

2019 State Damage Prevention Program Grant Final Progress Report

CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: 693JK31940020PSDP

Project Title: State Damage Prevention (SOP) Program Grants - 2019

Date Submitted: October 27, 2021

Submitted by: Jamie Renard

Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

Fund enforcement, education, training, communication, support, analysis, partnership, and mediation activities associated with its damage prevention program. (Elements 1-9)

Workscope

Under the terms of this grant agreement, the Recipient will address the following applicable elements listed in the approved application, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. §60134 (a), (b).

Element 5 (Public Education): A process for fostering and ensuring active participation by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities. (Applicable)

Accomplishments for the grant period (Item 1 under Agreement Article IX, Section 9.02 Final Report: "A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.")

[How did you progress on each of the items/elements provided in the "Specific Objectives" and "Workscope"? How did your progress compare with established objectives? Start with an overall description followed by item-by-item or element-by-element detail if possible.]

The Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) is recognized throughout the state as the organization leading the state's damage prevention efforts through compliance and enforcement activities, public awareness, and stakeholder education. The RRC aims to reduce the number of pipeline damage incidents in Texas chiefly through compliance and education efforts.

Since the beginning of the grant period, which started on September 28, 2019, and now ends on September 27, 2021, due to an extension, Damage Prevention staff have attended—as well as hosted—outreach presentations at 105 events. These presentations included Mock Line Strikes in Bay City and El Paso, a training in Robstown at the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Safe Digging Seminar, and a booth at a City of San Marcos event scheduled specifically for city employee education. Staff attended Damage Prevention Council meetings held throughout the state, and then attended virtual meetings after COVID-19 precautions limited statewide travel and large gatherings. Staff educated contractors and the public on the importance of having underground natural gas lines marked before digging at the 2020 Texas811 Damage Prevention Summit in Galveston, TX. The Summit is the largest gathering of industry professionals dedicated to excavation safety and damage prevention in Texas with nearly 500 attendees. In addition to these events, staff became active in the

Utility Public Safety Alliance (UPSA), an alliance of state regulatory agencies and private organizations across the United States that meet to share policies and best practices regarding damage prevention and safety. Staff presented at one in-person and one virtual UPSA meeting during the grant period.

In 2020, Earthx 2020 and the Sunbelt Builder's Show 2020 were cancelled in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. In 2021, staff attended the Sunbelt Builder's Show, a live event held in Dallas, TX from July 13, 2021, to July 16, 2021.

Inspectors in the Commission's Oversight and Safety Department received new safety cones with the RRC and 811 logos for their fleet vehicles. In accordance with the RRC's parking procedure, the cones are placed around the trucks every time they are parked. The logos on the cones promote the 811 Call Before You Dig awareness campaigns anywhere an RRC inspector vehicle is parked across the state.

At outreach events, Damage Prevention staff handed out tangible, visible, and most importantly, constant reminders to always Call Before You Dig, such as stress balls, cooling towels, and seed packets. Staff also provided Chapter 18 flipbooks that were designed by RRC detailing the state's damage prevention rules, which serve as a handy reference guide for damage prevention stakeholders such as excavators as well as the general public. Staff also distributed an assortment of these items to homeowners in Kennard, TX.

Other items that were purchased and distributed using grant funds include: yard sticks, flashlights, and flash drives with the RRC and 811 logos. The flash drives also include preloaded Chapter 18 rules, giving stakeholders quick and easy access to state damage prevention rules.

Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness (Item 2 under Article IX, Section 9.02 Final Report: "Where the output of the project can be quantified, a computation of the cost per unit of output.")

[This may be difficult to explain for every grant project, but we're trying to get a sense of how effective this grant work has been in improving your damage prevention program. If your grant is more data oriented, you likely had some sort of metrics in mind to improve upon. If so, what were those metrics and how does the data look now compared to when the program started? If you're doing something along the lines of enforcement that involves incident review, how many cases have you been able to review/close and/or fines collected compared to before the grant work? If you are working on something more along the lines of public awareness, how many stakeholders have you been able to reach? Even if you don't have the metrics fully defined, put whatever you can here.]

Educating the public and stakeholders on 811 and Chapter 18 rules is a priority of the Damage Prevention Department. The RRC's efforts to promote 811 and educate stakeholders resulted in an increase in the number of 811 calls while also reducing the number of damage incidents. This trend is encouraging considering the amount of growth Texas is experiencing. In Fiscal Year 2008, when the

program started, the number of damages per 1,000 locates was 6.05. In Fiscal Year 2021, the number of damages per 1,000 locates was reduced to 2.16.

Public awareness is one of the program's priorities. During the grant period, Damage Prevention staff attended a total of 105 events, that were either in-person or virtual. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the RRC had outreach and public awareness success and saw an increase in the number of calls to the One Call Center. In Fiscal Year 2019 (pre-grant period) there were 3,550,997 calls. The calls in Fiscal Year 2021(end of grant period) totaled 4,129,447—a 14 percent increase in call volume during the grant period.

Issues, Problems or Challenges (Item 3 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Final Report: "The reasons for slippage if established objectives were not met.")

[If the project has successfully concluded on schedule, simply state that there are no issues, problems or challenge to report. If there have been delays for any reason, explain what they are and how they have impacted the grant work. For instance, with some States, even after an agreement is in place, it has to be sent back to the Governor's office for approval, which takes more time than originally anticipated. Even if work began immediately after the agreement was in place, other delays could have been caused by personnel changes or issues that arose as the project progressed.

The beginning months of the grant period are typically a little slower regarding outreach opportunities in Texas. The warmer months tend have more mock line strikes and safety day events planned. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many of these events to be postponed or cancelled due to travel restrictions across the country. Despite COVID-19 travel restrictions that limited travel and in-person events, staff was able to attend and host online events and webinars. As COVID-19 travel restrictions are easing, more in-person events were planned and attended.

Final Financial Status Report

[Per the instructions in Article IX, Section 9. 04 of your agreement (included below), the financial status report should be submitted with this final report to the Agreement Administrator (AA) and the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). Please see instructions below and include supporting documentation such as invoices, receipts, spreadsheets, etc. However, if there are any issues with the Financial Status Report or additional explanation is needed, please provide that information here. If there are any delays for whatever reasons, these should be communicated to the AA and AOR in advance.

From Article IX, Section 9.04 of your agreement: "At the end of the grant period, the Recipient must submit a Final Federal Financial Report, Standard Form 425 (SF-425), to report the status of all funds. In addition to the SF-425, the Recipient should provide the breakdown of costs for each object class category (Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other, and Indirect Charges). The Final Federal Financial Report must be submitted to the AOR and the AA via e-mail, no later than 90 days after the grant period end date (see Section 1.03). If possible, this report should be submitted, along with the Final Report, within 30 days after the grant period end date. "

The Final Federal Financial Report and a breakdown of costs for each object class are submitted along

with this report.

Requests of the AOR and/or PHMSA

[In most cases, any questions or actions requested of the AOR and PHMSA (such as grant modifications) should have been addressed in advance of filing the report. If this is the case, simply state "No actions requested at this time" or explain any actions that are currently in process. However, if something has come up recently, or if you haven't been able to discuss with the AOR yet, please describe here.]

There are no actions requested at this time.