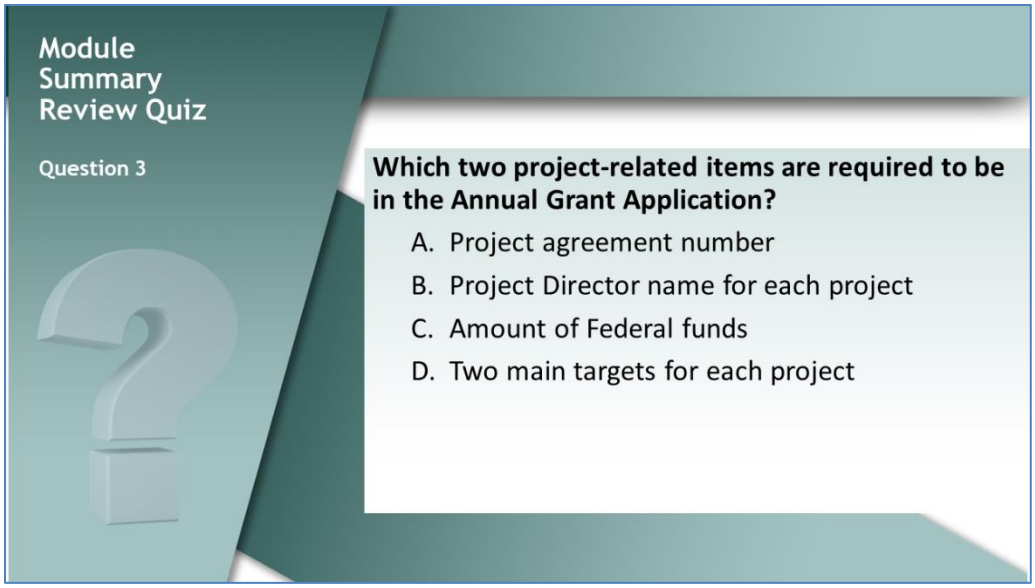
Slide 50.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 1
When an application arrives at the SHSO, does it automatically become a project agreement?
A. Yes
B. No

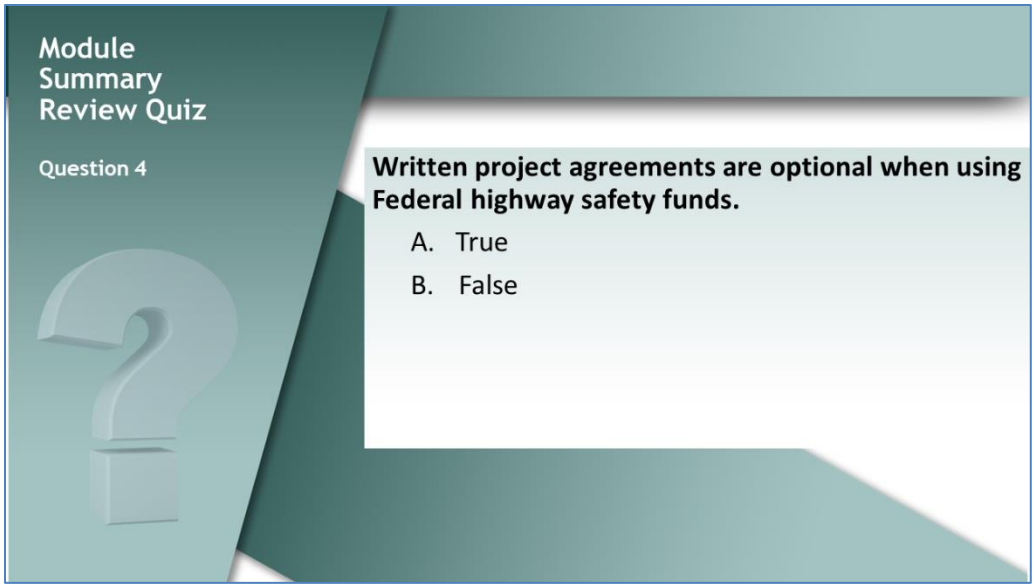
Slide 51.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 2
What is the purpose of a Project Agreement?
A. It doesn't really serve a purpose
B. It clearly defines the problem, identifies specific solutions, presents the commitments of all parties involved, and establishes a mechanism for accountability
C. It's only valid for new subrecipients, if you don't already have a relationship with them

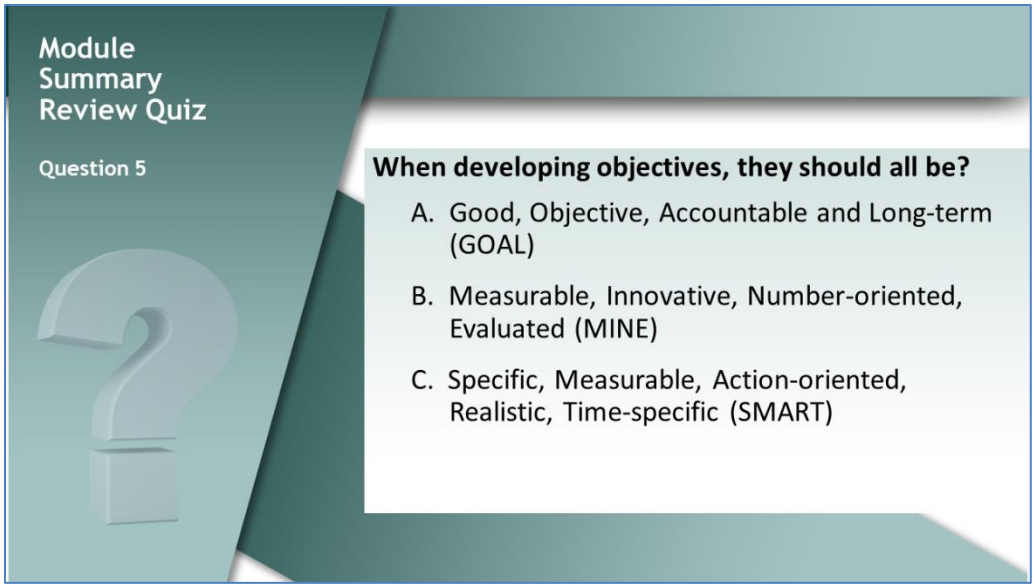
Slide 52.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 3
Which two project-related items are required to be in the Annual Grant Application?
A. Project agreement number
B. Project Director name for each project
C. Amount of Federal funds
D. Two main targets for each project

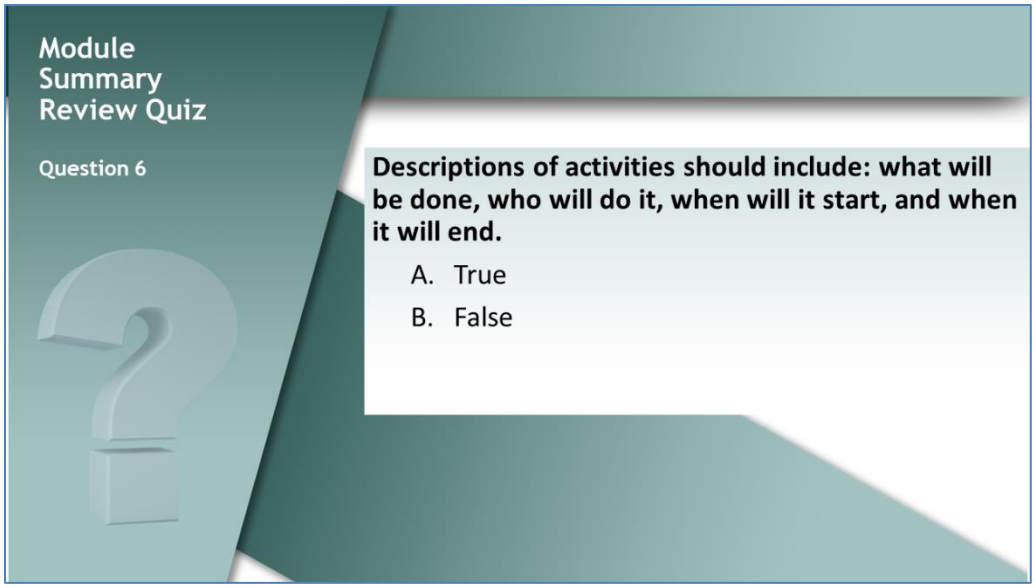
Slide 53.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 4
Written project agreements are optional when using Federal highway safety funds.
A. True
B. False

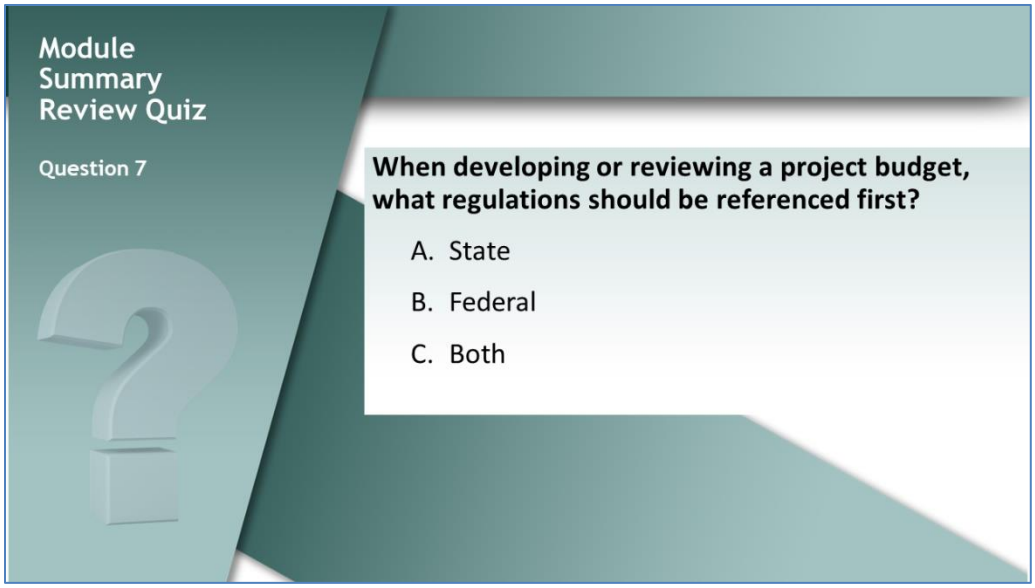
Slide 54.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 5
When developing objectives, they should all be?
A. Good, Objective, Accountable and Long-term (GOAL)
B. Measurable, Innovative, Number-oriented, Evaluated (MINE)
C. Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Time-specific (SMART)

Slide 55.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 6
Descriptions of activities should include: what will be done, who will do it, when will it start, and when it will end.
A. True
B. False

Slide 56.


Module
Summary
Review Quiz
Question 7
When developing or reviewing a project budget, what regulations should be referenced first?
A. State
B. Federal
C. Both

Slide 57.